



# In Focus



## THE PEACEMAKERS

**P**REPARE TO BE INSPIRED. You're about to meet five people who are committed to making the world a more peaceful place. They're part of a growing network of participants from two programs: Rotary World Peace Fellowships and Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies. So far, 194 have completed their studies and ventured into the world to put what they've learned into practice. About 130 more are currently enrolled in the two programs. The Rotary Foundation, which selects the scholars and gives them funding, hopes that in time, alumni will occupy key decision-making positions in governments and organizations around the world and that together, they'll make a difference. As the five people in the following pages prove, the future is looking bright. >>



## The students

*Peace fellows are typical students with extraordinary aims*

Photos by Monika Lozinska-Lee



To find out what life is like for Rotary World Peace Fellows, Senior Editor Tiffany Woods spent five days shadowing three of them at Duke University and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC). Here's a glimpse at their motivations, aspirations, and their lives inside and outside the classroom.

### ► 11 a.m. Thursday 28 September

"Today, we are going to be speaking Arabic only – English is banned to enter the classroom," Professor Nasser Isleem tells the 23 students in his beginning Arabic class at UNC. Then he hands out their graded midterm exams.

Shai Tamari, a first-year Rotary World Peace Fellow, gets 94½ points. "There'll be peace after all in the Middle East," he jokes. A Jewish man born in Jerusalem, Tamari hopes that by studying Arabic, he'll be able to help find a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Tamari, who's majoring in global history with a special-

ization in conflict resolution and Arabic, is already making strides on an individual level. He has befriended classmate Mohammed Mallah, a Palestinian who's spent much of his life in the United States. The two engage in friendly jibes; humor is one way Tamari defuses tension.

As part of a vocabulary exercise, the professor hands out slips of paper containing Arabic words and phrases. Tamari and Mallah struggle to translate theirs. They finally get it, and Mallah uses their phrase, which means "is like," to write a sentence on the board in Arabic: *Shai is like a beautiful girl*. Highly enter-

**Taking note** Tamari aims to help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, so he's studying Arabic. "Communication is key," he says.

tained by their own mischief, the two try to contain their laughter as they wait for the professor to see the sentence.

Their friendship is a big deal. Tamari grew up in a society that taught him to feel superior to Palestinians. But as a child he never understood why he was supposed to feel that way. "I always felt something wasn't quite

kosher to hate Arabs for a reason I didn't understand," he says.

### ► 4:45 p.m. Thursday 28 September

A handful of students, including second-year peace fellow Stephanie Borsboom, are gathered around a table, listening to career advice from Frank Webb, who teaches a course on capac-

“ I found my passion. This is my way of changing a small piece of the world. ”



ity development at Duke University, located near UNC.

“Lesson number 1: You can take risks when you’re young, because you have the rest of your life to get it right,” he says.

Borsboom, 28, knows something about taking risks. In 2000, the Dutch native traveled to Nepal on an internship for her master’s degree in civil engineering. She was in the country to build a bridge, but when she saw the contrast

between her opportunities back home and those of the poverty-stricken Nepalese, she was inspired to change career paths. She has returned to Nepal several times, and a nonprofit organization she’s set up has funded the construction of 15 schools and about 1,000 toilets there.

But Borsboom wants to go even further. She plans to work for an international organization that helps people

in developing countries obtain essential needs like water, health care, and education. So she’s at Duke, majoring in international development policy with a specialization in peace and conflict resolution. That emphasis will complement her work, she says, because conflicts are often related to inequalities in access to basic needs.

“By addressing the delivery of services and infrastructure,

you can decrease the possibility of conflict,” she says.

### ► 3 a.m. Friday 29 September

First-year peace fellow Crisostomo “Jun” Bas is curled up on his living room floor with one book over his face and another under his arm. His laptop is on the coffee table next to him. He has fallen asleep preparing for a presentation he has to give on Sunday about the conflict over

the sovereignty of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. In four hours, his wife, Lynne, will wake him up.

Back home in the Philippines, Bas is a major in the army. He and Lynne lived with their two children in a gated military community. They had a chauffeur and two cars, plus a nanny to help around the house. Now on sabbatical from his army post, he and his family share a spartan apartment.

Like Borsboom, Bas is at Duke to study international development policy with a specialization in peace and conflict resolution. He wants to apply what he's learned to help the Philippine army implement new development strategies.

Bas, 40, has been in the military for almost half his life. In 1986, he enrolled in the Philippine Military Academy and graduated four years later.

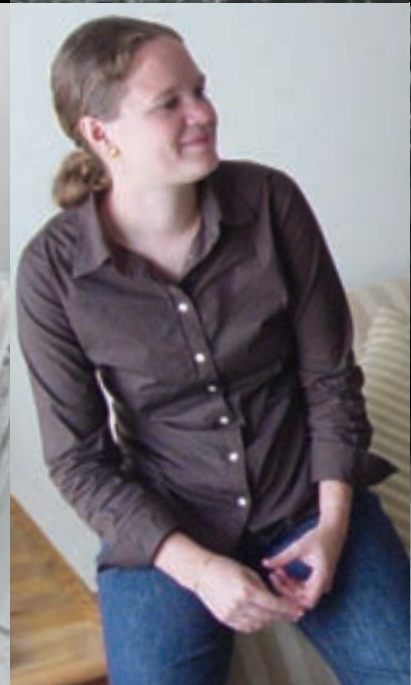
After he joined the army, he was deployed to rural areas to fight communist insurgents aiming to overthrow the government and implement land reform.

One day, after a battle in which the company he commanded killed several insurgents, he had an epiphany. On a mission to recover the rebels' corpses from the battle scene, Bas vomited as he looked at their bodies. "Why are we doing this?" he asked himself later. He realized he was fighting his own countrymen.

Bas creates doctrine manuals for the military and believes the Philippine army should be involved in developing communities on a sustainable level, which he says would curb the possibility of insurgents resurfacing. He says the army's



**Captivated audience** Professor Terry Barnett in front of his International Conflict Management class. Right: The Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke. Below: Bas and his son, Patrick; Borsboom at her apartment; Tamari at the building that houses the UNC office of the Rotary Center for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution.



SECOND FROM LEFT AND CENTER: TIFFANY WOODS/RI



**How you can help** The Rotary Foundation aims to raise US\$95 million by June 2015 to fund 120 Rotary World Peace Fellows every year. So far, about \$15 million has been raised. For information on how to donate, including special naming opportunities, e-mail [plannedgiving@rotary.org](mailto:plannedgiving@rotary.org) or call Eric Schmelling, the Foundation's director of planned and major gifts, at 847-866-4458.

current practice is to clear an area of insurgents, then carry out civil military operations, such as installing water pumps and building schools. But those projects, Bas says, are “short-sighted” and aren’t integrated into the community planning process. Bas wants to see the army become a strategist and middleman when it comes to development. He envisions it assessing a community’s needs, then channeling funds from donor agencies to it.

Bas says studying international development will give him the skills to implement this plan. He and two colleagues have already established a scholarship program to send 16 army personnel to the University of the Philippines to get master’s degrees in community development.

What’s the motivation behind all this? Bas simply says: “I just want to make a difference.”

► **4 p.m. Friday  
29 September**

You wouldn’t know it from the wrinkled cargo shorts and faded blue T-shirt he’s wearing, but Shai Tamari is pretending to be a conflict consultant advising Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh. He stands at a lectern in front of his international conflict management class, one of four core classes required for all peace fellows at Duke and UNC. It was designed specifically for the program, but other students can take the class as well.

Tamari stands behind a laptop as a PowerPoint presentation is projected onto a screen to his left. The 21 students seated in front of him make up his team.



Their job is to figure out whether Tamari should advise Haniyeh to persuade the Palestinian government to recognize the state of Israel.

After he gives an overview of the problem, Tamari talks about the obstacles that might color his thinking. "Because I was raised in Israel, I was raised with walls in my head," he says. "That's why it's important for me to talk to people who are not Jewish."

Growing up in Jerusalem, Tamari didn't know much about Arabs. He was busy watching TV shows like *Beverly Hills, 90210*. "I was only aware that I wasn't allowed to socialize with them," he says, adding that at age 12 or 13, he supported an anti-Arab party.

At 18, Tamari began his mandatory service in the Israeli military. "I wanted to go into it," he says. "I went into the paratroopers because it is considered somewhat elite." He had a hard time adjusting, though. As an only child, just sharing a room with other soldiers was something of a shock. "I was selfish and unpopular in my unit for the first six months," he admits.

But his eventual disenchantment with the military stemmed from a more serious factor. "I realized I didn't want to hurt people," he says. "I don't have the ability to confront someone with a weapon."

During his first month in uniform, Tamari's unit was ordered to man a checkpoint just outside their base in the West Bank. They were told to allow all cars to pass. At one point, a car with a Palestinian license plate drove up.

"One of the soldiers from my

unit walked to the center of the road, lifted his rifle, and aimed it at the driver," Tamari says. "The driver slammed on the brakes and stopped a few meters from the soldier. Neither of them spoke. The soldier then lowered his weapon and let the driver resume his journey. As the soldier returned to the side of the road, he wore a grin on his face. What bothered me most was that I did not speak a word. I was shocked. Until that time, I never thought Israeli soldiers abused Palestinians."

After three years in the army, Tamari found himself in the civilian world again, uncertain about what to do next. He moved to Australia, where his mother was living, and earned his bachelor's degree in journalism. Halfway through his studies, however, he realized he wanted to change paths. He had started reading Arab literature and trying to understand the Palestinian perspective for the first time, and he realized he wanted to work to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2006, he obtained his master's degree in Near and Middle Eastern studies from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

"I found my passion," Tamari says. "This is my way of changing a small piece of the world."

► **3:50 p.m. Sunday  
1 October**

Borsboom's apartment smells like a bakery. She has made her famous Dutch *appelflappen*, or apple turnovers, for a potluck for faculty and students in her program. Ask just about any of her classmates, and they'll have



BOTTOM: TIFFANY WOODS

heard of her pastries. They think she's slaved over them, but her secret is simply opening a tube of ready-made croissant dough, adding apples and raisins, and sprinkling on some sugar.

Borsboom pulls them from

the oven as she chats with her roommate, Carsyn Gu. "My brother phoned me," Borsboom says. "I said, 'I'm baking *appelflap*.' He said, 'You? In the kitchen?'"

As Borsboom wraps the pastries in foil, she turns to Gu, who's



### What are Rotary World Peace Fellowships?

The Rotary World Peace Fellowships program allows students to obtain master's degrees at one of seven universities located in Argentina, Australia, England, Japan, and the United States. Since the first fellows began their studies in 2002, The Rotary Foundation has awarded about 60 Rotary World Peace Fellowships each year.

Participants can pursue a degree in any field related to peace and conflict resolution, including health care, nutrition, education, human rights, development, and social work. Students must take two to four Rotary-approved courses and participate in an internship or conduct field research. Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to peace and international understanding through their personal and community service activities or academic and professional achievements. Find information and applications in Downloads at [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org).

from China, and says, "So, we do the outsourcing joke?" It's a spiel they've perfected. Borsboom explains: "We say, 'The Dutch are outsourcing labor to cheap-labor countries, so I outsourced the *appelflap* to Carsyn.'"

When Borsboom and Gu arrive at the potluck, they're joined by Amr El-Gundi, a peace fellow who was born in Kuwait. El-Gundi is fasting for the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. He can't eat until the

**What's cookin'?** Borsboom shows her roommate how to make her famous *appelflappen*. Below: Books by Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Jeffrey Sachs line Borsboom's bookshelf.

sun sets at 7 p.m., so this potluck is a true test of his willpower. As they walk toward the tables, he catches the smell of meat on a barbecue. "Oh, they have grills," he groans, bracing himself for the temptation.

Fabiola Rueda, a Duke student and Honduran Rotaractor, walks up to Borsboom and cuts to the chase. "Where's the *appelflap*?" she asks.

#### ► 2:30 p.m. Monday 2 October

"The topic for this afternoon will be deliberative culture."

Borsboom sits in a chair, her chin resting in her hand. She and 10 other students, including several peace fellows, are arranged in a semicircle around Professor Jürg Steiner, who teaches a class at UNC on democracy in divided societies.

"Deliberation is an extremely complex topic," he says. Borsboom hunches forward as Steiner talks about bargaining, fixed preferences, and motives.

"Now, what is the deliberative model?" he asks rhetorically. "The first aspect is participation at the citizen level. The second aspect is justification. A third is truthfulness."

At the break, Steiner asks Borsboom whether she understood a reading assignment. Borsboom admits she didn't fully grasp it. "I have no background in politics," she explains. "It's very theoretical."

"What was your major?" Steiner asks.

"Civil engineering."

#### ► 4:30 p.m. Monday 2 October

Steiner's class ends, and Borsboom walks with peace fellows Ana Salazar Manzur and David Chick to a bus stop to catch the shuttle back to Duke. Borsboom is already thinking about the assignment for her Evaluation of Public Expenditures class on Tuesday. She also has an assignment due Wednesday for Reinventing Government for 21st-century Development, and somewhere she has to find time to prepare a prospectus for her master's project before a meeting with her adviser on Thursday.

"So you have just one graph," Borsboom explains to Chick, discussing the public expenditures assignment as they walk. "The right axis is with percentages, and the left one is with dollar value. You can only base one series on the right one and then more series on the left one."

As they walk, the sun casts early evening shadows onto the red brick paths. The autumn leaves are starting to change. Squirrels drop acorns from oak trees. Students walk to and from class, talking on cell phones, laughing with friends, shouldering backpacks. Others ride bikes or sit on the grass and read. The day is coming to an end, and tomorrow will mean one more deadline met, one more book read, another paper written, another day closer to graduation – and another step toward making the world a better place. ■



## The survivor

*A Rotary World Peace Fellow's journey out of Cambodia's violent past*

by Tiffany Woods

**P**ath Heang went from toiling in the rice fields in Khmer Rouge labor camps to working for the World Bank. Along the way, he was separated from his family, battled hunger, was jailed for studying English, and survived in the unfamiliar city of Phnom Penh with only US\$30 in his pocket. Here's how he beat the odds.

► **1969** Just a baby, frightened and alone, Heang wails after bombs fall on his village. His panic-stricken mother has fled with his siblings, but he lies forgotten. When his mother realizes she has left him, it's too risky to return. She must wait until late in the day, after the soldiers have left her Cambodian village, called Pong-ror. The Vietnam War is spilling over the border, and the situation is terrifying. When she does return, she finds her baby quiet, unable to cry anymore.

"That was the beginning of my exposure to violence," Heang says, 37 years later.

► **1975** A few hours ago, six-year-old Heang was playing happily with other boys in the labor camp where he was just brought by the Khmer Rouge. But now he wants to go home.

The Vietnam War has ended, and the Khmer Rouge has seized power, forcing everyone to work in the rice fields as part of a violent plan to impose a communist system that eliminates the bourgeoisie. Heang soon learns that children who cry or disobey are beaten. Over the next three years, he stays in several camps and toils in rice fields, digs canals, collects dung for fertilizer, and herds cattle. One day,

**Standing out** Heang, who studied in Australia on a fellowship from The Rotary Foundation, disembarks from a ferry on Cambodia's Tonle Sap Lake.







“ How I worked my way to where I am today is because of struggle, commitment, determination, and support from others, including The Rotary Foundation. ”

some of the cows wander off, and as a punishment, he is tied to a tree covered with biting ants.

In the camps, Heang works more than 10 hours a day but receives only two meals of soup and watery rice porridge. Aching with hunger, he eats insects. He owns just one pair of pants, a shirt, and a scarf. He sleeps on the ground or on a makeshift bamboo bed. If he gets sick, no one will take care of him.

One night, young Heang awakes to find himself held tightly in a woman's arms. Warm and content for once, he drifts back to sleep. In the morning, the woman is gone, but he finds some warm leaves, boiled with salt, wrapped in a scarf. The woman never returns.

"I did not know she was my mother," Heang explains.

► **1978** Vietnamese troops are pushing farther into Cambodia. Occupied with fighting the invaders, the Khmer Rouge can no longer control the labor camps. People flee, braving the shooting, bombs, and chaos to locate their families. On foot, they carry just enough to survive, and one by one, family members find their relatives – that is, those who haven't died from abuse, starvation, overwork, or disease.

► **1979** Heang, now 10 years old, is finally reunited with his mother, but he feels no attachment to her. His years in the labor camps have made him forget what it means to have a parent. Eventually, he and his mother find his two sisters.

Heang learns that his mother was the woman who had given him the leaves in the camp. She

had found him as she was passing through his camp with her work group, en route to another camp. Heang has never asked her why she didn't identify herself. They don't want to talk about some things, even after all these years.

► **1981** The village children are sitting in the home of Heang's family in Pongror, listening to a teacher who has come to tutor them in math. During the day, Heang attends the village primary school: a blackboard under a big tree.

The teacher tells the students that he once saw a man from the West in the capital city of Phnom Penh. The man, the teacher says, had a long beard and long hair. He studied birds and could understand what they were saying.

Heang listens, captivated, his mouth open. The others in the room laugh at him because he is so fascinated by the story. "Why didn't he cut his hair and beard?" Heang asks. The teacher tells him the man was too busy with his studies to cut it.

On another night, the teacher mentions something else that catches Heang's attention. He says that if the students study hard, when they're older, the government will give them money to study in another country.

"Those two stories changed my life," Heang says.

► **1986** On the third floor of an abandoned, roofless building, a group of students are secretly teaching themselves English. Cambodia's communist regime forbids English, which it associates with capitalism and Western society. Now

a high school student, Heang already knows some English words from containers of cooking oil, fish, and corn provided by UNICEF.

This is the third clandestine "classroom" Heang and his friends have used for their English lessons. Police discovered two earlier hide-outs and jailed the students for several nights. Tonight, the moon is out, so they can see well enough to write English words on the white walls with charcoal. On nights when the clouds cover the moon, they practice conversing in English instead.

► **1993** It's 11 a.m., and Heang is sitting in front of a house in Phnom Penh, hoping to run into a friend. It's his first day in the capital. He's been working as a teacher for the past few years, but now he will study at the Royal University of Phnom Penh. He has US\$30, two changes of clothes, a few books, and nowhere to live.

Six hours later, Heang still hasn't seen his friend, but a man has told him that he'll never make it alone in the city with just \$30.

► **2002** Sitting at his desk in the Cambodian office of the Working Group for Weapons Reduction, Heang is handed an envelope marked with the Rotary emblem. Trembling with excitement, he opens it, reads the letter inside, and jumps to his feet. He has been accepted at the Rotary Center for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution at the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. Unable to concentrate on work, Heang





**Helping his country** Before working at the World Bank, Heang was a research and policy officer at the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, where he helped bring together representatives of political parties, nongovernmental organizations, and the government to prevent and resolve election disputes. At the International Labour Organization in Cambodia, he was part of a team that established mechanisms to resolve labor disputes. When he was at the Working Group for Weapons Reduction in Cambodia, he helped persuade Cambodians to turn in their weapons, left over from three decades of fighting, to authorities for destruction and safe storage. Working for Caritas Australia in Cambodia, he developed a primary school curriculum and helped farmers increase their crop production.

goes outside and walks around the block, imagining his future.

Finally, his efforts have paid off. Since graduating from college in 1997, he's applied for scholarship after scholarship, hoping to study abroad. Now, his luck has changed. When he was a student, Heang had met an Australian named Ross Macindoe, who was working in Cambodia. Heang told Macindoe that he wanted to study peace and development so he could help Cambodians reconcile after their civil war, which had ended in 1991 after more than 20 years. When he returned to Australia, Macindoe learned that The Rotary Foundation had recently launched its Rotary World Peace Fellowships program, and he encouraged Heang to apply.

► **2003** When Heang's airplane touches down in Brisbane, a Rotarian host counselor is there to greet him. In the days that follow, his host helps him find a place to stay, set up a bank account, and figure out the public transportation system. Initially overwhelmed by the size of the university, Heang perseveres, tackling courses in conflict analysis, international relations, arms control and disarmament, and research methods. The program is demanding, and he still struggles with English. But in November 2004, he receives his advanced master's degree in international studies with a specialization in peace and conflict resolution.

► **2006** Deep within a dense, quiet forest in Cambodia, Heang is interviewing a farmer

about a land dispute. A government official has illegally seized the farmer's land, and Heang is trying to figure out exactly what happened.

Now employed by the World Bank, Heang is working on a project called Justice for the Poor that aims to find ways to resolve disputes over land ownership and natural resource management outside the courts, which are widely viewed as corrupt. Less than 20 percent of the private land in Cambodia carries a title, so when people who were displaced by the Khmer Rouge try to reclaim their families' land, most have no proof of ownership.

So Heang ventures into forests and rice paddies to study disputes, interviewing witnesses, authorities, and neighbors. Because the incidents sometimes involve the rich and powerful – elected officials, for instance, or officers in the Cambodian army – the work can be dangerous. It would be easy for Heang to have an “accident” or to simply disappear into the forest.

Back at the office, Heang uses what he learned in Brisbane to analyze the information gleaned from his interviews. He recommends strategies for resolving disputes to representatives of both government and nongovernmental organizations, who can then design programs and policies to address the issues he's identified.

“I'm happy because I'm in a place where I really want to be,” Heang says. “I can connect to the local people and the national government. That's the place I wanted to be for many years.” ■



## The activist

*A Liberian turns to the Foundation for skills to build peace*

by Tiffany Woods

**G**et out! Come out with your hands in the air! We are the NPFL. If you don't do it, we will kill you. Come out! Come out!" It's 29 July 1990, and armed rebels with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia have surrounded 19-year-old Richelieu Allison's home on the outskirts of Monrovia.

The rebels are looking for government employees and people loyal to President Samuel Doe. Some of the fighters are just teenagers, awkwardly carrying AK-47s, M-16s, and hunting rifles and wearing ragtag clothes.

Along with his mother, three siblings, and two nieces, Allison walks out of the house, hands in the air. After searching the home, the rebels tell everyone to go back inside. The family spends the night listening to the sounds of their neighbors crying and shots being fired.

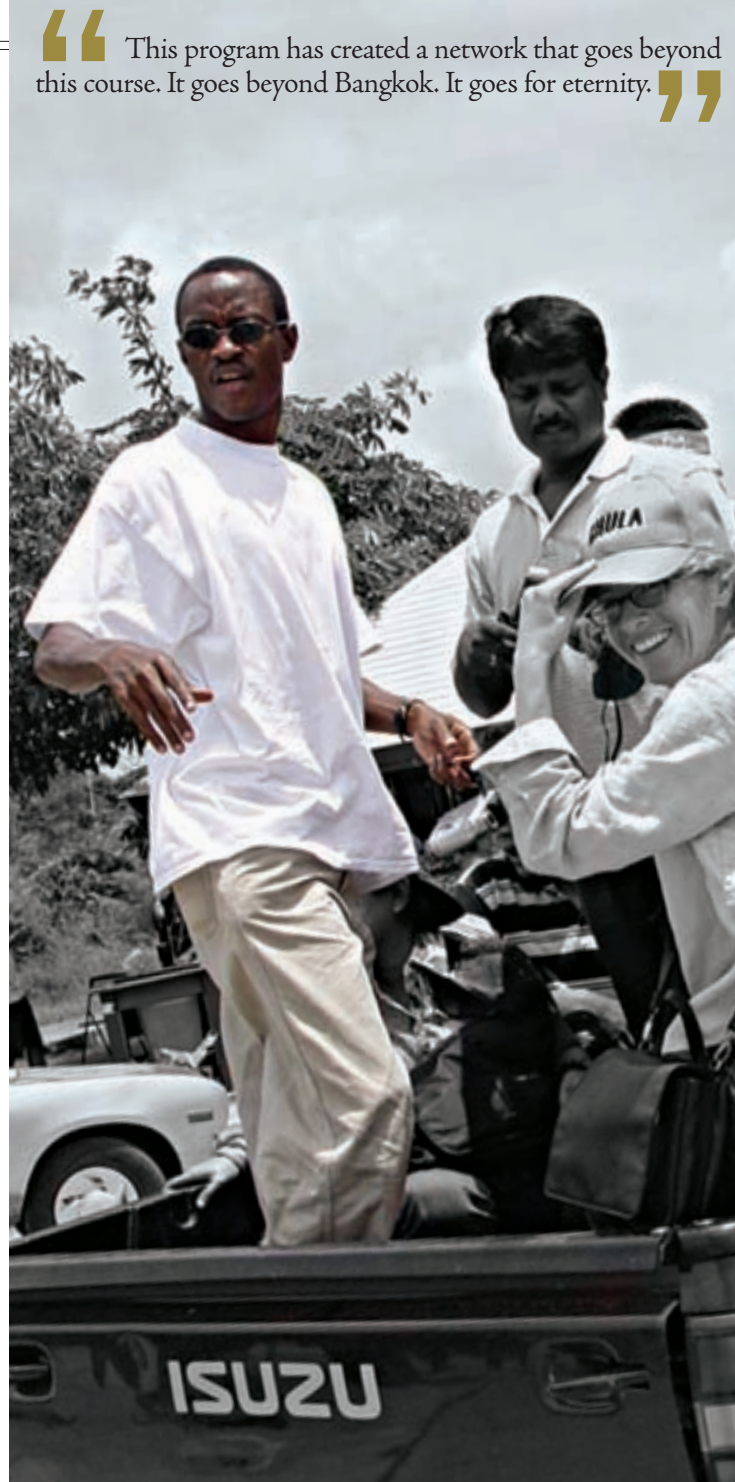
It would become the longest night of his life.

Over the next several months, he and his family experience the horrors of war. Unable to find

food and fearing for their safety as their town descends into anarchy, they walk 50 miles to a camp for displaced people, taking only what they can carry. Along the way, they pass through checkpoints, where soldiers look for citizens associated with the government and certain ethnic groups. Allison sees rebels pull people out of line and shoot them. He passes countless bodies, some devoured by dogs.

Eventually, another rebel group, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia, kicks everyone out of the camp. Allison and his family return to their home, only to find it's been looted.

Allison survived Liberia's 1989-96 civil war and, owing largely to the horrors he had wit-



**Hop in** Allison (far left) and classmates get on board to visit a dam in northeastern Thailand for their first field study on resource-based conflict.

nessed, became a peace activist. Today, he's the regional director of the West African Youth Network, a group that mobilizes and trains young people to restore peace and human rights in West

Africa. He's also a member of the first graduating class of the Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies program at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand.



### AN ACTIVIST IS BORN

Allison's career as an activist began in 1993, when he co-founded Voice of the Future, an organization that advocates for children's rights. In 1996, with support from UNICEF, Voice of the Future launched an effort to disarm child soldiers

in Liberia. In 1998, he helped launch a radio program that let children air their views on the issues affecting them.

That same year, Voice of the Future published a report that accused the Liberian government of training child soldiers at one of its military barracks.

"The government was not pleased with the report, and overnight we were branded as enemies," Allison says. "We had to run for our lives."

Allison fled to Côte d'Ivoire but returned to Liberia the next year. By then, the country and its neighbors were deep in an inter-

woven conflict. Sierra Leone was engaged in a civil war, and Liberia was caught up in a second civil war. Guinea was absorbing refugees from the two countries and was invaded by rebels in 2000.

Frustrated with the violence, Allison says he helped establish the West African Youth Network in 2001 to "ensure that youth get off the fence and participate in the restoration of peace and human rights." To dramatize the need for peace, Allison organized a hunger strike in Monrovia. About 100 young people staged the three-day strike in front of the embassies of Guinea and Sierra Leone. In October of that year, he led a delegation to encourage Liberian president Charles Taylor to meet with leaders from Guinea and Sierra Leone and put an end to the violence. In recognition of his efforts, the *Inquirer*, a Liberian newspaper, named Allison the 2001 Peace Promoter of the Year.

### ENTER ROTARY

Despite his achievements and honors, Allison felt he lacked the knowledge and training he needed to build peace more effectively. The Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies program, which he'd heard about online, put him on a path to gain that expertise. From July through September, he and 14 other students attended the intensive three-month program at Chulalongkorn.

Allison's excitement was palpable. A few weeks before he graduated, he called his mother from Bangkok and announced: "I'm coming back home with new skills." He says he learned the difference between conflict transformation and conflict



## What is the Rotary Peace and Conflict Studies program?

This three-month program, aimed at professionals working for governmental and nongovernmental organizations, was created as a specialized alternative to the one- to two-year master's degree program offered to Rotary World Peace Fellows. After completing the peace and conflict studies training, alumni are expected to return to their jobs and apply the skills they've learned.

Taught in English, classes are held at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. Two sessions are offered annually, and up to 30 participants are selected for each one. The first group, which comprised 15 students from 10 countries, started the program in July and graduated in September. The second group, consisting of 22 students, will graduate in March.

Each session includes academic courses and practical fieldwork. Students examine case studies, learn to diagnose the causes of conflicts, and acquire skills to mediate, negotiate, and communicate effectively. Chulalongkorn faculty members and international guest lecturers lead classes. The university awards graduates a certificate in peace and conflict studies. Get more information at [www.rotarychula.org](http://www.rotarychula.org) or Educational Programs at [www.rotary.org/foundation](http://www.rotary.org/foundation).

**Check it out** Allison and a classmate visit the Chulalongkorn University library. Bottom: Students discuss the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

management, his strengths and weaknesses as a communicator, and negotiation strategies.

Allison also learned to analyze conflicts. When he met Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the president of Sierra Leone, in 2003, the leader asked Allison what he thought was the main cause of the conflict between Liberia and Sierra Leone and how it could be resolved. At the time, Allison couldn't give a knowledgeable answer. Now, using the lessons

he learned in the program, he's writing a book that examines the conflict in Liberia.

Much of Allison's education took place outside the classroom. The students took field trips to areas facing ethnic and resource-based conflicts. In northeastern Thailand, they visited dams and conducted interviews to learn how the dams affected the environment and the local economy.

During their three months of studying, socializing, and eating

together, the students formed strong bonds. One of the program's aims is to inspire alumni to form an international network of peacebuilders, and Allison says he and members of his class have already discussed possibilities. One of his classmates suggested that the group join together to speak out on peace and human rights issues.

"This program has created a network that goes beyond this course," he says. "It goes beyond Bangkok. It goes for eternity."

In the final weeks of the program, Allison thought

about how he would put what he'd learned into practice. He planned to pass on his new knowledge to the staff and volunteers at the West African Youth Network and to encourage youth and women's organizations to incorporate conflict resolution and peace education into their agendas.

Allison also notes that the program has given him the tools and inspiration to confront the challenges ahead. "The training," he says, "has strengthened my resolve to continue to work for peace." ■