

•Groundwork Institute

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Groundwork Teams Up With Playing For Change

Dear Friends,

I'm excited to tell you about Groundwork's new partnership with *Playing For Change*, specifically the *Playing For Change Foundation*.

Playing For Change is an organization I have loved since its start more than a dozen years ago. Would you like to live in a world at peace? A world where people support each other? Where people from all parts of the world cooperate to make this a beautiful place? Amazingly, that is what *Playing For Change* does with music. They bring together musicians from all over the world to create wonderful music and videos. I'm writing about them, but you have to see and listen to know what I'm saying. [Here's one](#):



In their videos you see musicians in Africa playing with a children's choir in Ireland; Keith Richards from the Rolling Stones playing with a mariachi band in Mexico; and a Palestinian drummer playing with an Israeli singer and a string quartet in Cuba. Many of them recording while in different countries. It's amazing to

watch. It is moving and inspiring.

In 2007, the PFC movement expanded with the launch of the *Playing For Change Foundation*, which provides music education in areas that are culturally rich yet economically challenged. Children in countries around the world, from Africa to Latin America to Southeast Asia, attend free classes in music, dance and languages, taught by qualified local teachers and led by regional administrators. Students learn about their own cultural traditions while employing technology to connect and share experiences with others.

Playing For Change's motto is "Peace Through Music." They declare "We are one family." Well, that is what Groundwork stands for in the physical environment. We want beautiful and healthy environments for all people, not just the wealthy. And we want to work cooperatively with creative people around the world to obtain that goal. And we want a respectful and healthy cooperation with the natural environment.

Some years back Groundwork was working in China. China is experiencing tremendous growth, demolishing and building whole towns, fast growing industries, more cars and growing wealth. Along with this it is also experiencing tremendous pollution, environmental degradation and income disparity between wealthy and poor. Our objective was to show how to create high quality places to live in a way that is healthy for the natural environment and for humans. This was intended to benefit everyone, not just a few. To do this in China we focused on planning the rebuilding of a particular town. We started a collaborative process with faculty and students in 3 Chinese universities and 2 U.S. universities as well as specialists from a number of engineering and design firms.

About that time, I saw one of the first "Songs Around the World" videos from Playing For Change. I sent it to several of our team members in China. They liked it. I said, "This is what we want to do with architecture and planning." We are bringing together specialists from around the world to create something healthy and beautiful for ordinary people. Groundwork has worked in and done projects in Cuba and Grenada in the Caribbean, Nicaragua in Latin America, Cameroon and Liberia in Africa, China in Asia and now looking to work in Nepal.

We have specialists helping us from South Africa, the U.S., Canada, England, Australia and other places around the world. When we started 37 Years ago in Cuba, we couldn't even place a phone call. To work with our counterparts in Cuba, the only way to communicate was to go there. When we started in Nicaragua, for the first time we could take "portable computers" with us (they were the size of a suitcase and just as heavy). Years later, in China we were able to exchange drawings, photos and videos by email and we could hold video conferences over the internet. It is now technically and economically feasible to collaborate with experts all over the world on projects to benefit a small village in Cameroon or a city in China.

Playing For Change gives a beautiful example of collaboration between skilled people in widely different places. We strive to do the same with architecture and planning.

Our first collaboration with this wonderful organization will be to build a school for a village in southeast Nepal. The methods used in the school will also serve as examples to the broader community in dealing with issues such as earthquake resistant construction, clean water, improved sanitation and health. Groundwork has the technical skills necessary and *Playing For Change* has created amazing connections with the local

community as well as the global community. We'll tell you more about the project in the next newsletter.

Playing For Change has partnered with UNICEF on projects in Latin America. With our long experience in Latin America we hope to work with them there in the future.

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William Aura, *Playing For Change* Foundation's Asian Music Program Coordinator (left) with Huck Rorick, *Groundwork*'s Executive Director. [Click here](#) for videos, info on the Nepal PFCF program.

Contact us at info@groundwork.org with comments or to find out more about our work.
