



WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIC NONVIOLENT STRATEGIES

HELD AT FRIENDS INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

NGONG ROAD

FROM AUGUST 30TH - 1ST SEPTEMBER, 2017

Prepared by

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Workshop on Strategic Non-violent Strategies

Introduction

The above event was realised at Friends International Centre from August 30th to 1st September, 2017. The three day workshop was organised by Chemchemi ya Ukweli, an interfaith organisation and brought together about 50 participants from different organisations. The objectives of the training were to promote skills, strategies and concepts in the field of nonviolent civil resistance, how civil resistance work, strategies and tactics, managing repression and backfire as well as understand women in civil resistance and external actors among others.

Day 1

During the introduction prayer, Bishop Stephen Kaluyu from ACK (Anglican Church of Kenya) in Isiolo led those who were present through a reflection from the book of Kings in the bible. The verse spoke of King Solomon who acted wisely in the judgment he gave to the two harlots, who were disputing over the living child. Each participant had an opportunity of contributing to the understanding of the judgment and what it meant for an individual. At the end of the presentation bishop Kaluyu called upon all the participants to be like King Solomon who exercises wisdom in all circumstance for the good of the society.

Context Analysis of the violence situation in Kenya

Mr. Stephen Kadenyo led the participants through the context analysis of the violence situation in Kenya. He noted that Kenya is a divided nation and this division is not just political but there are many other factors that lead to it such as economic and historical injustices. He asserted that the political division runs all the way from 2010 up to the present moment. Mr. Kadenyo gave an example of where CORD, a political party in Kenya was advocating for the removal from office of IEBC (Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission). He explained that some people were in favor of the body remaining in the office while others were not. Citing some of the activities that led to the General elections in August this year, Mr. kadenyo explained that people were divided along political parties and that is why they did not care about the preliminaries carried out which vitally determined who to vote for in the major election.



Participants of nonviolence civil resistance conference listening to the facilitator

Regarding the church, the trainer said leaders are divided and that is why the catholic bishops could not agree on the statement they were to release about the use of brutal force by the police after the announcement of the presidential winner candidate. He further added that the

presidential win divided the country along tribal lines. This made different groups to support different political side as far as Jubilees and Nasa were concerned. The speaker told those who were present that change can only come with personal responsibility and urged everyone to be a good and responsible Kenyan citizen.

Mr. Kadenyo told the participants that civil resistance is disobeying in a peaceful and orderly way. He further explained what was contained in the manifesto of both Jubilee and Nasa which they used during the campaigns. He pointed out the similarities and differences and helped the participants to understand in a deeper way what both parties were promising to the Kenyans. The facilitator noted that the government had some promises that they had not fulfilled. In his conclusion Mr. Kadenyo said that despite all what Kenya is going through, there is hope. He once again reminded the participants that any change can come with personal responsibility.

Religion and cultural forms of civil resistance

Sheikh Abuhamza led the participants through the above topic and explained how religion has been used to favor certain group and propagate certain ideologies in the world. Prior to this, Sheikh Abuhamza had explained how some people in Kibra use violence to acquire property. He explained that there are some individuals who keep watching for the loopholes during election so that they can loot and even snatch other people`s property. Abuhamza gave an example of how some individuals burn other people`s “kibanda” and then build theirs in the same place. When the owner comes and says the place belonged to him/her, the only answer that is given is that “your Kibanda was here before but now it is mine that is here”. Sheikh Abuhamza explained that such issues are wrong ways of doing things as they leads to revenge. He added that such situation calls for change of heart and treatment of other people as you would like them to treat you. He noted that although change is important in the life of an individual, it is also not easy for some people as they find joy in such acts because they benefit.

Sheikh went further to explain how the Arabs Springs started and said it was a form of non-violent civil resistance to the government. He further explained that religion has been used to divide people and at the same time to unite them. He noted that politicians use religion to mobilize people in terms of “our people”. Citing the Egyptian example, Sheikh Abuhamza described how the Jamaa Islamia and the Muslim brotherhood mobilized people and peacefully resisted the then ruling government. Adding on his explanation the trainer reiterated that the two movements were started by the Egyptian scholars in the 1920s and 1930s. Despite the existence of the two religious groups, Egypt is a secular country. Sheikh added that the Christians and Muslims in Egypt feel that values have to be installed in the country through the religion.



Sheikh Abuhamza explains the role of religion in nonviolence resistance

As far as nonviolent civil resistance is concerned, Sheikh Abuhamza cautioned people against bringing out high emotional feelings while taking any action. He urged them to bring the

religious conscious out by going back to religious values. To make his points sink more into the minds of the participants Abuhamza gave an example of how a man went to a holy place and helped himself there. The followers of prophet Mohammad wanted to punish the culprit severely but the prophet commanded them not to hurt him. Later the guilty man prayed that Allah help Mohammad and only him to enter paradise. Abuhamza explained that the man saw some values in Mohammad which were not in his disciples and that is why they were not included in his prayer. He thus concluded his example by saying that disorders and resistances should be guided by values.

Women and civil resistance

Ms. Susan Owiro Chege led the participants through women and civil resistance topic. She gave the background history of women non-violent civil resistance which she said dates back to 1756. She also explained how women had gone on a non-violence strike in the United States in 1786 forcing the industry owners to listen to their grievances. Chege also brought to light various other events realised by women as a way of disobeying certain orders nonviolently. Starting from Liberia Ms. Chege explained how women had led to liberation of various countries through their non-violent resistance. She spoke of Kenya where women had to fight for environment led by the Nobel winner Prof. Wangari Maathai.

Ms. Chege further explained that Kenyans have leaders for nonviolence resistance and that the only thing that is lacking is the strategy. She finally concluded that women should continue with nonviolence resistance if it is for a good course.

Day 2

Nonviolent activism in spite of repression, repression and backfire in civil resistant

Mr. Suba Churchill led the participants through the above topics. During the session Churchill asked participants to give types of leadership styles that they knew. Leadership styles such as democratic, autocratic, dictatorship and laissez-faire among others were given. Mr. Churchill pointed out that all what a country needs is transformative leadership where a leader engages others to a higher level of motivation and morality. He added that this type of leadership stimulates and motivates the people to develop and become leaders.

Churchill told those who were present that a leader should have a vision and values. At the same time he emphasized high moral and ethical standards as vital elements in leaders which help to show respect, consideration and encouragement to others as well as be a role model of the people that one leads.

The trainer carried the participant through various steps that are followed in nonviolence resistant.

1. Vision- a vision that attracts mass followers
2. Nonviolent communication- use a language that communicates and strengthens the group(Steps: observe, avoid blame, communicate your need, express feelings and make a request)

The participants also had the opportunity of learning about the 6ps of nonviolent resistance. Mr. Churchill gave the following:

1. Proclaim the truth at all times
2. Protest the injustice- refuse to see the injustice and keep quiet
3. Part from the injustice- don't participate in injustice
4. Penetrate the conscience of the enemy by using the truth
5. Pray –prayer is the key support
6. Pay the price- be ready for any consequence (*if you are not ready to die for anything don't live for anything*)

Day 3

Civil resistant organizing in politically charged and violent environment

Mr. Churchill led the participants through the above topic. He defined repression as silencing, stopping and as any situation that prevents one from enjoying his/her full rights. He explained that whenever there is repression there is censorship and people cannot enjoy freedom of expression and movement. He further said that in such situations people are constrained and live under fear and involuntary state of calm.

The speaker later helped those who were present to understand” backfire”. Mr. Churchill went further to explain that when there so much repression in the society there is an explosion which is in form of demonstrations or civil disobedience. He said backfire is form of civil resistance. During the explanation of backfire, Churchill said transformative event is the result of backfire.



Participants discuss ways of carrying out nonviolence civil resistance in a group work

Churchill gave various examples of transformative events that brought about backfire such as the 24 day salt march led by Mahatma Gandhi of India. He explained that the march was a response to the British repression. The Indians kept marching even when the British army kept killing them. Their peaceful march moved the oppressors not only to stop their repression but grant India independence.

In his conclusion Suba Churchill urged everyone to use social media to communicate to others and report what other mainstream media does not bring to light.

Conclusion

The conference was a success as many people attended and were actively participating. The facilitators covered all the topics that were programmed and their content was shared to all those who had participated via email. The participant expressed satisfaction with content that created awareness and enhanced skills on how to engage in nonviolence civil resistant.

APPENDIX

