

Nonviolence: A Dangerous Idea

The meeting started off with a spontaneous introduction by mingling around as naturally as possible for a couple of minutes....giving time to at least exchange a few opening words with the majority of the participants.

After trying to finalise the setting of agreements and non-agreements (still on-going) we moved on to the “spectrum”, which amongst other practicalities and the recreation of responses in real scenarios, was particularly interested in (referred to) the situation in Gaza and the rallies that were taking place in town around these.

Then, along came the first time of reckoning for everybody around our conceived and pre-conceived ideas of violence and non-violence, first in rotating one-two with other partner and eventually in the bigger group. The result seemed to be satisfactory and the dialogue expanded nicely as a result. The idea of non-violence turned out to be more of a pro-active approach than some may expect and equally the different definitions of violence -direct, cultural and structural- helped us out to bring together a shared common understanding. It would be relevant on this step to resort to Johan Galtung’s contribution on the matter. Along with these the listening to Utah Philips’ poem-song “Anarchy” was fitting at this stage.

A lovely shared (mainly) lunch welcomed with the great news of not having to wash up afterwards (Thanks Friends House!) was followed by a series of collaborative games, based both on the concept of using up resources to the best with imagination and creativity and as importantly the reliance on one another in order to carry on and thrive.

After a reflective moment of experience-sharing and setting up the outlines for future meetings and self-organization –including a highly instructive piece of dramatization- it was reached the end of this first encounter of the year in a relaxing atmosphere of warmth and camaraderie....See you soon!