

MCW Communications Team
info@mcwglobal.org
www.mcwglobal.org
+1.212.453.5811



MCW GLOBAL HOLDS FIRST VIRTUAL YOUNG LEADERS CONFERENCE IN PERU – 4TH EDITION

NEW YORK, NY, December 21, 2020 – MCW Global, in collaboration with the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, held its 4th edition of the Young Leaders Conference Program virtually between October 23 and December 18. The virtual program brought together 34 young leaders (one lead mentor, four mentors, and 29 mentees) from seven South American countries including Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Paraguay, and Peru, to develop critical skills needed to become community leaders with a focus on **Gender Equality** and **Mental Health**. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference took place virtually via e-modules and online learning with four primary learning outcomes: **Modern Leadership**, **Understanding of Mental Health**, **Gender Equality within a regional context**, and **Vision Planning**.

During the program, participants received introductions to leadership, capacity building, networking, and planning tools to support their development of social projects addressing local community issues. Guest speakers and experts led sessions and shared their knowledge with participants, providing additional skills and expertise.

Young Leaders Access Program alumni María José Lovatón (YLA '18) and Florencia Peñaflor (YLA '19) were fundamental to the conference's development and implementation. They applied to host the conference, facilitated the partnership with the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, and provided support with the program's logistics and development.

Participants kicked off the program by getting to know one another. Young leaders shared their aspirations for improving their communities as it related to gender equality and mental health. Later in the program, participants learned about leadership's core aspects: the "Modern Leadership" session focused on the different definitions, styles, and cultural understandings of leadership. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about and understand regional issues in relation to gender and mental health from experts in the private and public sectors as well as NGOs. Facilitators, MCW team members, and mentors supported participants as they worked on developing their ideas through vision planning, a project management method that incorporates strategy, vision, and mission, understanding and defining the problem, resource development, and time management.

"After I participated in MCW's YLA Program in 2018, I had one goal: more South American young people to have the same opportunity as me. We went through many challenges during the conference organization, but my goal was always there, inspiring me to find creative solutions. And throughout this process, the MCW team, Ghanem and Florencia, were always there to support me. We had an amazing team. I couldn't be more grateful to MCW for giving me the opportunity to do this conference. This was my way to thank them back for everything they did (and still do) for many other communities and me. MCW believes in us as young leaders that can impact our communities," said María José Lovatón, YLA host alumna from Peru.

Exceptional speakers led sessions on modern leadership, understanding gender, mental health, and vision planning. Speakers included: Khalid Elachi, MCW's Executive Director; Bram Van Haver, Project Management Specialist at (UNAOOC); Rosario del Pilar Díaz Garavito, Founder of The Millennials Movement; Ana Sofía Carranza, Co-founder of De-mentes; Jackeline Velarde, Communication specialist at Public Sector; Aranxa Pizarro, UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality in Higher Education Institutions at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru; Claudia Sánchez, Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist; Manuel Bartra, a labor lawyer and Gender activist; Tesania Velázquez, Professor of the Department of Psychology and the Master of Community Psychology of (PUCP); Dur Montoya, Co-founder of La Peace Hub; and Leon Gojani, MCW's YLA Program Manager.

After completing the conference, participants will work on their community-based vision plans with support from their mentors for the next three months.

About Us

MCW Global is a non-profit organization with a vision for communities around the world to achieve greater levels of education, improved health, and increased economic security. Our mission is to address communities' pressing needs by empowering current leaders and readying leaders of tomorrow. Founded in 1999, MCW Global is based in New York with affiliates in Africa (Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia). MCW Global offers Young Leaders and Africa Programs. Across all our programs, we seek to act with integrity, compassion, accountability, responsibility, and excellence. www.mcwglobal.org | [@mcwglobal](https://twitter.com/mcwglobal)

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