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A project of

CJ Centre d'estudis
Cristianisme i Justícia

 Working Group on
Christian Nonviolence
Christianity and Justice Research Center

With the suport of

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ICIP

 Ajuntament de
Barcelona

WVW
ACT International Institute
for Nonviolent Action

Educational Unit 4

**HOW
TO RUIN MY
PEACEFUL FIGHT**



MOVE
nonviolence



Working Group on
Christian Nonviolence
Christianity and Justice Research Center



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"Move Nonviolence" is an educational commitment to initiate a process of personal transformation before the conflicts we face in our times, creating nonviolent strategies that free up situations that are at an impasse. This tool consists of a series of videos accompanied by the corresponding educational units so that the teaching guides have the material and direction for their work. The dynamics of this document are classified into sections and their topics in accordance with their appearance in the video. In some sections we suggest suitable options for each end-user profile. This proposal is intended for groups who can be accompanied by someone with a capacity for in-depth reflection on each subject.

Acquire all the material

www.movenonviolence.net

Each unit plan incorporates a series of associated material accessible from the project website: www.movenonviolence.net. The material of this specific unit is found in: <https://movenonviolence.net/U4>.

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stopped an act of violence). If they cannot, each accomplice is given one credibility point, and together they choose a nonviolent actor to become an accomplice (a red ribbon will be tied onto his/ her arm, and he/ she will then have ten credibility points).

During this count, however, if an accomplice finds in a nonviolent actor some piece of clothing of the same colour as his/her own, just for this play, the nonviolent actor is discounted half the credibility that he/she once had (rounding down, and if the score reaches zero, he /she is considered an accomplice, given the red ribbon and assigned ten credibility points). This suggests that due to proximity, the accomplices easily convince the person to change over to their side. Moreover, in the meanwhile, the nonviolent actors must try to build a word related with nonviolence, using only the letters of the names of the accomplices and oppressor (even if they repeat letters, such as “Creative” with the names Charles, Vanessa and Tim). If the leader of the activity feels it is a good word, the group are given an extra card with +5 points. If not, 3 points are taken away from them.

After one round, another round begins, providing three minutes of game time have not elapsed. If more time has elapsed, the game is stopped and the time actor goes around to everyone, using the marking pen to double the points on the cards of all the nonviolent actors and dividing in half (rounding down) the points of the accomplices. If the accomplice finishes with less than one point, he /she has zero credibility and must

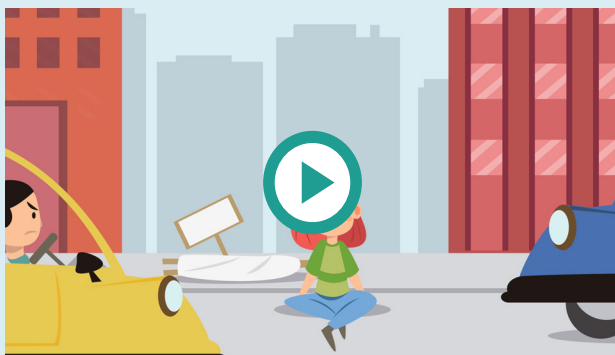
sit next to the oppressor, where he /she is finally completely still and controlled by the oppressor. Moreover, the oppressor has three cards of “-10 credibility points” that he /she can impose on the nonviolent actors as wild cards as of the third round, at a rate of one per round, to take away points from the score of the nonviolent group whenever he/ she so desires, hence punishing them.

The activity continues with further rounds so that the nonviolent actors can try to save the victims of the system with their credibility. The game ends when the oppressor has zero credibility (in other words, the accomplices are immobile around him /her), or when there are no nonviolent actors left (they have lost, as everyone is an accomplice).

At the end, a fictitious biography of the oppressor is read to the group, describing some details of the suffering and violence experienced by the oppressor in his /her childhood. The idea is to show how the violence endured was rebounding, as he /she too was once a victim. The goal is not to feel hatred towards anyone, and to remind the participants that people aren’t either good guys or bad guys; instead, there are many in-betweens. However, anyone who becomes an accomplice to violence loses credibility. What we must do is come together against violence.

■ ADULTS

Visit a periodicals library or find bibliographic sources and analyse the case of the ICRC during World War II bearing in mind Desmond Tutu’s statement, which was cited above. What could have been the response in the face of a situation like that one, had the path of nonviolence been taken? What consequences would have to be assumed according to nonviolence? What consequences would you be willing to assume in this situation?



Would you like to learn how to resolve conflicts?

■ CHILDREN

Each child is asked to think about an activity that he/she has learned through practice, and one by one they are asked to mime their activity, while the rest must try to guess what it is (swimming, calligraphy, etc.). At the end, let us think: "Who guided you through the first steps of this activity? Would you have learned without that person? Next, place a gummy candy between two children. If you both want it, what can you do? Has anyone taught you how to react in the face of a conflict? They are led to see that we all need nonviolence..

■ YOUTH AND ADULTS

Make two groups and select two main characters, one per group: one driver has had a car accident in ambiguous conditions and has killed the other person, who happens to have made the driver's life a misery at work. The driver (bandaged up and sitting in a chair) assures that he/she had been distracted behind

the wheel. The other character lies on the ground dead. The rest of each group must face the situation: A) with violent reprisals that increasingly get worse. The participants take turns writing on the blackboard, in two columns, listing the actions decided by each group in response to the other (i.e.: threat letter, reporting the letter to the authorities, insulting graffiti, organising groups to attack the family, hiring lawyers, etc.). B) Now, they attempt to escape the situation: the injured driver's group does not want to pay any attention to the conflict. How does the situation get worse? Each group discusses how they feel and what they would do. In doing this, will it be possible to prevent internal and external violence between them? Finally, C) The groups try to manage the conflict with nonviolence. What actions can you think of to build bridges and ease the tensions, in order to better understand the pain of the other person ...? It may be necessary to assume responsibility for the events. How can we prepare ourselves for this?

1

The most frequent errors: the fastest solution

■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH

One member of the group sits in a chair and all the others must hold him/ her up in the air (taking turns, etc.). Meanwhile, the group will have to provide answers or solutions to a series of 10 different challenges (resolving mathematics problems and construction challenges using domino pieces, inventing a number of sentences with a limited set of words, etc.). These tests will be difficult, and the group will have 2 minutes to solve each one. They have the option of using 2 wild cards, each of which will save them from 3 of the 10 challenges. However, each time a wild card is used, the group will be given an envelope with the “consequences” of that action, and they will not know what those are until they open it: the first wild card will entail holding 2 classmates up in 2 chairs, rather than just 1. If they use the second wild card, they will have lost. Meanwhile, someone in the group is secretly entrusted to try to persuade the rest to press on to the end without using any wild cards. Yet everyone will place priority on going fast and getting immediate results (the monitor reminds them that they have the wild cards at their disposal), given the weight of the classmate in the chair. If they finish the 10 challenges without using any wild card, they will be rewarded, even if they were unable to get through all of them: they have resisted. A final reflection: the “persistent little ant” method with no wild cards is nonviolence. If they hold on to the end, the group’s reputation is better (they win) because they have resisted in innocence (without attacking). The wild cards are violence: they have unforeseen

consequences (hidden in the envelope) and they always worsen the conflict, even if they accelerate the end. How did it feel for the participants who held up the chair? How did it feel for the person who insisted on not using wild cards? What conclusions can we reach from this game? Had we known all the rules from the beginning, would we have used the wild cards? The same thing goes for our conflicts: simply because we are incapable of seeing very far into the future, we often opt for violence because we are in a hurry. Haste is the enemy of peace.

■ ADULTS

The members of the group share personal experiences of driving a car: when we are driving along a highway at night with loads of mist, we mustn’t speed. Even if we are in a hurry, we can only see a few metres ahead, and if we were to accelerate, it would be very easy to have an accident. On the other hand, by driving so slowly, it is easy to get restless and frustrated: how do we feel if we do not know the highway? Is there any difference if we’ve been driving for 10 minutes or if we’ve been driving for 2 hours? We have got to have extremely high hopes to continue to believe that we are closer to an end that we cannot see! What if we know the road? The same thing occurs with nonviolence: loads of people subscribe to the first attempts, but when it’s time to resist with no guarantees, if we can only see the short term (of the first two metres, as in the example) haste soon takes over and we opt for violence. The group then debates different possibilities to avoid this..

10

If you become an accomplice, you lose credibility

Nonviolence requires a commitment with both the weak and the truth. This makes it difficult to remain neutral in the face of injustice: As Desmond Tutu said, "if you're neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor". To avoid being an accomplice, you must speak out against it and not be silent. Nevertheless, it is one thing not to remain silent and another thing to know how to speak up in the moment: in nonviolence every word and action requires strategy and study to achieve the goal, and accepting the consequences of words or actions also forms part of the strategy. If you refuse to assume them, you can become an accomplice to the injustice, your positions and your acts lose credibility and could end in a greater failure. Cooperating with injustice and violence (our own and those of others) or not speaking out against them, will therefore ruin that internal coherence that makes the person who practices nonviolence respectable. An historic example of this was the action of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which was present at the Nazi death camps during World War II: the silence of this organisation in the face of the genocide brought about accusations of complicity.

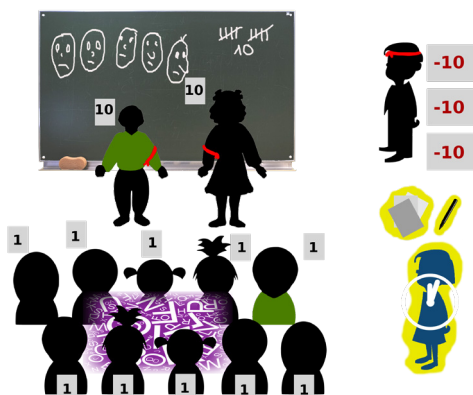
[03 The ICRC in WWII: The Holocaust](#)

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The group is proposed a game that will require red ribbons, credibility cards, a marking pen and a stopwatch. The members of the group are assigned to play different actors: one time actor (or more, if the group totals more than twenty participants) who has the marking pen and the cards; an oppressor actor with red ribbons on his /her forehead; two accomplices with red ribbons on their

arms; and the rest are nonviolent actors. At the start of the activity, the cards are given out to all the participants. One point is written on the credibility cards of the nonviolent actors (leave blank space, as the scoring will gradually change). The two accomplices receive 10 points on their cards. The oppressor always has the same credibility as the sum of his /her accomplices.

The game begins with a first round. The oppressor is on one side. The accomplices are positioned in front of a blackboard, and the nonviolent actors are in a group on the other side. Everyone must turn his/ her card up in front of him/ her to facilitate the counting of the points. The accomplices that have credibility points use half of the blackboard to draw five giant faces that represent victims of the system. Once this is done, everyone waits for the time actor to tally up the credibility points of the nonviolent actors on the other half of the blackboard: only if the nonviolent actors' total credibility points equal three times the number of people in their group can they erase the five faces and receive a card with ten extra points for the group (they have



9

Without taking the consequences into account

If we are inexperienced, it is easy not to take into account the consequences of our decisions. First, it is important to seek good advice and then weigh out the efforts and the consequences that we will have to assume in the worst cases. Sometimes they will be grievances that we will bear individually, but other times they will have to be agreed upon with our family, our group... etc.

■ CHILDREN

The children are invited to arrange the pieces of three domino sets in such a way that they form a large single design that can fall as a chain. During the activity, the participants exercise their patience, inventiveness and resilience: if someone makes a mistake, all the pieces fall too soon. Similarly, if they do not all fall as a chain at the end, the group will have to start over. Finally, everyone sits down to discuss the importance of imagining the consequences of their actions (if someone touches a piece, all the time-consuming work of the group is destroyed). Also, when we try to make peace in a quarrel, we must learn to imagine what would be most suitable approach: will the people react better with a word or with a gesture that touches their hearts; or would it be better to wait to address the problem at another time...?

■ YOUTH AND ADULTS

Choose two of these conflicts:

- **Gender violence:** A woman is constantly threatened by her husband, who takes advantage of any little oversight to remind her that she is worthless. He has been hitting her a lot recently and she is afraid.
 - **Fight:** We go out for drinks at night. We see a fist fight between two young people and the crowd comes together, but nobody intervenes to stop it.
 - **Stock market:** You find out that your bank has stock in companies that make weapons. Changing over to an ethical bank would cost you money and time.
 - **Disobedience:** You are told that tomorrow a bank plans to evict one of your neighbours, an elderly widow. You know her well; she is poor and half blind. You are very angry, but aware that people standing in the way of the police could be arrested.
1. Without thinking too much, what would you do, spontaneously? Write it down.
 2. Now, analyse all the possible consequences, regardless of whether you did not consider acting or you wanted to intervene.
 3. Does being nonviolent mean making sacrifices? What are the sacrifices in this case?
 4. To what extent would you be willing to sacrifice yourself in this conflict?
 5. Would it be different if it was a family member or a close friend? Why don't we act as forcefully against identical cases of injustice and why do we depend so much on our feelings towards that person?
 6. If some time after the incident (days, weeks, etc.) you think about the situation again, would you have chosen to act differently? Does immediate involvement in the scene lead us to change our decisions?

2

Forgetting our own personal inside work

Preparing for a nonviolent transformation does not solely consist of planning, organising, creating and evaluating. We must work gradually and patiently at both the personal and group levels and the change that we want to see on the outside must begin personally within each individual. To carry this out, one key point is the capacity for silence and spiritual growth, whether through meditation (yoga, zen, etc.) or in prayer (for those who have religious beliefs). This daily grounding and balancing exercise will enable us to get to know ourselves more deeply and will bring us peace and harmonise us with Life. The great masters of nonviolence, in fact, have fed from the sources of spirituality to prepare and promote their personal and social nonviolent transformation.

1. Observations. "I see this is happening"

2. Feelings. "When this happens, I feel like this"

3. Needs. "I experience it this way because I need... (affection, security...)"

4. Request. "Would it be possible to make such a change?"

Rosenberg's nonviolent communication model (NVC) offers us a few additional clues for this personal internal work. This is an exercise of self-compassion and compassion for others. It requires a good dose of empathy and self-awareness, in order to identify and try to satisfy the needs and emotions of all the parties involved without falling into va-

lue judgements. We can practice NVC with ourselves (self-awareness) or we can practice it with others (resolving conflicts).

■ CHILDREN

Stage a situation of schoolyard bullying to experience what each side feels: the person who is doing the bullying, the person who is being bullied, the group, the teacher, etc. The idea is to put the feelings into words and discover the needs behind each feeling.

■ YOUTH

Apply Rosenberg's NVC to try to express what each side is experiencing. The proposed steps will give us tools for self-awareness, communication, and, if necessary, to speak

01 Bullying



to a supervising adult who can help: Now apply the NVC model to a conflict you have lived in your own life.

■ ADULTS

Have you ever been subjected to a "look of hatred"? If not, talk with someone who has and find out what that person felt. Recall a situation that particularly bothers you (in your family, at work, etc.). Now, try to communicate with the person who has "looked at you with hatred" or created the situation, following the steps of the Rosenberg model.

3

Controlled by emotions

Distorted visions of reality determine our feelings and lead to a subjectivism that leaves us with a very biased viewpoint. It is advisable to understand the patterns of distortion, as they are changing our behaviour. We suggest

that the group recognise times when we are trapped in these distortions. What are our objectives when we use them? Why? What are we covering up? What makes us feel insecure and pushes us to resort to these distortions?

A few distortions of reality*

"All or none" thoughts	The person may see everything black or white, but reality also has its greys. Ex: <i>It was perfect / it was horrible.</i>
Overgeneralisation	The person simplifies an idea by generalising it. Ex: <i>Men always take advantage of women.</i>
Mental filter	Everything is analysed through a positive or negative filter. Ex: <i>All they do is deceive you. This must be the same thing.</i>
"Catastrophizing"	The person dismisses the positive: all obstacles are catastrophic. Ex: <i>They gave me a bad note. What a disastrous semester!</i>
Mental reading	The person anticipates the thoughts of the other person without considering his/her freedom. Ex: <i>Why do this if he/she won't like it anyway?</i>
Magical thought	The person constantly compares the present with an idyllic situation: dissatisfaction is permanent. Ex: <i>If I changed my job, everything would be better for me...</i>
Emotional reasoning	Emotions are assumed to be reality. Ex: <i>I felt so anxious during the presentation that I'm sure it went badly.</i>
Permanent false	The person assumes that something will never change, making all transformation impossible. Ex: <i>Do you really think the other guy has even the slightest bit of heart to change?</i>
Labelling	Thoughts that make use of derogatory labels and that undervalue people. Ex: <i>She's the block chatterbox.</i>
Personalisation and blaming	Ideas that blame people for things that are not their responsibility or competence. Ex: <i>See what I mean? Because of you, here we are again...</i>

* Adaptation of the book ROJAS-MARCOS, L. (2014). *La familia: De relaciones tóxicas a sanas*. Barcelona: Debolsillo.

Next, have the participants make a table, filling in the distortions with examples of their own and making explicit the specific times that this occurred: "I noticed I was using this

distortion, what my objective was, the feeling that caused it and the need that I identify it with". The activity leader should adapt the proposal to the ages of the participants.

Tempted by violence



When peace attempts to change violence, sooner or later there is a point at which we are provoked, where we are tempted to return to violence as a quick and visceral reaction. This is the most primary reaction, and in order not to fall into it, we must train ourselves well in nonviolence. It can also happen that out of fear or mistrust vis-à-vis nonviolent strategies, we decide to combine them with some other strategies that contain violence “just in case” it isn’t enough. Yet... violence and nonviolence are opposites and cancel each other out! This small dose of violence can ruin everything that has been built thus far.

■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Depending on the ages of the participants, the group leader can adapt this activity to the group. A large button is placed in the centre of the group. The button has just been painted red, so the paint is still fresh, yet the participants are not warned of this. The leader proposes the experience of having the participants press or not press on the button to: (1) “get a world wonder for yourself”; (2) “get the 10 greatest wonders on the planet for yourself” (naming a few of them); (3) “receive €100 million right now”; (4) “be the president of your country for 10 years”; (5) “have any physically possible wish come true”. However, from the beginning, the leader makes it clear that in each case, having

a wish come true will happen in exchange for killing an unknown person somewhere in the world, automatically, invisibly and in a way that is impossible to detect. If someone decides to press the button, his /her hand will be stained with red (representing blood). The participants can be told that the red on their hands is paint and it can be washed off, but that if it was real, that death would never leave their conscience. At the end, generate an ethics debate on the temptation of the use of violence, especially when it is invisible or collateral, to achieve our individual goals.

■ ADULTS

Make a list of five decisions that you need to take in the upcoming days, going from the simplest matters to the most important. How do you think you would take the decision if you were spurred by the first statement? And by the second? Now think about the decision after walking through nature for 3 hours. Compare the decisions you have taken.

- **The end justifies the means** (Napoleon Bonaparte, a writing on Machiavelli’s *The Prince*).
- **The end is in the means just as the tree is in the seed** (Mohandas K. Gandhi). In other words, if we want a fair and peaceful society, we must use means that in and of themselves lead to the end that we want to achieve.
- Has it ever happened that someone from your group suddenly and spontaneously gets violent with another person? And what do you do? Apply this to demonstrations and nonviolent acts: if someone initiates violence, how can we detect and isolate it quickly?

7

When the results get you down

When a nonviolent action begins with high expectations for success or too much confidence, you can begin to feel bad about any failed attempts or setbacks, even before you assess or understand why things have ended this way. Gene Sharp emphasises the importance of strategic planning. Nevertheless, this planning must be flexible and must provide a suitable response to expected and unexpected changes. The following pitfalls alert us to the ways in which the results can affect us:

- **Risk of not evaluating** our own actions, of not being critical of ourselves. Those who do not evaluate themselves lose their value. Self-evaluation enables us to see the mistakes we have made, to improve our response and better adapt it to new unanticipated situations.
- Placing hope on the **results**, rather than on the procedures. The failure of an action or of its result can be discouraging. It is important to evaluate the processes and the lessons we have learned along the way. They can be positive, without depending solely on the short-term results.
- Losing our patience, being **short-sighted**. Nonviolence that aims to transform both the relationships and the parties involved takes time. It is unlikely that everything will always move forward easily and quickly with no obstacles.
- During the process, know that **you will not win all the battles**. Sometimes you must lose so that you can adopt a better strategy that will enable you to advance and get closer to your goal. The mud-

dy road of today can be an open and well-taken opportunity for tomorrow. The process is not a single specific moment, but rather a whole path.

■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Watch this video and think about the following questions: Is there something you have tried many times and not achieved it? What is it that made you stop? If you found yourself in the same situation today, would you do the same thing? What would you change?

02 Learning from Failure



■ ADULTS

As a group, discuss the different participants' experiences: How many job interviews have you had? If you look back on the experience of all the interviews you have had, what do you think of the process? As to the interviews that did not lead to the job you wanted or that didn't turn out well, did they help you in any way? Do you see those interviews as a failure or as an experience to learn what you needed to learn for subsequent interviews? What have you learned from them?

Considering the adversary a lost cause

Feelings of hatred, anger, rage and envy can blind us. If I experience it, I will have to go back to a point of reference so as not to distort reality: I have to try to help the adversary recover. The very moment that the discourse consists of demonising the other by thinking that he /she is a lost cause and must be defeated, I am warping reality according to my emotions. Nonviolence presupposes a certainty: any human being, by virtue of being a human being, can change, sooner or later, if he/she is placed under enough nonviolent pressure. The problem comes when from our point of view, we cease to consider the person a human being. When we consider him/ her an animal, a monster or an evil machine, nobody wants to include him/her in the solution. We must urgently reverse this distortion if we want to improve or resolve the conflict.

■ CHILDREN

The kids are reminded of the legend of Beauty and the Beast. They are invited to think about certain aspects: What characters see the beast as an incurable creature? Who sees him differently? What is she able to see, so that she is no longer afraid? The group leader makes the participants see that the feelings towards the beast lead us down a dangerous path. By simply treating the beast with humanity, he becomes human again. The group leader proposes applying the same rule to the people that we are afraid of.



■ YOUTH AND ADULTS

Organise a debate by interrelating these themes: the feelings towards the adversary, polarisation, the warping of reality and animalisation, which excludes the "other". Here are a few ideas to help prepare the debate:

- When you exclude someone from the solution because you have ill feelings toward him /her, think about what part of yourself it is that you do not accept and that you are projecting onto the other person, and first accept it within yourself. Identify your own monster and welcome it. It also forms part of you.
- We know the adversary in the worst of his /her facets. There are better facets that he/ she has yet to develop, with a little help. So, are our feelings and information enough to conclude by sentencing the person to be "a lost cause" or "incurable"?
- "You wouldn't believe how bad these people are. These aren't people, these are animals, and we're taking them out of the country at a level and at a rate that's never happened before" (Donald Trump 2018/05/16).
- "We used to call the Tutsis beetles or serpents, and they were our enemies. We didn't say, go out and kill; we used the term "work". "Get to work" was the synonym we often used to motivate people to murder others" (testimony of Valerie Bemeliki, one of the six hosts of the Radio of a Thousand Hills that spread hatred before and during the Rwanda genocide of 1994).

From the surface, you won't see the roots of their power

Those who are powerful have roots that most people cannot see. If we do not analyse the reality in depth, the strategy of nonviolence can ultimately be inadequate. The dangers of this include:

- **Not analysing the current context** or situation enough. Not knowing or not knowing how to specify the six sources of power of any adversary (authority, followers, abilities, feelings, material and sanctions).
- **Basing our opinions on rumours alone.** Not checking the accuracy of the data that are circulating.
- Losing a realist and serious perspective of what is happening and therefore falling into the **"do-gooderisms" that simplify things that are in fact complex.**

■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The children are told the story of a dictator who has imprisoned six human rights activists (separate six participants and have them go behind some chairs, as a prison). The rest of the group must be crafty enough to find the way to free them: each test that they overcome represents that they have gone deeper into the roots of nonviolent power, so they will be able to free a classmate:

1. Stage a scene where someone makes use of nonviolent authority.
2. Stage a situation of bullying where you respond by overthrowing the aggressor without the use of violence.
3. Think about what skills you would ask of someone who wanted to exercise his / her leadership nonviolently.

4. Half of the group writes 3 skills that they would have to train and acquire to free their imprisoned classmates using non-violent methods, and they give the list to the group leader. The other half has 3 minutes to guess the skills.
5. Half of the group uses mime (without speaking) to describe 3 methods that are used by the heads of violent gangs to scare people, and the other half tries to guess what they are.
6. Half of the group work together to come up with a nonviolent reparation before some grievance, and the other half must debate it and decide whether it lacks anything to be considered nonviolent

At the end, the group reads a fictitious biography of the dictator, who turns out to be a victim of all kinds of violence when he/she was a child. Very often, the instances of violence that we see tend to rebound and keep going: we must stop the vicious cycle!

■ ADULTS

Imagine that you have a disagreement with someone about a specific issue and after a while you see that there is no longer any point to your argument. The other person has convinced you, but you don't want to give in and acknowledge it. You find yourself arguing something that you don't even believe, just so that you don't have to say that he/ she is right. Try to recall a similar situation. What led you to uphold a point of view that was no longer yours? Does your attitude change depending on who you are debating with? And depending on the issue of discussion? Identify the feelings that lead you into these situations.

6

Improvising makes it worse

Relying on improvisation for nonviolent answers does not usually lead us down good paths. A “perfect storm” to disarm violence will not simply come to us because we decide to improvise. Just as armies spend years preparing for violence—with training, discipline and strategy—nonviolence also needs to be prepared meticulously: with internal work, investing time in the nonviolent group, strategy, developing more creativity, learning the plurality of perspectives, planning dissemination, etc.

In the face of injustice, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. proposed four phases of action: “Collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist, negotiation, self-purification and direct action. We have gone through all of these steps in Birmingham” (Luther King, M. 1963. *Letter from Birmingham*).

■ CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Two people in the group are selected to be referees. The rest of the participants are divided into two groups. In one group, the participants are asked to take turns for five minutes, using a table tennis ball to try to hit a chess pawn located seven metres away, yet without moving from where they are. Sometimes they will miss and the ball will roll into the wrong place; other times they will get it right. One of the referees will keep count of the times they hit the chess piece.

In addition to the chess piece and the ball, the other group is given thirty metres of string, some scissors, two bowls of sand, a chair and four long wooden sticks. They are also given some written instructions: “Bury two sticks in the form of an X in each bowl of sand, so that on the outside of each bowl you can only see a V. Position a bowl on each end of the

seven metres. Use a string to connect the lower parts of the two Vs, attaching the upper left-hand side ends of the Vs with another string, and the upper right-hand side ends with a third string. The result will be a path of three 7-metre-long strings, along which the table tennis ball can roll safely. One bowl is placed on a chair, to create a considerable downward slope towards the end bowl, where the chess piece is attached”. For five minutes the members of this group now try to hit the chess piece with the ball, and the second referee keeps count of their score. The result ought to be 100 % of the attempts. At the end, let us interpret the game: the first group were improvising in their attempt to reach the goal. What would have happened if each failed attempt led to people’s death or the destruction of buildings...? That is what happens if we improvise in the face of violence. On the other hand, if we plan and build a “secure path” like that of the second group, we will achieve the result with total security, even though the preparation involves more work. That is what nonviolence is like.

■ ADULTS

Now imagine that you are extremely angry about an unfair situation. Knowing yourself, for each of the four phases mentioned by Dr. Martin Luther King (Collection of the facts, Negotiation, Self-purification and Direct Action) write your shortcomings and what you ought to work on within yourself so as not to improvise in one of these situations. Within the direct-action area, you can think about the areas of *community, strategies, creativity and dissemination*. Next, work in pairs to share and discuss what you have written.