

The 2004 Caux Scholars



"I am blessed to have been chosen to come to Caux... For me it was at the right time since I was in need of this kind of change due to the difficult situation in my country. The beauty of Caux touched my heart— whenever I sat on the terrace, I felt a peace and satisfaction overwhelming me."

**Mona Ayyad,
Palestine**

"I am a changed person, in terms of my outlook on life. I feel more driven to get involved in international affairs and pursue a meaningful career. But most of all, I want to make a difference on a personal level— to see the child in every one of us and embrace it."

**Rozanne Neil,
Jamaica**

On July 12th, 20 young leaders from 13 countries assembled at Mountain House, Caux, Switzerland, to begin the month-long Caux Scholars Program. Anticipating a month of academic discussions about the theory and practice of conflict analysis and transformation, the scholars were surprised to quickly discover that this work involves more than just helping others deal with their conflicts. It begins with the often difficult process of personal change and transformation. Indeed, as Ibtihal Merghani, a scholar from Sudan, writes, "I have come full circle and realize that to seek change in the world, a personal transformation has to occur in me as well." The 2004 Caux Scholars Program was all about creating space for these personal transformations to occur.

Mountain House, the international conference center of Initiatives of Change, provided a venue conducive to personal reflection and larger group discussions. Located high in the mountains overlooking Lake Geneva, Mountain House, the former Caux Palace Hotel, has served since 1946 as a meeting place for people coming from opposing sides of conflicts, a space where these parties can engage in honest dialogue, which can lead to forgiveness and reconciliation.

Classes convened in the morning in the Villa Maria, a chalet located across the street from the main conference cen-

ter. In the afternoon, the scholars participated more fully in the larger Mountain House community, joining work shifts to serve meals, garden, or run the internet cafe and help in other practical ways. The scholars worked alongside politicians, community and religious leaders, and social change activists who were participating in the conferences running concurrently to the Caux Scholars program. This provided the scholars yet another opportunity to build community and have meaningful interaction. The scholars took turns educating each other about their home communities through presentations on "Conflict Where I Come From." During the fourth and final week, the scholars participated fully in the Agenda For Reconciliation conference on Human Security through Good Governance.



Mona Ayyad listens while Ibtihal Merghani explains the current situation in Darfur, Sudan

A SAMPLE OF TOPICS COVERED

- Identity and Worldview
- Conflict Analysis: Structures and Power
- Skills for Cross-Cultural Conflict
- Transformation
- Strategizing for Change
- Peacebuilding Paradigms
- Victim Cycle, Path of Reconciliation
- Trauma Recovery
- Conflict Prevention Networking
- Early Warning Theory and Practice
- Transitional Justice



Faculty and Class Themes

"I know I am different than when I came. I can not imagine my life without these people. I feel so much more open now and am learning to trust, not to judge. The staff has taught us to do so— but we have also taught each other."
**Geneviève LeBaron,
Canada**



For the seventh year, Dr. Barry Hart, current faculty member of Eastern Mennonite University's Conflict Transformation Program, returned as the Academic Director of CSP. Dr. Hart introduced the three visiting faculty and various guest lecturers and supplied course continuity, and offered specific input on Trauma Healing and Peacebuilding. Barry's field experience in west Africa and the former Yugoslavia is an asset he draws on in his teaching.

Michelle LeBaron, Professor of Law and Director of the University of British Columbia Dispute Resolution Centre in Vancouver, Canada, was with the Caux Scholars during the first week to examine identity, culture, worldview, and conflict. Michelle taught the scholars skills they can use to analyze the cultural elements of conflict situations, starting with personal and group exercises aimed at rendering these skills immediately applicable. Building on this, Michelle shared skills for identifying the common ground that makes shifts in conflict situations possible. Her wonderful gift for building community was a great asset.



Michelle facilitates a session on identifying common ground in conflict situations, which can lead to shifts in conflict behavior.

"The Caux Scholars Program has helped me to realize that this world needs me, that my age, skin color, nationality or language don't matter. To do something, to help someone else, I don't need to wait."
**Pablo Alvarez Tostado
Fernandez,
Mexico**



Marinetta (right) facilitates a role play, involving Zeke Reich, Pablo Alvarez Tostado, and Sara Kushnik, examining the role of power in conflict.

During the second week, Marinetta Cannito Hjort, who currently serves as the Baptist Chaplain at American University in Washington, DC, and has worked in the past for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, introduced theories and practices of conflict analysis and resolution. Marinetta employed an experiential learning style, which had scholars engaged in role plays and group work intended to elicit learning about the origins of conflicts, as well as methods for addressing and transforming these conflicts. Issues of power were examined and time was spent developing the skills of strategizing for desired social change.

Sam Doe, Executive Director of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) based in Accra, Ghana, a former Caux Scholar ('95) and faculty member since 1997, returned to CSP for the third week of the Program. He gave extremely detailed presentations on conflict prevention (a developing area in the field of conflict transformation), and early warning theory and practice. Under Sam's facilitation, scholars had the opportunity to employ these skills by working through a case study. Dr. Hart finished this portion of CSP by looking at transitional justice and the journey towards healing and reconciliation.



The 2004 Caux Scholars had ample opportunities to interact with a diverse group of guest speakers, including: Niketu Iralu, a Naga leader who has been deeply involved in peacebuilding between the Naga clans and the Indian government and who served as the keynote speaker for the Agenda for Reconciliation's Human Security conference; Dr. Farooq Hassan, international lawyer and recently named UN Ambassador for Families; and Cornelio Sommaruga, former President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and President of the International Association of Initiatives of Change (IofC). Scholars posed questions during plenary sessions to such notable speakers as Lech Walesa, former Solidarity leader and President of Poland.

Scholars also shared meals and discussion time with many interesting conference participants including Ginn Fourie and Letlapa Mpahlele, who shared their moving story of forgiveness from their experiences in South Africa's Apartheid times; John Graham, who enthralled the scholars with stories from his time with the US State Department; and a delegation from southern Sudan, who shared their experiences in participating in the current peace process.

Fun Times

Surprisingly, given the packed schedule, students were also able to fully avail themselves of the various recreational activities in Caux and the surrounding areas. They made it down the mountain to nearby Montreux to attend the annual Jazz Festival, shop and swim in Lake Geneva, climbed high into the mountains behind Mountain House, and made weekend excursions to other destinations in Switzerland and France.

The scholars entertained the rest of the Caux community by staging an international fashion and talent show. This included cultural dances, songs, poems, and much laughter. They spent many a late night at the Caux Café, getting to know one another on a much deeper level.



Pablo Alvarez Tostado, Alicia Miller and Juan Ordaz Ruiz prepare Mexican food for the CSP banquet

Program Staff

Krista Rigalo, who formerly worked for 13 years in several countries in Africa on various development, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding projects, and who is currently working on her doctorate in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Virginia, USA, serves as the Program Director for the Caux Scholars Program. Joining her in Caux this year was Grant Rissler, a CSP alumni ('01), who served as the CSP intern. Grant currently works as the Communications Director for The Faith & Politics Institute in Washington, DC. A skilled photographer, Grant did the job of 2 interns as Abdallah Ali, the other chosen intern, was unable to leave Palestine. Providing support to Krista and Grant were Kathy Aquilina and Randy Ruffin, both of whom are staff members of Initiatives of Change in from Washington, DC.



CSP '04 intern Grant Rissler

“Caux is a reflection, a mirror image of what the world should look like. CSP has provided me with the opportunity to find my inner calling through personal reflection and the sharing of stories. It was encouraging to observe the transformations occurring on the personal and group levels.”
Hala Fleihan,
Lebanon

“I’ve had to confront everyone as a human being. This is the first time I’ve totally focused on this aspect. I’ll keep this in my spirit and in my way of interacting with others.”
Yama Torabi,
Afghanistan



Agenda for Reconciliation

In their fourth and final week, the scholars participated in the Agenda for Reconciliation Conference on Human Security through Good Governance. They offered a workshop on cross-cultural communication and conflict, reflecting their learning from the previous three weeks. They also posed questions or made comments intended to initiate the question and answer period following each plenary session. A number of scholars accompanied larger delegations attending the conference: Egypt, southern Sudan, South Africa, three groups who were focused on urban issues (thematically grouped as: Youth and Police, Asylum seekers, and Leadership) and the people associated with the Global Indigenous Dialogue. Several scholars joined the Egyptian delegation in presenting a play one evening; others joined a singing circle and participated in a concert for the larger community.



Rob Corcoran, from Hope in the Cities, Richmond, Virginia, USA, shares a meal with scholars Zeke Reich and Christie Shrestha

Photos in this Report by Grant Rissler

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Going Down the Mountain



Pablo Alvarez Tostado, Daniele Ressler, CSP alumnus Sinisa Mudri, and Academic Director Barry Hart hike to a nearby waterfall
(photo by Randy Ruffin)

In addition to helping students acquire an understanding of conflict and skills as peacemakers, the Caux Scholars Program hopes that the experience will be a catalyst for growth and personal transformation that will have an impact on life “down the mountain.” Since the end of this summer, many scholars have already been engaged in exciting activities. One, a Harvard graduate, is busy working on a presidential campaign. Another, a young woman from Lebanon, reports that she has begun applying what she learned in Caux to her work with a local peacebuilding center and has even been interviewed on national television about her experiences. A Nigerian woman studying for her Masters in Dispute Resolution in Boston, USA, returned to her academic program in time to take the lead on hosting Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. Others have begun graduate programs and law school. Capturing the sentiments of many scholars regarding the way forward after Caux, Pablo Alvarez from Mexico writes “I can say now that I am a spark ready to start a great fire— the fire of reconciliation!”

“The program opened up dozens of new worlds for me, from the places and struggles of my fellow students, to the conflicts I learned about in the Initiatives of Change conferences, to the possibility of transforming conflict in my own life and in myself.”

Zeke Reich,
USA

“Thank you again for all the love and community you gave me. It revived a part of me that was deep and slumbering. I feel right now like I can do anything. That is because of my time with you in CSP.”

Alicia Miller
USA



The Caux Scholars Program is a month-long academic program held in Caux, Switzerland, that 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.