



PRESS RELEASE

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INTERFAITH YOUTH CORE AND TONY BLAIR LAUNCH FAITHS ACT FELLOWSHIP IN CHICAGO

CHICAGO, September 11, 2009. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair joined IFYC in Chicago last night at the kick-off event for the Faiths Act Fellowship. The Prime Minister addressed the 30 Faiths Act Fellows, IFYC staff and special guests to welcome the Fellows back from their training in Africa and inspire them as they begin their 10 months of work in the US, Canada and the UK.

Starting October 1st, the Fellows will begin their work to mobilize local people of faith to work together toward combating malaria in Africa. In their 10 months of work, the Fellows will reach tens of thousands of young people of faith with essential education about the devastating impact of malaria and the ways faith communities can work together to make a real difference. Inspired by their different religious traditions, they will motivate and equip young people in congregations, schools and university religious student groups to lead their faith communities in spreading awareness of the MDG challenge, raising life-saving funds for the fight against deaths from malaria and promoting a new inter-religious dialogue of life and action.

Eboo Patel, IFYC Executive Director said, "We believe that young people will lead the way in building inter-religious cooperation for the 21st century. The Faiths Act Fellowship is about producing exceptional young leaders whose interfaith leadership results in real impact on the lives of others."

Prime Minister Tony Blair said: "As changemakers for current and future generations, young people have the opportunity to establish a new vision of inter-religious interaction that places protecting the welfare of the world's poorest at its centre."

Benjamin Bechtolsheim, Faiths Act Fellow from Chicago, said "We cannot underestimate the challenge of eradicating disease and poverty. However, our recognition of these complications should drive us to action, not to resignation."

The Faiths Act Fellowship is an initiative of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation and is coordinated by Interfaith Youth Core. It began in August with a two-month intensive immersion program including training in **London** and **Chicago** and fieldwork in **Mali, Malawi and Tanzania** with primary health care partners in malaria-endemic countries. In October, Fellows will return to their home countries to work towards mobilizing young people of faith and raising awareness and resources in the global fight against deaths due to malaria.

ABOUT INTERFAITH YOUTH CORE (IFYC)

IFYC is an international non-profit based in Chicago which equips young leaders to build interfaith cooperation on their campuses and in their communities. Through speeches and trainings, and domestic and international fellowships, we nurture and network thousands of interfaith leaders to engage religious diversity in a positive way, and build stronger communities through cooperative service.

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