



# Caux Scholars Program

## Report 2013



Catherine, Kenya



Vanessa, Lebanon  
Lamiya, Azerbaijan



Hany, Egypt  
Tim, Canada  
Ihab, Sudan



Xeniya, Tajikistan  
Amaha, USA



Photo Credit: Eric Parsons

## Up the Mountain

For many Caux Scholars, the ‘Caux Experience’ begins months before they actually set foot on the historic and picturesque mountainside conference center. Applications, visas, finances, and travel plans are just some of the hurdles that scholars must overcome. Additionally, many scholars may face personal and spiritual battles before finally arriving, unaware of the transformative experience that lies before them.

As the train slowly climbs from Lake Geneva, the Scholars glimpse their first view of their new home for the next month. Breathtaking panoramic views unfold before them as they finally arrive at the Initiatives of Change Caux Conference Center. Distant

mountain peaks, lush valleys, bustling Swiss villages, and a serene lake are some of the features that adorn the scenic views from this mountainside perch. The overwhelming beauty of this surreal environment in many ways embodies the personal journey and transformation that many will embark upon while participating in the 2013 Caux Scholars Program (CSP).

**“What does it mean to transform from the inside out?”**

**- Dr. Carl Stauffer**

## WEEK 1: Conflict Analysis and Peacebuilding Basics

Trustbuilding exercises, group problem solving, and cooperation laid the foundation for team spirit. This generated an atmosphere of camaraderie and trust in which Scholars could have honest discussions about difficult and personal topics. Personal transformation was one of the pillars of the Caux Scholars Program, and Scholars are challenged to reflect on their own conflicts and embedded worldviews. Other highlights included a lesson on Identity, Culture, and Power Dynamics, setting the foundation for following coursework.

**“As I prepared my presentation, I followed a guide which made me look into deeper issues surrounding my conflict and speak to more people. I had to step out of my own biases to create a balanced presentation. In so doing, I changed the way I looked at it and my solutions. You leave CSP more aware of the world and how you can contribute an idea or a narrative around a particular conflict worldwide.”**

- Alex, Uganda



Dr. Stauffer during a plenary session of Healing History

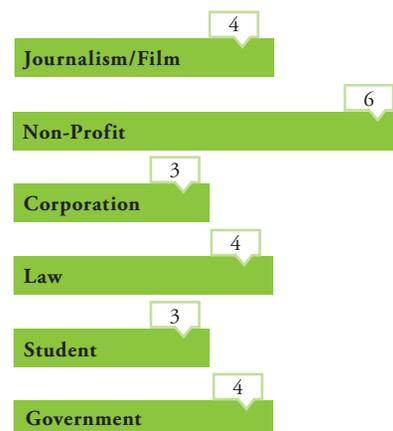
Initiatives of Change USA convened a conference in Caux entitled “Healing History: Overcoming Racism, Seeking Equity, Building Community”. Over 400 international participants focused on lessons learned and challenges in regards to racism around the world.

The Scholars assisted in hosting the conference. Some were part of a media team that provided streaming updates for the conference, while others were work group assistants, reporting on breakout sessions. Scholars provided valuable support and were reinvigorated to fight against racial injustice, social hierarchy, and discrimination.



The Scholars of 2013 enjoy the outdoor classroom

### Professions of the Class of 2013



## WEEK 2: Healing History Conference

**“I know that when we find common ground, learn to love the differences, and unite as a community that discrimination will be squashed.”**

- Dr. Maggie Hodgson, Canada

### Creating a New Dream

*“Our mandate was to explore the legacy of racism and provide constructive means to create inclusion. Politicians, faith-based leaders, students, grassroots activists as well as business leaders, and development practitioners from all over the world joined to share stories of hurt, healing, and peacebuilding – committing to our mandate.*

*From the opening plenary to the closing session, I learned concepts I never considered and shared my experience as a social entrepreneur working towards equity for women after prison. Dr. John Powell’s presentation on unconscious bias gave me something to consider; Mr. Algernon Austin challenged me to quantify the economic value of inclusivity; and former Minnesota State Senator Mee Moua inspired me to accept the importance I have as a woman of color in healing history.*

*The honest talks encouraged at Caux and the stories told must be expanded, yet without reflection, I don’t believe we can undertake this challenge. Overcoming racism and building community is a global initiative and it was my time at Caux which allowed me to see the issue fully. I am realizing ways to ensure my work doesn’t just heal history, but creates a new dream for the twenty-first century.”*

- Laurin, USA

“Caux is an amazing experience because it is rare to have such a wide range of people gathered in one place and the chance to connect with them on a personal level. A lot of the relationships developed were not during the lectures or workshops, but during community service. When everyone was working together, setting tables, doing dishes, washing vegetables, we were able to develop deep and strong bonds with people that we probably would not have otherwise met. For many of us, these are the moments we cherish most!”

- Amaha, USA



Rashad, Azerbaijan and Alex, Uganda in preparation for mock tribunal

## Reflection on Fear and Transformation

*“Participation in CSP has been a turning point in my life. I decided to apply for the program to present on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict which had a direct and tragic impact on my family and filled me with hatred towards Azerbaijanis. I believed that the only solution was war.*

*The most challenging moment was meeting with Azerbaijani participants, since I had never met Azerbaijanis before.*



Lamiya, Azerbaijan;  
Elina, Syria; Anush,  
Armenia

*During the first week I tried to overcome my fear of them and avoided conversation. The last two weeks, I started to concentrate on their personalities and feelings. I noticed my personal transformation every day, every hour, and every minute. I was finally living without fear and hatred – a calm and peaceful feeling. I discovered another person in me who dreamed of living in peace.*

*The lesson I got from CSP is my highest achievement. I realized that for Nagorno Karabakh and other conflicts, the best solution is hidden in us. Only personal transformation can help get rid of the hatred. I believe that is the only way to reach long-term peace, a task for the youth of Armenia and Azerbaijan.”*

- Anush, Armenia

## WEEK 3: Transitional Justice

After an informative day excursion to Geneva, visiting a peacebuilding NGO and the United Nations, the Scholars returned to Caux for a role-playing scenario entitled “The Tale of 2 Brothers”. Scholars became characters in a heart-wrenching journey of two families in a war-torn village who sought justice for the loss of one son at the hand of the other. This exercise allowed the Scholars to bring to life the theories and practices learned, revealing that restorative justice goes beyond traditional justice by not only assigning guilt, punishment, and compensation but bringing healing and restoration.

Dr. Stauffer’s vast experience in South Africa added additional practical exposure by teaching about the benefits of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions as well as the potential drawbacks of poorly executed Commissions. An International Criminal Court mock tribunal provided the scholars with new appreciation for the challenges of international contexts.

## WEEK 4: Dialogue and Reconciliation

The final week focused on establishing and facilitating effective dialogue groups. Guest lecturer Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer of American University equipped students with practical mediation techniques and modeling methods to guide dialogue groups through personal and sensitive topics.

His gentle spirit and experience working in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict made him engaging both inside and outside the classroom. Dialogue sessions led to personal revelations, challenged worldviews, and allowed greater understanding of other’s perspectives.



The Scholars with Dr. Abu-Nimer, Dr. Stauffer, and program staff

**“Dialogue is more than a good conversation and less than a structured negotiation.”**

**– Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer,  
Palestine/U.S.A.**

# 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 'Caux Experience' is about education and atmosphere, but most important, it is about people. Most Scholars expressed how they would cherish the friends and connections made along the way.

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 is. However, what makes CSP succesful is its ability to bring peacebuilders from all corners of the earth and all walks of life together to build a community of practice.



The rainbow of passports representing the Class of 2013

## What is the Caux Scholars Program?

Twenty-four scholars from 19 different countries brought a diversity of experiences and beliefs to this month-long intensive course. Through role playing, conference participation, teambuilding, classroom learning, and trustbuilding sessions, the Caux Scholars Program combines traditional education with practical application. It focuses on breaking down stereotypes, challenging worldviews, and equipping students with effective peacebuilding strategies. Academic Director Carl Stauffer of Eastern Mennonite University and the experienced staff design the coursework and extracurricular activities with four major themes, one for each week of the course.

Rigorous coursework is balanced with participation in the international Caux conferences and outings aimed at experiencing Switzerland, which allows the Scholars time to process and reflect upon the week's theme. The program's home is Caux Palace, a former luxury hotel from the early twentieth century, located 1000m above Lake Geneva and Montreux. The hotel was purchased through the sacrificial giving of a large group of Swiss families at the end of WWII, refurbished through voluntary labor, and opened as a conference center for the healing of relationships between people and nations, a role it continues to carry forward today.

LEADER  
GLOBAL  
COMMUNITY  
PEACE  
FRIENDS  
LEARN  
TRUST  
HOPE  
NETWORK  
EDUCATION

## Thank You to our Generous Donors

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If you are interested in contributing to the class of 2014, please contact the program.

Caux Scholars Program  
1003 K Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington DC, 20001, USA

Telephone: 202-872-9077  
Fax: 202-872-9137  
Email: [cauxsp@us.iofc.org](mailto:cauxsp@us.iofc.org)  
[www.cauxscholars.org](http://www.cauxscholars.org)

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.