

Strengthening peace in the United Kingdom

A peaceworker's personal story

Selina Larsen is working with Campaign Against Arms Trade, an ambitious organisation calling not just for an end to the arms trade, but for progress towards total demilitarisation.



I have been an attender since the age of six and have been supported by Newbury PM and Thames Area Meeting in attending a range of activities and events that have been key experiences in my spiritual journey.

Aside from participating in the 2002 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage, many BYM Summer Schools, Senior Conferences, and Young Friends General Meetings, I also had the opportunity to attend the Brussels Peace Conference in 2006, where we explored the roles of Europe and Pacifism in peacebuilding. Contributing greatly to the direction of my undergraduate degree, I then wrote my dissertation on Governments and NGOs in the Role of Peacebuilding. Whilst my degree developed my understanding of many key issues in peacebuilding, I was still unsure in which specialisation I wished to work. QPSW's supportive

peaceworker scheme has been the best environment to develop skills whilst exploring the best way forward for me.

I'm interested in disarmament and reintegration, working with ex-soldiers and militia, and am keen to make the most of my time at CAAT, campaigning for the disarmament of governments and an abandonment of military-influenced policy. Currently key issues for CAAT include the disproportional financial and civil support from the government for arms companies, the attendance at and organisation of arms fairs by civil servants, and the willingness to export arms to countries with dubious human rights records and histories of violent instability.

Already this year has given me great inspiration for my next steps. Although my current work focuses more on policy than the disarmament of

individuals, I feel I am gaining a multitude of valuable skills, but also that a future in peacework is a more concrete and realistic possibility, rather than a distant pipedream.

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