

Rotary Global Grant Scholar Update

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Hello everyone! I hope you are staying safe and healthy. I wanted to give you an update on my experience thus far in my graduate program and experience as a Global Grant Scholar. When I first arrived in Israel for this master's program, I was very interested in the prospect of building upon my foundation of conflict resolution at a community level to the international arena. I had my heart set on taking a policy-centric approach professionally once I finish my studies and begin my career. With the program being interdisciplinary and multifaceted in nature, I was exposed to many different avenues of conflict resolution. One that unexpectedly struck a chord with me that I had not previously been exposed to was my Socio-Psychological Theories of Conflict Resolution course. I found it so fascinating that I chose to take Advanced Social Psychology in Conflict Resolution and Conflict Management during Spring Semester which just began last week. I am so grateful to have been afforded this experience which has helped me clarify my interests and the direction in which I want to take my academic and professional journey.

Most of my studies have taken place on Zoom, but we have had a few incredibly fascinating and informative field trips. On one of the trips, we went to the Gaza border to learn about the blockade and the many ways in which peoples on both sides are affected. We also went on a trip where we met the architect of the separation barrier wall between Israel and the West Bank and learned about its impact and implications. While our studies often utilize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a case study, we have also focused closely on the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. In my Political Approaches to International Conflicts course, my class put together a detailed policy recommendation report that will be disseminated to officials in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. It has been exciting to take what we have learned and apply it in a way that will be utilized for conflict management purposes. We also were recently told that this fall if the global pandemic situation is more stable, that there may be the possibility of a trip to conduct socio-psychological focused conflict resolution research in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. My initial thesis research proposal actually happened to revolve around conflict resolution-based research for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with a socio-psychological approach, so I am hoping that I will ultimately get to partake in this amazing opportunity.

When it comes to community engagement and connecting with my host Rotary club in Ramat Gan, due to the pandemic I have not yet been able to meet them in person. It has been a pleasure to tune into their Rotary meetings on Zoom, as well as virtual tours that they sponsor of various beautiful and historically rich parts of Israel. As of today, restrictions will be lifted for a great majority of the population who have been vaccinated, including myself and all of my classmates. I hope this will at last provide me the opportunity to connect in person with my host Rotary club and the community, attend classes in person, and further explore the beauty of this country. Despite the pandemic, this experience thus far has been absolutely life-changing and formative for me and I am so very appreciative to the Las Vegas Rotary Club, the Rotary Club of Ramat Gan, Rotary District 5300, and Rotary International.

I have attached photos from the two trips I mentioned, as well as another great highlight from my program. At the end of a rigorous two week UN certified International Mediation training workshop, we had an inspiring surprise guest, Dr. Arun Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, take the time to share wisdom with our class. Dr. Gandhi is a very prominent figure in the field of Conflict Resolution and Nonviolence, so it was an absolute honor to listen to him speak.



A wall near the Gazan border



The separation barrier between Israel and the West Bank



Dr. Arun Gandhi speaking to my class after successful completion of International Mediation training

