



Insights and Innovations

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GENNEXT SYMPOSIUM

On Thursday, October 17, 2024, at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library in Washington, DC, the Generation Next Humanitarian Fellowship Program (GenNext) hosted its very first GenNext Symposium. GenNext, a program of the Public Health Institute (PHI), supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), aims to increase the diversity of professionals in the Humanitarian sector by building a pathway for students from Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).



Fellows answer audience questions during the "Voices of GenNext Fellows" panel.

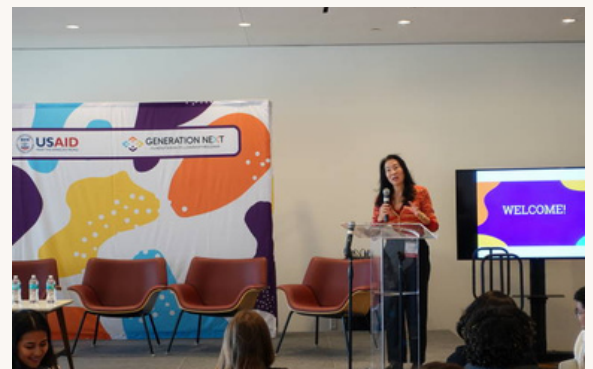
The event, titled "Generation Next Fellowship: Building Tomorrow's Humanitarian Professional," was a tremendous success! It featured a compelling mix of insightful talks, vibrant networking opportunities, and thought-provoking panel discussions, leaving attendees inspired and motivated to become agents of change within their respective fields.

From the moment it began, the energy was palpable! GenNext Program Director, David Hausner and PHI President and CEO Melissa Stafford Jones each



MLK, Jr. Memorial Library in DC served as Symposium venue

opened the event with a captivating Welcome Address, followed by an insightful and equally engaging Keynote Address titled, "Diversity in the Humanitarian Sector: Bringing MSIs and Host Organizations Together" by Marcia Wong, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Humanitarian Assistance, USAID. Expert speakers from Minority-



Marcia Wong provides the Symposium Keynote Address

Serving Institutions, Humanitarian Organizations, and our very own GenNext Fellows, held panel discussions, delivering cutting-edge ideas, practical solutions and real-life experiences that resonated with the diverse audience.

The first panel discussion, "Voices from the GenNext Fellows" provided Fellows an opportunity to share how the fellowship has impacted their lives, the opportunity the program presents and the work they have accomplished so far, followed by a lively Q&A exchange from the audience.

Next, was a dual panel discussion, "Collaboration! Humanitarian Organizations and MSIs: Opening Access to Humanitarian Assistance", which included representatives from Humanitarian Organizations and MSIs, each highlighting the importance of strategic partnerships and developing collaborative methods to improve students' understanding of humanitarian aid. These efforts aim to equip students with the essential



Emily Goncu of Global Communities and Dr. Powell-Young of Hampton University share their "Rapid Prototyping" presentation.

knowledge, skills, and experiences needed for successful careers in the humanitarian sector. Three afternoon sessions were held concurrently: "The 5 Pillars of Inclusion: Encouraging and Evolving Inclusion at all Levels", which encouraged participants to interactively discuss the successes and challenges of current inclusion strategies; "Reaching MSIs: Increasing Applications and Building Partnerships", led participants to delve deeper into the collaborative opportunities explored in the earlier Humanitarian Organizations/MSIs panel discussions; "GenNext Connects", held exclusively for GenNext Fellows, encouraged them to envision and define what an inclusive world of humanitarian assistance might look like.

The closing session, titled "Now What? How Do We Move the Needle?" focused on strategic partnerships aimed at creating an engagement pipeline. The session



David Hausner, GenNext Prog. Director, Melissa Stafford Jones, PHI President/CEO and Jennifer Dogbey, GenNext Deputy Prog. Director.

wrapped up with "rapid prototyping" presentations by individual teams, where participants developed practical, actionable solutions in under 30 minutes!

Throughout the Symposium, networking among the attendees provided an engaging atmosphere and an incredible opportunity for meaningful connections and valuable exchanges. Many attendees found it to be an ideal platform for expanding their networks, gaining fresh perspectives, and fostering relationships that will lead to future collaborations.

The key contributors of the GenNext Symposium's success were the engagement, collaboration and enthusiasm of the attendees and the expanding and exchanging of ideas. This made the Symposium not only enjoyable, but also a springboard for fostering valuable connections and strategic partnerships between MSIs and Humanitarian Organizations and sparking new ideas for future growth!

Thank you to our esteemed MSIs and Humanitarian host organizations for their presence and invaluable contributions!

Minority-Serving Institutions

- Bowie State University
- George Mason University
- Hampton University
- Howard University
- Lincoln University
- Morgan State University
- The City College of NY (CUNY)
- Tuskegee University
- University of NC at Pembroke

Humanitarian Orgs

- Action Against Hunger
- American Red Cross
- Blumont, Inc.
- CARE
- Engender Health
- Global Communities
- Project HOPE
- Save the Children

