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Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies
Fellow June- September 2007 Batch No:03

FINAL COURSE REPORT

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FINAL COURSE REPORT-ROTARY PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION:

The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International in the quest to offer “Service Above Self” and to build World Peace have reached out to a tiny dot on the World map-Jamaica, giving me a great opportunity to participate in one of their educational programs-The Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies at the Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok-Thailand.

It would be remiss of me to give a report on my participation in the Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies Programme without recognizing and acknowledging with profound gratitude:-

- The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International
- The Staff of the Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies programme, Bangkok-Thailand
- The Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies Programme Coordinator.
- The Government and people of Thailand
- The Ministry of Justice-Jamaica (among others)

The exposure to this programme, the cross fertilization of ideas and diversification of culture from presenters/lectures and participants (alike) in such a structured and enlightening manner can

only benefit the organization in which I work – (The Victim Support Unit) and the nation as a whole.

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Pre-class assignment in the form of analyzing a conflict in my country provided the spring board/launching pad for my understanding and participation in analyzing other regional and international conflicts, some of which were presented by fellow participants in the first week of our scheduled twelve weeks' study.

Resource based conflicts involving mainly land, and water issues, religious conflicts, political conflicts, ethnic conflicts and even conflict relating to the languages spoken in some counties were highlighted and became an integral part of the ensuing discussions which were thought provoking and intellectually stimulating.

A solid foundation was hence established for class activities and field trips, correlating participants' individual conflict analysis with the already planned course syllabus. I must note that this program, not only exposed us to various theories and thoughts on Peace and Conflict Resolutions, but that all participants were given the glorious opportunity to gain 'hands on' experience to be exposed to the practical side of the subjects.

Lecturers, who were drawn from a wide cross section of the globe, shared their experiences and knowledge on the subject of peace and conflict resolution in an organized, structured and excellent manner. Various teaching methods were utilized to ensure that we were efficiently equipped with the vital conflict resolution and Peace building skills.

Mediation, negotiation, organizing and conducting trainings/seminars/workshops, communicating effectively and efficiently with people, designing peace building projects and

using education as a peace building tool, are few of the important topics covered in the Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies course(RPCS) which I have been utilizing in my work as a court officer and a victim support manager. As such, participating in this course will certainly make me more efficient and effective in serving humanity.

FIELD TRIPS:

Field trips are very good methods of enhancing and reinforcing learning and this is exactly what was done in the three(3) field trips which took us to Northern Thailand July 13-21, 2007; Cambodia August 10-19, 2007 and Rayong-September 01,-03, 2007.

On all field trips we were given the opportunity to interact with the ‘actors’/ stakeholders of various conflicts and was informed of the positive and negative effects of these conflicts on them and the respective roles they play or have to play in alleviating the trauma or trying to find suitable solutions to their existing problems.

Our visits to refugee camps and villages enabled us to observe the vulnerable persons and revealed some dynamics of the conflict, inclusive of the structural instability-the presence of poverty, depression, fear and trauma which beg for suitable interventions.

Interacting with land mine victims(Cambodia), HIV/AIDS victims (in Rayong-Thailand) and victims of sexual offences and domestic violence at the Mae La Camp in Mae Sot Northern Thailand provided me with the opportunity to have short counseling sessions with these victims which is the main thrust of my job as a victim support officer in Jamaica.

The group activities which we did during those trips also helped us to learn more about each other and from each other and increased our knowledge base on the specific conflicts that

we set out to study. In addition, the various meetings we had with representatives from governmental and non- governmental organizations were enlightening and emphasize the fact that we all need to work together as one for the betterment of our societies.

IMPRESSION OF THE PROGRAM

In a time, when the world is constantly in conflict, socially, politically and economically among others, this programme (RPCS) is most timely in addressing the ills of our world. The topics covered were intensive, comprehensive and relevant and should equip participants in being capable peace builders and peacemakers. Consequently, I think that this course should be regionalized so as to attract more participants, to reach out to more people who will preach the gospel of peace and conflict resolution.

I share the view that some time could be allotted to topics which speak to crisis intervention, Types of personality, (why some people behave the way they do?), behavior modification, (how can we effect change of behaviors?) in some of these people who are bent on causing conflicts or raging wars.

The Rotary peace and Conflict Studies Program is an excellent program which has the scope to be bigger and greater if given the proper promotion and continues to reach out to the caliber of people it is now reaching out to.

POST PROGRAMME PLANS

As the director of the Victim Support Unit in Manchester- Jamaica, I have been exposed to conflicts within families and at the community level. However, some of these problems are manifestations of a deeper national problem and sometimes global problems. Having

successfully completed this course, it is my intention to do an in-depth analysis of the conflicts that I will have to intervene in.

The knowledge gained from this course, I cannot and will not hold to my chest. I will have to disseminate information, teach, train and create disciples of peace both at the community and national level in Jamaica. I also intend to initiate a peace education drive. A proposal will be written to the Ministry of Education requesting permission to launch some peace advocate clubs in schools. I intend to train peer mediators in schools, the Police Youth Club and other Youth clubs and build a cadre of young peacemakers. It is also my intention to work with Rotaracters and Rotarians in my parish in conducting Seminars and workshops in peace and conflict resolutions.

INVOLVEMENT WITH ROTARIANS

As a victim support officer and Public Relations Officer for the Manchester Branch of the Jamaica Red Cross, I have to network with various agencies, organizations and service clubs among others, for the welfare of the Victims of crime and vulnerable persons who are entrusted in my care. As such, I have been working on projects with (the Rotary club of Mandeville) Rotarians as a volunteer in some non-governmental and community based organizations with special reference to the Jamaican Red Cross Society-Manchester Branch.

The most recent project is one in which the Rotary Club of Mandeville along with the Rotary club of Richmond, British Columbia and Canada, partnered with the Manchester Branch of the Jamaica Red Cross to provide a fully equipped ambulance to enhance our disaster and emergency activities.

It was also through this collaboration and partnership that I learned about Rotary scholarship (The Rotary Peace and Conflict Programme) and was properly prepared for interview by immediate past President Mr. Michael Walker and Dr. Patrick Adizua- Assistant District Governor of the Rotary Club of Mandeville D 7020. Various brochures, flyers, magazines and readings were given to me including Clifford L. Dochterman's book *The ABC's of Rotary* from which I updated myself on interesting facts about Rotary International.

In Thailand, my host counselor lived some five hundred kilometers from Bangkok and as such , she could not have interacted with me as she wished. However, the host counselor of some participants assisted and I was able to participate in the following activities:

- June 29,207 at 7:00p.m.Attended Installation Program with Undomchai Sakulvanaporn - Pacific City Club (a club for members only), Bangkok- participated in Cherokee.
- July 05, 2007 at 7:00p, I attended Induction Service and International Night ,Rotary Club of Sathorn (D. 3350) with – Thammasak Jivavatanasak (adopted host counselor) and family. Met Rotarians from all over Thailand.
- July 14, 2007 at 7:00p.m Khantoke dinner with members of the Rotary Club of Chiang Mai at the Old Chiang Mai cultural center. Exchange Rotary Club of Mandeville banner for Rotary club of Chiang Mai with Dr. Bussabong Jumremdararassamee.
- September 03, 2007, at Camillian Social Center, Rayong, Thailand; Exchange Rotary Club of Mandeville Banner with Mr. Martin Brand- Rotary Club of Eastern Seaboard.
- September 10, 2007 at 12:30p; attended meeting of the Rotary Club of Dusit at the Indra Regent Hotel, Bangkok Thailand on invitation of Thammasak Jivavatanasak. Address Rotarians (all males), gave a short overview of Jamaica, the nature of the Rotary Peace

and Conflict Studies course and how I intend to utilize what I have learnt back in my country.

On all occasions, a solid network which I know will be very helpful to my unit and my country in the near and distant future.

CONCLUSION – SUCCESSES/CHALLENGES

My success starts with being recommended and accepted to be a participant of this prestigious programme—The Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies Programme. Developing a relationship with the staff of the RPCS center, lecturers, Rotarians, Rotaractors, fellow participants from all over the world and representatives from governmental and non-government organizations in Thailand and Cambodia have enabled me to create a solid network with people from various cultural, ethnic economic, political and religious divide.

Interacting with the people of Cambodia, and Northern Thailand, seeing the victims of civil wars and the vulnerable and meeting with other samaritans dedicated to the cause of humanity in these areas have reinforced my belief that the world cannot stand aside any longer and watch man's inhumanity to man.

The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International has created a cadre of humanitarians equipped to make the world a more peaceful place for all of us to live in. In retrospect, the successful completion of the Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies course will inure to the benefit of all the countries that have participated and this can only help mankind to emerge from the dark midnight of pains, sufferings, injustices and unrests to a morning of peace, solace and love.

CHALLENGES

Language barriers could have been a bigger challenge out of class, but with the able assistance of my Thai participant and friend Ratchanee Phataisit and the Rotracters of the Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. I was adequately equipped to communicate and conduct transactions in Thailand successfully and with much ease.

Special mention and commendations must also be given to the Honorary Consul of Jamaica in Thailand – Dr.Jingjai Hanchanlash who offered support to me throughout my course of study in Thailand, liasoning with British Airways during the eleven days delay of my luggage, taking me out to places of interest and being present at my final project presentation and graduation. You all gave me a feeling of being at home away from home.

This torch that I brought back from Thailand, I know that I will pass on. As I set out on this part, the torch will have to be held high, so that each day it will glow brighter for all to see.

Profound gratitude to all who were instrumental in making this course the success it has been. I will do my best to ignite the candle, carry the spirit of Rotarians and be a vessel of peace.

cc. Sponsor Counselor

Host Counselor

Sponsor District Governor

Host District Governor