

What is Global Health-2012- Because You're A Student Maya Cohen Bc10 And Nicole Dussault Cc14

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Hi, this is Wig. What is global health? The podcast from the Journal of Global Health

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at Columbia University that explores the philosophical underbelly of provocative issues in public

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health and science research. I'm Connie Chen and this is Episode #4. This week the spotlight

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is on the Coney 2012 controversy in youth social movements. Our guests are Maya Cohen,

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Executive Director of GLOBE-MED and Nicole Dussaud of GLOBE-MED's Columbia University

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chapter. In case you're wondering, GlobeMed, with over 45 chapters nationwide, is one of

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the largest student-driven global health organizations in the United States. It's composed of networks

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of university students who work together with grassroots community organizations around the

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world to improve the health of the impoverished. And in fact, we had such a stimulating discussion

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with Maya and Nicole that we decided episode number four will be delivered in two parts.

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Part one is entitled "Because You're a Student.

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What is special about a social movement driven by students?"

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Maya and Nicole comment on how Globemath has empowered students to put their visions

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of the world into action.

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Part two is entitled "Cony 2012, Social Media and Agency."

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As The New York Times puts it, "Do social media campaigns give young people a false

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sense of accomplishment?

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And what is the meaning of agency, anyway?"

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listening to episode 4 part 1 because you're a student hosted by me Connie Chen and Kevin

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Xu in conversation with Maya Cohen and Nicole Dussaud.

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Maybe we can start with the question about students and social movements.

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Drawing on your experience with GlobeMed and in general, what are your opinions on the

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specific roles that students can or should play in starting and maintaining social movements

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And could you tell us about maybe some of the difficulties that you have encountered?

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I think to start out with, you know, most of the powerful social movements in this country were either started by or driven largely by students and young people.

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If you look at the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, the women's rights movement, so much of it came out of university campuses.

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And I think that that is an important part of history that often students don't necessarily

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hold on to.

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I think that oftentimes there's a sense that you can be an activist or a change maker despite

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being a student but not because of the fact that you're a student.

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And that's something that I think that GlobeMint has really tried very hard to turn on its

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head and to have young people today really look back at history and say, "Actually,

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you know, it has been driven by people who are just like you, your age.

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And I think that there are a few reasons for that.

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I think that the time in your life in which you're a student

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is a really transformative and important point.

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I think it's the time when you're starting to come into your own,

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you're starting to shape your ideas about the world.

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And for those four years, you have access to some incredible resources.

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The first is honestly time.

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as Nicole talks about, taking six classes.

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Still, your time is much more flexible.

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You're not working a nine to five job.

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And not only that, but you're exposed to some of the most

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brilliant minds and educational and academic resources

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that you will have ever had at your fingertips.

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For so many young people, their world

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opens up when they're students, when they enter university.

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And so I think that it's a time in which people

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are being exposed to the world, where they're encountering new ideas, and when they're

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shaping who they are and what kind of work they want to do.

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And so all of those factors, I think, come together to make a really unique opportunity

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for students, for young people to say, "You know, we see the world as it is.

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This is what we think about it.

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We think that, you know, this is wrong or this is right, and we're going to try and

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change it."

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I think that as the generation cycle through,

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that's an incredibly important thing to hold on to.

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I think each generation needs to have that experience

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of looking at the world as it is

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and imagining the world as they want it to be

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and putting that into action.

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And so Globeman's role, I think,

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is to empower students and young people

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to be able to put that vision into action.

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In terms of the, I think, you know,

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it gets to the challenges in a second,

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but I think that it's really important

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to highlight all of the resources

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and the actually unique opportunity

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that students have to make a difference.

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So if I were to describe the thing

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that I think global students do best,

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is I think that they connect the margins of the world.

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And what I mean by that is that if you think

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about the extremes, think about walking through

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Butler Library and the incredible resources and wealth and knowledge that's captured in

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that space. Thinking about walking through Columbia's campus and all the scientific

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innovation that's going on, all of the thought and really the massive amount of resources

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that's captured between 116th and 120th Street, not to mention medical school campus and everything

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else. You know, that is an extreme. It's an extreme of the world in terms of its

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richness of resources. And then if you think about the places where students

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are sitting abroad, where global students are working, where students, you know, are

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traveling to on their summers and internships, you know, they're traveling

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places that are the opposite extreme. You know, whether it's the Zutu or

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Cambodia or, you know, inner-city Peru and Lima, you know, they're traveling to

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places that really have some of the greatest depravity of resource.

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And they're moving back and forth between these two margins.

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And they have, I think, the time and the resources to travel between them.

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And they have the vision of imagining how you could actually connect those two, such

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that it would lessen the inequality of the world.

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And to have the guts, the chutzpah, the pragmatic idealism to think about how do you actually

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bring those two together.

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And I think that that is really the idea of bringing the resources of Columbia to a place,

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to take the global example to a place like Gulu, and then to bring the perspective, the

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vision, the voices, the incredible vision that's coming out of the communities of Gulu into

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to Columbia and to say that these voices need to be at the table, you know, is a really

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profound, the important exchange that needs to happen and I think students can be the

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brokers of that. And in doing that, you know, I think that that's really what builds a social

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movement because you're connecting the margins of the

world, you're drawing ties between

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people who didn't know they could relate to each other, and you're bringing key voices

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into the conversation and bringing people around the table. So those are all the things

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that I think are really powerful about being students.

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And I think, of course, that they're fair share of challenges.

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I think that the first challenge is, honestly,

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I think that young people don't believe enough in themselves

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and don't take the time to really think about the resources

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that are at their fingertips.

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If you sat down, each of you--

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and I've said this to Nicole 1,006 times--

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to Nicole, you can't--

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Yes, absolutely.

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But if you really thought about every resource that you had at your fingertips in terms of knowledge,

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in terms of funding, in terms of other peers,

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in terms of the fact that you have a loudspeaker as a student to really mobilize young people like yourselves,

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it's really incredible. And I don't think that young people today fully appreciate fact.

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And so I think in some ways our own, our greatest barrier is ourselves.

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I think secondly, it's for global men, we ask ourselves, what is the role of students

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in improving global health?

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We're not doctors, we're not nurses.

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What role can we play?

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And so I think another piece is certain kinds of limited technical knowledge.

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There again, I could say though that I think students can mobilize that technical knowledge

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based on the research around them in innovative ways.

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But I think that can be a limitation.

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And I think lastly, the last challenge is again,

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I think something that's kind of part of being young

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is the sense that students feel like sometimes

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they have to do it alone.

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And I would say, and I don't want to make this sound

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judgmental because I don't think it's necessarily coming

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from a bad place.

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But I think that the entire college application process

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and being a talented student, talented young person

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in the US is the message that you get is that it's all about you
and your vision and your

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solution and your innovation.

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And that I think is profoundly limiting because what you get

is a lot of young people who

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think that they have to come up with their solution and isolation instead of thinking

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about collaboration.

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And so in terms of building social movements, I think that's the biggest thing.

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I think we're taught that we all have to be leaders, whereas sometimes we have to be

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leaders and sometimes we have to be followers.

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the best and the most profound change makers know when to do each of those at the right

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time. So I think I think that you know I'm sure there's more to say on that but that

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would be my those would be my initial thoughts.

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Thanks Maya that's just it's really such a such an uplifting message and that's something

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I that's it makes me feel really inspired and it makes me it makes us as students feel

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like there's so much that we could do.

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And I think a lot of it goes to the fact that, you know,

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we go to school every day and we go through all these years

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of education, but what's really important, I think,

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is that groups like GlobeMed and a lot

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of other global health groups out here,

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I think there's something fundamentally really important

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being done in that while we're students, these types

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of groups give us the opportunity

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to translate what we're learning, all this education,

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all these resources that we have,

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and allow us to sort of get some sort of social change going.

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And I think it's really uplifting,

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and it's very inspiring, it really is.

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- Can I jump in, Kevin?

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- Yeah, Nicole.

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- I think what you're saying is actually really important

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and something that Globa does really well,

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and Maya touched on this too.

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I think, well, you're asking about

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how do you make a social movement?

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and I started talking about the idea of being a student.

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And I think being a student is one of the best times almost

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to become involved in a social movement

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because of mainly the environment that we're in.

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I mean, basically it's an unparalleled opportunity

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to be surrounded by people who are your age

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and who you can connect with.

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And I think that having an organization like GlobeMed

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allows you to be with people who you really can develop

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these deep and personal relationships with

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and that you have a sense of longing

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something that's larger than yourself, with people who share your values and who are not

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afraid to challenge you.

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And so it's an ability to create this sense of great trust that enables us to work together

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and to create some, to create really great change and to do amazing work.

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I mean some of my best friends are in GlobeMed and I know that I can go to them with anything,

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you know, related to GlobeMed, related to my personal life.

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And that's just so important.

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I mean, if you're going to be doing really intense work that

takes a lot out of you,

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doing a social movement really is, it's draining.

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But you need to be surrounded by people who you love

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and who you care about and who you know feel the same way

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about you and who you can just really trust with,

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trust to have your back and the things you need.

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And so Global really facilitates this in a way

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that a few other student groups

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that I've ever been involved with have

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because it's just the environment that we create

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is one of just great compassion and great

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and having really, it really focuses

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on building these relationships.

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And so it's like, when you're doing all the nitty-gritty work

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that is just not, you know, the not the most fun

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or the most exciting, you know that you're doing it

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because others rely on you

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and you want them to be able to trust you.

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And so it's the students and also, I mean,

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when you go to college, you have all these

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preconceived notions in your head

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and you have, you know, the set of values

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that you think you know,

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and that they're, you know, almost sacred in your head.

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And then you go to college

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and you start thinking about other things

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and you get different perspectives.

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And it's kind of like life-shattering.

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I mean, you start realizing that everything you thought up to this point is different.

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And to have a group of students who you're not afraid to talk about that with is so important.

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I mean, it's hard to start talking about, you know, challenging your own beliefs and

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to do that in a group where you know that if you say something, maybe that isn't necessarily,

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you know, the right thing to say.

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You know that no one's going to judge you and no one's going to look down upon you.

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I think actually Maya told me this quote once.

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I don't think I'm going to get it right.

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but it's like a weak moment doesn't make you a weak person.

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I think it was something like that.

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And I just think that's such a great quote

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because if you're gonna have a social movement,

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you need to rely on people and you need to trust people

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and you need to motivate people and be inspired by people.

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And global med really facilitates that

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and creates an environment where students

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can learn from each other and empower each other

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and give each other the agency to create real social change.

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And not just in a sort of mindless way where we all believe the same things, but it's really

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about challenging each other too.

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I mean, like every week at our meetings, we have some pretty in-depth discussions that

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I don't even...

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We don't come to any sort of answers.

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I still don't know where I stand in half of the things we talk

about, but the idea is

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to talk about them.

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And I think that's just so important to help develop in your own values and beliefs, and

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social movement really is driven by values and beliefs.

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wondering, Nicole, what drew you to GlobeMed? Was this something that you were interested

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back in high school? Plus, Maya, you started GlobeMed at Columbia, so I'm sure I'm just

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really curious to hear the stories behind this.

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>> All right. Well, I joined GlobeMed by accident.

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Now, really, I was actually,

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okay, so I've been involved with

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service organizations in high school,

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but they're more home repair and in

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Appalachia not abroad.

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But I was also interested in medicine because

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I really like infectious diseases in high school.

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So I wanted to be a doctor,

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so I went to college looking for

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like a service-oriented health group.

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I actually saw a flyer for

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global brigades and I was going to go to that meeting. And so I went to Hamilton on the night

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and there was a sign on the door that said that the Globe Med meeting had moved to Lerner.

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And that's our student union building for the listeners out there. And so I went there to the meeting

00:15:32.440 --> 00:15:37.440

and sat down and there was just these two girls there who kept looking at me and I heard them whispering to each other

00:15:37.440 --> 00:15:43.440

like, "This is like a general info meeting." And I just felt very uncomfortable and finally I asked them where I was

00:15:43.440 --> 00:15:45.760

and I was in the first GlobeMed e-board meeting,

00:15:45.760 --> 00:15:49.260

not the Glover Brigade's Info General Body and Getting.

00:15:49.260 --> 00:15:52.400

And so, yeah, they explained to me what GlobeMed was,

00:15:52.400 --> 00:15:54.520

and it sounded pretty amazing,

00:15:54.520 --> 00:15:57.000

but the application had been closed the night before,

00:15:57.000 --> 00:15:59.520

but they told me I could still apply anyway, just in case,

00:15:59.520 --> 00:16:01.020

and I never thought in a million years

00:16:01.020 --> 00:16:02.840

that I would get accepted,

00:16:02.840 --> 00:16:04.720

but luckily I was honored enough

00:16:04.720 --> 00:16:06.640

and blessed enough to get accepted.

00:16:06.640 --> 00:16:10.800

So I joined GlobeMed by a moment of faith,

00:16:10.800 --> 00:16:13.720

but I think it attests to the wonderful power

00:16:13.720 --> 00:16:16.520

that GlobeNet has to keep students so involved

00:16:16.520 --> 00:16:19.640

that something I joined without even really giving

00:16:19.640 --> 00:16:22.320

too much thought in has become basically my life.

00:16:22.320 --> 00:16:23.720

(laughing)

00:16:23.720 --> 00:16:25.200

- I'm so fed up with story.

00:16:25.200 --> 00:16:27.600

- Yeah, it's like really,

00:16:27.600 --> 00:16:29.400

whenever someone asks me why I joined GlobeNet,

00:16:29.400 --> 00:16:30.600

I'm always like, oh boy.

00:16:30.600 --> 00:16:31.840

(laughing)

00:16:31.840 --> 00:16:36.840

- I'm always so impressed by the unity of everyone

00:16:36.840 --> 00:16:38.800

in GlobeNet.

00:16:38.800 --> 00:16:45.560

one in my CC class who sits right in front of me and I saw a Goldman sticker, multiple

00:16:45.560 --> 00:16:55.920

stickers on her laptop. I think her name is Katie, but I saw the stickers and immediately

00:16:55.920 --> 00:17:01.640

I'm just always so impressed by how enthusiastic and how dedicated everyone is.

00:17:01.640 --> 00:17:08.240

I think that's something really important about any group that you join. Maybe even

00:17:08.240 --> 00:17:18.240

It's equally important as to what the direct mission of that group is because you need that kind of collaboration in order to really have an impact as a group.

00:17:18.240 --> 00:17:28.240

Yeah, I think that I was thinking about this today just reflecting on why GlobeMed spends so much time building community.

00:17:28.240 --> 00:17:35.240

And, you know, we have a position on the executive board of every single chapter across the network

00:17:35.240 --> 00:17:42.240

that is dedicated solely to community building and developing the relationships within the chapter.

00:17:42.240 --> 00:17:47.240

And I think it's true that relationships are really at the heart of our model,

00:17:47.240 --> 00:17:51.240

the relationship between the chapter and their partner organization,

00:17:51.240 --> 00:17:57.240

the relationship between the chapter members, the relationship between the chapters in the national office.

00:17:57.240 --> 00:18:01.000

And I think that the thing is that at the end of the day,

00:18:01.000 --> 00:18:04.360

the core belief that drives it is that the love,

00:18:04.360 --> 00:18:08.760

and I say love, love can mean friendship,

00:18:08.760 --> 00:18:10.160

it can mean deep connection,

00:18:10.160 --> 00:18:12.960

it can mean the support that Nicole is talking about,

00:18:12.960 --> 00:18:14.200

it can mean many different things.

00:18:14.200 --> 00:18:17.560

But really the love that we have for each other

00:18:17.560 --> 00:18:21.160

gives us the courage to challenge power.

00:18:21.160 --> 00:18:23.400

And this has been true, I think,

00:18:23.400 --> 00:18:26.200

of every great social movement.

00:18:26.200 --> 00:18:31.020

And MLK talks about that one of my favorite quotes is he says,

00:18:31.020 --> 00:18:35.240

"Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice.

00:18:35.240 --> 00:18:41.160

And justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love."

00:18:41.160 --> 00:18:43.640

Which is just such a beautiful quote.

00:18:43.640 --> 00:18:48.560

And I think that at the heart of it, it really is, I mean, what

matters most to us?

00:18:48.560 --> 00:18:54.960

When you think about who won the Academy Award for Best Feature Fellow in 1972?

00:18:54.960 --> 00:18:59.960

or even, you know, who was president in 1875?

00:18:59.960 --> 00:19:02.880

Random year, you know?

00:19:02.880 --> 00:19:05.600

It's like these things that we hold in such high regard

00:19:05.600 --> 00:19:07.560

are not anything compared to things like

00:19:07.560 --> 00:19:09.680

the name of your first grade teacher

00:19:09.680 --> 00:19:13.720

or that moment that you, you know, really connected

00:19:13.720 --> 00:19:16.160

with, you know, one of your best friends

00:19:16.160 --> 00:19:17.880

or, you know, all of the things

00:19:17.880 --> 00:19:19.440

that your mom has ever done for you.

00:19:19.440 --> 00:19:21.880

I mean, those are the things that really create meaning

00:19:21.880 --> 00:19:25.480

and drive us to act on behalf of another person,

00:19:25.480 --> 00:19:28.080

which is what a social movement is, you know?

00:19:28.080 --> 00:19:29.400

People coming together and saying,

00:19:29.400 --> 00:19:31.560

"I'm gonna stand with you in solidarity.

00:19:31.560 --> 00:19:33.840

"We're gonna fight for a common cause."

00:19:33.840 --> 00:19:37.640

And I mean, the base of that has to be human connection,

00:19:37.640 --> 00:19:39.080

you know, because that's what withstands

00:19:39.080 --> 00:19:41.680

all of the challenges of everything else.

00:19:41.680 --> 00:19:44.280

And so, yeah, I definitely,

00:19:44.280 --> 00:19:46.000

I think Nicola hit on something

00:19:46.000 --> 00:19:48.120

that's really, really important.

00:19:48.120 --> 00:19:50.040

And, you know, we dove right in.

00:19:50.040 --> 00:19:52.840

this is usually the thing we kind of warm up to you in
GlobeMed.

00:19:52.840 --> 00:19:54.560

But since we went there, I went there.

00:19:54.560 --> 00:19:55.320

So there we go.

00:19:55.320 --> 00:20:00.320

[LAUGHTER]

00:20:00.320 --> 00:20:04.920

So GlobeMed also emphasizes relationships

00:20:04.920 --> 00:20:08.560

between the chapters at Columbia, for example,

00:20:08.560 --> 00:20:14.640

and the partner organization, which is in Gulu, Uganda.

00:20:14.640 --> 00:20:19.160

So how do you sort of maintain that connection?

00:20:19.160 --> 00:20:24.160

and build a sense of trust and that common human connection

00:20:24.160 --> 00:20:28.120

that we were talking about earlier.

00:20:28.120 --> 00:20:31.640

- Well, that's the most important part.

00:20:31.640 --> 00:20:34.920

The relationship between the chapter and the organization,

00:20:34.920 --> 00:20:37.440

that's hands-on to everything.

00:20:37.440 --> 00:20:40.040

I mean, that's what we're all about, right?

00:20:40.040 --> 00:20:41.320

- Yeah.

00:20:41.320 --> 00:20:43.680

- So I can give you a little bit about what we do

00:20:43.680 --> 00:20:45.560

at chapter basis and then I think I can give a much

00:20:45.560 --> 00:20:48.320

broader sense of how relationships are built

00:20:48.320 --> 00:20:50.940

from the ground up, 'cause she was actually the one

00:20:50.940 --> 00:20:54.580

who founded our chapter in built relationship.

00:20:54.580 --> 00:20:56.260

Actually, Maya, do you wanna maybe start first then

00:20:56.260 --> 00:20:58.060

and then I can say what we do now?

00:20:58.060 --> 00:20:59.820

- Sure.

00:20:59.820 --> 00:21:03.340

You know, I think the first thing that needs to be said

00:21:03.340 --> 00:21:07.220

is that the greatest privilege of being a Globe Men student

00:21:07.220 --> 00:21:09.620

is having the opportunity to connect

00:21:09.620 --> 00:21:14.540

with these incredible, incredible grassroots leaders

00:21:14.540 --> 00:21:19.460

who are challenging the immense injustices

00:21:19.460 --> 00:21:21.580

that their communities are facing

00:21:21.580 --> 00:21:24.340

and are actively working to recognize

00:21:24.340 --> 00:21:27.180

their human rights every single day.

00:21:27.180 --> 00:21:28.620

The thing that I think,

00:21:28.620 --> 00:21:30.900

the thing that drew me to Glowmette

00:21:30.900 --> 00:21:33.180

and that I think that draws many other students

00:21:33.180 --> 00:21:36.700

is the fact that you have that direct connection

00:21:36.700 --> 00:21:39.220

to people who are working on the front lines

00:21:39.220 --> 00:21:43.180

of social justice and health around the world

00:21:43.180 --> 00:21:45.740

and having the chance to learn and get to know them as
people

00:21:45.740 --> 00:21:47.180

and really connect with them.

00:21:47.180 --> 00:21:49.620

And so just kind of on a broad level,

00:21:49.620 --> 00:21:52.580

the way that it works is really it's about the power

00:21:52.580 --> 00:21:53.980

of the internet.

00:21:53.980 --> 00:21:56.460

Just as we're talking on Skype right now,

00:21:56.460 --> 00:21:59.640

you can talk to pretty much anywhere in the world.

00:21:59.640 --> 00:22:04.860

It's, you can connect with pretty much any country.

00:22:04.860 --> 00:22:08.860

I wonder if there are countries that Skype does not connect to.

00:22:08.860 --> 00:22:11.340

So, I mean, just this morning,

00:22:11.340 --> 00:22:18.340

I was Skyping with Pamela, who's the director of Columbia's partner organization in Guli,

00:22:18.340 --> 00:22:19.340

Uganda.

00:22:19.340 --> 00:22:21.740

And we were talking back and forth, we were video chatting.

00:22:21.740 --> 00:22:23.540

It was face to face.

00:22:23.540 --> 00:22:25.380

And I still talk to her really often.

00:22:25.380 --> 00:22:29.940

And it's an incredible privilege of our generation that you can hop on Skype and completely for

00:22:29.940 --> 00:22:35.020

free, I can connect face to face with someone who is on the other side of the world.

00:22:35.020 --> 00:22:40.180

And so, chapters have these conversations at least once every two weeks, if not more

00:22:40.180 --> 00:22:41.180

often.

00:22:41.180 --> 00:22:47.300

And the privilege of being able to hear the personal stories
and the work of these activists

00:22:47.300 --> 00:22:48.300

around the world.

00:22:48.300 --> 00:22:52.540

You know, we have partner organizations in North America,
in South America, in Africa

00:22:52.540 --> 00:22:53.540

and in Asia.

00:22:53.540 --> 00:23:00.220

You know, you've got students Skyping into Panam, Penn,
Cambodia, into rural Nepal, into

00:23:00.220 --> 00:23:08.940

Lima, Peru, into Rwanda, Ghana, I mean, literally from one
globe to the other.

00:23:08.940 --> 00:23:12.080

And that is just an absolutely incredible privilege.

00:23:12.080 --> 00:23:17.600

In terms of how you really build that relationship, I think that
the thing is that sometimes people

00:23:17.600 --> 00:23:23.620

talk about development work or global health work as if it's
different than any other work

00:23:23.620 --> 00:23:29.080

of connecting with anyone else, whether it's your roommate
or someone that you meet at

00:23:29.080 --> 00:23:34.020

a random party or someone that you meet on the street or
just a friend that you're trying

00:23:34.020 --> 00:23:35.020

to make.

00:23:35.020 --> 00:23:38.100

The bottom line is people are people are people.

00:23:38.100 --> 00:23:40.020

And the same things that build the relationships

00:23:40.020 --> 00:23:42.180

that are most meaningful in all of our lives,

00:23:42.180 --> 00:23:46.540

trust, communication, openness, vulnerability,

00:23:46.540 --> 00:23:49.300

warmth, kindness are the things that build connections

00:23:49.300 --> 00:23:50.780

with people around the world.

00:23:50.780 --> 00:23:54.500

Listening is incredibly important.

00:23:54.500 --> 00:23:57.940

Being open to being changed and transformed

00:23:57.940 --> 00:23:59.900

by the connection that you have.

00:23:59.900 --> 00:24:03.340

And recognizing the fact that you're coming together

00:24:03.340 --> 00:24:07.620

around a common vision and they each have lessons to
share and to learn.

00:24:07.620 --> 00:24:12.340

You know, that's true for anyone that you want to develop a close relationship with

00:24:12.340 --> 00:24:15.900

and it's not any different whether you're talking to someone in Uganda, you know,

00:24:15.900 --> 00:24:18.340

or you're talking to someone in your CC class.

00:24:18.340 --> 00:24:24.500

So, you know, I think that is one of the most profound lessons that our students learn is

00:24:24.500 --> 00:24:30.020

that you really can't have on a Skype call with someone in Cambodia and find yourself,

00:24:30.020 --> 00:24:32.220

you know, I kind of call it the Sistine Chapel moment.

00:24:32.220 --> 00:24:37.500

You know when Adam puts his finger next to God, you know, and you have that spark.

00:24:37.500 --> 00:24:42.140

You know, I think that's what happens when people realize, you know, "Holy crap, this

00:24:42.140 --> 00:24:44.220

person has a completely different background."

00:24:44.220 --> 00:24:50.540

They've gone through potentially, you know, genocide, poverty, sickness, just so much

00:24:50.540 --> 00:24:56.540

strife and here I am, you know, a junior at this school and yet we can connect around

00:24:56.540 --> 00:24:57.540

the same vision.

00:24:57.540 --> 00:24:59.540

Isn't that incredible?

00:24:59.540 --> 00:25:03.100

That's a powerful, powerful moment and I think that's what keeps our students in it for the

00:25:03.100 --> 00:25:08.680

long run and hopefully inspires a lifetime of advocating for global health and social

00:25:08.680 --> 00:25:13.140

justice because it's not about a statistic or a number, but it's really about the human

00:25:13.140 --> 00:25:16.660

relationships that people have been able to build.

00:25:16.660 --> 00:25:24.100

Maya, just wondering, before we get to Nicole, how do you tell us about what was going on

00:25:24.100 --> 00:25:31.580

when you started the GlobeMet chapter at Columbia and started this partnership with the people

00:25:31.580 --> 00:25:39.100

in Gulu, Uganda. It's really enormous feat. What's happened since?

00:25:39.100 --> 00:25:46.220

Yeah, so, you know, this is where the GlobeMet National Office comes in and I would not

00:25:46.220 --> 00:25:53.380

have been able to do any of this without them. Basically I

was a sophomore at

00:25:53.380 --> 00:25:57.900

Barnard and I spent the first two years on campus really looking for something

00:25:57.900 --> 00:26:05.060

to get involved in and I couldn't find an organization that was really so

00:26:05.060 --> 00:26:09.740

interesting that had the humility that I was looking for recognizing the fact

00:26:09.740 --> 00:26:14.060

that as young people we had a lot to learn that was really deeply connected

00:26:14.060 --> 00:26:16.580

to the communities and listening to the communities

00:26:16.580 --> 00:26:20.540

and the vision of those communities that changed,

00:26:20.540 --> 00:26:23.940

needed to be made in and was really making an impact.

00:26:23.940 --> 00:26:26.260

And so the first two years I really struggled on campus.

00:26:26.260 --> 00:26:29.420

I had been involved in human rights stuff in high school

00:26:29.420 --> 00:26:31.140

and just could not find an organization

00:26:31.140 --> 00:26:32.860

to really sink my teeth into.

00:26:32.860 --> 00:26:36.120

And so I also stumbled on GlobeMed by accident.

00:26:36.120 --> 00:26:39.580

I went to the Northwestern Conference on Human Rights

00:26:39.580 --> 00:26:42.340

because a close friend of mine was at Northwestern

00:26:42.340 --> 00:26:49.500

and was sat next to a girl who was part of the Global National Office,

00:26:49.500 --> 00:26:52.060

completely randomly in this giant room full of people.

00:26:52.060 --> 00:26:55.100

And she started telling me about the model,

00:26:55.100 --> 00:27:00.300

whereby students, a group of students are connected directly to one particular organization.

00:27:00.300 --> 00:27:03.740

They speak with that organization consistently throughout the year.

00:27:03.740 --> 00:27:08.020

They work together to design a health project, the partner implements it,

00:27:08.020 --> 00:27:10.420

and you build on it year after year,

00:27:10.420 --> 00:27:13.260

really deepening that relationship and building on that impact.

00:27:13.260 --> 00:27:15.220

And the light bulb went off in my head and I was like,

00:27:15.220 --> 00:27:16.740

this is so brilliant.

00:27:16.740 --> 00:27:18.500

It was one of those kinds of things where it's like,

00:27:18.500 --> 00:27:20.740

how could this never have existed before?

00:27:20.740 --> 00:27:23.380

You know, you think people must think that about Q-tips, right?

00:27:23.380 --> 00:27:26.260

It's like, I'll stick Q-tips and not be in that.

00:27:26.260 --> 00:27:27.780

That's how I thought about the Globe Men model.

00:27:27.780 --> 00:27:31.020

It was so obvious and simple and basic to me.

00:27:31.020 --> 00:27:32.940

It's about human connection and just connecting people

00:27:32.940 --> 00:27:34.940

around the globe that I just didn't understand

00:27:34.940 --> 00:27:37.820

how I hadn't encountered it before.

00:27:37.820 --> 00:27:40.380

So I went back to campus and, you know,

00:27:40.380 --> 00:27:43.380

nothing ever happens from one person.

00:27:43.380 --> 00:27:49.380

I had the incredible privilege of finding an amazing group of students who were willing

00:27:49.380 --> 00:27:52.380

to come along on the crazy ride with me.

00:27:52.380 --> 00:28:00.380

And the Global National Office takes it as their responsibility to be able to find amazing

00:28:00.380 --> 00:28:03.380

organizations to match with their partners.

00:28:03.380 --> 00:28:12.580

So, they had sent a National Office staff member and a student to Uganda to find organizations.

00:28:12.580 --> 00:28:15.620

And so they knew that I was passionate about women's rights and about human rights.

00:28:15.620 --> 00:28:21.740

They had met Hamela, who runs an organization called Gulu Women's Economic Development and

00:28:21.740 --> 00:28:22.740

Globalization.

00:28:22.740 --> 00:28:26.620

It's quite a name and the acronym is even better.

00:28:26.620 --> 00:28:27.620

It's Gweji.

00:28:27.620 --> 00:28:33.620

I tried to explain to them what a wedgie was and they were just like, "What did you really?"

00:28:33.620 --> 00:28:35.620

I think that's better than wig.

00:28:35.620 --> 00:28:45.620

But they met Pamela and Gulu by asking community

members, "What's the organization that's making the greatest change in your community?"

00:28:45.620 --> 00:28:51.620

They tracked down those organizations and Gweji and Pamela was one of them.

00:28:51.620 --> 00:28:54.060

And they said, you know, this makes a lot of sense.

00:28:54.060 --> 00:28:56.580

You know, you're out of, you know, as a barner,

00:28:56.580 --> 00:28:58.060

you're at a women's college.

00:28:58.060 --> 00:28:59.660

You're so passionate about human rights.

00:28:59.660 --> 00:29:01.100

This is a human rights organization

00:29:01.100 --> 00:29:02.980

with a, you know, focus on health.

00:29:02.980 --> 00:29:04.540

And we think you guys would get along great

00:29:04.540 --> 00:29:06.380

and Pamela is amazing.

00:29:06.380 --> 00:29:07.380

So we're gonna connect you.

00:29:07.380 --> 00:29:09.260

And so they sent a connecting email.

00:29:09.260 --> 00:29:12.940

And Pamela and I hopped on Skype and started talking.

00:29:12.940 --> 00:29:15.900

And you know, in those early, in those early times,

00:29:15.900 --> 00:29:18.300

you know, it's so important to get the human story.

00:29:18.300 --> 00:29:23.060

So I asked her what was her story.

00:29:23.060 --> 00:29:26.740

And she wrote us back this just incredible description

00:29:26.740 --> 00:29:29.340

of everything that she had been through,

00:29:29.340 --> 00:29:33.460

and chimed over and persevered through in order to start

00:29:33.460 --> 00:29:35.460

Guajie.

00:29:35.460 --> 00:29:37.220

And I can definitely go into this.

00:29:37.220 --> 00:29:40.620

But if you guys want me to--

00:29:40.620 --> 00:29:42.340

but it's just so inspiring.

00:29:42.340 --> 00:29:44.300

And after that, I just kind of sat there with my mouth

00:29:44.300 --> 00:29:45.020

hung open.

00:29:45.020 --> 00:29:48.100

And she was like, so how'd you get involved?

00:29:48.100 --> 00:29:51.100

And I was like, oh, you know, we went to a conference

00:29:51.100 --> 00:29:54.560

and met a young person.

00:29:54.560 --> 00:29:57.220

And so from there, it was just about the fact

00:29:57.220 --> 00:29:58.280

that we were in it together.

00:29:58.280 --> 00:30:03.320

And I asked her, so we think we can raise \$5,000 this year.

00:30:03.320 --> 00:30:05.280

What's the best use of that money for you?

00:30:05.280 --> 00:30:09.060

She came back with a bunch of different project descriptions.

00:30:09.060 --> 00:30:10.740

And something that I love about Pamela

00:30:10.740 --> 00:30:14.220

is that she never misses an opportunity to really bring

00:30:14.220 --> 00:30:15.380

the human story into it.

00:30:15.380 --> 00:30:20.100

And so in her first project description,

00:30:20.100 --> 00:30:23.180

she snuck in the phrase, "In Northern Uganda,

00:30:23.180 --> 00:30:26.140

poverty strikes like bushfire."

00:30:26.140 --> 00:30:28.380

This isn't a grant proposal, you know?

00:30:28.380 --> 00:30:30.500

And I remember just reading that phrase

00:30:30.500 --> 00:30:33.140

and just thinking like, oh my God,

00:30:33.140 --> 00:30:37.420

like this is so incredible that I'm having the chance

00:30:37.420 --> 00:30:39.300

to be able to work with someone who can put that

00:30:39.300 --> 00:30:42.460

into words in that way and that we're gonna be able

00:30:42.460 --> 00:30:44.460

to address that bushfire together.

00:30:44.460 --> 00:30:47.640

and hopefully help extinguish some of those flames

00:30:47.640 --> 00:30:49.280

that are causing so much pain.

00:30:49.280 --> 00:30:52.980

And so we went back and forth on a few different project ideas

00:30:52.980 --> 00:30:57.060

and settled on an income generating project

00:30:57.060 --> 00:31:00.220

for seven families.

00:31:00.220 --> 00:31:02.520

It was a goat rearing project.

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And then got going.

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And over those months, I learned as much as I could

00:31:05.500 --> 00:31:08.540

from Pamela about goat rearing in northern Uganda

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and her story and tried my best to share that with the chapter

00:31:12.260 --> 00:31:14.420

and help them understand that--

00:31:14.420 --> 00:31:19.160

By raising \$5,000, we were going to help 145 people

00:31:19.160 --> 00:31:23.180

to live on more than \$1 a day and really work with them

00:31:23.180 --> 00:31:26.900

to bring that into reality, to have them feel that.

00:31:26.900 --> 00:31:30.700

So I think that the key thing that I would take away from this

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is oftentimes people say, oh, it's so great what you students

00:31:33.140 --> 00:31:33.700

are doing.

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And honestly, it's just such an incredible privilege.

00:31:35.700 --> 00:31:37.820

You're able to work with such an amazing organization,

00:31:37.820 --> 00:31:39.900

an amazing woman.

00:31:39.900 --> 00:31:42.340

And that is a gift and a privilege

00:31:42.340 --> 00:31:44.700

that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

00:31:44.700 --> 00:31:48.900

- Hello.

00:31:48.900 --> 00:31:49.740

- Yeah.

00:31:49.740 --> 00:31:50.580

- I love that story.

00:31:50.580 --> 00:31:51.620

(laughs)

00:31:51.620 --> 00:31:52.940

- That's very inspirational.

00:31:52.940 --> 00:31:57.360

Okay, yeah, Nicole.

00:31:57.360 --> 00:32:03.980

- Well, I think what Maya said is a privilege

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is probably the best way to describe it.

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I mean, I remember the first time I skimmed at the panel

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first semester freshman year and like I said I joined
GlobeMed by accident and so you know at first I wasn't

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admitted I was not the best GlobeMed member. Yeah but I
mean I remember my first Skype with Pamela and I think
that's like

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for a lot of people what that's really what does it because

you hear her speak and she's so articulate and

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well-spoken and intelligent and she knows like she knows so much about her community and how to and how to

00:32:38.700 --> 00:32:39.860

to help them about human rights.

00:32:39.860 --> 00:32:41.340

And she knows so much.

00:32:41.340 --> 00:32:42.420

She's been through so much.

00:32:42.420 --> 00:32:44.660

I mean, the stories she's told us

00:32:44.660 --> 00:32:46.780

have been just awe-inspiring.

00:32:46.780 --> 00:32:51.180

And I mean, the idea of working with a woman who has,

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at the age of, by the age of like 24,

00:32:53.180 --> 00:32:58.180

was like running the Ugandan food refugee program.

00:32:58.180 --> 00:33:00.980

It was something amazing.

00:33:00.980 --> 00:33:02.180

It's just profound.

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And I think the way we really maintain this partnership

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you know, on a more of a day-to-day basis,

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is by trying to connect our chapter with Guadji.

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And we do this in a couple ways.

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So every week, me and another girl in our chapter,

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we co-lead a program called Global Health U.

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And this is a half an hour Global Health Training

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and Empowerment program.

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And so a lot of Global Health U is dedicated

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to talking about a partner organization.

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We had an entire unit where we just like,

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went really in depth into what global values were

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and explore them through the lens of our partner organization,

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looking into their history, looking into Pamela's history,

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hearing their words, seeing their work,

00:33:46.100 --> 00:33:47.940

seeing pictures from their organization

00:33:47.940 --> 00:33:50.340

and getting like a really in depth grasp

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of what global med does, I mean what Guwajie does

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and what global meds project with Guwajie is.

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'Cause Guwajie does a million things

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besides just the project they do with global med.

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So it's important to really understand

00:34:01.980 --> 00:34:05.820

vast power and reach that Guajie has in glue.

00:34:05.820 --> 00:34:09.260

And so that's one of the things we do, making sure that every single chapter member really

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understands what Guajie's mission is and what kind of work they do.

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And we also, we do a lot of talks on current events in Uganda.

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There's actually quite a lot going on right now in the national sphere, what with different

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national political protests and the possibility of a current anti-gay bill right now.

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We do a lot of talks and then also like you know ideas of like there's an oil

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Oil current events going on so you talk a lot about those so we can keep keep our members

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You know current on what's going on in the country and then we also have which is how I became you know

00:34:44.620 --> 00:34:47.660

So dedicated and you know just talking to Pamela

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We have Skype calls where you know every member can go and they can talk to Pamela

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They can hear her words they can ask her questions

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And she'll answer them and answer them really really just wonderfully and it's just that's a really great experience

00:34:59.340 --> 00:35:05.580

And then also this semester we started a pen pal program with with wedgie and that got off two bit of rocky started first

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but this semester it's much better and

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We've had about ten of our members have been connecting

with actual wedgie staff members and communicating back and forth and

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Talking to each other and right now. That's really what it is

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You know just doing a pen pal thing

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We're hoping to develop into more of like a like we're trying to develop an internet forum where we have you know

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pictures and videos and we kind of can create more of a campaign fills around this and I think

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I think this partnership is really what keeps, it's not just, and I talked a lot before about

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the relationships with each other, but the relationships with our partner organization

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is what keeps people really in global meds.

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I mean, your friends are in your global med are important and that's so necessary and

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vital to maintaining the social movement.

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But if we didn't have our common purpose and our common purpose is wedgie, then we would

00:35:52.540 --> 00:35:54.260

have been nothing to working towards.

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And so I think building this relationship and understanding how important our partnership

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is and understanding that, you know, Guwajie is a community-run organization that empowers

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the residents of Galu to become, you know, self-acting agents of change in their community.

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And that's just the most amazing thing that they've been doing this for so long and they're

00:36:15.740 --> 00:36:19.540

so, you know, they're so impactful in their community and really understanding the reach

00:36:19.540 --> 00:36:20.540

they have.

00:36:20.540 --> 00:36:24.820

And I think, you know, connecting each and every chapter member to Guwajie is just a

00:36:24.820 --> 00:36:29.180

a vital part of what global med is because if you don't see the faces you don't hear

00:36:29.180 --> 00:36:33.380

the voices and understand the message then it's it's hard to fight for something you

00:36:33.380 --> 00:36:37.540

can't see you can't tangibly know and so I think building this

relationship is just

00:36:37.540 --> 00:36:44.700

you know without that it global med would really wouldn't be what global med is today.

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This has been wig what is global health the podcast from the Journal of global health at

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Columbia University. This has been Episode 4, Part 1, Because You're a Student. Look

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out for Part 2, also with Maya Cohen, Executive Director of GlobeMed and Nicole Dousseau of

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GlobeMed at Columbia University, in which we discuss Kony 2012, Social Media, and Agency.

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for and other previous episodes of WIG are available online at www.ghjournal.org/wig.

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That's www.ghjournal.org/wig, W-I-G-H. You can also find WIG on iTunes.

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Thanks to Karina Yu for contributing to this episode and thanks to Kevin Xu for co-hosting.

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And thank you for listening.