



CSP Class of 2007

Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and seeking – ranging from evangelical and fundamentalist to lib-

eral and secular, with many on a spectrum in between – these were the beliefs that helped define the spirited class of 2007. Several students were just completing undergraduate study, while others were finishing doctoral theses, embarking on careers, or returning to graduate school after some years in a career. They came from the conflicts in Liberia and Burma, from the violence that plagues the streets of Los Angeles, and from countries experiencing a tense standoff - such as India and Pakistan. And they were teachers, students of theology, psychology, information technology, sociology, development economics, education and political science.

SAMPLE OF TOPICS COVERED

Identity and Worldview
Conflict Analysis
Cross-Cultural Conflict Transformation
Strategizing for Change
Peacebuilding Paradigms
Interfaith Dialogue
Victim Cycle, Path of Reconciliation
Trauma Recovery

I have a better understanding of my personal reactions to conflict, and what my role is in relation to other parties involved.

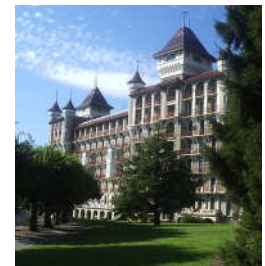
Remi Raidan
Lebanon

I will be more aware of my biases and I will promote and try to live up to the values of Caux.

Andrea
Malagón Bonilla
Mexico

“My five-week, peacebuilding program in Caux, Switzerland, began with a discussion about Ubuntu,” wrote Tiffany Kizito in the Ottawa Citizen, referring to a South African word meaning “my humanity is tied to yours.” She sets the stage:

“Built in 1902, Caux Palace was initially a grand hotel for the world’s rich. During the Second World War, it became a refuge for Jews. In 1946 the goal was to bring people together from every continent in hopes of working together and preventing another world war...”



“For the next weeks, I will be living in a palace 900 meters above Lake Geneva with a stunning view of the Swiss Mountains. But it’s the atmosphere of the house that is most remarkable. Guests are expected to volunteer and work together to complete various daily duties. (They) range in age, subscribe to different faiths, and represent dozens of ethnicities. Despite these differences, we are able to work successfully as a community.

“ I am left wondering if it is possible for other communities to function as successfully as the one here, for people to recognize that we actually are interdependent. But how do you merge pragmatism with idealism?”



The Academic Course



Michelle LeBaron (rt) with teaching associate, Carrie MacLeod.

During the three weeks of classroom work, scholars wrestled with making their idealism more real.

“Start reflecting on your own inner landscape,” said Michelle LeBaron, who offered insights on personal leadership in the global community. According to one student, an exercise building body sculptures “involved not only our creativity, but more importantly, our deep feelings connected to the images that we were representing.”

Barry Hart, CSP’s Academic Director, introduced students to the basics of conflict analysis and conflict transformation, helped them to become aware of their own approaches to conflict and gave them



an experience of mediation. Drawing on his own work in Liberia and the Balkans, he highlighted the impact of unhealed trauma on individuals and societies.



Mohammed Abu-Nimer emphasized through storytelling and simulation how important under-the-surface feelings are in getting at the roots of

conflict. He cautioned that, “Every conflict can be resolved in theory. However, when it comes to practice where emotions come into the mix, things get much more difficult to deal with.”

Tools For Change

The final week had scholars actively participating in the Tools for Change conference. Many found that the learning tracks augmented the CSP course. One student noted that it “gave me necessary skills to approach my community conflict —how to initiate different types of conversation, approach various parties involved, and how to try and facilitate an honest conversation.”

Others were challenged to reflect quite deeply, commenting that it became time to let go of old hatreds and to recognize deep feelings and painful experiences. “It is helping to resolve a conflict within myself,” said one. “What I like most is the quiet time for my inner voice.”

www.toolsforchange.iofc.org

Trip to Geneva/Visit of Kofi Annan

On July 27 we visited Geneva, which is the second largest headquarters of the United Nations after New York. We walked through the beautiful and imposing Palais des Nations and met with several UN representatives. Jean Fabre, Deputy Director of the UN’s Development Program (UNDP) gave a brilliant presentation on the UN’s efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, which aim to halve the world poverty’s rate by 2015. Despite the challenges impeding progress, Mr. Fabre’s enthusiasm and his simple and precise way of explaining his work and challenges were amazing!

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan visited Mountain House during our last week together. Some of us had the chance to brief him about CSP and he asked about its content and about our experience as a group. He emphasized the necessity, but also the difficulty, for a mediator to listen deeply, show respect to each party, trying to understand the unexpressed roots of problems. Encouraging individual responsibility, he said, “When something goes wrong in our societies, we cannot just leave issues to governments. We should all ask ourselves, what can we do?” *Selly Wane*

Linking peace with development and getting a window into the human aspect of an enemy are two concepts that can help strategize peacebuilding plans at a practical level.

Rashad Bukhari
Pakistan

I found out that I can make a difference and can be an effective leader; however it requires commitment. CSP marked a turning point in my life.

Daniya Baisubanova
Kyrgyzstan



Students Present Conflict Where I Come From

Throughout the program, Caux Scholars have twenty minutes to speak about a conflict that somehow touches their lives. Tools given in class for analyzing and mapping conflict aid them in their presentation. A lively question period follows. This summer we had such subjects as: water rights between The Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan, the shunned indigenous people of Burma, Afghanistan under the Taliban, the last five years of assassinations in Lebanon, immigration pains in Canada and violence on the streets of Los Angeles.



Students present a human sculpture depicting conflict.



Left Top: Students discuss strategies in a breakout group.



Odemari Mushi from Tanzania questions a speaker at the United Nations.

Left: For a few hours a week students gain experience working with a team serving Mountain House..



Tiffany Kizito and Muaz Cisse

“We have only been here for a short time, but that has not undermined the ability of the 16 of us to feel completely comfortable with each other and to develop a particular group dynamic that fits with our various personalities and cultures.

“Some of the stories I have heard thus far have amazed me. Hearing stories first-hand, watching and listening while people try to relive the events in order to accurately depict what took place leaves you wondering: How are these people still standing today?”

“Muaz Cisse was born and raised in Liberia. He has experienced 14 years of civil war. His courage, determination and resilience have truly inspired me. He lost his mother at the age of nine, was robbed of his teenage years and lived in fear for the majority of his life. His story is one of the many I have heard here at Caux, and it has helped me put things into perspective.

“Despite all the obstacles Muaz has been presented with, he wants nothing more than to return to his community and give back. He wants to help others. He wants to make a difference.” Tiffany Kizito, Ottawa Citizen

Conflict was transformed for me from a process that happens outside of Caux, into a real life personal struggle. I have a better understanding now of how I respond to conflict and how I can change my reactions to become an effective leader.

Michael Speltie
USA

We grew closer as we were more comfortable expressing our perspectives with one another; also the simulated conflict taught us about our group dynamic and care for one another.

Laura Thomas
USA



A Month on a Mountain

“Climbing the Rochers de Naye turned out to be one of the hardest things I have ever done. It was not only a physical challenge, but I was also pushed to my mental limits. About halfway through the course, the hike became very physically demanding: the path became very narrow and steep, it was midday so the sun was very intense, and most of us had run out of water. As the group trekked along and I struggled to keep up, I started to picture worst-case scenarios.

“Finally—heart racing, lungs gasping for air—I sprawled myself onto the nearest rock. Struggling to catch my breath, I was physically exhausted and felt like I just could not go on. In that moment, I was amazed at how everyone rallied around me—no matter what, we were all going to finish.

“An experience I will never forget, hiking to the top of the Rochers de Naye was a lesson in the power of the human spirit. For me, the hike was the embodiment of Ubuntu and I realized that just as we needed each other on the mountain, we all, all of humanity, need each other and are connected in a deeper way.” **Stacy Whyte**

CSP STAFF

Each summer the Caux Scholars Program benefits from the experience, skills and wide-ranging gifts of two former students. In 2007, Amy Rice, a graduate student in physics and hydrology at the University of Arizona and a 2001 scholar, returned, along with Farhad Salehian, a 2006 participant and '06 graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, now preparing for law school. In her application, Amy wrote, “Caux affected my view of the world and my conception of myself, and I gained a core belief in the synthesis of these two, the power of individual transformation to bring about global change.” Program Director Kathy Aquilina and Randy Ruffin oversaw the course and organized events for students.



Stacy Whyte (left) and CSP classmates

This sense of community began to form early on when they shared with one another something of special meaning in their life – an object, book, poem, piece of music, or picture.

The bonds grew as they hiked to the top of the Rochers de Naye their first weekend, and deepened as scholars viewed the film “Blood Diamond,” which captured the experience that Muaz Cisse, from Liberia, had lived.



They also enjoyed a breakfast out of doors at a restaurant high in the nearby mountains, a Swiss fondue, and shared talents ranging from dance, singing, piano and clarinet to silly skits and declaiming. As the program drew to a close they shared their learning through a ceremony at a beautiful waterfall.



Program Director Kathy Aquilina with Zamemi and Laura Thomas at the waterfall

Photo credits:
The class of 2007 with special thanks to Aditya Jain and Muaz Cisse. Also contributing to this report was Daniya Baisubanova.

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The Caux Scholars Program (CSP) is a month-long academic program of the international organization Initiatives of Change. CSP is held in Caux, Switzerland, and brings together students from around the world to learn about the moral and spiritual dimensions of peacemaking and about the relationship between individual transformation and change in the world.