

Caux Scholars Program



Report 2017

Getting there is half the battle: For many Caux Scholars, the 'Caux Experience' begins months before they actually set foot in the historic mountainside conference center; applications, visas, finances, and travel plans are just some of the hurdles that Scholars must overcome. In addition to the logistical challenges, many Scholars also face personal and spiritual battles before finally arriving, unaware of the transformative experience that awaits them. IofC USA walks with these scholars as they prepare, coaching them as they raise funds, helping them prioritize responsibilities, and sometimes advocating on their behalf to family members to support their participation in the program. No matter their life circumstances, we aim to let Scholars know that we make this journey with them.

Not "just another conference:" With guidance from world-class faculty who stay up-to-date on the latest developments in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, scholars work to break down stereotypes, challenge their own and each other's world views, and learn and practice effective peace-building strategies. CSP combines traditional classroom learning with hands-on experiences such as team and trust-building sessions, simulations and role playing, and participation in Caux Forum conferences. Rigorous coursework is complemented by outings to experience the best of Switzerland: the lively Montreux Jazz Festival, hikes to waterfalls and mountain peaks, and a visit to the UN and ICRD in

Conflict Where I Come From (CWICF)

Each scholar arrives in Caux prepared to present a conflict they relate to and know well. In a given year, this could mean current high-profile conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, lesser-known conflicts in Colombia, the Philippines, Cyprus, or Cameroon, or long-simmering racial tensions in the United States. This year's class enjoyed listening to presentations that they were not familiar with and offering suggestions of how the presented conflict could be overcome or transformed. CWICF is a powerful practical learning method that gave the Scholars the opportunity to delve into the conflicts, understand and analyze the issues that have caused these conflicts and share their perspectives of finding solutions for them. They left more aware of the world and how they could contribute an idea or a narrative around a particular conflict worldwide.



"I was extremely hesitant to present my conflict where I come from. My body was shaking, but the minute I started talking about the conflict I was avoiding, I saw the Scholars listening attentively to my words. That is how I opened my heart to them. In that moment, I felt I could trust these people. I believed that all 20 of us are ready to bring changes and peace to this world." Dzovag Soghomonian, Syria

"Every year, we at The Caux Scholars Program conduct an experiment: we try to bring together the 20 most diverse international scholars that we can imagine. We cross boundaries of age, culture, power, identity, ethnicity, nationality, politics, gender, expertise and worldview. And, every year after a month of living, studying and working together we realize we have formed a cohesive learning community, a safe space for personal growth to occur and a new way of being together that is nothing short of transformative. We have found a space of "common good" that stands in great contrast to the daily news of violence, division and fissures occurring all around us. We have embodied hope."

- Dr. Carl Stauffer, Academic Director, CSP



Week 1: Building a Community



As they experienced their first days in Caux and with each other, Scholars were invited to look beyond their most obvious differences and find shared interests and expectations to lay the groundwork for a month of living together at Mountain House. “Why are you here?” was the first question Academic Director Dr. Carl Stauffer posed to the class. After an initial trust-building activity, the first lessons focused on discussions of identity, culture, and power dynamics. As Scholars tried to understand questions such as “Who am I?” and “What functions and/or roles do I play?” in connection to establishing identities, they were also introduced to the conflict style inventory, providing them with an opportunity to discover their own approaches to conflict resolution.

Week 2: The Caux Foundation's Conference on Just Governance

This year, Scholars experienced the Just Governance Forum, which is an opportunity for participants to work together to advance human security, to connect, and to discuss the best ways to deal with conflict, division, counter-extremism and other challenges.

More than 250 individuals from 55 countries attended the Just Governance Forum this year, making it one of Caux’s highest-profile and most diversely-populated conferences. This year, Scholars had an opportunity to sign up for “Human Security Certificate” which was offered to participants who completed a set of tasks and who wrote summary reflections to enhance their understanding of the six pillars of Just Governance: good governance, care for refugees, sustainable living, inclusive economics, food security and healing memory. Throughout Week Two of CSP, Scholars served on the Forum’s organizing team, helping with organizational logistics, interpretation, social media, communications and other tasks related to organizing a conference.



Week 3: Transformative Community Conferencing & Dialogue

The third week was taught by guest instructor Dr. David Anderson Hooker. The class focused on issues related to identity and narrative. Students were provided with several paper circles in which they had to write their multiple identities. In what became Week Three's common refrain, Dr. David exclaimed "Let's play!" to stimulate Scholars as they worked through scenarios to determine their "valence" of identities – in other words, to better understand how different aspects of their identities balance or affect each other. In each scenario, Scholars could experience how the narratives of identity can trigger othering, victimhood and violence. It was a very efficient way to educate how the social construction, fluidity and subjectivity of human identity is rooted in the narratives. Finally, the Scholars realized that it is very important to change both narrative and structure to transform any society. By the end of the week, everyone adopted Dr. David's oft-repeated saying – "people aren't the problems, the problems are the problems."



Week 3 brought the annual climb Rochers de Naye (2042 meters) *[As a lower-caste Dalit,] I always hated my so-called upper caste friends who invited me in their rented accommodation in Kathmandu city, but never dared to take me in their homes in village, challenging their conservative parents. But now, I realize that it wasn't their failure, but rather the flawed narratives, that instigated this animosity to Dalits. Indeed, we need to deconstruct such bigoted narrative first to reconstruct a new narrative of equality and justice. I will definitely put my efforts on that from now on. –Rajendra Senchurey, Nepal*

And finally, Week Three presented an important professional opportunity for the Scholars when they traveled to Geneva for meetings with the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. During these meetings, the Scholars had the chance to ask practical questions about the various conflict transformation programs undertaken by each organization; they were also able to ask questions related to their current or future careers as peacebuilders.

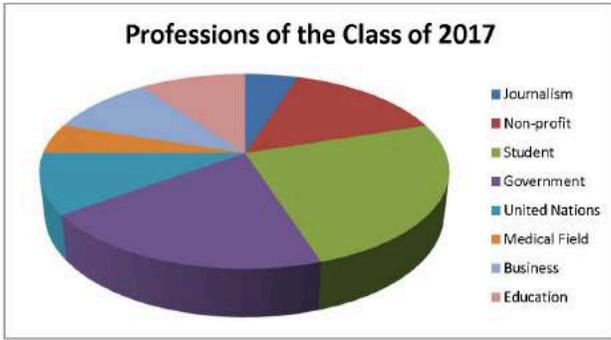


Week 4: Transitional & Restorative Justice

Week Four provided an opportunity for the Scholars to engage in a mock International Criminal Court trial, simulated a restorative justice to process, and reviewed case studies and videos, all of which allowed the Scholars to critically analyze the concept of justice. After learning about restorative justice approaches, scholars took a deeper examination of transitional justice processes such as Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) through case studies from South Africa, Sierra Lion and Rwanda. During the International Criminal Court (ICC) simulation, Scholars took on different roles (prosecutors, defenders, witnesses, jury, clerk, journalists, and judge) which helped to broaden their understanding of the ICC's procedures, benefits, and limitations as a vehicle for justice for those whose lives are affected by genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.



Service



As in previous years, service at Caux was an integral part of the Scholars' experience in 2017. One scholar provided this valuable reflection on his service:

"Coming from Africa where the cultural narrative constructed by the society affirms that kitchens are meant for women only and not for men, the first day of service was astonishing and humbling. I observed and blended with older, even high-profile men from very respectable institutions around the world, serving meals, wiping dining tables and washing dishes at the cafeteria. This made me open up to try new things. Doing service at Caux, was an awesome and invigorating opportunity as I interacted with different people from all over the world."

- Nyambe Mwiya, Zambia (currently Kenya)

Going Down the Mountain

As the Scholars gathered to leave, they reflected on learnings from Caux. Although academics, skill acquisition, and personal transformation are the pillars of the program, there is more at its heart. Learning about other cultures and perspectives, developing meaningful relationships with Scholars and staff, and discovering personal and professional inspiration are the core of CSP. The task of peacebuilders can often appear overwhelming, but hope is attainable when the community works together. The mission of the Caux Scholars Program is to inspire personal transformation so peacebuilders can be effective catalysts for change. However, what makes CSP successful is its ability to bring peacebuilders from all corners of the earth and all walks of life together to build a community of practice.

Thank You to our Generous Donors

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The Caux Scholars Program is a program of Initiatives of Change USA. Initiatives of Change is a diverse global movement of people committed to the transformation of society through change in human motives and behavior, starting with their own.

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