

# Building A Foundation for Promoting Peace-in-Action Within Rotary District 7680: A Retrospective View of the PCPR Committee Efforts and a Celebration of February, as Rotary's Month for Goodwill and Understanding



## A Global Peacebuilder District

*Peace comes from being able to contribute the best that we have, and all that we are, toward creating a world that supports everyone. ... It is also securing the space for others to contribute the best that they have and all that they are.*  
Hafsat Abiola

February is Rotary's Month for the celebration of *Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention, and Resolution (PCPR)*, one of its seven focus areas that encompasses the six others, namely: i) peacebuilding and conflict resolution, ii) disease prevention and treatment, iii) water, sanitation, and hygiene, iv) maternal and child health; v) basic education and literacy, vi) community economic development, and vii) environment.



These focus areas are at the core of Rotary's philosophy and belief that, in order to change lives constructively, as Rotarians we need to *serve above selves* in ways that allow us to positively contribute to goodwill and world understanding. To promote this imperative goal, at the onset of his 2021-2022 mandate leading the Rotary District 7680, DG Nico Iannelli:

- First, ensured that the district be recognized, once more, as a *Rotary Global Peacebuilder District* that continues its excellent practice of endorsing professionals or sponsoring Rotary Peace Fellows who then become catalysts for positive peace; and
- Second, strove to create and develop an environment that has the potential of fostering the emergence of the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention, and Resolution (PCPR) Committee.

Due to the collaborative orientation of District 7680 Rotarians and the service-above-self culture that permeates within the district membership, by the fall of 2021, more than a dozen Rotarians were part of the PCPR Committee. Currently, among the PCPR Committee members are Rotarians Nico Iannelli, Kamlesh (Kam) Chandan, Debra Corbett, Mike Walker, Tom Smith, Luther Moore, Firoz Peera, Sharon Heinrich, Kevin Kendrick, (Henry) H. Aktig, Wendy Barnhardt, Jennifer Gibson, Quanta Dawn-Light, Doyle George, Assaad Mounzer, and Yves-Renee Jennings.

**About the Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention, and Resolution (PCPR) Committee.** Anchored in the values of accountability, responsibility, collaboration, effective communication, respect, trust, and timely delivery of quality output, the Rotary District 7680 PCPR Committee seeks to help District 7680 Rotarians become knowledgeable about PCPR matters and understand why it is imperative to achieve sustainable positive peace. Based on its vision and mission, the PCPR Committee seeks to promote a systematic collaboration among its members, District clubs, Rotary International, Rotary Foundation, stakeholders, beneficiaries, external partners, and other concerned parties. Such a collaboration is key when developing projects and activities to help individuals, groups, or communities learn how to contribute to various efforts that foster the development of constructive societies or environments.

To carry out its work, the PCPR Committee has used Rotary's vision and resources, the knowledge and skills of District Rotarians as well as the guidance and information from the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) and the Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP). For instance, the IEP/Rotary Positive Peace Academy offers courses that can help Rotarians enrich their knowledge about positive peace. RAGFP's<sup>1</sup> resources provide guidance, standards and guidelines to help District clubs enhance their projects as they contribute to Rotary's mission of "*advancing world understanding, goodwill and peace*," regardless of the focus area. Efforts concerning the achievement of positive peace are anchored within IEP's eight-pillar framework which can guide Rotarians in their work with local and international groups and communities so they can strengthen the attitudes of their memberships, pertinent institutions and social structures in order to create an environment where positive peace and constructive development outcomes can be fostered and achieved.

**Positive Peace Versus Negative Peace.** With respect to peace, Johan Galtung (1969) asserts that *negative peace is the absence of direct violence* and does not guarantee that societal aspects are constructive within a given environment. Contrary to negative peace, positive peace exists where *direct, indirect and structural violences* are absent.<sup>2</sup> Within the context of positive peace, pertinent environments operate based on structures that promote justice, acceptance, and equity. Martin Luther King (1963) held similar views in his Birmingham Jail letter, where he highlighted that *negative peace is the absence of tension* and *positive peace is the presence of justice*.<sup>3</sup> IEP's seminal research gives us hope that positive peace is attainable if we consider its 2021 Global Peace Index report<sup>4</sup> findings which show that positive peace exists in countries such as Iceland, Norway, New Zealand, and Portugal. Related research highlights that certain necessary conditions are present in these countries; and IEP<sup>5</sup> captures these conditions through its eight-pillar framework. This framework rests on intersecting variables that need to be present within nations, communities, groups, institutions, organizations, or other related societal settings for their respective environments to enjoy positive peace. It is important to remember that the presence of these conditions cannot be negotiated because they impact the attitudes and behaviors of constituents and members that evolve within such societal settings. IEP's eight-pillar framework, which comprises the necessary conditions for a given system or setting to be positive-peace centric include:

- **Well-functioning Government** which is capable of delivering high-quality public and civil services, engenders trust and participation, demonstrates political stability, and upholds the rule of law.
- **Equitable Distribution of Resources** which helps related governing entities ensure equity in the access of resources such as education, health, and equity in income distribution.
- **Free Flow of Information** which empowers independent and constructive social media to disseminate information that provides greater knowledge and helps individuals, businesses, and civil society make better decisions. This condition can lead to better outcomes and more rational responses during times of crisis.
- **Good Relations with Neighbors** which promote peaceful interactions with other countries. This condition is key because it also helps foster good relations among groups within a country, and often with other countries. It is worth noting that countries with positive external relations are more peaceful. They are often more politically stable, have better functioning governments, are better integrated regionally, and have lower levels of organized internal conflicts.
- **High Levels of Human Capital** which helps develop and maintain a skilled society where it is imperative to educate the population to promote the constructive development of knowledge, thus improving social capital, economic productivity, care for the youth, and political participation.
- **Acceptance of the Rights of Others** which includes both the formal laws that guarantee basic human rights and freedoms; and the informal societal and cultural norms that relate to citizens' attitudes and behaviors. These factors are often proxies for tolerance within a society or a country with differing ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socio-economic groups. In this context, commitment to human rights and freedom are key characteristics of peaceful countries where this

condition deals with the acceptance of minorities, diversity of ethnic groups, genders, and foreigners; and the promotion of constructive societal attitudes and behaviors towards members of the society who have differing identities.

- **Low Levels of Corruption** which is essential because in societies with high levels of corruption, resources are often inefficiently allocated, a decision that often leads to a lack of funding for essential services, and results in civil unrest. Conversely, low levels of corruption usually enhance confidence and trust among and within institutions.
- **Sound Business Environment** which helps promote strong economies and formal institutions that support the operation of a vibrant private sector. Where this condition exists, business competitiveness and economic productivity usually prevail as can be observed in countries such as Iceland, Norway or New Zealand, which are currently among the most peaceful countries in the world, according to the 2021 IEP Global Peace Index report.



*The world would have been different today if we would have united for love, peace, [and] construction ... to support each other in building as allies to one another [thus] making this world a better place.*  
Aiyaz Uddin

**The Importance of PCPR, Goodwill and World Understanding.** Around the world, a wide range of contemporary issues have caused millions of individuals to be displaced or become refugees; to live through structural, cultural, direct, mental and psychological violence; while millions of others evolve within societies where nefarious acts, persecution, discrimination, rampant inequality, and human rights violations prevail. Thus, it is increasingly imperative that, as Rotarians, we engage in peace-in-action efforts to promote initiatives that help individuals within groups, organizations, institutions, societies, or other settings acquire the necessary level of positive peace knowledge and skills. Such capabilities can give them the tools to help others deal constructively with the breakdown within their respective societies and learn how to resolve the negative issues that underpin contemporary woes and perpetuate negative peace. Related peace-in-action efforts have the propensity to give rise to the development of societies that contemplate the achievement of sustainable positive peace as their ultimate goal. However, to be successful in helping and serving others in such societies, as Rotarians, we need to continuously enrich our knowledge of positive peace and acquire the pertinent skills that will allow us to contribute effectively to such a goal, which is the cornerstone of Rotary's humanitarian work.

**The PCPR Committee Activities.** Since its inception, the PCPR Committee has proactively and diligently worked to put in place a foundation to help the district promote positive peace within the context of supporting clubs by mapping their service projects to RAGFP standards<sup>6</sup> and to EIP's eight-pillar framework. The purpose of this support is to help enhance District club projects. This support entails helping District clubs align their respective projects, which are already based on Rotary's areas of focus, to RAGFP project development standards and EIP's eight-pillar framework to ensure their respective work is embedded within a peacebuilder's lens. To date the PCPR Committee work has included:

- Creating the PCPR Committee
- Carrying out bi-weekly virtual PCPR Committee meetings
- Ensuring that the Rotary District 7680 is recognized as a Global Peacebuilder District
- Developing a PCPR website that contains the committee's values, vision, mission, a wide range of PCPR-related information as well as links to pertinent resources. The PCPR Committee website is accessible through <https://rotary7680.org/pcpr-committee/>
- Creating the PCPR Corner to offer District Rotarians and clubs access to current related news, information, requests, reminders, research, webinars, virtual conversations, constructive tips, and views about PCPR-related matters. The PCPR Corner is accessible through <https://rotary7680.org/pcpr-committee/> and updates

- Formulating a Positive Peace Knowledge Enrichment Curriculum strategy that can serve as a road map to guide PCPR Committee members
- Launching a “call to action” to District clubs to become RAGFP Peacebuilder clubs and to apply for a \$250 matching grant that can fund a current peacebuilder project provided it will be completed by the end of the 2021-2022 Rotary Year
- Reviewing the Rotary Charlotte South application for the \$250 grant for a current peacebuilder project which will be completed by the end of the 2021-2022 Rotary Year at which time the grant will be awarded to this club
- Preparing and disseminating to District clubs, through Area Governors, a One-Pager as a Basis that briefly introduces the Knowledge Enrichment Curriculum to District Rotarians
- Encouraging PCPR Committee members to take the Rotary/EIP Peace Academy courses
- Proactively liaising with RAGFP Board representatives to determine how the PCPR Committee can serve as a liaison between RAGFP and District clubs in an effort to support RAGFP Peacebuilder Clubs
- Locating through the RAGFP map Rotary District 7680 clubs that have applied for the RAGFP Peacebuilder Club designation and/or District Rotarians who are part of the RAGFP fellowship network
- Launching, in collaboration with local stakeholders, the two-year process to designate Charlotte as one of the 1000 International Cities of Peace
- Carrying out a pilot project to map the work of District clubs that have applied for the Peacebuilder Club designation during the last few years. The related clubs include: *Rotary Club of Ballantyne, Rotary Club of Charlotte, Rotary Club of Charlotte South, Rotary Club of Charlotte Dilworth South End, Rotary Club of Gastonia*. The purpose of this pilot project is to determine how District clubs are embedding a peacebuilder lens through their projects by mapping the objectives of their projects to the pertinent RAGFP standards and elements of the IEP eight-pillar framework. As part of this project, designated PCPR Committee members have been liaising with the five current Peacebuilder Clubs to:
  - Present to their membership a refresher session about the purpose of RAGFP Peacebuilder Clubs and how their work fits within the EIP eight-pillar framework
  - Showcase the work of Peacebuilder Clubs whose projects have been mapped through the PCPR Corner to encourage other clubs
  - Recommend that District clubs which have promoted projects through a Peacebuilder lens be classified as RAGFP Peacebuilder Clubs and positive peace champions provided they fulfill RAGFP required applications
- Launching and carrying out the Rotary District 7680 Peace Fellowship 2022-2023 application process during February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 -- June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, while providing support to applicants, interviewing them and preparing their respective endorsement for submission to Rotary International and Rotary Foundation around June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Organizing a district-side spring 2022 peace-in action Afghani picnic project to welcome Afghani refugees to the greater Charlotte area and to offer them a fun and relaxing time with their compatriots within a safe and secured environment
- Celebrating February as Rotary’s International Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Goodwill, and World Understanding Month through:
  - The Introduction of the Rotary District 7680 PCPR Committee, its foundation and work during the February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Third-Wednesday All-Rotarian Zoom Call and the highlights of the February 26<sup>th</sup> PCPR Committee workshop
  - The PCPR Committee Workshop, during the February 26<sup>th</sup> Mid-year Assembly, where the PCPR Committee will present on Peacebuilder Clubs, the EIP Framework pillars and mapping of District projects, the Duke/UNC Chapel Hill Peace Center matters, and the experience of a Rotary Peace Fellow

while carrying out breakout sessions and conversations between the PCPR Committee members and District Rotarians

- Reviewing the Charlotte International Rotary Club application for the RAGFP Peacebuilder Club designation
- Recommending Charlotte International Rotary Club to be classified as a RAGFP Peacebuilder Club, based on its club projects which are positive peace centric provided it meets RAGFP's approval based on its application requirements
- Recommending North Mecklenburg County Rotary Club to be classified as a RAGFP Peacebuilder Club, based on its club projects which are positive peace centric provided it meets RAGFP's approval based on its application requirements
- Celebrating—virtually or face-to-face—the Rotary Peace Fellows graduating cohort of Class XIX during the Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Annual Duke/UNC Chapel, NC Spring Conference with faculty, staff, students, District Rotarians and local participants. This year's conference theme is "*Peace (Re)imagined: Sustaining Justice and Hope for the Future*". At that time, the graduating Peace Fellows will present their respective research projects while sharing examples of justice and hope in peace-making and international development around the world.

**Going Forward.** It is the hope of the Rotary District 7680 PCPR Committee members will encourage District Rotarians so they can tap into the various resources that can help them operate through a peacebuilder lens and a positive peace-in-action methodology. Such opportunities will help District clubs and Rotarians as they assist local and international groups and communities, as well as projects beneficiaries deal with the challenges they face with regard to contemporary issues and the resulting destructive results of negative peace. Beyond the 2021-2022 Rotary Year, considering the importance of continuity, it is advisable that:

- PCPR Committee members seek to promote positive peace using a pertinent common language and making necessary adjustments in its strategy and the scope of its activities;
- Rotary District 7680, if possible, partner with other districts (locally or internationally) to share ideas and discuss challenges related to how to implement a sound agenda effectively and efficiently to actively promote the Rotary's focus area "Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Resolution;"
- District Rotarians become more involved in the PCPR committee work and tap into opportunities for collaboration, while creating an environment where positive peace can take root, not only within beneficiaries' projects, but also throughout District clubs; and
- PCPR Committee members, based on input from District clubs, find ways to reach out to District Rotarians, so they can benefit from the Positive Peace Academy offerings and other PCPR resources that can help them carry out projects that are anchored within RAGFP's and IEP's practical tools and guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://rotaryactiongroupforpeace.org/peacebuilder-clubs-2/>

<sup>2</sup> Johan Galtung, 1969, Violence, Peace, and Peace Research, Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1969), pp. 167-191 Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>

<sup>3</sup> Martin L. King, Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963, <https://letterfromjail.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Measuring peace in a Complex World, <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/GPI-2021-web-1.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Pillars-of-Peace-Report-IEP2.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://rotaryactiongroupforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/PBClub.StandardsFinal-1.pdf>

