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**Clinton Global Initiative University 2008 Meeting  
Working Session: Human Rights & Peace  
Discussion and Commitments  
Clinton Global Initiative University  
March 15, 2008**

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**MALE SPEAKER 1:** We're hoping the maybe you guys and wrap it up, so that maybe we can take some of your questions and please this is by no means the end of the discussion. Our hope is that you continue all of these, all of the topics, everything that you guys have brought up in the last 20to25 minutes in the halls, throughout the day, down the line, so don't let this throw you.

But we are back here to answer some of your questions. We were just handed a sheet from some of the stuff that came around and we don't have a lot of time to do it, so I am going to get right to it.

The first question that we are going to answer that we wanted, I think, collaboratively to tackle at which is, how do you keep students motivated to continue their activism when they see very little tangible change in connection with their work? Stephanie, why don't I start with you guys? We've got about three minutes [laughter] to answer each of these questions so—

**STEPHANIE NYOMBAYIRE:** Okay I will speak as fast as I can. The one way that we have kept students motivated is to at first have everyone understand what I said earlier that change will happen, but it will happen in a slow process. So I know we're students and we're used to wanting things fast, working

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on a paper, getting it graded already, but I think that you all have to remember that change will come at a slow pace and that you have to be in it to understand that.

That's small change that you see is actually a big change in terms of the bigger scheme of things. If I take, for example, Da Fur, if you look at the fact that we haven't stopped genocide in four years but the lives that have been saved are a lot more than would have been lost is nobody was talking about Da Fur, if Da Fur wasn't on anybody's radar, if people didn't even know where Da Fur was.

The conflict would have been a lot worse than it is right now, so it's looking at things like that. It's understanding the way change works in the world and the way change works over time that will keep students motivated.

And if you're leading a group and you are working with students, thanking them is a big thing, so thank the people you work with. Go through your accomplishments as time goes by and that's how you keep students into the movement.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** Eboo do you want to try to tackle that question?

**EBOO PATEL, PH.D.:** I'll skip that one.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** You'll skip it? Courtney?

**COURTNEY SPENCE:** Yes, I think there was a similar question that was posed about how to continue an organization

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after you graduate, which I think was sort in sort of the same vein of this and to me it's just really important to think about it beyond yourself and building the infrastructure and the organization, keeping a positive mentality about it all.

But for me like I know when I graduated I read, Built to Last and Good to Great, which are two books by Jim Collins about how to build great organizations.

And even though ours was ten people and a student campus organization, at the time, I started thinking about a year and a half before I graduated how is this going to continue when I am not here and really started to transition leadership, talked to people about sustainability issues, because I think some of the greatest news that I got at first when I was trying to start this deal on campus was there's so many campus organizations that are started and they fail the moment that that student graduates and that was the last thing that I wanted to see happen.

So I am kind of keeping in mind three years ahead of where you are right now is important too.

**MALE SPEAKER 2:** I think it's funny just to add my own sort of line into that. We set the stakes so large here. People tell you, you can change the world. You have the capacity to make this enormous impact on not just the society around you but the world around you.

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Don't let that be discouraging if you don't immediately see results along those lines. It takes years and years. Eboo was talking earlier about Mohammed Unis, who received the Nobel Prize last year. This was a man who worked for 35 or 36 years with his NGO before it received the kind of public acclaim and was generally taken to be the operating theory in the world of micro finance.

So don't think of it like a Hail Mary pass. Incremental work really does come up. The second question that we wanted to take was a case study that somebody had written about uniting Iranian and American youth. The question was my commitment is to unite Iranian and American youth in an effort to find common ground and mutual understanding.

Already we are limited by government censorship in Iran with Iranian students fearing government retaliation. What advice can you give to students who face challenges too large for them to tackle but too serious for them to avoid?

It's a broad question, but we kind of all dug it because we figured here's a case study of how maybe to start an organization from the ground up. So I was hoping you guys could just sort of jump in and say well theoretically if I was going to start that organization or do some— voice of God? [Laughter], how would you do it? How would you pull it off?

Maybe that would help out. So I will just offer a

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similar case study at the Interfaith Youth Core. I think you are always working on three levels. You are working on the level of idea, that's the highest level. You're working on the most basic level, which is the level of the concrete project, and you are working at the mezzo level, which is pattern change.

Okay, so the question is how can you do that with people on the other side of the world? Our idea at the Interfaith Youth Core is called religious pluralism. Just very simple, people from different religious backgrounds including no religion at all, should be engaging one another in ways that build understanding and cooperation.

In 1999, this guy named from Anosk [misspelled?] from Jordan emailed me out of nowhere and said, I saw the Interfaith Youth Core Website and I am inspired by this. I believe in that idea. What can we do?

And so I told him why don't you start an Interfaith Action Group and bring your friends from different faith backgrounds, Christian and Muslim, and Jordan to do service projects. That's what we do in Europe and that's what we do in the States. Low and behold Anosk started doing that and we started exchanging this stuff online and then when I saw Anosk like six years later, it turns out that he was leading an

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Interfaith Service Project trips between the Middle East and Europe.

He started to cultivate a pattern change. So, I think, that's where we need to be connecting with our friends who are next to us and on the other side of the world.

What's the common idea that we have? What's kind of a common project that we can do? That's why the Interfaith Youth Core started the Days of Interfaith Youth service and then how are we kind of leveraging those kinds of things together towards a pattern change.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** Courtney can I ask you to jump in on this one?

**COURTNEY SPENCE:** Yes, I think my piece of advice here would be, I think my dad told me once you get to be big by thinking small. And if you are looking at a really serious issue that is incredibly daunting, but is too important to ignore don't ignore that small steps really make a difference.

And the only way that you're going to actually achieve change and see something really become resolved is through taking those first small steps and I think in the case of Students of the World I mean we've been working on this eight years, we are at six campuses. I want to be on a hundred campuses and I want to have more of a staff than two. I was

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joking our staff just doubled last month, we just hired another person.

So I think set your sights really high but then also appreciate the small successes that you'll experience those first couple of years and also appreciate the failures too and don't be afraid to fail, because that's going to happen and it is the failures that really motivate you to keep going if you have the right mentality and frame of mind.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** You going to take a crack at that Stephanie?

**STEPHANIE NYOMBAYIRE:** Yes I also give the example of genocide to mention our work. The way we saw it was we divided it into three parts, which was first of all [inaudible] genocide, I think, is a pretty big issue. So if you think about things that are too big too not think about and still very intimidating to attack.

I think genocide was pretty out there, so what we thought about was the fact that, first of all your idea that you're bringing is an idea that the world needs and that's what you need to believe into start off with.

So we believe that breaking the silence around genocide and making everybody have a hand in stopping genocide was extremely important, so you start off with that. And the three goals were to and still are to educate, advocate and fundraise.

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So we knew that NGO's that start and are only based on raising awareness is only first step and that can't be enough.

We knew that doing advocacy work could not be enough because people needed to know about it. We knew that fundraising could not be enough because you can't just raise money and not do anything else, so those three things.

Letting people know about the issue, so that people can give you their support with knowledge of your support, letting people- doing advocacy work because we know that change happens also at a level of policy and policy change.

So in terms of your organization knowing what kind of policy we would like to see pass and going out and doing the research about what kind of policy we would like to see written. So the genocide [inaudible] that we started off with, our ideas about policy, not knowing that one day we would actually be helping Senators and Congressman writing Bills that have actually passed today.

So advocacy is very important and getting citizens to know that their voices count, getting citizens to know that you will call your representative, you will call your Senator, you will call Congressman, because that is the only they will act if they know that constituents care, so advocacy is a very big part and then again money because we need money to run.

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So creating very creative projects in very creative ways to fundraise money, and again I can't drive it home enough, persistence and continuing to do what you do, innovating and continuing to do it and never allowing yourself to give up.

**MALE SPEAKER 2:** I just wanted to add on that, as well, because I found myself doing some work with U.S. and Iraqi organizations after I came back from Iraq the first time as to how to foster dialogue with this whole war on terror going on. When it comes to, I mean, this case study talks specifically about an international issue.

Never forget that at the Universities that you attend that you are in the best microcosm of the world possible. You look at Stephanie or you look at Eboo, you're talking about people who have a relationship, a very direct relationship with different parts to the world that are probably very vastly different from the college campuses that they attended.

I am not sure what the Rwanda community is like in Swarthmore or what the Indian community is like in Illinois, but I'm just going out there on a limb as to suggest that around you and on your campuses may be the best ambassadors, may be the best conduits towards the kind of good or the kinds of sort of organizations that you're look to direct your time, energy, and attention.

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And that that's usually a pretty good place to start because they can help you work through the intricacies, both politically, social, in certain cases sort of religious in terms of the operational stuff of getting stuff off the ground. I did want to get one more question. I know Mickey's head is going to explode because I did that but I thought it was a really pertinent question.

We all kind of agreed on it while we were sitting in the green room drinking coffee and you guys were doing the yeoman's work out here.

This is a question that came to us and said you all started, with the exception of me, your own successful projects. There is so much out there already how do you know if you should join and work to improve something already existing or if you should start something completely new?

How does your organization work with others that are like you? And I think all of use had a personal reason for picking this one, so Stephanie why don't you kick it off.

**STEPHANIE NYOMBAYIRE:** Well as I said before, the reason why we started genocide intervention was because of what we saw the reaction to past genocides were. So starting off, I think we were talking about it. We weren't looking to be heroes.

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We weren't looking to make history and have Martin Luther King like stories written about us. But the point was that we saw a change that needed to be made and we saw something that needed to happen that was not happening. We saw the same part in risking to happen if we didn't not act the way we did, which was to create the genocide intervention network.

So that's how you know you should start your own innovative organization, because you know you have an idea that is not being implemented out there the way that you want it to be implemented. And if you do see others doing what you are doing, go out and research where they are doing and see if maybe you could join with those organizations, if you're going to use the exact same thing that those organizations are doing maybe you can join.

But if you are going to provide an innovative way to do it and a better way to do it and you know you can do it better, then work with those organizations as well as create your own. And you have to remember even if you create your own organization it doesn't exclude working with the ones that are already existing.

It actually means that you need mix strains so that's the way we go for, so when we started there were other organizations springing up across the country, but their focus wasn't our focus, but we knew that our end goal was the same,

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so working together to make that end goal happen and showing that you're in that cause for the people and not for your heroic needs.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** Eboo, do you want to take a stab at that one?

**EBOO PATEL, PH.D.:** Just the thing that I want to say very quickly is at the Interfaith Youth Core, we probably actually have five people on staff who have started their own organizations, who started their organizations before they came to the Interfaith Youth Core.

And part of why I think a good organization does is it allows for really talented people like Jenan [misspelled?] and Cassie and the other people on staff to be entrepreneurs within an organization. There are many places that you might be able to go and start a new initiative or start a new project and I will tell you something.

The hardship to hero ratio of starting your own organization is about a 100:1 and maybe a 1000:1 right, plus your parents will give you hell for it. I want to just close with two quick things. One is we tell these stories a lot at the Interfaith Youth Core. We're really encouraging people to start their own Interfaith Projects and then network those.

Guys like Frankie are going to start their own organization. Other people are saying how I can I work? How

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can I be a significant value added in an existing organization?  
If you go to IFYC.org, which is our website you will see a lot  
of this.

I am going to end with a quick story, and for me a lot  
of this comes back to spiritual issues right? Like where, who,  
are you meant to be in the world and what are you meant to do?  
There's a story about Saint Francis of Assisi, who was tending  
his garden and somebody came up to him and said, Saint Francis  
if you knew the world was going to end at 6 o'clock tonight  
what would you do and he said I would continue tending my  
garden.

If you are meant to start an organization, if that's  
deep in your soul and if your heart's great gladness connects  
with the world's great need, you've got to do it, but if that's  
not the case and you see yourself as a value added somewhere  
else, I would encourage you to do that.

**FEMALE SPEAKER 1:** Yes, and I'll just be real brief. I  
think you just never underestimate the power of collaboration  
and that's where, I mean we're all in this room today and I  
think the Clinton Global Initiative University is a perfect  
example of, when you're in this arena of global social justice  
issues, raising international awareness and activism, actually  
doing something about it you're in a very family oriented  
arena.

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I mean, people want to work with you. They want to know what you are doing. They want to believe that other people are doing good things and when you come together with this sort of power of the minds that this is right here today, you guys realize that the creativity and the innovation and the collaboration that can come from that is really impressive.

And that's why I think I am just so thrilled to see this, be a part of this today and I just hope that you guys take advantage of this room that you're in, the people that you're meeting and really be open to the conversation that you're about to have when this thing is over and that person that you're about to meet because you never know where that will take you.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** Excellent. I just wanted to thank our three panelists in particular and all of you guys here in the room. That pretty much wraps things up. There's a little bit more business that Mickey's got to take care of.

**MICKEY:** Kind of what— you're still not off the hook because I want to have just a closure again, but I want to take it back a little bit to talk to you about what we generated or what you generated actually from the tables and what were some of the themes and I think that our panelists will can take copies of it also because they can't see.

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You'll see it on the screens, so I am going to start and I am going over them fairly quickly. You can see them on the screens on the sides. The first segment is kind of themes. These are common thoughts that came from several questions. As you can see you were talking about building coalitions of existing groups on campus, pooling resources together, kind of combining efforts.

You talked about not only spreading your ideas abroad, but actually go abroad and see what other people are thinking and bringing it back home to where your home is. You are talking about building your organization through social networking.

Phase work is one of the things mentioned but, as you know there's Change.org there's other plentiful of networks online, a lot of them concentrating on social activities. We talked about, you talked about emphasizing collaboration, which I found as a very interesting point.

There is kind of a tension between kind of getting a coalition of everything that exists, but then on the other hand making sure that not everybody can do everything together, that we actually need to keep some focus on organizations.

And there is a notion that if you come up with a new idea that you want to be the leader of the revolution. It's worth and that's a point some of the tables make, it's worth

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checking the field first and seeing if there are other people doing it and you can join them and actually learn from their experience.

You talked about starting small, great programs on a small local level and address global problems. You talked about creating a global community through short curriculum and student exchanges.

These are kind of the themes. Now we are going to kind of what we call the gems, but kind of like specific ideas that we had, that you had that you surfaced. Use a blog to make a pen pal in other countries.

Engage people who don't think their skills can contribute, example Art Majors. We've created folders. I must say Art Major is extremely irrelevant in what we are trying to do here and I am sure that's the intention of that thought was not to disinclude actually to include— there's so much to be done with the creative majors and other things that not necessarily feel like an exact fit or an immediate fit.

But so much can be done and arts is being used everywhere in conflict resolution, especially with children and others. There was an idea to lobby to create a department of peace and create a culture of peace. I like that if we can get mobilization of students on that one. Organize a scavenger hunt with diverse groups focusing on raising awareness.

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We have an online international youth post publication to give voice to youth globalists who are rivaling dominate lobbyists. I think that addresses some of the things that Eboo was saying that if it's not you who are talking about diversity and religion on your campus, it's going to be someone else and not necessarily voicing what you want to be voiced.

We have a very short time left, but I really want to get it back to get it in the panel to react to some of those if you have very initial, very quick thoughts. Thank you very much.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** Yes very quick, anything jump out at any of you, this to you guys specifically. I know we covered some of the grounds in the Q&A.

**STEPHANIE NYOMBAYIRE:** The one that jumped out at me is actually two is the start small one and also the connecting with the people you are trying to help. I think in many cases it is important to know who you are trying to help and where you are trying to help them to go to because help I think is a word that can be both harmful and helpful.

So when we're talking about helping people, are you talking about helping them so they can help themselves eventually or talking them so they are internally in a state of help forever? So we see this when we look at sort of NGO's that go in to a country not understanding how the country works

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and creating a situation of dependency that's lasting as opposed to creating a situation of where they go in and help that is given is actually help that can be used and where people that are being helped are helped to help themselves.

So I think trying to understand who you are helping and trying to hear what they are want from you as opposed to what you think they need is very important. So when we are talking about creating policies or creating things internationally, trying to see if your ideas match up with the ideas of the people on the ground and start small is what you were saying.

Start small, break down your goals and you will feel more accomplished just like checking off small things off your to do list, but also building operation starts with the small things. Small things matter just as much as the big things that you see in the end, so those are the big things that resonated with me.

**MALE SPEAKER 2:** There's a relationship between big, medium and small and I am just going to go back to idea, pattern change, concrete project. Any movement that you care about, the environmental movement, the human rights movement, it has a core idea. The core idea of the environmental movement is the earth is precious and should be protected.

There are a set of concrete projects like we heard this morning, changing light bulbs in poor communities across

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America, changing light bulbs in poor communities in Atlanta. That concrete project can become a pattern change across America right. That's that three layers right there.

That's your cocktail of social change. For the Interfaith Youth Core the big idea is religious pluralism. The concrete project includes days of Interfaith Youth service, interfaith student councils, and interfaith fellows.

The pattern change is people around the world from different faith backgrounds engaging one another in ways that build understanding and cooperation right, so go to IFYC.org and check that out. We also have material up here and we are happy to talk during lunch.

**FEMALE SPEAKER 1:** All of these stand out to me, but I think, what personally resonates that I don't think we have talked much about but this not only spreading our ideas abroad but actually going abroad and connecting with the people that are facing the problems, not just those that are solving them.

That's with all this, the internet and faces book communication and all that we really can become closer as a global community and really have a better opportunity to empathize with those half way around the world. But if you have an opportunity to go meet people face to face, live in their homes, understand the realities of their everyday life and their night life too.

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There's nothing that can replace that and I think with Students of the World what we have seen is the individual life that we changed, not just in the organizations we've worked with, but our students from actually interacting with the people on the ground that are there.

It just- there's- it's unprecedented, so and I also think that a lot of people think that they don't have an opportunity to go abroad, but there's so many organizations, grants, opportunities out there and if you just look hard enough, talk to as many people as you can, you can find a way to get there.

And I would just like to add a side note. If you go to Students of the World.org you can find my contact information. If you have any questions about starting an organization and how to take it after you graduate, I would be more than happy to work with you, talk to you about it, just because it's now my life for better and for worse and I would just like to help anyone I can.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** I would argue for better. Thank you guys very, very much. [Applause] Well now is- I am going to stand up if you guys want to stay for this you're by all means invited to but I think they would like you off stage because this is the-where the rubber hits the road sort of with the

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Clinton Global Initiative for any of you who have heard or read reportage of what this is based on.

We're not just here to talk. We like it mostly when people put up where their ideas are and there's a couple of commitments that we would like to recognize here today that have been made as part of CGIU and we would like to invite the people up who have made these commitments and these pledges to carry this work forward.

The first person I would like to invite to the stage is Ryan Madigan from Rutgers. Ryan, are you here in the room? [Applause] There you are. Ryan if you could come on up here, I would like to tell you guys a little bit about what Ryan's done. He's here.

He's committed to create a scholarship at the graduate school of Applied Professional Psychology at Rutgers U for students from conflict areas who are interested in becoming clinician with an area of expertise in crisis and trauma intervention, which if you've ever been to an area you know it's just absolutely critical or for those of you who are natives of New Orleans and live through Katrina you just know it's absolutely critical.

The scholarship is going to be fully funding a recipient student tuition to Rutgers and the cost of living

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over a two year program, so that they can go out and do this excellent, excellent work.

In an effort to increase the number of trained clinicians able to serve areas in crisis Ryan is also going to be working to create trauma focused curricula in pre-existing academic areas not just not in that one school, but also in conjunction with the scholarship itself.

And also in support of this proposal the administration at the Graduate School of Applied Professional Psychology has offered to extend their single year informal graduate study across two years to help enrich that experience with two years of practical training as well, so taking it out of the ivory tower and actually getting it into the places that it deserves.

In order to establish this scholarship Ryan is seeking funding from Rutgers while applying for grants from organizations including the International Students Organization, the American Association of University Women and the National Institute of Health and U.S. Department of Health and Human services.

We all look forward to seeing Ryan in the future and to the first recipient of that award and I would like to hand you this placard on behalf of President Clinton signed by President Clinton himself as a leader in the University community I commit to take action to address this specific global

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challenge. You have done exactly that Ryan, thank you very, very much. [Applause]

And that is his new face [inaudible] profile.

[Laughter] The next person I would like to invite up is Nate Lowenthall. Nate, are you out there? [Applause] Nate is the Executive Director of the Roosevelt Institution and he has committed to creating an international fellowship program that's going to immerse students in the reality of problems that they are researching while training them to use tools of advanced policy writing in legislative messaging to help drive legislation and advocacy informed by the priorities of local actors and developing nations, so very much what our friend Courtney was just talking about here on stage.

This is a \$40,000 scholarship that was being created or is going to be created to bridge the gap between classroom experience and relevant experience providing students with first hand experience in developing nations.

While abroad they are going to work for NGO's and local policy or advocacy groups before returning to Washington, D.C. to submit a paper with a policy suggestion. So this is all very pragmatic and will actually service change itself. The Roosevelt Institution is going to work with each fellow to develop a unique action plan tailored to the student's research

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in the areas of interest and activism while responding to the needs and priorities of partner organizations.

They run similar programs domestically and this was inspired to take this program abroad by the CGI itself, which is the larger banner version of what you are all attending here today. Over the course of the next year, the Roosevelt Institution is going to develop a curriculum, foster relationships with policy organizations and NGO's based on the targeted developing countries that this will be applied towards and raise the necessary funds to provide stipends fellows thereby allowing a broad range of students from many disciplines to be involved.

The program is going to launch with five fellows in the summer of 2009. I would not be surprised Nate if you get some applications from here in this room. Thank you so much. [Applause] Let me give you this award. This is way more important. I dig that you came in sandals so hard I can't even tell you. [Inaudible] how it goes.

**NATE:** Thank you.

**MALE SPEAKER 1:** My pleasure, thank you. Thank you Nate. [Applause] Our final commitment, which we would like to recognize and hold their feet to the fire excuse me comes from Kate Fedisova [misspelled?]. I hope I pronounced that right from Occidental College. Kate did I do a good job on that?

<sup>1</sup> kaisernetwork.org makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of written transcripts, but due to the nature of transcribing recorded material and the deadlines involved, they may contain errors or incomplete content. We apologize for any inaccuracies.

[Applause] Please come up here. Kate works with an organization called Peace in Focus whose mandate is to use photography workshops as a springboard for discussions of conflict resolution and as a means to foster relationships between youth whose communities have been divided as a result of violence, disaster or neglect.

Peace in Focus plans to hold three pilot workshops this year for 20 youths in Boston, Mass, Burundi and Liberia. This spring, the group is going to hold focus groups with community stakeholders and students in order to develop curricula for workshops that are going to address the community's priorities and needs.

Using photography, participants are going to capture their commonalities. They're going to learn strategies to reaffirm their perceptions of one another. They're going to discuss social change and they are also going to begin to craft and communicate their personal and joint visions for peace through images, which as we all know are incredibly powerful and storytelling.

In an effort to extend the workshop's effect, deeper into the community Peace in Focus is going to exhibit the art created by the participants for the public in order to help facilitate a larger community wide dialogue. She's joined by Kyle Dietrich of Tuff's and Harvard Universities, who I have

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neglected to mention, but thankfully caught before I stepped in it a little bit too hard. We only have one of these for the both of you, but thank you so much for committing both your time and your effort to this cause. Thank you Kate. Thank you Kyle. [Applause]

So, that is a wrap at least for this part of the session. We hope that you carry it out into lunch and beyond. Thank you so much for participating. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you guys and what you do. Thank you.

[END RECORDING]