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With this letter I report on my first months experiences as a Rotary World Peace Fellow here in Brisbane, Australia.

First of all I want to thank the Rotary Foundation of this great opportunity to participate to the Rotary World Peace Scholarship Program. I owe special thanks to Michael Donlan for his answers of countless questions. I thank also the Rotary Finland; the Rotary club of Leppävirta and my Sponsor Counsellor Mr Markus Harald. My compliments also to the Rotary District 1430 and Mr Edvin Seppänen, Mr Seppo Sinkko (DG 2005-2006) and Mr Kaapo Pulkkinen (DG 2006-2007). Finally, many thanks to persons such Mrs. Judy Magub, Dr Richard Davetak, my host counsellors Dr Peter Ellis and Mrs. Catherine Bonifant and to other Rotarians with whom I have been in contact within these first months in Australia and who have helped my family with our adaptations.

#### *Academic activities and progress*

During the first semester 2007 my academic studies concentrate on the following subjects: '*Arms Control and Disarmament*', '*Ethics and Human Rights*' and '*Advanced International Studies*'.

*The course 'Arms Control and Disarmament'* addresses the political, strategic, legal and humanitarian factors associated with international arms control and disarmament.

So far in the course we have studied the concepts associated with arms control and disarmament, the processes and achievements which have been made within the field. In addition, we have studied conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction and ways to limit these weapons. We have looked at the key players in the processes as well as the factors that have affected the success or failure of particular proposals and campaigns. I have greatly enjoyed Dr Marianne Hanson's way of teaching. She is very proficient in her teaching and she encourages student to share their view of the subjects.

This course has been very valuable to me and I feel the subject close to me. When I was in army and when I worked as a peacekeeper in Kosovo, I participated to number of disarmament operations and other operations discussed in the class. It has been interesting to approach these issues from the theoretical perspective.

In the course '*Ethics and Human Rights*', we have addressed key ethical dilemmas in the world politics. In this course we have surveyed the main ethical traditions in international relations, such as cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. The course

instructor, Professor Roland Bleiker, has very effective way of teaching. The students have contemplated ethical issues through a range of practical issues, including human rights, international law, just war debates, humanitarian intervention, war crimes and poverty.

I feel the knowledge of the ethical issues to be, or at least should be, a prerequisite when one works within issues as peace, conflict and development. I already feel this course to be one of the courses I never forget.

The 'Advanced International Studies' provides students with a broad introduction to international relations and peace studies. Because many of the scholars, like I, come from different disciplines, this course carries an enormous value to us. This course builds the base for the rest of my studies here in the University of Queensland. I have enjoyed greatly of Dr Martin Weber's style of teaching. He knows how to deal with difficult and obscure thoughts in a way the students learn those. Also the course tutor Dr Jean-Louis Durand has added great value to the course with his passion to the international relations.

After the first months in the University of Queensland it is easy to sum up that the university is a world class place for learning the global matters. In addition, it has been great to learn how multicultural unit the School of Political Science is. The teachers as well as the students represent many nationalities, which makes the study everyday adventure here.

### *Involvement with Rotarians*

My host counsellors, Dr Peter Ellis and Mrs. Catherine Bonifant, have helped my family dearly. It has been pleasure to visit their wonderful families, and to feel to be welcome to the country. They have helped us greatly with our adaptations with their hospitality.

I have visited and introduced myself to Peter's club, the Rotary Club of Planetarium, here in Brisbane. The club is big, and it's members are extremely friendly and interesting people. The club members have been kind enough to support us in many cases. Family Lawrence, for example, volunteered to lend us their extra BBQ for the time we stay here, and other Rotary family gave us a sofa to keep.

I am looking forward to visit Catherine's club in Gold Coast. So far, the tight schedule of my studies has limited the possibilities to visit Gold Coast. However, I will have the opportunity to visit Catherine's club during the break in June-July.

On 11th of March, 2007 I participated to the Foundation Seminar here in Brisbane. In the seminar I learned many things about the Rotary and met other Rotary scholars who were studying here in Australia.

On 31st of March the peace scholars and their host counsellor had BBQ near the university. The event was arranged by Judy Magub. I must say special note to always so energetic Judy Magub. She has done wonderful work with us and truly makes me wonder how it is possible for one to do all things she does.

On Easter my family was invited for a dinner to Rotarian Paul Hudson's home. In addition, during the break, the Hudsons invited us to spend some time with them to the Sunshine Coast. They had rented a beach house for their holiday and we were privileged to visit them there. It has been a pleasure to get to know the Hudsons lovely family.

### *Impressions of the program*

The first few months in Brisbane have been hectic, as well one might. So far I have been concentrated mainly, like other new scholars, on studies. Getting used to the style and norms of the new university takes time and extra efforts from students. However, since I have studied and lived in other countries before, I already had a touch of the challenges I might face here in Brisbane.

The first months of the program have been successful of many reasons. However, I must upraise one thing above others and that is the huge network of peace scholars. To have opportunity to study and share office with talented people from all over the world for peace is extraordinary.

The coming World Peace symposium in Salt Lake City on 15-16<sup>th</sup> of June will bring together today's scholars as well as the former scholars from all over the world. This is something we all look forward to.

After the Salt Lake City, I am planning to have two other workshops in the US. First one is in Minneapolis on 18-22<sup>nd</sup> of June, though is yet to be confirmed. It is about genocide studies and taught by Professor Stephen Feinstein from University of Minnesota, and of whom I became familiar with during my studies in the University of Minnesota. I also applied, and succeed, to get in from among over two thousand applicants, to the work shop on social change in the University of Virginia. This work shop is held on 24-29<sup>th</sup> of June.

When I come back from the US I will have few weeks holiday which I am going to spend with my wife, son and my mother-in-law and my wife's two nieces who are coming to visit us here in Australia.

I end this report with the picture of my son Luukas - 16 months. He is excited of starting the swimming school at the University of Queensland!

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