



Natalie Portman and microfinance students

**LUNCHEON REMARKS
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VILLAGE BANKING CALL-TO-ACTION CAMPAIGN
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Good afternoon. As FINCA's Ambassador of Hope, my primary job this afternoon is to inspire you.

Early in his career in microfinance, Bangladeshi economist and Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Mohammed Yunus made a list of some poor people who had asked for a small sum of money. When his list was complete, there were 42 names on it. The total amount of money they needed was \$27. That's about a dollar fifty per person. In our neighborhood, dollar fifty can't even buy you a cup of coffee. But when you live in extreme poverty, a dollar fifty goes a whole lot further than a trip to Starbucks.

The good news is we have the technology and the tools to alleviate poverty on a global scale. All that is standing in our way is education and will. It is with that in mind that I'm here today asking you, the next generation of leaders, to get involved and get inspired about the concept of microfinance and harness the same the social networking tools you use on a daily basis as a force for good.

FINCA's Village Banking Campaign offers small loans and savings programs to the world's most underprivileged people. It is transformational. Small loans can transform lives, especially the lives of women and children. The poor can become empowered instead of disenfranchised. Homes can be built, jobs can be created, businesses can be launched, and individuals can feel a sense of worth again. Over 70% of FINCA's clients are women determined to lift their families out of poverty and remarkably FINCA is

seeing repayment rates of over 97%. Remarkably, the first thing these women spend their earnings on, is education for their children.

I have had the chance to see the effects of this concept first-hand. Now, it's your turn. FINCA has created a MySpace page for the Village Banking Campaign. On the site, you can view a documentary that was recently produced in Mexico, which will introduce you to the courageous women who are providing microloans in remote towns and villages, and the women who are translating these loans into life improvements for their families.

Through my video diaries, you can also experience my eye-opening trip to Mexico. But, most importantly, you can use this MySpace page to act and mobilize your friends and families to support the campaign.

In this Digital Age, social networking is playing a huge role in creating awareness and mobilizing support for all kinds of common interests. What better way to use this remarkable tool than to change the world?

Our generation has the ability and the responsibility to make our ever-more connected world a more hopeful, stable and peaceful place. I have been a part of this organization for four years and I can tell you that ending poverty is possible. It's just a mouse click away.

So...I urge you all to go to MySpace.com/villagebanking and get active in the Village Banking Campaign today. Then check in with us, and report back about your efforts and successes.

We can no longer claim ignorance. We can only claim indifference.