

RPF AA Board of Directors Priorities 2020-2022

The first elected Board of Directors of the Rotary Peace Fellowship Alumni Association took over its functions in September 2020 on the basis of outstanding work done by the previous Board of Directors, which set-up key processes, policies and procedures for the RPF AA's operations. In October 2020, the Board sent out a survey to alumni to inquire on their views, interests and ideas concerning potential focus and priorities for the Association.

In addition, ever since taking office, Board members have reached out and received more inputs and ideas from Rotary Peace Fellows (RPFs) on where they would like the Association to go in the period 2020-2022. This rich array of views, ideas and suggestions inspired three priority areas in which the RPF AA Board will focus the efforts of the Association for the period 2020-2022. This document was developed to serve as the basis for a consultative process that the Board will undertake in the second half of 2021 with RPFs to set the priorities for the Association in the coming year.

These three priority areas are:

1) Supporting RPFs career development: As of January 2021, of the 1297 peace fellows who had communicated with Rotary, 41% worked for NGOs or other peace-related organizations, 14% worked for a government agency or the military, 10% were teachers/professors, 7% worked in research or academic support positions, 6% worked for United Nations agencies, 5% were pursuing additional advanced degrees, 3% worked for police or were involved in law enforcement, 3% were lawyers, 2% were journalists, 1% worked for the World Bank, 6% defied easy categorization, including bankers, human resource professionals, business owners, and people on leave from regular positions; and 2% reported they were actively looking for work in the field.

In this context, every year, many RPF alumni embark in job searching, look for career development opportunities or even, for a more radical career change. As such, the RPF AA Board would like to lead, support and facilitate efforts to bring our incredibly rich network of peace builders closer together so we can all benefit from increased exchanges, collaboration and joint action in support of our career choices and paths.

As such, under this priority area, the RPF AA Board plans, among other activities, to (i) support alumni networking, specifically related to career development, including applied field experience; (ii) consolidate a community of practice, including through support to the creation of dialogue spaces on local and global current humanitarian, development and peacebuilding issues as well as skill building for alumni, the development of regional and thematic forums; (iii) to facilitate the sharing of professional, research and other opportunities for RPFs by other alumni.

2) Supporting RPFs' Wellbeing and Self-Preservation: In our day to day work, family or community lives, RPFAs face several challenges, pressures and stressful situations. From working in/on conflicts, leading community initiatives, working with people from vulnerable backgrounds, or simply participating in family dynamics, RPFAs can be exposed to high levels of stress, depression and anxiety. On top of that, the COVID-19 Pandemic is contributing to deepen these and other strong emotions and feelings, with a direct impact in our personal lives.

As such, and based on ideas and suggestions from several RPFAs, in the period 2020-2022, the Association will prioritize a range of activities with the aim to develop and promote within the areas of well-being and self-preservation. Activities under these areas will include (among others): (i) defining the group's line of actions and framework in consultation with specialists; (ii) establishing the RPFAs Wellbeing and Self-Preservation group with the aim to make it sustainable and robust over time; and (iii) creating spaces where members of the Association can feel seen and heard, while sharing challenges, concerns, and by exchanging experiences within a safe, confidential, and respectful environment.

3) Strengthening partnerships, with special consideration to the Rotary Family: With more than 1,400 peace practitioners spread throughout all five continents, the RPFAs constitutes a unique network of real worldwide reach. At the same time, we know that the challenges of sustaining peace are increasing both in volume and complexity. As a result, the RPFAs is conscious of the need to strengthen partnerships with key peacebuilding actors to leverage our complementary advantages to contribute to build peace at the individual, community, national, regional and global levels.

In this context, the Rotary "family", including Rotary International, the Rotary Foundation, Rotaract, Interact, Rotexers and Rotary Clubs, Rotary special groups such as RAGAS, RAGFP, among others, all over the world, are key partners in the promotion and building of sustainable peace. The RPFAs and the Rotary family have been working together in the past few years, bringing alumni and Rotarians closer for joint collaborative action. Consolidating and expanding this partnership will be a priority for the 2020-2022 period.

In addition to the Rotary Family, the RPFAs should also look to consolidate existing collaboration with outside partners as well as expand these networks where possible, particularly with a focus of interest to alumni, including climate change, gender equality, youth in peacebuilding, among others.

Activities under this priority will include, among others: (i) partnering in the organization of Rotary Peace Symposiums, Peace Conferences and related events; (ii) collaborating with existing partners in knowledge sharing, continuous dialogue for improved practice, and identification of best practices for peacebuilding; (iii) identifying new partners and setting-up new partnerships for joint peacebuilding action; and (iv) educating audiences on the role and value of the Rotary Peace Fellowship.