

# Thank You

FOR ALL YOUR HELP!



Dear Friend of the World Youth Alliance,

My name is María José García. I am 25 years old, and I was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. I am the second in a family of nine siblings. I have been serving as UN Advocacy Fellow for WYA since January of 2014. I received a Law Degree from the Universidad Panamericana in 2011 and a Specialization Degree from the Phoenix Institute in Advanced Social, Economic and Political Studies, after attending three summer seminars at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA, and the International Theological Institute in Trumau, Austria.

As a lawyer, I have worked in civil litigation, Corporate Law and Notary Law, but I found my real passion in the area of Human Rights and International Law. A close friend introduced me to WYA in 2007, and I fell in love with the organization and its mission. By the following September, we celebrated the opening of the Guadalajara Local Chapter of WYA. The Chapter organized conferences and cultural activities with volunteer students from three universities throughout the course of three years.

I became a WYA National Committee member in 2008, attended my first International Solidarity Forum (ISF) at the UN, and interned for two summers at the Regional Office of WYA Latin America. My experience at the ISF inspired me to apply as a WYA Advocacy Fellow after finishing Law School. I first completed a WYA Advocacy Fellowship from September 2012 until April 2013, with the unique opportunity to see the reality of the UN, actively represent youth, and influence work for the promotion of human dignity.

This winter, I returned to New York as a UN/OAS (Organization of American States) Fellow, organizing the WYA Advocacy Team's activities at the UN and OAS. I promoted language affirming human dignity during the spring UN commissions, provided legal advice and language amendments to delegation heads, and supported the

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advocacy work for the OAS General Assembly this coming June.

I also monitored the Post-2015 Development Agenda that will replace the Millennium Development Goals and which aims to eradicate poverty differently from traditional systems of foreign aid. At consultations and meetings with delegations at the UN, I advocated for targets that affirm person-centered development and uphold respect for life and the family.

This experience taught me that there is a hopeful window of opportunity to shape positive change at the United Nations. I am now determined to pursue a career as a human rights legal advisor, influencing public policy in my own country of Mexico.

In solidarity with a great advocacy team and the excellent guidance of WYA Research Policy Specialist Meghan Fischer and WYA Founder Anna, a beautiful stage of my time with WYA will soon come to an end. I will be returning home, carrying with me new members whom I now call "family," life-lasting friendships, a smile for the fun times, gratitude for the hard times, and invaluable lessons gained from challenge.

This year was special for all of us: a celebration of the WYA's first 15 years and my seven years of being part of WYA's family. We happily joined with WYA Staff and interns in the preparation and celebration on WYA's 15th Anniversary Gala. We could not have made it this far without your support and contribution. Dear Friend: Thank you for allowing us to keep up the work for the defense of human dignity!

With sincere gratitude, María José García Manzano

Guadalajara, México | WYA Latin America