Nonviolent Action Academy

# INTRODUCTION

The training course is aimed at 25 high school students of Turin (aged between 17 and 18 years), will be privileged students from schools in which the recruitment is greater by the military bodies of the state and in which it is greater the presence of young people who, because of their identity, sexual orientation, origin, religion, still suffer different forms of discrimination.

The last elections saw the growth and victory of populist, xenophobic, anti-European, racist and sexist movements in Italy. Most of the young people with whom we work daily at Sereno Regis Study Center are part of the minorities systematically attacked by the parties that obtained the majority of seats. Often these young people live multiple forms of violence, structural (they always come from marginal socio- economic background, many of them do not possess Italian citizenship and are subject to the volatility of residence permits), direct (by the police), cultural (often they are raised in sexist contexts, mafia, in which abuse and violence are encouraged ...) and the only form of action against injustices they know and acknowledge is violence itself.

There is a growing need to spread a culture of nonviolence, as a possible, achievable and organized action aimed at social change among those boys and girls who find an individual solution in violence; violent solution that traumatizes them, stigmatizes them in the eyes of society and leads them more at the margin of the society itself.

Nonviolent Action Academy aims to make the scientific knowledge of the nonviolent struggle accessible to Italian students and especially to the students who face daily injustices and who are most at risk, in an attempt to rebel against them, to adhere only to deviant behavior.

The program is structured in 10 training sessions every two weeks, every training session lasts two hours. Between a seminar and the other the are working groups, supporting the comprehension of the studying materials in English, but also promoting the cooperative learning, mutual knowledge and help among students.

The course, in fact, is aimed in particular at students who come from multiple marginal contexts and we intend to support them not only in the methodology that we will use during the seminars but also in the access to materials in English that is not actually their first language. Therefore, the training sessions will be carried out favoring what in Europe is defined as Non Formal Education in youth work, while in the midweek meetings the boys and girls will be supported on a methodological level, to read and understand the materials in group work.

# SEMINARS PROGRAMME

All the course will be conducted face to face; we strongly believe that positive relations can support learning process so we strongly invest in face to face group work when teens can read together, discuss but also build friendship ; so it means that there will be 10 workshops lasting 2 hours each when the educator will explain the main contents (through a participatory and non formal educational approach) then there will be other 20 meetings in which students will analyse the texts we suggested them to read in groups through the cooperative learning methodology , educator will be present in these meetings too to answer questions and support the learning process.

So the total amount will be 60 hours of face to face contact hours.

During the 10 workshops in class, educator will speak italian. As I tried to explain, all the students that will take part in the course come from a marginalized backgroud so it cannot be assumed that they are able to speak and understand English fluently but, given a proper amount of time and with the support of the group reflections and the presence of the educator can approach written texts, so we will use the materials in english.

# Calendar

October 16th 2018 1st Workshop facilitated by the educator

October 23rd and 25th 2018 studying groups with the presence of the educator October 30th 2018 2nd Workshop facilitated by the educator

November 6th and 8th 2018 studying groups with the presence of the educator November 13th 2018 Workshop facilitated by the educator

November 20th and 22nd 2018 studying groups with the presence of the educator November 27st 2018 Workshop facilitated by the educator

December 4th and 6th 2018 studying groups with the presence of the educator December 11th 2018 Workshop facilitated by the educator

December 18th and 20th 2018 studying groups with the presence of the educator January 15th 2019 Workshop facilitated by the educator

January 22nd and 24th 2019 studying groups with the presence of the educator January 29th 2019 Workshop facilitated by the educator

February 5th and 7th 2019 studying groups with the presence of the educator February 12th 2019 Workshop facilitated by the educator

February 19th and 21st 2019 studying groups with the presence of the educator Februrary 26th 2019 Workshop facilitated by the educator

March 5th and 7th 2019 studying groups with the presence of the educator March 12th 2019 Workshop facilitated by the educator

March 19th and 21st 2019 studying groups with the presence of the educator

Seminars #1 and #2 Nonviolent action: between principles and Misconceptions

Learning objectives:

* students understand the principles that define the concept of nonviolent struggle
* Students are able to recognize the dynamics of nonviolent struggle in different historical paths of liberation, change and social struggle for the recognition of rights, they are also able to recognize embryonic forms of nonviolent action in the daily life of our country's political life.

Methodology

The group of students begins to work with the brainstorming methodology around the concept of nonviolent action.

Thanks to the brainstorming and the completion of the entry questionnaire we can understand the point of view and the level of knowledge of the participants

Using digital learning tools like Kahoot! 1 Students "line up" around some clichés about nonviolent action (for example "nonviolent action is inaction", FALSE), progressively building a scientifically correct definition of nonviolent action.

The topics1 1 regarding which the students will progressively discuss , first in the form of debate, then analyzing a case study in small groups and then with the contents developed by Schock are:

1. Nonviolent action is not inaction
2. Anything that is not violent is not considered to be nonviolent action
3. Fra i materiali le descrizioni di lotte nonviolente, storiche e presenti, che permettono ai ragazzi, dopo il confronto fra loro, di confrontarsi con case studies e dati scientifici
4. Nonviolent action is not composed of regular or institutionalized techniques
5. Nonviolent action is not a form of negotiation or compromise
6. Participation in nonviolent action does not require that activists hold any sort of ideological, religious, or metaphysical beliefs
7. Those who implement methods of nonviolent action may not recognize them as "methods of nonviolent action"
8. Nonviolent action does not depend on moral authority , the "mobilization of shame", or the conversione of the views of opponents in order to suceed
9. Those who implement nonviolent action do not assume that the state will not react with violence.
10. Suffering is not an essentianl part of nonviolent resistance
11. Nonviolent action is not a method of contention that is used only as a last resort, when the means of violence are unaivalable
12. Nonviolent action is not a method of the "middle class" or a "burgeois" approach of political contention.
13. The use of nonviolent action is not limited to the pursuit of "moderate" or "reformist" goals
14. The mass mobilization of people into campaigns of nonviolent action in non-democracies does not depend on coercion

1 Topics of discussion taken from K.Schock "Nonviolent Action and Its Misconceptions: Insights for Social Scientists

1. Nonviolent action is not inherently slow compared to violent action in producing political change
2. the occurence of nonviolent action is not structurally determined
3. The effectiveness of nonviolent action is not a function of the ideology of the oppressors
4. The effectiveness of nonviolent action is not a function of the repressiveness of the oppressors.

Reading Materials:

The readings will be examined in depth, considering the difficulty with the English language on such specialized texts, in scheduled meetings with the group between the first and the second seminar, through cooperative learning.

The same will also be done for all other recommended readings in the interval between one seminar and the next one.

Schock, Kurt.2003 "Nonviolent Action and Its Misconceptions: Insights for Social Scientist" PS: Political Science and Politics 36,4 (October):705-712

Srdja Popovic, Slobodan Djinovic, Andrej Milivojevic, Hardy Merriman and Ivan Marovic, 2007, "CANVAS Core Curriculum: A Guide to Effective Nonviolent Struggle" Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS). Published in Serbia, pages 86-95

Martin, Brian, 2015, "Nonviolence Unbound" , Irene Publishing, Sweden, pages 6-26 Irwin Bob and Faison Gordon, 1978 revised on 1983, edited by Albert David H. "Why nonviolence? Introduction to Nonviolence Theory and Strategy" , New Society Publishers, 1984

Videos:

Michael Nagler, "Nonviolence\_understanding the basics " James Lawson, "Gandhi and nonviolence"

James Lawson, " Training for Nonviolent Resistance"

# Seminar #3 Is the Nonviolent Struggle Effective?

Learning objectives:

* Knowing the scientific motivations that allow us to say that the movements that use nonviolent action in achieving their goals are effective
* Understand the complexity of this hypothesis also in the light of current events and processes.

Methodology:

Division of the class into two groups: one group supports the thesis that the movements that choose the nonviolent struggle are more effective than the movements that adopt techniques of violent struggle, the other group tries to prove the opposite. To each group are distributed materials to support and contrast their thesis. The work of comparing the two groups is then related to the discoveries of Erica Chenoweth in "Why Civil Resistance Works".

Reading MaterialS

Chenoweth, Erica and Stephan, J.Maria, "Why Civil Resistance Works. The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict", International Security, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Summer 2008), pp. 7–44

Chenoweth, Erica and Stephan, J.Maria, 2016, "How the world is proving Martin Luther King right about nonviolence", Washington Post, January 18, 2016

Erica Chenoweth and Kurt Schock (2015) Do Contemporaneous Armed Challenges Affect the Outcomes of Mass Nonviolent Campaigns?. Mobilization: An International Quarterly: December 2015, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 427-451.

Ackerman Peter, 2007"Skills or Conditions : What Key Factors Shape the Success or Failure of Civil Resistance?", Conference on Civil Resistance and Power Politics, St.Antony College, Oxford University, 15-18 March 2007

Video

Erica Chenoweth - Why Civil Resistance Works\_ Nonviolence in the Past and Future - YouTube

# Seminar #4 and #5 A Force More Powerful

Learning objectives

* Know and recognize the nonviolent struggle movements in history
* Map a situation of conflict according to the variables of Power, support pillars, obedience and alliances.

Methodology

Vision of the Documentary "A Force More Powerful -We Were Warriors" Learning by doing: The documentary becomes an example of study through which to understand the concepts of power within society, pillars of support and obedience. At the same time, the map of social actors is analyzed.

Assignment

The study of the example case allows us to concretely analyze the Italian situation around the "IUS SOLIS" fight theme concerning the right to citizenship of many of the students with whom we work every day.

Reading Materials

Bartkowski Maciej , 2013"Recovery Nonviolent History: Civil resistance in Liberation Struggles", Rienner Publishers, 2013, pages 1-50 for all students, in addition the class divides into small groups, each group is entrusted with the deepening of a specific historical-geographical context described in the book by Bartkowski followed by the presentation by each group of the case study to the whole class.

Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict (New York: Macmillan, 2000) each group will choose a specific struggle to deepen and to present to the rest of the group Srdja Popovic, Slobodan Djinovic, Andrej Milivojevic, Hardy Merriman and Ivan Marovic, 2007, "CANVAS Core Curriculum: A Guide to Effective Nonviolent Struggle" Centre for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), pages 20-65

Democracy in Action. A Study Guide to Acompany the Film Freedom Riders" , Facing History and Ourselves, 2011 by WGBH Educational Foundation from page 14-24

Gene Sharp , "The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Part 1: Power and Struggle (Italian)-Politica dell'Azione Nonviolenta I -Potere e Lotta", Translation: Edizione Gruppo Abele, 1985, from pages 53-56, from pages 73- 77 and from pages 127-154

# Seminars #6 and # 7 Strategies of Nonviolent Struggle and the Beauty Resistance

Learning objectives

* The students know and are able to recognize in the context that surrounds them the techniques of nonviolent struggle, including those that use the artistic means

Methodology

Divided into small groups students are given cards describing nonviolent fight techniques and articles describing the same techniques applied in different nonviolent struggles of the present and the past in the world. The aim of the groups is to combine the description of the technique with the situation described above, to research and analyze, always in groups, the single technique in the broader strategy of the movement in which it was applied. Each group is given different techniques and situations from those of the other groups and follows a mutual presentation of the results of research of each group.

A specific study is dedicated to the techniques of struggle that use artistic expression through the analysis of the materials on the site [http://beautifultrouble.org](http://beautifultrouble.org/)

We have chosen to explore with the students the forms of struggle that use the artistic medium because young people already find naturally in the artistic medium a form of resistance and expression of instances of social change. Also in this case the students are divided into small groups, each group is entrusted with a part of materials and case studies that are presented to the class in plenary.

Reading Materials:

Sharp Gene, 1973, The Politicsof NonviolentAction, Part 2: The Methods of NonviolentAction (Italian), Politica Dell'Azione Nonviolenta — II. Le Tecniche, Port Sargent Publishers, 1973

Translation: Edizione Gruppo Abele, Enrico Benucci, Manuel Vignali and Alberto Zangheri (translators), 1986, class will be divided in groups, each group will choose and read some methods and make a presentation for the rest of the class.

# Seminars #8 #9 # 10 People Power Game

Learning objectives

* Students have the opportunity to put into practice the theoretical learning acquired up to that time, to analyze a complex conflict situation and imagine a nonviolent strategy

Methodology

Before starting the game we make a presentation to the students so its use is easier and more immediate and the students can immediately concentrate on learning content.

We divide the class into groups of two, maximum 3, students. We have chosen to have students play together to promote dialogue and mutual enrichment. At the end of the three seminars the students propose to their classmates a presentation of the progress of their campaign and the results obtained. In plenary they discuss difficulties and successes. To get close to the experience of the students we work with we have chosen to specifically use the scenario of minority rights struggle.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE LEARNING GOALS

During the training course there are several moments in which the student's learning process is monitored such as: the different presentations by the groups, the analysis of specific cases, the defense of opinions based on materials and scientific contents, the application to real cases and in the development of a strategy in the People Power game.

All these learnings are condensed in a final group work aimed at organizing a workshop, conducted with non- formal methodology, targeted at younger students. The group chooses the theme and the methodology that it wants to share with the younger schoolmates.

The evaluation is not performed by the teacher but is the result of the dialogue between the student and the teacher and focuses on the self-assessment of the student.