

Mark Hanis, Genocide Intervention Network

“Genocide is a political, man-made crisis.”

“Should we have send bags of rice to the Jews in the concentration camps?”

“Students have been the leaders in this campaign.”

“Politicians pay attention to numbers, money, and ideas.”

- Why does ‘never again’ keep happening over and over again?
- As students, what could we do? Our first response was to send aid, but genocide is a political, man-made crisis. What we needed to do was focus on policy.
- The Genocide Intervention Fund sought to raise money to support to African Union Mission in Sudan. We wanted to focus on maintaining civilian protection. The AU needed money to get the planes to fly the troops into Darfur, the tents they needed to house themselves, and the boots they needed to wear to keep their feet from burning.
 - A contingency of our donations would be that the money would only go towards non-lethal expenditures. Currently the AU is training female Rwandan police officers to escort the refugee women when they collect firewood.
- We tapped into our network of friends by using Facebook, MySpace, and Friendster and we sought to raise \$1000 and write 1000 letters in our first major campaign.
- We, as citizens, can do a lot to raise money and awareness but governments need to solve the problem of genocide. Simply put, there are certain things that the average person just doesn’t have the power to do.
- Politicians don’t think that we care, and this is especially true about their perception of the youth. An alumna of Swathmore that served in Congress during the Rwandan genocide told us that he received not one phone call or letter from a constituent concerned about the genocide in Rwanda.
- Politicians are flooded with calls, letters, and emails about gun and abortion legislation, but when it comes to genocide there’s absolute silence.
- Politicians pay attention to numbers, money, and ideas.
 - Go to www.opensecrets.org to find out the major donors to your Senators and Representatives.

- At GIN we focus on three major tenets:
 - 1) Educate
 - 2) Advocate
 - 3) Donate
- In June, 2005 there was 50x more coverage of the Michael Jackson trial, than Darfur. There was 12x more coverage of Tom Cruise and the Runaway Bride. Fifty times more coverage for one person, versus minimal coverage for 400,000 dead Darfurians and 3 million refugees.
- After each genocide the concerned body disappears, what GIN hopes to do is to create the first anti-genocide constituency. You can visit www.genocideintervention.net and sign up to be a member.
- Million Voices Campaign
 - Students have been the leaders in this campaign. The MV project is geared towards students, and we hope to send a contingency of about 500 students to Washington, D.C. on the weekend of April 29th. There they will participate in workshops and the final delivery of the one million postcards to President Bush.

Q&A

Q: Who in Congress do we need to target?

A: The major targets are Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), Vice Chairman of the House Committee on International Relations, and Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), Chairman of the House Committee on International Relations. For California, target Sen. Barbara Boxer, Sen. Diane Feingold, and Rep. Nancy Pelosi. These individuals sit on other committees where they can use their clout to pressure people on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Committee on International Relations.

Q: What are the mechanics of the Million Voices campaign?

A: The campaign hopes to gather one million postcards to present to President Bush on April 30. I encourage you to be as creative as possible in how you go about getting the signatures. One of our advantages, as youth, is that we often do things that adults would never think of doing.

Q: How do we commit ourselves to one issue when there are so many other time-sensitive issues going on right now?

A: You absolutely can commit yourselves to more than one issue. You're able to walk and chew gum at the same time; likewise you can focus on two issues at once.