

Annabelle Parker - Youth Representative from Lehigh University

My name is Annabelle Parker, and I am a member of the Lehigh class of 2028. I am double majoring in History and International Relations, and I plan to pursue a law degree after completing my undergraduate studies. I am originally from Houston, Texas, but I grew up in Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and Amman, Jordan. Those experiences have shaped in me a desire to see people from different cultures and backgrounds working together for good in the world. I am honored to be serving as a youth representative for the Widows Development Organization (WiDO), an NGO that works to address issues widows face globally. My position as a youth representative will give me the opportunity to advocate for the rights of widows all around the world. I hope to make my community more aware of the human rights violations widows often face and join with others in tackling these challenges.

2. My Why WiDo

When applying to the UN youth rep program we had to pick a specific non profit we wanted to be a part of. There were many incredible options. I immediately began to do research on all of them and looked into what they stood for. When I began doing research on WiDO, I was shocked. I was shocked by how many challenges widows face, and I was shocked by how little I knew about those challenges. Widows often deal with the struggles of poverty, in fact nearly one in ten widows live in extreme poverty, and they deal with oppression for being women. Beyond that, widows are frequently ostracized by society and sometimes are even forced to undergo violent cultural rituals. In this way, they are under a quadruple threat! I wish that I had known more about this before, and that I was already engaged in raising awareness for their struggles. Now that I am informed, I feel it is my duty to take a stand and fight alongside these women. Since I regret not being informed on this matter sooner, I also feel passionate about ensuring others are educated on the issues widows face. So, that is why I joined WiDO: to help however I can and to empower others to help where I can't.