

THE QUAKDER VOLUNTARY ACTION GROUP (QVA)

The QVA Group spent 8 days in Palestine and Israel. During their time here, they picked olives, participated in activities at the Friends International Center in Ramallah, and met Palestinians and Israelis working for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some of them were willing to share some of their thoughts and impressions:

“It was absolutely right to come. It has been a privilege. What a range of emotions we have experienced—from the sheer admiration for the steadfast, persevering work done by the Palestinians and with the Palestinians, to the anguish felt on seeing and hearing the shrieks of desperation of a grandmother we visited in a refugee camp, to the deep respect when observing the people in prayer. We go home with commitment to do all we can.”

---Pat Yates

“Since being here in Palestine, I have been overwhelmed with the wonderful kindness and generosity of spirit in all the people I have met and their amazing courage and dignity. On my return to the UK, I will take with me memories of the courage and dignity and intelligence of the articulate young men and women at Friends Boys School. They give such hope and deserve a safe and just future.”

---Mary Wright

“I was sitting on a rock fallen from the ruins of an ancient mosque in Al-Jib. My companions had climbed further up to investigate. All was hot and still. The village was quiet. The older children were in school. From the house opposite me, a little girl of about four watched me, then crossed the road, one little hand extended. She remained mute from shyness, but her eyes said, ‘Welcome to my village, my country’.”

---Alison Fairgrieve

“There is no doubt that the Palestinians are an oppressed people in many ways: through violence, through theft of resources like land and water, and subject to petty and vindictive obstacles to living a normal life. It is remarkable that my overwhelming impression of the people of Palestine is of gentleness, humor, and generous to almost an unbelievable degree with their hospitality, their time, their concern for others. The Palestinians are oppressed, but not victims, even as their persecutors present themselves as victims. I shall do whatever I can back in the UK to support justice for a people I love and respect deeply.”

---Stuart Yates