

PEACE PIECES

Uppsala Rotary Peace Center

Educating and strengthening leaders to have a positive impact on peace and conflict resolution in the world



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FOREWORD

We are happy to share with you the 2023 Summer Edition of the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center Newsletter documenting an eventful academic term. Our activities kicked off with the energizing meet and greet of Classes XX and XXI and exchange over Applied Field Experience lessons learned, establishing a platform for rich exchange of experiences.

We were honored to host distinguished guests, most notably Ngozi Amu, the Head of Research at the UN Office for West Africa. Our dialogue centered on the United Nations' efforts in climate and security in West Africa, expanding our understanding and emphasizing the crucial interplay between policy and practice.

Our Annual Seminar in April was a key highlight, with the presence of the extraordinary Ilwad Elman, a true leader in peacebuilding, as keynote speaker and a host of distinguished guests. This was a unique opportunity for the Peace Fellows to share on their diverse range of experiences and lessons learned during the thesis writing and applied experiences of the program.

Our journey also took us to Stockholm in a study excursion to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) in May – experiences that enriched our understanding of a multitude of important issues from disarmament to election protection and climate-related threats.

We are grateful for additional activities spearheaded by the Host Area Coordinator and Committee and Swedish and international Rotarians. This included two unforgettable excursions to Åland and Western Sweden. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for their unwavering support.



Last but not least the Peace Fellows were all occupied with the academic program and additional speaker series and events.

The Center congratulates Class XX on their successful graduation in June. As they embark on the next phase of their careers and continue their peace work, we extend our best wishes for their continued success. We look forward to following their work and the contributions they will make to the world of peacebuilding.

Nina von Uexkull, Associate Professor and Director of the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center

ANNUAL SEMINAR 2023

By Daniela Patricia Sánchez Duque (Class XXI) and Liana Lopes (Center Coordinator)

On 21 April, Class XX Peace Fellows captivated the audience with their inspiring presentations in the Annual Seminar at Uppsala University. The theme of this year's seminar, titled "The Reciprocity of Research & Practice in Grassroots Peacebuilding," showcased the Fellows' diligent research during their Master's thesis and their contributions

to peace through applied field experiences. Moreover, the event also provided a valuable platform for Uppsala Rotary Peace Fellows to engage with esteemed guests working in the field of peace and conflict resolution, both in academic and practical contexts.



Class XX: Daniel Martínez, Megan Dumas, Cynthia Abazie, Noha Yasser, Amina Ahmed and Catalina Robayo

The Uppsala Rotary Peace Center was privileged to have Ilwad Elman, a renowned expert in ending conflicts and preventing violent extremism, as the keynote speaker. Ilwad's reflections and insights about her work at the Elman Peace and Human Rights Center in Somalia left a lasting impact on all attendees. She stressed the significance of carrying out projects with a deep comprehension of the local circumstances, the conditions of the countries involved, communities and their specific needs, as well as the overall context and practices. Regarding Somalia, she explained the peace agreements have failed to address the underlying structural issues within communities. Ilwad firmly believes that as long as these issues remain unresolved, the risk of conflict resurgence will persist. She also highlighted the importance of local organizations being able to express

their knowledge, as it lends legitimacy to their solutions and empowers them to move away from conventional mindset of adopting generic models without considering context-specific approaches.

Furthermore, Ilwad pointed out that the persistent divide between research and practical implementation has been a major obstacle in the peace and conflict field, and bridging the gap between academia and the realities on the ground remains challenging. After familiarizing herself with the exceptional accomplishments of Class XX Fellows, Ilwad openly conveyed her profound admiration for their achievements. She commended their dedication not only to advocating for peace but also in the crucial task of decolonizing knowledge. Additionally, she highlighted that their immense contributions have the potential to foster

more horizontal, equitable, and transformative relationships. By challenging and dismantling the existing power dynamics and biases inherent in traditional knowledge systems, Ilwad argued that Fellows can create space for diverse perspectives and voices to be heard and valued. Through their research, practice, and advocacy, they have the power to reshape narratives, amplify marginalized voices, and promote inclusive approaches to peacebuilding. “Their commitment to decolonizing knowledge paves the way for a more just and inclusive world”, concluded Ilwad.



Ilwad Elman

In the subsequent panel, Fellows Megan Dumas, Amina Ahmed and Noha Yasser discussed the intersections between international responses and conflict dynamics. Megan’s presentation centered on the global community efforts to address the complexity of conflict-related sexual violence, sharing her research findings on the subject. In her reflection about her experience at the Uppsala program, Megan came to the realization that it provided valuable perspectives that inspired her to become a better practitioner. Amina examined the conditions under which sexual violence and gender provisions are incorporated into peace agreements, particularly when international organizations are involved. Noha focused on the hydro-political security complexes in the context of shared transboundary rivers, as well as on the role of international organizations in either promoting cooperation or exacerbating conflicts related to water resources. She also emphasized the importance of empowering individuals with knowledge created through practice and education to tackle water-related challenges.



Megan Dumas



Amina Ahmed



Noha Yasser



Peace Fellow Catalina Robayo commenced the last panel on peacebuilding and inclusion. She addressed the connections between the empowerment of human right defenders (HRD) and the achievement of sustainable peace in Colombia through activism. Catalina also analyzed the HRD’s adapting mobilization strategies to enhance resilience in conflict setting and to build peace. Daniel Martínez then delved into the consequences of long-standing violence and conflicts on refugees, as well as their integration with host communities. Cynthia Abazie concluded the session by examining how women’s civil resistance relates to inclusion in elitist peace negotiations. As her research indicates, although women’s meaningful participation in peace processes is often limited, their nonviolent methods have proven to be effective alternatives in peace negotiations.



Daniel Martínez



Catalina Robayo



Cynthia Abazie



The Chair of The Rotary Foundation Trustees 2022/23, Ian H.S. Riseley, complimented the Peace Fellows for contributing to make the world a better place, and expressed his appreciation for their unwavering dedication and commitment to promoting peace.



Ian H. S. Riseley

The closing keynote of the seminar was delivered by Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen from Uppsala University, who commended Class XX Fellows for their insightful reflections on peace and conflict issues that are relevant to all of us. He also mentioned the importance that Uppsala Rotary Peace Center places on methodology and evidence-based approaches as fundamental to understand conflict-related problems.

Rotarians who attended the seminar were highly impressed by Class XX's presentations, and Class XXI Fellows are motivated to plan an equally inspiring seminar for the upcoming year. The Peace Fellows concluded their day with a delightful dinner arranged by the Host Area Coordinator, Bengt-Erik Jansson.



Class XXI, top row from left: Musawenkosi Mpofu, Joseph Augustine, Ornella Corsant-Colat and Davis Makori. Bottom row from left: Vanessa Lanteigne, Eva Patricia Rodriguez Bellegarrigue, Katherine Ronderos, Clause Okwoku Obote and Daniela Patricia Sánchez Duque.



Peter Wallensteen

SPRING ACTIVITIES

AFE: LESSONS LEARNED

In a meet and greet event held in February for the Peace Fellows, Class XX enthusiastically shared their insights and lessons learned from their Applied Field Experiences (AFE) in significant and influential organizations located in Cambodia, Geneva, Ghana, Jordan, New York, and The

Hague. The recommendations and experiences shared by Class XX served as an invaluable source of inspiration for Class XXI. In our previous [Newsletter](#) (link), you can find detailed information regarding their AFEs.



Megan Dumas talking about her AFE at the UN Office of the Representative to the Secretary on Sexual Violence in Conflict, New York, USA.

LECTURE ON CIVILIAN'S OPTIONS IN ARMED CONFLICTS

Current and former Rotary Peace Fellows engaged with Professor Pedro Valenzuela from Pontifical Universidad Javeriana in Colombia, during a lecture organized by the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center in February. Professor Valenzuela examined the options available to civilians in armed conflicts. Specifically, he explored how armed

actors strive to assert control over territory, resources, and populations, while also discussing the potential for nonviolent resistance by civilians. The discussion with the Peace Fellows focused on case studies involving different communities in Colombia.

SEMINAR ON CLIMATE SECURITY RISKS

In March, the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center held a seminar on climate security risks in West Africa and the Sahel. During the event, the Peace Fellows had the privilege of learning about the UN's efforts in this area from Ngozi Amu, the Head of Research & Analysis at the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). These discussions further enhanced their comprehension and emphasized the importance of the relationship between policy and practice. The discussants were Cynthia Abazie, a Class XX Fellow, and Halvard Buhaug, Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo and Lead Author in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change IPCC report.



Cynthia Abazie and Ngozi Amu



From left: Vanessa Lanteigne, Musawenkosi Mpofu, Clause Okwoku Obote, Cynthia Abazie, Eva Patricia Rodriguez Bellegarrigue, Ngozi Amu, Davis Makori, Nina von Uexkull, Halvard Buhaug and Joseph Augustine.

STOCKHOLM STUDY EXCURSION

On 25 May, our Peace Fellows embarked on an exciting excursion organized by the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center that involved a visit to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).

During their time there, they engaged in thought-provoking discussions with experts covering a range of important subjects, including disarmament, AI governance, climate change, and food security. This invaluable experience also included enlightening conversations about safeguarding

elections and the influence of natural disasters on electoral processes. All in all, it was an enriching adventure that broadened their knowledge and perspectives in these crucial topics.



PEACE FELLOWS IN ACTION

The Peace Fellows have been actively involved in various events and seminars at Uppsala University, and other gatherings and memorable excursions organized by the Host Area Coordinator, Rotary Districts and Clubs in Sweden and abroad. They have been sharing their valuable professional and background experiences and insights into the Fellowship program through informative presentations on a wide range of topics. In this section, we will present some of the noteworthy activities they have participated in during the spring of 2023.

On 23 February, Class XXI Peace Fellow Joseph Augustine participated in a panel discussion with the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, centered on the importance of collaboration and unity in achieving sustainable development goals, as well as on the challenges hindering development in Africa. The event, which was organized by Uppsala University and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, was facilitated by Professor Peter Wallensteen (Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University). It was an inspiring occasion that highlighted the potential for collaboration and the importance of addressing global challenges together. The photo below captures a moment shared between Joseph and Ms. Amina J. Mohammed at the Uppsala University Main Building.



In February, Ornella Corsant-Colat, a Class XXI Fellow and former UN associate analyst, took part in a panel discussion organized by the students organization Pax et Bellum. The focus of the event was to analyze both the successes and failures of peacekeeping. The panel also included Professor Lisa Hultman from the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University, Professor Erik Melander who is a former

peacekeeper and the Director of the [Alva Myrdal Centre for Nuclear Disarmament \(AMC\)](#) at Uppsala University, and Ulf Henricsson, a military commander. The discussion was moderated by Assistant Prof. Sebastian van Baalen from the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University.

In March, the Host Area Committee organized a lunch where Fellows from both classes got the chance to engage in meaningful conversations with the Host Counsellors and the Center's staff. They shared their professional experiences prior to coming to Sweden, as well as their reflections on the Fellowship program in Uppsala. It was a great opportunity for everyone to learn more about their diverse background and captivating personal journeys while advocating for peace.



Katherine Ronderos at HAC Soup Lunch



Catalina Robayo

Between 2 and 5 March, Davis Makori (Class XXI) was invited to attend the [Raisina Dialogue](#) (link), the flagship conference of the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted by the Observer Research Foundation. As a Raisina Young Fellow, Davis participated at this year's conference under the theme 'Provocation, Uncertainty, Turbulence: Lighthouse in the Tempest?' He was also invited to participate in the T20 town hall, a conference on India's role as the chair of the G20.

During the President Elect Training Seminar (PETS) organized by Rotary District 2360 in Gothenburg on 11 March, Amina Ahmed (Class XX) delivered an insightful speech on the Rotary Peace Fellowship program and the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center. It was an informative session that shed light on this important Rotary International program. The photo below features Amina with Lena Ekman, who is a Past District Governor in 2360 at Rotary International.



Photo credit: Lena Ekman

On 25 and 26 March, Catalina Robayo (Class XX) and Davis Makori (Class XXI), as ambassadors for District 2320, attended the 2320 District Conference at Härnösand. Catalina presented on the Colombian Truth Commission and Davis on the collaboration for peace between grassroots civil society and International NGOs.



In late March, Davis Makori attended the Rotary Club breakfast for Rotary Club Aros (D2350) where he gave a talk on his work in collaborations and partnerships for peace.



Davis Makori

On 24 April Cynthia Abazie (Class XX) was invited to speak at the Rotary Mariefred Club on the topic of early-warning systems. In her presentation, Cynthia provided valuable insights into the significance of strengthening these systems and the practical tools available for conflict early-warning. She also shared her own experiences working in Ghana at the West African Network for Peacebuilding. There, she supported the early-warning team in preventing conflict and monitoring trigger events in conflict-prone areas.



Kjell Kristiansen, President of Rotary Club Mariefred thanking the guest speaker, Cynthia Abazie, for honouring the event and for her presentation.

Katherine Ronderos (Class XXI) visited the Rotary Club Carolina Rediviva in Uppsala on 27 April. As a passionate advocate for women, peace, and security in Colombia, she had the opportunity to share with the club members her professional experiences on these topics.



Katherine at Rotary Club Carolina Rediviva (Uppsala)



Katherine and Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen at Rotary Club Carolina Rediviva

On 24 May, Cynthia Abazie (Class XX) attended the Rotary Peace event 'En kväll för freden' hosted by Båstad Rotary Club in Southern Sweden. The President of the Club, Angelica Persson, invited her to speak about the organization of Rotary International Peace Centers. In her presentation, she gave an overview of the Rotary Peace Centers and emphasized the importance of the Rotary Peace Fellowship program. She explained how the fellowship had positively influenced her life by equipping her with critical research and interpersonal skills. Angelica Persson stated that "We feel humble when we understand what these young Rotary Peace Fellows are willing to use their lives for, and we truly want to wish Cynthia Abazie and her Peace Fellows all good with their important work worldwide."



Photo credit: Angelica Persson

In late May, Class XX ventured into an exciting excursion to the Western Sweden, thanks to the kind support of Rotary District 2380 and the Rotary Clubs of Gränna and Hjo. The trip allowed them to explore the region’s stunning landscape and visit popular tourist attractions, including a picturesque beach. As Peace Fellow Cynthia Abazie puts it, “The trip provided an opportunity to interact closely with Rotarians in a less formal space. Additionally, I was able to make new friends and build great networks in the countryside. Furthermore, the visit created an opportunity to bond with the other Class XX Fellows outside the academic environment.”



Class XX Fellows with members of the Rotary Clubs in Gränna and Hjo.

Amina Ahmed (Class XX) received an invitation to attend the Rotary Multi-District Conference D-2231 Poland and D-1940 Germany in Szczecin on 12-14 May. She delivered a motivational speech regarding her experiences at the Rotary Peace Center at Uppsala University.



From left: Rotary District 2231 Governor Piotr Jankowski (Poland); Rotary District 1940 Governor Jessika Schweda (Germany); Peace Fellow Amina Ahmed; Past District Governor in 2360 at Rotary International, Lena Ekman; Rotary International Director Elect for Zones 30 and 31, Elizabeth Usovicz; 2020-21 Rotary International president, Holger Knaack.



Amina and 2020-21 Rotary International president, Holger Knaack

CLOSING CEREMONY

The Uppsala Rotary Peace Center congratulates our Class XX Fellows for completing their Master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies on 2 June. Their unwavering commitment to promoting peace and conducting valuable research is truly admirable and highly valued by the staff at the Center and the Department of Peace and Conflict Research (Uppsala University). We are grateful for their significant contributions throughout the past two years and wholeheartedly wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. Their master's theses have been successfully approved, covering the following topics.

Amina Adhan Ahmed (Kenya): WE WILL NOT BE SILENCED: How International Actors Bolster Women's Movements' Push for Strong Gender Provisions

Bernabé Daniel Martínez Carranza (Mexico): Attitudes Towards Forcibly Displaced People in Conflict Exposed Host Communities: An Analysis in Ethiopia

Maria Catalina Robayo (Colombia): Human Rights Defenders in Colombia: Adaptive mobilization as a tool for territorial peace during the post-conflict

Noha Yasser (Egypt): Hydro-political Security Complexes and the Role of International Organizations in Bringing Cooperation or Conflict to Shared Transboundary Rivers

Megan Dumas (USA): "What can you offer them here that they don't have in the bush?": Exploring the impact of targeted sanctions on conflict-related sexual violence

Ugochi Cynthia Abazie Abang (Nigeria): PUSHING OPEN THE DOORS OF INCLUSION: Examining the Connections between Women's Movements/Groups Cohesion in Civil Resistance and Securing Inclusion in Formal Peace Negotiations



Class XX from left: Amina Ahmed, Cynthia Abazie, Megan Dumas, Daniel Martínez, Catalina Robayo and Noha Yasser



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

By Liana Lopes, Center Coordinator

I feel privileged to have been involved in the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center from the very beginning in 2011. Throughout my time working with the Fellowship program, I have been fortunate to witness numerous remarkable events. However, the most rewarding aspect of my work with the Center is the chance to connect with and learn from incredibly talented young individuals who are dedicated to promoting peace.

One of the fellows from our inaugural class (2012-2014), Nick Tobia, continues to be a source of inspiration for me. Nick is a graduate of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research Master's program. In a recent meeting, he graciously shared with me his incredible journey and expressed his deep gratitude towards Rotary. He also fondly recalled his time in Uppsala. The following text is a brief overview of his professional journey, highlighting key moments and achievements that he shared with me.

Prior to his time in Uppsala, Nick worked in public policy at the human rights commission in the Philippines, and in human rights development aid at The Asia Foundation. While his professional focus was on human rights, it was his experiences in handling human rights violations within the context of counter-insurgency that led him to pursue peace research.

During his time at Uppsala University, Nick wrote his master's thesis on framing the regional human rights framework of Southeast Asia as a non-traditional security issue, which led to a role as a senior officer at the ASEAN intergovernmental commission on human rights in Jakarta. He also contributed to the first issue of the student journal of the DPCR, *Pax et Bellum*, in which he explored the topics of dissent to peace negotiations and the political legitimacy of spoilers to the Philippine's Bangsamoro peace process. He developed this topic into a PhD dissertation where he explored agonistic peace and the contradictory political ontologies of democratically ratifying peace agreements. He recently completed his PhD dissertation at the National Centre for Peace & Conflict Studies at the University of Otago in New Zealand, a peace center with deep ties with the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University.



Nick remains a human rights professional, and currently works as consultant of the British Council in implementing the Governance in Justice Programme, the flagship justice reform initiative of the EU in the Philippines. He also works in social impact data analytics, and credits Kåre Vernby, his methods professor at Uppsala University, for sparking a deep interest in social science statistics and big data methodologies. One of Nick's first applications of his degree from Uppsala was the development of a large, date-stamp database methodology to measure efficiency of criminal proceedings in the trial court system - a methodology adopted by the Philippine supreme court. He continues to work very closely with the justice sector, with a deep focus on jail decongestion and protecting the rights of detainees and prisoners.


One of his best memories of Uppsala is the freedom of bike commuting, which had left a lasting impression on him: "I still commute by bicycle today, cycling through the streets of tropical Manila, like a misplaced Swede, on an upright, step-through bike very much like the Swedish bikes parked by the river along Östra Ågatan."


ABOUT THE UPPSALA ROTARY PEACE CENTER

Since 2011, the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University has hosted one of the seven Rotary Peace Centers worldwide. Students from around the world can apply for Rotary scholarships to the Master's Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies. The Uppsala Rotary Peace Center selects and educates Rotary Peace Fellows to have a significant, positive impact on peace and conflict resolution in their future careers.

Stay updated on the Fellows, hear about special events, and learn more about the Rotary Peace Fellowship online or contact us at the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center website: www.pcr.uu.se/education/uppsala-rotary-peace-center/

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