

Study Visit to the United Nations in Geneva



Eighteen sixth form students from three Doncaster Schools, Trinity Academy, Sir Thomas Wharton, and The Armthorpe School with a teacher from each took part in a study visit at the United Nations in Geneva for 5 days in October 2010. The visit was organised by my-work-experience.com to give students from Doncaster with an interest in world affairs the opportunity to gain unique and life changing access to the work of the United Nations.

After gaining their security passes the students received open access to almost all areas of the vast UN complex situated in the Palais des Nations. They participated in seminars and debates connected to a wide range of current international problems. For example there was an excellent presentation and interactive participation session from Maria Gabriella Lay and her team about the international programme for the elimination of child labour (IPEC) when the students and teachers were invited to take an active role in the session.

Other seminars covered activities such as: the joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the World Health Organisation (WHO); the office for the coordination Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).



They also visited the IRCI complex to research the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent where they took part in a seminar and had the opportunity to visit the Red Cross museum.

Ron Robinson, Phil Porter Directors of my-work-experience.com who organised the visit and Bob Willey who acted as tour guide were most impressed by the Doncaster students who displayed a most mature approach, asking thoughtful questions and participating in individual research into their own specific areas of interest.

Here is what one of the Doncaster students had to say about his visit:

'I found the trip to the UN in Geneva an incredibly valuable experience. Learning about issues and information that isn't available to most people was both very interesting and mentally stimulating. I feel as though I can actually make a difference with the knowledge I have attained, along with knowing a lot more about the UN operations worldwide. The presentations were thought provoking and really got the message across that things can be done to help those in need. For example, you can feed a child for 10p per day. The sheer scale of help that can be given with so little effort from those in more developed areas is baffling. I plan to explore ways of giving aid in the future. The programme put in place by my-work-experience.com was great, with a fantastic tour guide, and the ability to explore the UN with little restriction was very enjoyable.'

Apart from the UN, the city of Geneva is spectacular. Surrounded by mountains, with Mont Blanc in the distance, the serenity of Lake Geneva, the huge branded buildings and a massive fountain, it really is a beautiful city. It is also the most expensive place I have ever seen, with endless top brand shops and huge hotels, and where your average McDonald's will set you back about £8 in Swiss Francs! I would love to return, but maybe when I've got a lot more money to spend.



I would like to thank my-work-experience.com and everyone involved in the organisation of the trip for an experience that very few people receive. Viewing the work that the UN do from the inside was utterly eye-opening and gives me an advantage when applying for jobs and universities in the future, with knowledge that very few other people have been able to acquire.'