I William Zartman Field Trip Fund

A student request in the fall of 2005 sparked what is now a flagship of the Conflict Management (CM) program at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), the annual Field Trip. Every year since, first under the leadership of Professor Zartman, continuing with P. Terrence Hopmann, and today with director Daniel Serwer, the program has taken about 16 students on field trips around the globe to observe conflict situations first hand and gain further understanding of the causes and possible remedies.

As the CM program continues to thrive, we endeavor to give each concentrator an opportunity to participate in a trip. Instead of turning down applicants each year, we propose undertaking more than one trip each year. But the costs are prohibitive. Annually, 66% of CM’s operational funds are allocated for the field trip. Now, to expand the program and honor Bill Zartman’s pioneering spirit, SAIS has established the I. William Zartman Field Trip Fund and seeks to raise $30,000 in 2016 to fund field trips.

Over the past 12 years, nearly 200 students have studied conflicts around the world. Bill Zartman, who pioneered the idea, has participated in all but two of the trips. Upcoming trips are planned to China, to study the U.S./China conflict in the South China Sea, and to Ukraine.

Selected students spend several weeks, usually during the fall semester, attending briefings given by Washington based government representatives and experts on the conflict. Students also prepare reading assignments for the participants and identify their own research question related to the overall goal of understanding the root causes of the conflict in question and devising conflict prevention, management and resolution strategies.

Field trips are typically a week to ten days, and often involve travel to more than one destination, so as to enable meetings with all of parties to the conflict. At each destination, the group meets typically with a wide array of constituents, usually with foreign ministers, at times with presidents, and consistently with government officials, civil society organizations, university faculty, students, think tankers, and any other relevant groups or individuals. In Cyprus, the group visited both sides of the Green Line, in Nagorno Karabakh the group visited Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the Nagorno Karabakh region. For the Colombia trip, the group traveled to Choco province to meet with groups who had close connections to the FARC. In Casamance, the group held meetings both in Dakar and in Ziguinchor. In Sierra Leone, they traveled from Colombo to Jaffna, in an area once dominated by the Tamil Tigers.

Upon their return to SAIS, students work on a 10-page paper that answers their initial research question and provides policy recommendations to the various parties to the conflict. These papers are then compiled in a published report launched publicly in late spring at a SAIS event.

Bill Zartman pioneered the concept of the field trip, and we would like to continue his legacy. The skills that the students learn on these trips cannot be taught in a classroom setting. For many of the students, it is their first time being exposed to an area of conflict, even if the conflict zones we go to are relatively safe. Having first hand access to the parties of the conflict and its victims is a unique experience. The students also have their work published, which is an outstanding marketing tool for them on the job market.

Please honor Bill Zartman by contributing to the I. William Zartman Field trip fund. Your gift will directly help a student in the program attend an international field trip, and allow us to expand the number of students who get to participate. To learn more about how you can support the fund with a multi-year pledge, please contact Khadija Hill, associate director of development, at khadija-hill@jhu.edu or 443-591-1404.

To make a tax-deductible gift online, please follow this link: https://secure.jhu.edu/form/sais:

1. Select "other" as the designation
2. Type "Zartman Field Trip Fund" in the box