

# Making a mark for peace at the UN

The Quaker United Nations Office works to speak for those whose voices are otherwise unheard.

Our Quaker peaceworkers in 2009 will each be allocated to one of two work streams: the Peace and Disarmament strand, and the Human Rights and Refugees strand.

QUNO's long-term commitment, its strong reputation, and the provision of a private space for diplomats to speak freely all combine to ensure that QUNO is effective when it calls for joint action to improve the lives of the world's poor.

Making lunch for diplomats, providing a setting for confidential talks, carrying out groundbreaking research, raising and promoting discussion among world leaders on key issues: this is how Quaker peaceworkers are helping to **promote dialogue at the United Nations**.

People matter. In the end human rights are about people being treated and feeling like people who matter...

...above all we must take risks for God: look around us to the people who need help, listen to those who experience oppression; engage in the mutual process of liberation.

*Quaker Faith & Practice, 24.1*

## This year's QPSW peaceworkers at the Quaker United Nations Office



Adam Drury will support QUNO's peace and disarmament programme.

Adam points out that QUNO is "older than the UN itself (if you count its previous incarnations)". But he'll be dealing with some of today's most difficult issues – calling for the UN to take action on the proliferation of small arms, including landmines and cluster munitions, and researching the link between armed violence and development to inform global policy. Adam will be building on a useful academic background: he has recently completed an MSc in Violence, Conflict and Development which will complement his work at QUNO.



Jennifer Rosenberg will work on human rights issues.

Jennifer's work will build on some of QUNO's recent achievements in persuading the UN to turn its attention to the rights of imprisoned women and their children around the world. Jennifer will be conducting an important research project to support this work. The programme also covers issues concerning internally-displaced persons (IDPs), another topic to which QUNO was among the first to draw attention. Jennifer's background includes voluntary work offering childcare and teaching English to homeless children in Peru.

# Promote dialogue at the United Nations



Quaker peaceworkers appeal  
2008–2009

[www.quaker.org.uk/appeal](http://www.quaker.org.uk/appeal)



# Promoting dialogue between world leaders

Quaker peaceworkers support the staff of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva, working tirelessly and patiently to bring world leaders together for behind-the-scenes diplomacy. Their work has helped make a difference to millions of lives on a range of issues.

In 2008–9, there will be two Quaker peaceworkers making a mark for peace at QUNO:

- One will be working on the disarmament programme, urging the UN to take action on this critical area.
- A second will be building on QUNO's successful – but ongoing – work on protecting the rights of women in prison around the world.

Use this information leaflet to learn about how Quaker peaceworkers are making a mark for peace at the UN, and consider whether you will support this group of placements in 2008–9.

## What does QUNO do at the UN?

**Small processes, quiet circles.** QUNO staff have made some real marks for peace over the years, but the behind-the-scenes nature of UN work means that their achievements often happen without fanfare.

Sometimes it can take years of patient diplomacy to yield an agreement, draw attention to an issue, challenge a decision.

This is one of the unique aspects of Quaker work at the UN: many other organisations would be unable to provide the same long-term commitment required to research and raise an issue of concern, build a consensus, and see results. QUNO works doggedly and quietly on behalf of those whom the international community ignores or forgets, and brings “the voices of the voiceless” to the world's greatest political forum.

By opening Quaker House Geneva to diplomats and officials, QUNO enables world leaders and policymakers to meet in private and as equals, and hold informal, off-the-record discussions to learn about each other's views and find new ways forward on matters of current concern.

QUNO staff also identify new issues that need attention from the world's policymakers. They conduct expert research into these topics, publishing their findings, promoting awareness of the issues among UN missions, and helping them to formulate policy. QUNO's political independence and its trusted 'consultative status' mean that QUNO staff can be – and often are – among the first to speak out on an issue, capturing the UN's attention and setting out on the road to reaching agreements that make a positive difference to people's lives.



## How do Quaker peaceworkers support the work of QUNO?

QUNO's work has been quiet, radical and momentous. And Quaker peaceworkers have been there all the way, assisting and supporting it.

There's one task Quaker peaceworkers can do from day one, whatever their talents or experience: they make lunch! Quaker House's home-made, informal lunches are the backdrop for the discussions which QUNO encourages on key areas of concern. Meetings like this are often the first step in raising an issue to the world's attention.

Peaceworkers at QUNO also support the organisation's research work. In 2004 one of our peaceworkers, Rachel Taylor, helped to research and write a major QUNO report – *Women in Prison and Children of Imprisoned Mothers*. It formed the basis of work which is ongoing today – and has been recognised by a number of governments as setting out the foundations of improving policy relating to female prisoners and their children.

A new set of peaceworkers arrives at QUNO each year, to support the permanent staff. Each year, a fresh perspective, new enthusiasm and energy help to renew momentum and continue the hard work that has gone before. QUNO staff are viewed as expert, compassionate and trustworthy by the international community: Quaker peaceworkers are critical to sustaining this reputation, enabling QUNO to achieve better outcomes for millions of ordinary people.

## What has QUNO achieved?

QUNO led the way in examining global demand for small arms, contributing to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, and helping to create the Geneva Forum of UN officials, NGOs and experts on security and arms control to explore the issues further. QUNO staff initiated the process leading to the 1997 Ottawa Treaty, which banned the use of landmines.

QUNO's work on women in prison and the children of imprisoned mothers was groundbreaking – and continues. For 2009, a 'Special Rapporteur' – a senior, impartial expert on an issue of concern to the UN whose research and opinions carry great weight – has adopted QUNO's suggested focus of the right to education in prison.

QUNO was the first to draw attention to the issue of child soldiers, way back in 1979. Twenty years of commitment helped to create the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict in 2000 and QUNO still seeks to address this issue through its Disarmament and Peace work stream.

And there's more work going on all the time – on global economic issues, development, transferring technology to developing countries – as QUNO works to make its mark by securing justice and peace for people around the world.



A disarmament project among Karamojong warriors in Uganda.



Children imprisoned with their mother in Afghanistan.



An Egyptian woman who lost her leg in a landmine explosion.



Work to clear landmines in Tajikistan.



Children are still recruited as soldiers by a rebel group in Sri Lanka.