

# Promoting dialogue at the United Nations: A peaceworker's personal story

**Jenny Rosenberg** is working at the Quaker United Nations Office as a Programme Assistant for Human Rights and Refugees.



I have long had an interest in human rights and international relations. This possibly began through the influence of my parents, who have always worked in these fields and lived in many different places. My grandparents were refugees in the Second World War, which meant that as a child I was very aware of the suffering caused by conflict situations and of the plight of refugees. From a young age I aspired to work for international organisations, working to protect people's rights.

I came into contact with the plight of refugees in a very practical way during the year I spent in Zaragoza, Spain, teaching English after my degree. There has been a large influx of immigrants there over the last few years as well as a ongoing difficulties in relation to the gypsy community. The classroom seemed to be a microcosm of the increasing problems in Spanish society at large and was a very visible example of the need to break down barriers between different cultural groups in order to accommodate and support increasing numbers of refugees and immigrants.

Working and studying abroad over the last few years has generally fuelled a personal commitment to multiculturalism and passion for social justice. The time I spent in Peru working in a home for girls in Lima impacted heavily on my

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life. It also started my love of, and interest in, Central and Latin America. I went on to do a degree in Comparative American Studies and spent a year studying in Mexico. During this year I wrote my dissertation on the migration of the Huichol, an indigenous group from the Sierra Madre in Mexico. This gave me an insight into the ideas around 'indigenous' rights which is something that I have since been keen to follow up on.

Growing up attending Brighton Quaker Meeting was a formative experience for me and one that helped me to focus some of

my ideas on promoting peace and human rights world wide. Attending the Quaker United Nations Summer School gave me a real insight into how this work is carried out in an international arena and inspired me to apply for the QUNO Programme Assistant role.

This position is an excellent way to become involved in the field. It is very varied and flexible enough to cater to each programme assistant's specific interests. It is also unique in that it is a paid job, whereas most internships in organisations of this nature are unpaid and are therefore not an option for people who don't have the funds to live for a year without earning.

It is great that the Quakers can provide this first step for people in a more equal way and that they continue to inspire and enable new generations of human rights and peace workers. I am very grateful to the Quakers for this opportunity.

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