

Strengthening peace in the United Kingdom: A peaceworker's personal story

Candia Crosfield has been placed with Peace Child International, a UK organisation which seeks to enable young people to make their voices heard in the campaign for peace, human rights and sustainable development.



To say I have been a Quaker all of my life would be an untruth. I certainly come from a Quaker family and have been brought up with Quaker values, but I was an apathetic youth. I did not understand how anyone could make a difference in such a complicated world with so many problems. The whole notion seemed impossible and far too painful.

My meeting at Reading changed all this for me however, through their gentle nurture and by sending me to Junior Yearly Meeting where I began to understand that I had a purpose in life and that my faith would guide me. I met people who inspired me and who were living examples of another way. This was a real revelation! I developed a hunger to learn more about the world in order to find ways to change it. I became frustrated at my ignorance, unable to make a stand against issues that I felt in my heart were wrong (like the arms trade, like nuclear weapons, like the

way our country treats asylum seekers) without knowledge and understanding to support arguments against them.

Prompted by this yearning for knowledge and finally by Simon Fisher's call to action in his 2004 Swarthmore Lecture, I spent three years studying Conflict Resolution at Bradford's Department of Peace Studies; the perfect place to soak up new ideas and learn about the world. At the same time I joined the samba band and was involved in many peaceful actions. I was also given much encouragement by Peace Studies staff to explore the use of theatre for social change, something which had been slowly manifesting itself in my mind as a way to go forward and try to make a difference.

Knowing how hopeless I felt as a teenager makes me passionate about working with young people to help empower them to feel that they can make a real difference in their community and even in the world. I am

therefore delighted to have been given the chance, as a QPSW Peaceworker, to do just that. I am currently, amongst other things, running a project using Forum Theatre to explore how young people can take action in their community against things which worry them. At the same time, I am still, and always will be, learning from all the people I work with.

In the future I hope to continue using the arts in Peace Education and to carry on helping to arm people with the knowledge and confidence to make a difference.

“Knowing how hopeless I felt as a teenager makes me passionate about working with young people to help empower them to feel that they can make a real difference in their community and even in the world.”

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

