

Problem

Many American college students are unaware of current global conflicts and therefore remain uninvolved in humanitarianism and the promotion of peace. In this time of globalization, it is imperative that the students of our generation—the leaders of the future—understand current events across the globe and the worldwide consequences of their actions or inactions.

Solution

We propose creating a two-fold website designed to both inform American college students about current global conflicts and to facilitate student activism by connecting students and collegiate peace-promoting groups. The website will initially feature five to ten current global conflicts, including political, religious, and social crises, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the genocide in Darfur. To inform students about each conflict, the website will include a brief summary, a web map, and a combination of compelling photographs and video footage. The photographs and video footage will portray the effects of conflict on ordinary people, presenting a personal perspective on crises not often covered in the mainstream press or discussed in the classroom. The personal point of view highlights the common humanity shared by diverse people and has great potential to motivate students to take action in defense of human welfare.

The website will facilitate student activism distinctively by providing a forum for student groups to exchange ideas and work together so as to broaden their reach and amplify their voice. The website will include message boards and contact information for collegiate peace-promoting groups, allowing them to publicize events, coordinate joint events, share ideas, and support each other's efforts. Student groups, such as the Colgate chapter of Amnesty International and the Progressive Student Network, have already indicated their interest in using this website to promote their efforts. In order to reach many college students, we will publicize this resource at institutions participating in the Davis 100 Projects for Peace Program.

Implementation

We will first identify the conflicts to be featured on the website, aiming for a geographically diverse array of crises. In the late spring of 2007, we will contact non-governmental organizations, Colgate alumni, and other potential sources of existing video footage and photography of the conflicts. These possible contributors include Engineers Without Borders, World Citizens, the Peace Corps, and the International Rescue Committee. We have already begun working with Barbara Roback of the Colgate Center for Career Services to contact all Colgate alumni working internationally or with peace-promoting organizations, including Jenny Perlman Robinson with the International Rescue Committee and Brendan Touhey with the non-profit Playing for Peace. While on campus, we will meet with Dan Monk, chair of the Colgate Peace & Conflict Studies Department, and Lynn Schwarzer, chair of the Colgate Film & Media Studies Department, to establish guidelines that determine appropriate media content for the website. We will also consult with various Colgate professors to identify prominent scholars regarding the chosen conflicts; we will then request that these scholars provide us with brief summaries of the conflicts by the 15th of June.

During late spring, we will also meet with Ray Nardelli and Rich Grant of the Colgate Academic Technologies Team to plan the design and development of the website. Ray Nardelli, Rich Grant, and Lynn Schwarzer will connect us with interested and capable digital technology students. We will hire one student as a web developer to implement the website design during May and early June.

Throughout June and July, we will collect the photographs and video footage from organizations and individuals contacted during the spring. Alyssa and Emily will travel to Washington D.C. and Boston to meet with interested contributors and gather submissions. Once the website is created by mid-June, grant applicants Alyssa Martino, Emily Katz, and Sachi Schuricht will reconvene at Colgate University to organize correspondence and submissions. At this time the student web developer will train Sachi to upload summaries, web maps, photographs, and video footage and to manage online message boards. Sachi will then be responsible for organizing and compiling submitted materials for the website. Sachi will purchase professional stock photography to complement photograph submissions. All of the summaries, web maps, photographs, and video footage will be uploaded by the 1st of August.

Throughout the spring and summer, we will promote our forthcoming website by contacting professors and students involved in peace studies or extracurricular peace promotion at institutions participating in the Davis 100 Projects for Peace Program. We have already contacted Gordon Fellman, chair of Peace, Conflict and Coexistence Studies at Brandeis University, and Val Vetter, Peace Studies director at Grinnell College, regarding the promotion and use of our website at their schools. In addition, the Colgate chapters of Amnesty International and the Progressive Student Network have offered to help with establishing contacts with similar student groups at other colleges and universities. After the 1st of August, we will again contact collegiate peace-promoting student groups to launch the use of the website as a forum to facilitate communication and collaboration among such groups. These groups will have the opportunity to utilize the website during the impending academic year.

Expected Outcomes and Impact

We will design an easy-to-use website that will inform and connect students. The success of the website can be evaluated based on various website statistics. We will measure the number of visitors and amount of time they remain on the site, and we will track the web pages visited the most often.

Our success in connecting students can be evaluated by the number of student groups that utilize the website to connect with similar groups, coordinate joint events, publicize their events, and share their ideas through the message boards. Kathryn Meng, President of the Colgate chapter of Amnesty International and Progressive Student Network, has pledged to further promote the website to student groups at other schools throughout the 2007-2008 academic year. The website will thereby remain a valuable resource well after the summer of 2007.

Dan Monk, chair of the Colgate Peace & Conflict Studies Department, has agreed to maintain the website after the summer of 2007. He will integrate the expansion of the featured conflicts into the curriculum for his "Peace & Conflict in the Digital Age" class, so that the number of conflicts featured increases and summaries remain current. The integration of website maintenance into the class curriculum will provide more opportunities for college students to learn and benefit from this resource.

Division of Labor and Skills

Alyssa will direct all interactions with Colgate professors and other scholars to obtain the conflict summaries. As a Peace & Conflict Studies concentrator, she is connected with relevant Colgate faculty and is eager to connect with similar individuals at other schools. As a Colgate Writing Center Consultant and past editor of her high school newspaper, Alyssa is well equipped to write correspondence and cultivate relationships with scholars. Together, Alyssa and Emily will contact non-governmental organizations and other potential sources of video footage and photography explaining the project and requesting materials under the Copyright Act of 1976.

As a Colgate Writing Center Consultant and the current programming intern for the Colgate Center for Career Services, Sachi will work directly with Barbara Roback and direct all interactions with alumni. Sachi will also serve as the media manager, working with the Colgate Academic Technologies Team to plan the layout of the website and to hire and work with a student web developer. As a video editor for West Side Filmworks, Sachi has experience working with media—specifically with organizing large amounts of video footage. As a video producer, Sachi has demonstrated her ability to work with other people in realizing a creative vision.

Emily will lead the promotion of the website targeted at collegiate peace studies programs and peace-promoting student groups. Emily will also serve as the project manager in charge of overarching organization, supervision, and accounting. She will organize, track, and document all correspondence and manage the accounting of funds expended. Emily developed managerial and accounting skills as Student Rotarian President from 2003-2004, when she supervised 90 club members and planned and fulfilled multiple large-scale fundraisers that earned over \$40,000 a year. Emily's current involvement in the Colgate Student Philanthropy Council demonstrates her dedication to creating social change.

By the 15th of August, together we will have created the first website that both informs students and provides an accessible and distinctive forum to facilitate their activism.