

## Suggested Talking Points and Questions

Bilal Rajan

[www.makingchangenow.com](http://www.makingchangenow.com)

### Talking Points

- Bilal first began fundraising when he was only four years old, selling clementine oranges door-to-door in his neighbourhood in Toronto, Canada to help those affected by the devastated earthquakes in India in 2001. In 2004, Bilal founded an organization, Making Change Now, to heighten awareness of youth issues and raise millions of dollars to help kids in need all over the world.
- To date, Bilal has raised millions of dollars for various children's causes, and in March 2005 was chosen as an official child ambassador for UNICEF Canada.
- The world is in desperate need of help. Almost ten million people - 75% of them children - will die this year alone from starvation and malnutrition. Three billion throughout the world live on less than two dollars a day. One in three children in the world today will never go to school. Hundreds of millions in the developing world go without clean drinking water, adequate shelter or health care on a daily basis.
- Bilal published a book called *Making Change: Tips from an Underage Overachiever* in 2008. Bilal wrote it especially for young people. He wanted them to learn how possible - and how much fun - it really is to make a difference. More information can be found at [www.makingchangenow.com](http://www.makingchangenow.com).
- In 2008, Bilal created the Hands for Help Community Service Award at St. Andrew's College in Aurora, Ontario. The program presents an award to a student who completes the highest number of community service hours throughout the year. The award has inspired hundreds of students to take action and give back to their communities.
- Bilal travelled to central Africa to speak with children about personal empowerment. He also brought with him HIV/AIDS rapid testing kits which he raised from the Medmira Corporation and conducted testing on young people in Tanzania. As a UNICEF children's ambassador, he also personally visited Malawi, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Maldives to oversee how the funds he raised were being spent to help people recovering from the terrible Tsunami of 2004.
- In Bilal started his most popular initiative, the Barefoot Challenge, in 2009. Every June 1st, International Children's Day, he lives life without shoes to raise awareness about child poverty in the developing world. Thousands of young people from more than a dozen countries around the world kick off their shoes to better understand the struggles faced by poor children everywhere, many of whom cannot afford shoes, let alone other basic necessities.
- In June 2009, Bilal traveled throughout South Africa, where he met privately with former President Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. "It was such an honour to meet the world's most influential advocate for peace, social justice and freedom," says Bilal. "He showed everyone that when people work together, they can overcome even the greatest of struggles and change the world forever." Bilal is also speaking to school children and various charitable organizations.
- In August 2009, Bilal went on a two-week scientific expedition of the Arctic named "Students on Ice," where 75 young people learned how increasing greenhouse gas emissions and climate change are affecting the Aboriginal peoples of the far North. He saw first-hand the destructive changes caused by global warming.

- In February 2010, Bilaal issued the “Help for Haiti Challenge,” where he asked each student throughout Canada to raise \$100 for the earthquake relief efforts. He also agreed to have his head shaved in honour of the school that raises the greatest amount of funds.
- Through his very busy speaking schedule, Bilaal is raising further awareness about the relationship between environmental harm and global poverty. “Further damage to our ecosystems will cause underprivileged children even greater hardship,” he says. “We can’t let global warming continue to threaten the waterways, agriculture and food security of millions of people in underdeveloped countries. We need action now.”
- Bilaal co-founded Sudokugives.com, where users can play Sudoku, the brainteaser that is quickly taking the place of crossword puzzles as everyone’s favourite game. Unlike other online Sudoku sites, users will play to win UNICEF Plumpy’nut® packages, which feed malnourished children throughout the world, once sponsors come onboard. The more you play, the more food packages are sent to prevent global hunger. Rajan and his partner are planning for SudokuGives.com to be the premier destination website for Sudoku players.

### **Suggested Questions**

- You started fundraising when you were just a child. You went onto raise millions of dollars for children’s causes and became an author and UNICEF Children’s Ambassador. What inspires you to do such things?
- Your book is called *Making Change: Tips from an Underage Overachiever*. What is the book about and what made you write it?
- Tell me about your travels to central Africa and South America. What issues did you discuss with young people there?
- You often quote Mahatma Gandhi’s famous saying, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” What does this mean to you?
- If you could give some advice to young people who want to make a difference in the world, what would it be?
- What was it like meeting Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu? What issues did you talk about?
- Tell us about Students on Ice, the journey you took throughout the Arctic. How is climate change affecting the people of the North? What can we do in our own lives to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions?
- You issued the “Help for Haiti Challenge” in February 2010 and offered to have your head shaved by the school in Canada that raises the greatest amount of funds. Where did this idea come from?
- Tell us about your Barefoot Challenge. What is it like going without shoes? What kind of support did you receive throughout Canada and internationally?
- What activities are you planning for the future?