**Joint meeting with Rotary Peace Fellows and Representatives of Districts 1980/1990 (Switzerland & Liechtenstein) and 1710/1780 (France)**

Geneva Center for Security Policy, 12 April 2018

Draft Report

**Background and Goal of the meeting**

The meeting was organized as follow-up to the Rotary Day at UN/Geneva 2017 on the theme “Peace – Making a Difference”. Many participating Rotarians expressed the wish that Geneva may also in the future be a focal point for Rotary’s peace activities. Certain thought to suggest TRF to open a Rotary Peace Center in Geneva. However, a few week ago the “Peace Center Future Planning Committee” recommended to the Board of Trustees of TRF that new Peace Centers should be opened in Africa and Asia, but not in Europe. Thus, the question arises, how can Rotary take advantage of the knowledge and expertise available in Geneva without creating a Rotary Peace Center? The objective of the meeting was to discuss with Peace Fellows the relevance and possibilities to strengthen the role of international Geneva as a hub for Rotary’s Peace activities and to further cooperation between Rotary Peace Centers and Geneva-based international governmental and nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions.

To prepare the meeting a Rotary Geneva Peace Team (RGPT) was established. Together with the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP) the idea of an annual Rotary Summer **C**ourse in **A**dvanced **P**eace **T**raining (CAPT) was conceived (compare annex).

**Summing up of the discussions**

1. In their opening statements participating Rotarians underlined the importance of Rotary’s Peace activities as corner stone for all other activities and of their endeavor to facilitate and support strengthening the role of international Geneva in Rotary’s peace work. International Geneva is considered the most active location in the world in peace-making and conflict resolution activities. It plays a key role as:

* a connecting hub to all actors relevant for conflict and peace,
* a convening place to prevent or resolve violent conflict through dialogue and negotiation,
* a knowledge lab for evidenced-based research and practice,
* a docking station for everyone who is looking for non-violent solutions to violent conflicts.

The recommendation to open new Peace Centers in Africa and Asia but not in Europe was understood. It offers international Geneva the possibility to play more a horizontal ‘across-the-board’ role in supporting and strengthening Rotary’s activities in the focus area Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution.

1. Participating Peace Fellows welcomed the opportunity to exchange with Rotarians their experiences and needs after their training courses at Rotary Peace Centers. They all expressed gratitude for the generous Rotary scholarships but regretted that their acquired experiences were not more valued in Rotary’s peace projects. Some mentioned a certain feeling of ‘being abandoned’ by Rotary after their training, with difficulties to find stable job opportunities and possibilities to put their experiences into practice. Here several interesting suggestions were made, amongst others:

* the creation of a performant network of Peace Center Alumni with a lively Website and blogs on interesting subjects;
* the creation of a platform or portal to preserve, in digital form, all the work undertaken by these fellows over the past years, at great cost, to serve as a reference source for future work, with a modern data retrieval system with key-words.

It is to be noted that nobody mentioned the important role of the “Alumni Relations Senior Supervisor” at Rotary International nor the “Rotarian Action Group for Peace”.

1. The idea of a Geneva Rotary Summer Course in advanced Studies on Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution (CAPT) was welcomed. There is clearly a need for advanced training after the courses at a Rotary Peace Center. Rotary Peace Fellows are not only interested to be beneficiaries but willing to contribute with their knowledge and experiences to building such courses. GCSP having the same approach: “bringing together knowledge and experience” could be an ideal partner for a Rotary CAPT in Geneva if it succeeds in bringing in other partners.
2. Regarding an eventual Geneva Rotary CAPT the following proposals were made:
   * A Summer Course during 8 to 10 weeks was considered too long. Most Peace fellows are working and cannot afford to spend so much time for an advanced training.
   * The audience should not be limited only to Rotary Peace Fellows but be open to other participants having similar experiences.
   * Rotarians should have a possibility to follow at least certain events. Rotary international should have an interest that its work for Peace is better known within the Rotary family and even further afield.
   * The focus should be more on exchanges of practical experiences and less on pure knowledge transfer. Peace Fellows would like to be contributors to a CAPT and not only beneficiaries.
   * Possible modules for a CAPT:

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| Prosed Contents by GRPT/GCSP | Remarks by Peace Fellows |
| Leadership for Peace | Very important, if based on practical experiences |
| New approaches to Conflict Prevention | Interesting, again if such a module would be based on practical experiences |
| Humanitarian Assistance – Optimizing the Impact | Interesting if organized with partners such as ICRC, IFRC, OCHA, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CH- Centre), etc. |
| Mediation: Inclusivity & Legitimacy | Transfer of knowledge and experience of mediation techniques are considered essential |
| Rule of Law: Transitional Justice and Security Sector reform | Include also Human Rights and address problems of human rights defenders and work out practical solutions |
| Strategic Foresight, Crisis Management & Decision-making | Very important |
| Media & Arts for Peace, Strategic Communication | These are two different subjects and should be dealt with in two different modules. The role of new media and social networks were stressed |
| Case Studies, Conclusions, Evaluation | Visits to Geneva based organizations should be foreseen |
| Others | As missing, the following themes were indicated: gender, migration, intercultural work, importance of Peace as a subject in schools, etc. |

* A CAPT could either be based on several modules or on a singular theme such as: Gender and Peace, Migration and Peace, Education for Peace, etc.
* A CAPT should be organized in partnership with other international organizations, NGOs, foundations and even companies from the private sector. Specifically mentioned were e.g. the UN High Commissioners for Refugees and Human rights, ICRC and IFRC (Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), organizations working together in the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, etc.
* A CAPT should not only have as objective a transfer of knowledge and experiences but also organize internships and job dating between participants and services of Human Resources of several international organizations, NGOs, foundations, companies from the private sector proposing internships and/or jobs.

1. The importance of partnership of Rotary with other Geneva based actors for Rotary’s activities in the focus area Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution was underlined by several speakers.
2. Many Peace Fellows suggested that they would like to be more involved in Rotary Peace Projects and suggested even to launch a joint project of some Rotary Peace Fellows, even to make joint projects on a specific annual theme.

**Conclusions and Suggestions**

Rotarians present at the meeting were very much impressed by the knowledge and the commitment of Rotary Peace Fellows. After this meeting they felt mandated by the participating Peace Fellows to support them in their activities and to contribute in the huge investment that Rotary makes in its Peace Fellows so as to provide the biggest possible ‘return’ or impact for Peace and Conflict prevention and resolution. It is evident that all these suggestions cannot be implemented in an annual Rotary Geneva CAPT, but an annual CAPT could be a focal point to implement many of the ideas and suggestions expressed. The Geneva Rotary Peace Team may be considered as steering group for all Geneva based activities in this context.

The following proposals could be considered for implementation:

1. Organization of an annual Geneva Rotary CAPT in collaboration with other partner institutions. The timeframe must be defined. 8 weeks are too long.
2. The CAPT could either be organized around a single theme treated in several modules or as a basket with different themes addressed in different modules.
3. The CAPT should be open to any young professional wishing to specifically upgrade his/her knowledge of conflict resolution, mediation and sustaining Peace.
4. Rotary Peace Fellows should be associated to the preparation of a CAPT and be as much contributors as beneficiaries.
5. Others
6. involved should be consulted, in advance, as to the relevance, suitability and usefulness of the content of the course modules.
7. Non-Rotary sponsored participants at the CAPT would have to pay a financial contribution covering the costs of their participation.
8. At the end of each CAPT a public event for Rotarians and Non-Rotarians would be organized to publicize the results and seek support for future courses.
9. In parallel to the CAPT internships and job dating between participants and services of Human Resources of several international organizations, NGOs, foundations, companies from the private sector proposing internships and/or jobs to them could be organized.
10. Every second year the Rotary Geneva CAPT could be organized together with an alumni-meeting of Rotary Peace Fellows.
11. Rotary Peace Fellows should be invited to present events at the annual Geneva Peace week to inform a broader public about their experiences.
12. At GCSP a staff position could be created to organize, in collaboration with the GCSP leadership and the Rotary Geneva Peace Team (RGPT), the various events. The incumbent would also oversee in close cooperation with the “Alumni Relations Senior Supervisor” at Rotary International the Rotary Peace Center Alumni network and the creation and management of the relevant website and portal/platform. GCSP could probably offers facilities and integrate the incumbent into its team as a GCSP-Fellow.
13. The Rotary Club Genève International (RCGI) could be international partner of various projects implemented in the focus area Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution in collaboration with Rotary Peace Fellows. RCGI would be supported by the RGPT which includes representatives of districts willing to support such projects and the CAPT.
14. The Geneva activities must be coordinated, if not integrated in the Rotarian Action Group for Peace which is an action-driven group of Rotarians and Rotaractors working together for advancing peace and preventing conflicts throughout the world. The Rotarian Action Group for Peace was formed in 2012 as a group of Rotarians, recognized by Rotary International, focused on providing a network and resources to further the peace and conflict resolution work of Rotarians around the globe.

**Funding**

Funding certainly needs further discussion. Rotary’s involvement could be supported by Rotarians, Rotary clubs and districts, individuals and foundations. European districts could be encouraged to allocate some of their District Designated Funds (DDF) to support the Rotary Geneva CAPT. Whether the instrument of Global Grant Scholarships could be used has to be clarified with TRF. Non-Rotary participants should probably be financed by other sources or other participating institutions.

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