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PANEL ONE: RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE:

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PROCEEDINGS

DR. WEINBERG: My name is Adam Weinberg. I'm the president and CEO of World Learning. It's a real pleasure and honor to be here and I want to thank our panelists for doing this today. For those of us who've worked on this issue for a long time, I don't think I ever thought we would be sitting at Brookings talking about new research with a room that was so packed that we actually had people in the back sitting on the floor. So, I think the person that's taking the pictures needs to take pictures in that direction as well.

You know, for many years we've known about the power of international volunteering and service as critical tools for meeting global challenges. What we've too often lacked is the research that substantiates that impact, and perhaps more importantly the research that can help inform our work so that the programs we develop are the most effective.

Today we're going to hear from a research panel on new data that documents the impact of international service on volunteers, on host communities, and on host country perceptions of the United States. From my perspective, this data is really important and it challenges each of us in this room in at least three really important ways. First and foremost, it substantiates the claim that the work we do is probably one of our most effective tools for addressing the critical issues that we're going to face over the next 5, 10, 15, 20 years. And this research challenges us to do more of it. We're not doing enough.

The second is the research challenges us to rethink not only some of the assumptions that many of us use when building our programs and projects, but actually I think challenges some of the trends in the field. For example, the research seems to suggest that it isn't the frequency -- doesn't matter how many times you actually do a volunteer project -- but, more importantly, it's the quality and the depth. It's the deep cultural immersion that really makes a difference. That challenges us, and I think suggests that some of the current trends -- at least in higher education where I spend most of my time -- may not be moving in the right direction.

The third is I think the data challenges us to remember the importance of what happens when people return. People go off, they have an incredible experience, but the real impact

may actually begin when they come back home and they bring voices, views, and new perspectives back with them.

The work being done by this panel is really important, and it's my honor to be able to introduce them. Our first speaker is going to be Janet Kerley. Janet is the chief of research, evaluation, and measurement in the Office of Strategic Planning, Research, and Planning with the Peace Corps. Ms. Kerley leads the agency's efforts to measure the impacts of the work of the Peace Corps volunteers. Prior to joining the Peace Corps, she was the team leader for monitoring and evaluation in the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance at the U.S. Department of State. She also served at USAID and the Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination.

Our second speaker will be Susan Jenkins. Dr. Jenkins currently works as an evaluation program analyst in the Peace Corps' Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning. She oversees several projects, including the Host Country Impact Studies and the Return Peace Corps Volunteer Survey. Prior to working with the Peace Corps she worked with the Law School Admission Council as well as on the Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse Project.

And then our final speaker will be Amanda Moore McBride. Dr. McBride is an assistant professor in the George Warren Brown School of Social Work and the research director for the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis, and leads Washington University's Richard A. Gephardt Institute for Public Service. Dr. McBride studies volunteer civic service, including service learning, national service, and international service. Her research focuses on service programs and policy features that promote volunteer inclusion and retention as well as impacts on volunteers, host organizations, and communities. And I have to say, as somebody who grew up as a faculty brat at Wash U, it's really great to see Wash U represented up here today.

The format is going to be fairly straightforward. Each of our speakers will speak for about 8 minutes, and then that should leave us about 20 minutes for question and answers.

Please.

MS. KERLEY: Thank you. Thank you very much, Dr. Weinberg.

For me, it is a privilege to be here representing the Peace Corps. Peace Corps has

a long, long history in this field and for us -- for Susan and me to be here at this point in time is truly an honor.

And I want to say that there is a tie that binds us that is evident here. In fact, if you'd permit me, may I ask how many return Peace Corps volunteers we have here? Or staff?

SPEAKER: Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause)

MS. KERLEY: And I was reminded of the tie when I was looking at Adam's bio to learn who would be our distinguished moderator, and learned that Sargent Shriver was an experimenter. You see this tie, it's evident the networks are here. And we're privileged to be a part of that and a part of the research community.

So what we're going to talk about is a research program that Peace Corps began in 2008. Now it's not that Peace Corps hasn't done research in the past -- we in fact have a great body of research about us. We have been the subject of many research activities. Somebody quipped the other day, well, those return Peace Corps volunteers have got to do something for their dissertation topics. So, we actually pulled together all the dissertations we could find and we have that in a document to try and understand the depth of the research that's taking place.

But what was missing and what has been missing from the research that Peace Corps itself has done -- and we've done a great deal -- is that we haven't heard the voice of the people we're serving. Those individuals in the communities, our host country family members, our host country partners, our beneficiaries -- people who receive assistance and profit, if you will, from the Peace Corps teacher. We hadn't heard their voice.

And so we set out with a fairly ambitious program to try and understand this point of view. Now, there have been a few studies. There was a wonderful study in the early -- in the late '60s in Columbia that asked a number of questions of our host country partners, but very few. And as we moved along we've done approximately 15 country studies. We're going to report on 10 of those today. We have the data in from 10 countries. We have five more studies in progress actually in the field collecting the data, and then we have five more planned for the rest of this fiscal year. And we're going to do nine more next year, and nine more the following year. By then, my five years will be up so my successor will have to take it over.

Ambassador Bagley reminded us of how the Peace Corps was founded. And I wanted to just remind you that the mission of the Peace Corps has remained the same for those 50 years. And if you would indulge me, I would like to remind you what that mission is, because it comes to bear on the hypothesis that we've developed for our research.

If you would recall -- goal -- we have three main goals. Goal one, if you'll allow me to read it, is to help the people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained men and women. And that we pursue -- our volunteers pursue through their work -- their development work, if you will, their activities -- to help the small businesses in Mali. Where they are community health educators -- and many of the countries that we're going to present data for today.

But I think what's unique about Peace Corps is that we actually articulate -- rather, our founders articulated for us in the Executive Order -- goal two, which is to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served. And that's a very unique aspect of our mission, as I've said. And they carry -- the volunteers carry that out while they're doing their development work. Just recently we set up a series of core expectations -- it's not that we set them up, we wrote them down. And we have published those core expectations for the volunteers. And one of them is that you are on duty for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your Corps expectation is, you are representative of America and you will be on the job 24 hours a day.

And then goal three, which was just referenced, is helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. And that's when the volunteer brings Peace Corps back home and they share what they've learned with families and friends. Now, our research is going to -- our research, actually, focuses on goal one and two. We are looking for the impact of the development activities and also the impact of goal two. In fact, one of our oversight agencies, the Office of Management and Budget, suggested that it would be fruitful if Peace Corps did the research on goal two, which was pretty absent from the literature -- in order to, if you will, provide the evidence that you spoke about, Adam.

So, in the broadest terms, the purpose of the studies is summarized in two statements. Do host country individuals think Peace Corps volunteers and the community projects on which they meet locally defined needs? And the second aspect, does Peace Corps volunteer

work increase community members' understandings of Americans?

Now, I'd like to speak for just a minute about our development model, because that's also critical to the hypothesis that we have constructed around the research and it bears directly on the way we're going to report out the results. A major contribution of the Peace Corps stems from the unique characteristics of the Peace Corps service experience. Development for Peace Corps -- and we do have a definition that is important to us -- is any process that promotes the dignity of a people and their capacity to improve their own lives. And we're there to support it. The invitation of a host country government to help them meet their national priorities, and the local community needs.

So, the three key elements of the model are first, that the Peace Corps service is grassroots-based, and it is long term. Our volunteers serve for a total of 27 months -- now, you've heard 2 years. The three months are training. They have a pre-service training which they actually have to pass. They have a language exam -- because the second element is that we put a great deal of emphasis on language acquisition. So we have a strong language training program in every country, and Peace Corps volunteers learn all kinds of local languages. It's not just the principle French; it's the local tribal language in the community in which they're working.

And third, Peace Corps volunteers work by building local capacity. And they intertwine the project work of the development work with the second goal of understanding Americans and helping people understand our country as they learn about the country in which they're serving. And that interdependence of goal one and two is central to the Peace Corps experience. And it's central to our research.

We were asked to do research on goal two, and as we thought about it we said, no. The Peace Corps model is that of goal one and goal two. In fact, some people will argue which comes first? Do you need the cultural understanding first before you do the development work? Does the development work help you enter a community, give you a purpose together to work together and then help you understand each other better? So I want to just emphasize that the overall approach follows the definition of the Peace Corps development model for the volunteer.

Very quickly -- I'm not sure how I'm doing on time. Adam, am I all right?

DR. WEINBERG: Start to wrap it up.

MS. KERLEY: I wanted to mention very quickly some of the features of the research and then I'm going to turn the podium over to Susan to actually have her speak about the data. We are doing a multi-site research project -- as I've just explained the large number of countries -- that gives us the ability to use the standard set of questions that we can then run -- aggregate data. We also have built into the process a way to work with the host country research teams to customize those questionnaires for the country as well.

We in our office designed the research model. We're not involved with technical work. We don't implement projects, we don't design projects, we're at a level above. So, we bring a level of independence and objectivity and what we think -- it's not unique at all, but it might be a little unique for some of us. We hire local senior researchers and their teams to do the field work. So we have Armenians asking Armenians in Armenian about Americans, and we think that is key to our getting good quality, reliable data.

So, I am so excited to be here. There are days when I pinch myself and say, are we really doing this? And yes, we are. And we are so excited to be able to present the results today for the first time at a public forum.

Susan?

MS. JENKINS: Well, thank you, everyone. I'm also equally if not more excited than Janet to be here. And I will speak about the details of the data that we have collected so far.

This is an ongoing project, so in that sense these are preliminary data. But we are starting to see some trends in the data. And so, the data that I will talk about today is from 10 countries, as Janet mentioned. It involves responses -- interview responses from 974 individuals from countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, the Caribbean.

The respondents themselves are a combination of different types of people that live and work with Peace Corps volunteers. Forty-five percent of our respondents from this group are project beneficiaries, the people that the project is designed to advantage. They may be youth in a classroom where a Peace Corps volunteer is teaching, they may be members of a community where an aqueduct or cement floors were installed. It may be members of a youth group or a mother's

group where the topic is health, nutrition, life skills, things like that.

We also have 37 percent of our respondents are project counterparts. Those are the main individuals that the volunteer is working with. They're assigned to perhaps a co-teacher, a nurse at a clinic, that type of person that is their primary work contact. And some volunteers have more than one counterpart, so in some cases we have interviewed multiple counterparts at any particular site. And the remaining 18 percent of responses come from the individuals that live with the volunteers -- the host mother, host father, or other host family member.

And as Janet mentioned, the main research questions for today's talk, even though the study encompasses more, are, do volunteers interact with host country nationals in an intense and prolonged way? Is the Peace Corps model being embodied in these countries? And number two: are the people that share this intense contact with volunteers different as a result? In this particular case, do they develop a greater understanding of people from the United States? And do they develop a more positive opinion of people from the United States?

So, to set the stage I will talk for a few moments about the level of understanding and opinion before individuals interact with volunteers. What is that baseline, if you will? And prior to interacting with volunteers we found that 73 percent of our respondents reported either a limited or moderate understanding. We asked them on a 4 point scale, what was your level of understanding before interacting with a Peace Corps volunteer?

We also found that most people had a relatively positive view of people from the United States. Eighty-seven percent specifically reported either a positive or a neutral opinion of people from the United States before interacting with a Peace Corps volunteer. And when we asked people to describe these opinions, we got a more nuanced view of some positive and some negative ideas that people have -- stereotypes, perhaps -- of people from the United States. What they thought before interacting with Peace Corps volunteers. The most common that we have found so far is that people from the United States tend to be arrogant and self-centered. That we may be overly confident in our abilities, and think that the American way is the best way.

We also tend -- or it's perceived that we tend not to be well informed about people from other cultures, and we all only speak the English language. Another common comment -- and

this is a little more positive and negative together -- is that we're independent and adventurous. And this was viewed -- or it was expressed -- with some admiration in some counts, but also that we are people who have a shortcoming in that we're not satisfied with what we have. We have a lot, and we're not satisfied with that, and always seeking new adventures and new experiences. So, that was a mixed comment.

And another mixed comment was that we are hard working. When we first heard this, we said, yes. We're Americans, we're hard working. That's a very good thing. But how it was intended was that we are work-obsessed, that we are workaholics. And that this, then, is a shortcoming in that we're not family-oriented, we're not socially-oriented, and we may not be as developed culturally or spiritually as other people maybe think that we should be.

And so in general, the comments that we have are that people from the United States are not family-oriented but rather, work-oriented, adventure-seekers, and self-oriented.

The next part of our analysis was to answer the research question of whether the Peace Corps is, in fact, having long-term intense contact. If it does promote this contact between volunteers and host country nationals. And we found that the answer is yes, that 85 percent of respondents for this part of the study reported at least weekly work-related contact. And the work-related contact varied, but mostly it varied based on the type of work, where education projects where you typically have a volunteer co-teaching or singularly teaching in a class had daily contact with their students and counterparts, and health and small business volunteers tended to have weekly or multi-weekly contact. So that was really based on the type of work interaction that it was.

And with regard to social contact, we split these two things up, and that we defined as any contact basically outside of work that was not focused on the purpose of the work. So it could be running errands together, playing soccer together, eating together, catching the bus together, and having conversations, anything that was not focused on the work. Sixty-eight percent of our respondents reported having at least weekly social contact with Peace Corps volunteers. And that follows from the Peace Corps model of living in communities, speaking the local language or languages, using the same transportation -- as many people said, eating from the same plate.

We wanted to know if -- so that's the frequency. Is the experience prolonged? And

for most of our respondents, 78 percent, they said they had contact with Peace Corps volunteers for at least 12 months. With about half of the respondents reporting they had contact for at least 24 months. And as individuals may have contact with more than one volunteer, that's how you can get over the 24-month period.

And 70 percent of the respondents had experience with more than 1 Peace Corps volunteer. So as they talk about their understanding and opinion after the interaction, they're talking about a deep interaction that lasted over an extended period of time and may have encompassed multiple Peace Corps volunteers.

So, that takes us to the second question. Are people after this interaction different than they were before in terms of their understanding, and their opinions of people from the United States? And we found that the answer is yes, that for understanding, people did report a greater understanding of people from the United States after the interaction. Whereas 44 percent of respondents reported at least a moderate understanding before the interaction, 90 percent reported at least a moderate understanding after the interaction.

And similarly with opinions. We asked people after this interaction, was your opinion more positive, the same, or more negative? And 73 percent reported a more positive opinion. We found that 18 percent of people reported an unchanged opinion. So we looked into that a little more to see what that might mean, and we found that those individuals tended to have more positive prior understanding or more deep prior understanding and more positive prior opinions than did other individuals. So it appears that this 18 percent were retaining their positive opinions.

And the contact with volunteers -- does it cause a change in opinions and understanding? And what we found is that contact -- level of contact is significantly correlated with a more thorough understanding. In other words, people with more contact report a greater understanding after the interaction with Peace Corps volunteers. And we found that there is a stronger relationship between social contact than work contact, although both were significant.

And we also found that a greater understanding of people from the United States is correlated with improved opinions. Greater contact, greater understanding, greater -- more positive opinions. And when we looked at the comments that we got from people -- because these were

intense interviews with individuals. We found that people were changing their opinions and gaining more nuanced understandings of people from the United States -- more deep understanding, which is part of our goal.

Specifically, the comments reflected better understanding of our habits, our customs, our lifestyles -- why we do things the way that we do them. Seeing them from a new set of eyes, not from the Malian or Armenian or Tanzanian perspective, if I did this thing, it would mean this. But seeing it from an American perspective -- when the volunteer did these things, this is what the volunteer intended.

So, for example, going back to the hard work example. Volunteers are still seen as being hard working, but the positive attributes of being dependable, being someone you can count on, rely on are in there and with volunteers in particular, really having a desire to help other people -- a strong desire to help other people was tied into, then, the hard work. And after the experience -- the social experiences in particular -- talking about family and other experiences, individuals realized that we may express it differently, but we do have strong interpersonal ties, we value our families, we do know how to have fun.

Another example that we have that comes up very frequently is, Peace Corps volunteers present themselves in their dress and in their manner sometimes more casually than the host country nationals may be used to or may expect. And initially, that is seen as very disrespectful, that you should speak to people a certain way, you should present yourself in a more formal way, perhaps. After the interaction, we get comments that people see the Peace Corps volunteers' presentation of themselves in the manner that the Peace Corps volunteer intends it. It's seen as practical, from the Peace Corps volunteer's perspective, in that talking to people on an equal level -- talking to youth or teachers or people that may be stigmatized in a community as equals -- is seen as a sign of respect for all people rather than a sign of disrespect and not following some of the hierarchy in that particular country.

So, the views are deeper, more nuanced, more understanding. And then that leads to greater opinions, a softening of some of the negative stereotypes and ideas by making them more well-rounded and broadening people's understandings of people from the United States.

When we asked people about what their most common memories were, they tended to focus on things like the time spent together. The day-to-day types of interactions, the demeanor of the volunteer, the types of things that you learn from intense, prolonged interaction and that you learn in part by at least having some social interaction. Seeing how people respond day-to-day in a variety of situations, you get to know them; you get to see their character. And that's what people respond to when we asked them what was most memorable about your interaction with the Peace Corps volunteers.

So, in summary, our conclusion based on both the correlation data and the comments that we have from respondents is that volunteers do have prolonged interaction with host country nationals. And that that contact leads to a greater understanding of people from the United States. The greater understanding then, in turn, leads to improved opinions of people from the United States.

Our next steps are to look more closely at the sustainable development outcomes from this research, and then also to intertwine the data as the Peace Corps model is intertwined. Is it an effect of how the project is working that then also has more effect on opinions of people from the United States? Or the other way around? Does the opinion of the volunteer and people from the United States, if it's positive, lead to perhaps a more positive view of the work that was accomplished? And so we don't know at this time -- we do plan to look more closely into all of those relationships.

We're very excited about this, and I thank you for your time. And I turn it over to Amanda.

DR. McBRIDE: Let's applaud them. (Applause)

Good afternoon. Thank you, Dr. Weinberg, for moderating the panel and for your sector leadership.

I'm delighted to share the dais today with my colleagues from the Peace Corps. We've been comparing notes and methods and instruments for the last two years, and I think we thought we were alone in the universe in caring about the impacts of international service. And I join you in saying, you know, to look at the room; we know we're no longer alone. So, it's wonderful to be

here.

I'd like to set a little bit of context by crediting the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation approached the Center for Social Development 10 years ago and said national service, international service, these are global phenomenon. They are not unique to the United States. We want to understand what they look like in the far reaches of Africa, what they look like in Asia, what they look like in Europe. And also, stack that up against what we know about these forms of national and international service in the United States.

And so, with them asking us to help chart this field I have to really give them credit for shedding light on this. And one of the things that they did is, they funded this meeting that Chancellor Wrighton mentioned that we hosted in 2005. We had almost 50 practitioners and policymakers from around the world -- Korea, Japan, South Africa. And they said -- the field is so diverse. Stack the models up against one another and ask the question, what impact do these models have on the volunteers, the host organizations, the host communities?

And this was -- I think it's a really important thing that we acknowledge as a field. So if we go back over the last 200 years we can identify roots of international service and missionary work in the 1800s. But in the 1900s, really in post-war reconstruction and being driven by the faith community, then governments, and in the 2000s it's very different. It's very much led by NGOs. And so if you stack up the full range of programs that exist out there, the non-profit sector, the civil society sector really leading the charge. And then as we've heard today, the corporate sector has also joined us in this effort. And so we have this incredibly diverse field.

And so one of the things that we've tried to do is look across these -- all of these different organizational sponsors, all of these different programmatic models and to really distill down what are the key features of these programs? And then how do they differ across these features? So for any given model, where do they stand in terms of duration? Where do they stand in terms of volunteer training, volunteer immersion in the community? Host country involvement in setting out the project and implementing the project?

And so in looking in that, you know, in academic terms, that's our independent variable. So looking at all these different independent variables, then what outcomes might we

expect. And so again, looking across all of these different forms you can say that some of them -- there's some very specific outcomes for host communities. You want to see social, economic, political conditions change, or sending communities -- you want them to come back to their -- volunteers to come back to their home communities and change their family and friends' perceptions of the world.

But there's a core set of outcomes that we have thought of as internationally-oriented outcomes. Or this idea of raising global horizons. And we've identified four dependent variables, then -- four outcomes. And I'd like to just briefly define them to set the context for what I'm going to discuss.

And the first one is international awareness. And so it's this idea of how -- if and how people think about issues in other nations as well as their own, but how they think about these issues in a global context and how they might be addressed. The second is intercultural relations, and that's the idea of people's interest in people from other cultures as well as other races and ethnicities. Then, international social capital. And that we mean the connections that people may have outside of their home countries, and then what they do with those connections? So our resources leveraged, what happens between those relationships. And then the fourth being international career intentions. So you may volunteer in a civic capacity, but how do you want to turn that into your career?

So if you look across host communities, host organizations, we could see where do they stand on these different dimensions. And we have done that in our research. We have set up a design that allows us to look across those groups. Today, however, I'm serving as a complement to my colleagues to the Peace Corps and focusing just on our volunteer data from this overall study.

I have to tell you, as an academic I almost hyperventilated when I realized there would be no Power Point behind me to reference as I began talking about my data. So, I -- there are handouts that many of you can reference as I'm talking, if that would help. And one of the things is I want to say that about the design that we used to look at the impact on volunteers. It's a quasi-experimental design. We have a treatment group of international volunteers, and then we have a matched comparison group of individuals who applied to international volunteer programs but did not

go on to participate.

Now, the purists out there would say, well why aren't you looking at two very different groups where you randomize individuals into a treatment or control condition? If you can figure out how to do that, I would love to see that. But I don't know that people would agree to do that. So, we did quite frankly what's the best design possible, and we modeled it exactly after the AmeriCorps national longitudinal study in how we set up these two groups.

We interviewed them at baseline, then one to two months after they served, and then we will interview them again later this year. So -- later this year and the first of next year. And I have to say that we have two different program models that are in our study. They can be stacked up across a range of variables, in terms of short-term, long-term immersion, different immersion characteristics. And what we ask, then, between time one and time two is a very simple kind of categorical question. So we have these two different programs and we ask not what are the differences between them, but as they represent international service -- what impact does international service then have on these internationally-oriented outcomes? How do the volunteers look -- how do they look compared to that comparison group after they serve?

We used generalized linear mixed modeling to answer the question and it allowed us to control for other variables which we know are associated with the outcomes. In short, the answer is, yes. International service does influence these internationally-oriented outcomes, three of the four. It's associated with increases in international awareness, international social capital, and international career intentions. We did not find a statistically significant relationship with intercultural relations, and it is likely because as -- even though the treatment group -- even though the international volunteers increased in that measure between time one and time two, so did the comparison group. And so there's likely something else going on in our lives that's influencing how we interact with those from different cultures or different races and ethnicities.

So, we are able to look at these different models -- these regression models that we did for each one of the four outcomes in some more depth, and I want to highlight two individual -- independent variables or predictors that are significant and I think relevant for programming.

One is previous international experience. We measured this as any time spent

abroad in one's lifetime. So this could be living, working, volunteering, studying and could include traveling. So in any capacity. And what we found is that out of the four outcome variables, this was positively associated with three of them. So what does that mean? That means that the greater amount of time people spent abroad, any time in their lifetime, the more likely they are, then, to develop these international perspectives. And that includes the international volunteers. So they had already spent time abroad, they go through the international experience, and you still see an uptick in these outcomes. So they're still transformed as a result of their international service experience.

We actually think that future research needs to embrace this and to recognize that our intercultural learning is a transformational process. And so in that way we view these results as just interim, and to think about it as cumulative. They had already had international experience; they've had more as a result of the service experience. And so how do they continue to change over time?

A second is age. It is significant in several of the models, but it is negative. So that doesn't mean that it's a negative finding, it just means that the older the volunteers are the less likely they are to report increased interest in intercultural relations, or interest in international careers. And we can speculate a bit about this finding, looking at our research on national service. We've studied the impact of experience Corps on older adults, and what we have found is that the older adults in these programs, they want to apply their skills and experiences. They're not going to develop themselves; it's really about that generative aspect that Erik Erikson talked about.

So, we think this has implications for the volunteer roles that we develop for older adults as a sector. But it also has implications for recruitment and how we actually advertise these roles and what they're looking to get out of it.

So, in conclusion I just want to say, what does all this mean? Well, it means that we can say that international service is attributed with impacts on volunteers' international awareness, international social capital, and international career intentions. And that's even in the short term. So you could say that our research was actually conservative, by interviewing these individuals a month -- you know, at the high in a month, some even a week, they had already seen these changes in

their lives after the experience.

We do intend to follow up to see if these interests become behaviors, so at our next survey wave we'll see how they're operationalized. And we'll also be able to dissect and look at particular programmatic features and the impact that they have on those outcomes.

I would like to highlight this international social capital finding. I think this is really significant. So again, one week to one month after their international service experience, they are already leveraging resources. They're connecting their host country partners with people back in the states. They are sending money over, they are advocating for policy. So they're already turning it into action. And this, to me, undergirds the work that our Brookings colleagues have done around the smart power approach to diplomacy and capacity building.

You know, as a good academic I have to say there's limitations to everything. And this was definitely a self-report study. It's the volunteers perceptions of their outcomes and so we look forward to looking at the next wave of the survey. But also, triangulating these results with the interviews that we have done with the host country organization staff as well as the beneficiaries of the programs.

And I want to conclude by saying this is just the tip of the iceberg. I do feel like we're coming of age, if you will. Amate Etsione was at Washington University several years ago, and he said as a result of the national service research, it's come of age. We have arrived. And I feel that we're at that point with the international service.

And in that way I'm' pleased to announce formally today that the Brookings Institution and Washington University are formally partnering with OmniMed in an experimental design led by Dr. Ed O'Neill to look at the impact of community health in Uganda. And Dr. O'Neill is here today to address any comments you may have. And we have a description of the study outside.

So, on behalf of my colleagues at the Center for Social development, which includes Professor Margaret Sherraden as well as Dr. Ben Lowe, who's here, we hope we're contributing to the efficient and effective advance of the field. And we look forward to your comments and questions.

Thank you. (Applause)

DR. WEINBERG: Thank you, that was really wonderful.

The only thing I would question is, since your research substantiates all the work that the people in this room do, I would suggest there is no limitations to this research. It was perfect (inaudible). (Laughter)

I think we have a few minutes for questions and answer. If people would just raise their hand and please identify yourself?

MS. HIGH: Kathy High, USAID. (inaudible) --

DR. WEINBERG: I think there's a mic right behind you.

MS. HIGH: Kathy High, USAID. For Amanda, you noted that volunteering did not significantly impact intercultural relationships. And I was wondering if you could elaborate on that just a little bit more.

DR. McBRIDE: So, and also to clarify. So that's as compared to the comparison group, there was not a significant difference because they both increased over the study time period. And we actually think -- Ben's done some great thinking about this and this is actually one of his areas of expertise. And he suggested that we live in a very diverse society and we just have more opportunities to interact of different races and ethnicities. And so as a result, international service in and of itself did not give the volunteers a jump over the comparison group.

Also, we found that there were several individual predictors that carried a lot of weight. And so relative to the international experience those predictors likely kind of carried the day.

MR. QUIGLEY: Thank you very much. I'm Kevin Quigley for the National Peace Corps Association, and I wanted to applaud our host and our panelists for the tip of the iceberg. We want to see the rest of the iceberg. We know there's a lot more under the ice. But this is a really huge step forward for the community.

Both of your studies really talk about attitudes and perceptions, host country and the participants. The big enchilada is the developmental impact, and I'm kind of curious how you get at that. But really, my major question is the feedback loop. Today, Peace Corps has just released its strategic plan based on a self-assessment. So how are you feeding the results of your survey to the

Peace Corps leadership to shape strategy and programming?

And then more generally, Amanda, what would you recommend based on what your research is finding for the field itself of how we can enhance -- learn from your studies to enhance the impact for this community?

Thank you.

MS. KERLEY: Kevin, thank you so much. Before I start, I wanted to point out that NPCA did a study itself that fed right into what one of your conclusions was.

In terms of trying to understand the resource development, I guess I'm not sure that I've got the proper term. But the study actually looked at all the friends of groups -- and just from secondary data sources they were able to pull together the immense amount of return development that goes on with our return Peace Corps volunteers. The money that goes back, the contacts that are maintained -- it was actually -- it has not received it should. It was very significant.

The office that I work in is the Office of Strategic Planning. Two years ago we wrote the agency strategic plan. It was the appropriate time in the federal budget cycle for the agency to do that. And in that strategic plan, as you well can imagine, there are strategic indicators. We have 38 strategic indicators -- how boring. Except that one of them is so exciting because we are actually measuring a great deal of work that's taking place in the field at the country level.

And one of the indicators that we report on annually is how -- what is the perception of our partners -- of the work that's being done? And our research began -- it actually began in 2007 just as we were finalizing the strategic plan and those indicators. One of the main sources for that indicator are the impact studies. So, they've been fed back since 2008 -- again, I'm so sorry about the federal government budget cycle. But it is important because there is an annual performance report that every agency must produce. And in 2008, we were actually able to put -- our pilot study results fed right into our accountability report, and for the last two years the findings of these impact studies have been published. Of course, each year we increase the number of studies we've completed and the validity of the results is increasing, because the number of beneficiaries of partners and host families is increasing. So, that's one very significant area for the agency.

We also have a whole other side of these impact studies. We are evaluating

programs in country. The country director -- part of this series -- the country director actually is the person who contracts with our researcher. So that the host country researcher has to report back to that director in the form of an oral brief and a report. And in the case of Romania, if I might mention - - Romania found some very important conclusions both about the attitudes -- and that's where we were learning about how people interpret hardworking. The Romanian researcher said you guys have got it all wrong. We are not complimenting you. This is not a compliment. Hardworking to Romanians has an edge to it; you need to be a little more social and outgoing. And so he reported back to the host country staff -- to the director -- and, in fact, the director said, you must go and talk to the ambassador who was curious about the impact of Peace Corps. And he sent the researcher to have a conversation with the ambassador by himself. He did not accompany him, that's how confident he was that these findings -- both positive and negative of our impact -- were very important and were significant.

So, the findings, yes, we're rolling them up because we have the data. But they're also being used at the country level to influence program design for the staff to consider. Are there areas that we're finding that need to be strengthened?

In Armenia, we learned that host families were not always exactly thrilled with our Peace Corps volunteers. Now remember, the host family is that first gateway into a culture. And they have the hardest job of finding a -- of taking a volunteer who doesn't speak the language well yet and is learning the customs and that's their job is to teach them. But they sometimes found some traits that weren't as positive as we would have hoped. And the country director immediately took those findings and turned them right back into the pre-service training so that those trainees coming in to serve in Armenia would hear directly from their host families what was going well. And then they also took those findings and turned them into the training for the host families. So, there are many different facets of the research and the way that we're feeding the data back. And of course, management, we're using it all the time with our managers.

So, I don't know -- that's a little long winded. Except that we are very proud that it's not just gathering information but it's actually feeding it right back into program and design.

DR. WEINBERG: Let me get Dr. McBride, though. Final words?

DR. McBRIDE: So, Kevin. I would address your comments by saying we should embrace our sameness and our differences in the field. And so, in our sameness as we look at similar outcomes.

And so I'd like to highlight some research that Finn's done. So looking at intercultural competence, in particular, as a dependent variable, he found that two significant programmatic features bore on this. And that was, mutuality of goals -- so when volunteers perceived that the host organizations and the host communities were right in there and they were getting what they needed, they were more likely to increase their cultural competence. They also -- those volunteers were also more likely to increase their intercultural competence when they had substantial reflection.

And so that's an example of -- those are two programmatic features that transcend the field. Regardless of your program model, those are two things that you need to think about. What's their role, then, in your program.

Now, on the other side I think we should also recognize our differences. International service is not the proverbial hammer. It doesn't apply in all circumstances. And so being driven by host organizations and host communities and what their needs are we need to think, what's the best model for that? Is it a student-driven international service learning program? Is it a short-term NGO-based program? Is it a corporate professional skills-based program? What is needed? And as we have built our toolbox, if you will, across the field, we're at a point where we can do that.

And so, I would say where are we similar and how can we make our programming more effective? And then, where do we need to really be demand-driven and match our models to host communities and host organizations.

Thank you.

DR. WEINBERG: So please join me in thanking our panelists. And thank you.