

HOW MEDIATORS BEYOND BORDERS INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS WITH ROTARY INTERNATIONAL ON PEACEBUILDING

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For the last five years, Mediators Beyond Borders International has been an International Service Partner of Rotary International, both sharing a "strong ... commitment to global, grassroots and community-centered peacebuilding."

MBBI President and CEO Prabha Sankaranarayan spoke on November 21 at the Rotary Zone 33/34 Leadership Summit about women's participation in peace processes. The conference introduced Prabha by explaining that "when women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years." She reported that research covering the last 30 years indicating that the inclusion of women as a peace strategy could reduce conflict and advance stability has been largely ignored. Even though it has been shown that women can improve the outcomes, she noted that between 1992-2019, women constituted only 13% of those involved in peace negotiations, only 6% were mediators and only 6% were signatories in major agreements. Seven of ten peace negotiations did not include women.

Nonetheless, MBBI has been working for the last eight years to build women's capacity to facilitate peace processes. MBBI has been invited by hundreds of people, organizations, and communities to launch peace training and consulting projects in countries worldwide.

The Rotary International/MBBI partnership has been synergistic with more opportunities to come. Among the many joint accomplishments of the partnership are:

- MBBI has trained over 2,000

Rotarians at breakout sessions during Rotary Conventions and Peace Conferences since 2014.

- MBBI organized International Peace Training Institutes for women peacebuilders in Southeast Asia, the Andean Region and the Middle East, and North Africa, with another to be launched in West Africa next year. MBBI has conducted training partially funded by Rotary global grants in 33 countries.

- MBBI has presented at dozens of Rotary clubs throughout the world.

- MBBI partnered with RI at the World Peace Conference 2020 and 2016.

- MBBI leaders are also active Rotarians who have helped clubs and districts develop peace committees and action plans.

MBBI CEO Prabha noted that "RI has the capacity to become the major peacebuilder organization." To learn more about MBBI and Rotary, go to mediatorsbeyondborders.org.

PEACE BUILDERS IN WEST AFRICA

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Palmquist summarizes the training's five elements:

- 1) A five-day introductory online (because of COVID) training for a cohort of 30 women peace builders. The training is based on a model called the International Peace Training Institute (IPTI) launched by MBBI in 2012 with the goal of developing a global network of women peace leaders. The peacebuilding skills program uses dialogue facilitation, mediation, restorative justice, and training methodology; negotiation and advocacy training skills;

and cohorts are taught to think strategically about the best use of these skills in cultural contexts.

- 2) A five-day advanced training 8-12 months later - based on the training needs uncovered in fieldwork.

- 3) Monthly coaching sessions provided by the MBBI trainers since trainees are expected to expand their current field work.

- 4) Development and execution of community projects in their home countries.

- 5) Access to an international network of other IPTI participants from different regions of the world to create an international working group, sharing lessons learned and best practices.

Previous trainings in Jakarta in 2016 and Bogota in 2017, funded with Rotary Foundation global grants, have been successful. The 93 participants trained so far have impacted over 20,000 people living in areas prone to conflict.

Outcomes and new goals. The projected outcomes include: a) increased peacebuilding skills and activities of the trainee cohort in local projects and increased connection with Rotary peacebuilding efforts in their home countries; b) increased understanding and skills related to conflict resolution/prevention; c) increased community awareness of alternative ways to address conflict within the family and community, and d) increased branding of Rotary's Peacebuilding efforts.

MBBI has called for training 100,000 women in 2021, noting that Peace is not just about reducing violence; women work at the nexus of peace and the areas of health, education, development and the environment.