

Strengthening peace in the United Kingdom

A peaceworker's personal story

Dave Cullen has been placed with the Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, which raises awareness of the use of this toxic substance and campaigns for it to be banned.



My first contact with Quakers occurred when I was about eight or nine, when my mother began attending our local meeting, in Charlbury. I know she was attracted to the Quakers because of their values, which were the same values I was brought up with, and particularly by the commitment to trying to embody these values as much as possible in daily life.

As a teenager I attended many young Quaker events. The exposure to an environment that was much more accepting, liberated and mindful than my school had a profound effect on me. I came to the peaceworker programme after several years of work in unrelated fields followed

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by a degree in Politics and International relations.

My placement with the Campaign Against Depleted Uranium reflects my interest in the intergovernmental and the traditionally ‘political’ aspects of peace work, but I believe that peace is much more than the simple absence of military conflict. Rather, it is inseparable from social and environmental justice, and requires an ongoing commitment to social change and a politics which is inclusive and involves the cooperation and participation of all.

The challenge of trying to marry these huge ideas and aspirations with the daily routine and often unglamorous realities of my job is continually interesting to me. Putting principles and ideals into practice in the messy reality of our daily lives is, I think, one of the greatest problems we face as human beings.

I wouldn't want to give the impression that my job isn't enjoyable - I do genuinely love

my work at CADU, which is very varied and often exciting. On odd occasions it even has a touch of glamour too! However, I think it's important to be down to earth about it and to recognise that change is never straightforward, linear and predictable. We have to be content with the small differences we can make as individuals and be alert for opportunities to do so.

For me the peaceworker placement scheme is about sowing seeds that give people the skills, confidence and experience to take effective action against violence and injustice. I count myself extremely lucky to be in a position where my job involves turning these high minded principles into action. I intend to carry on campaigning work after the placement, and I expect it will always be something I do in one form or another. This year has been instrumental in equipping me with the tools where I can aspire to that, and making me certain that is a path I wish to take.

Find out more about Quaker peaceworkers – visit
www.quaker.org.uk/appeal

