

2016 Educateurs sans Frontières Assembly – NOTES

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Topic: Social Reform through Nonviolent Action

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We had one good song this morning. Let's do another song. This song is like the one used by Martin Luther Kings - "We Shall Overcome." This song is about - bless the world. This came when fighting between Pakistan and India. Gandhi, "Why do you fight for borders? The world should be borderless. If we win, we win together. It is not that one will win and one will be defeated. "

The "Jai Jagat Pukare Ja" song was sung with response.

"Jai Jagat Pukare Ja"

Jai Jagat
Jai Jagat
Jai Jagat pukare ja

(In response)

Jai Jagat
Jai Jagat
Jai Jagat pukare ja

Jai Jagat pukare ja (echo response)
Sir aman pe vaare ja (echo response)
Sab ke hit ke vaaste (echo response)
Aapna sukh visare ja (echo response)

"Bless the World"

Bless the World

(In response)
Bless the World

Bless the World (echo response)
Stand up for peace (echo response)
For everyone's wellbeing (echo response)
Forget personal gains (echo response)

<i>Jai Jagat</i>	(In unison)
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	
<i>Prem ki pukar ho</i> (echo response)	Let the voice of love echo (echo response)
<i>Sabka sabse pyar ho</i> (echo response)	Let everyone love each other (echo response)
<i>Jeet ho jahan ki</i> (echo response)	Let the entire world win (echo response)
<i>Kyo kisi ki haar ho</i> (echo response)	Why should anyone lose (echo response)
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	
<i>Nyay ka vidhan ho</i> (echo response)	Let justice prevail (echo response)
<i>Saab ka haaq saman ho</i> (echo response)	Let everyone get rightful and needful (echo response)
<i>Sab ki aapni ho zami</i> (echo response)	Let this earth be for all (echo response)
<i>Sab ka aasman ho</i> (echo response)	Let the sky be for all (echo response)
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	
<i>Rang bhed chod do</i> (echo response)	Eradicate racism (echo response)
<i>Unch nich tood do</i> (echo response)	Break classism (echo response)
<i>Dharm bhed chod do</i> (echo response)	Eradicate religious separation (echo response)
<i>Jati pati tood do</i> (echo response)	Break all castism (echo response)
<i>Manavo ki aapsi</i> (echo response)	Integrate human beings (echo response)
<i>Akhand preet jod do</i> (echo response)	With unshakable love (echo response)
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	
<i>Jai Jagat</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	
<i>Shanti ki hava chale</i> (echo response)	Let the wind of peace blow (echo response)
<i>Jaag kahe vale vale</i> (echo response)	Let the world dance in peace (echo response)
<i>Din ugai sneh ka</i> (echo response)	The day of love arises (echo response)
<i>Raat raang ki dhale</i> (echo response)	The eve of sadness ends (echo response)

<i>Din ugai sneh ka</i> (echo response)	The day of love arises (echo response)
<i>Raat raang ki dhale</i> (echo response)	The eve of sadness ends (echo response)
<i>Jai Jagat</i> <i>Jai Jagat</i> <i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat</i> <i>Jai Jagat</i> <i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	Bless the World
<i>Daar ke jina chod do</i> (echo response)	Live fearlessly (echo response)
<i>Daara ke jina chod do</i> (echo response)	Don't make others fearful (echo response)
<i>Prem aur anand ke</i> (echo response)	With love and blissful (echo response)
<i>Jeevan mai raang ghol do</i> (echo response)	Add such colors in life (echo response)
<i>Jai Jagat</i> <i>Jai Jagat</i> <i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat</i> <i>Jai Jagat</i> <i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i>	Bless the World
<i>Jai Jagat pukare ja</i> (echo response)	Bless the World (echo response)
<i>Sir adman pe vaare ja</i> (echo response)	Stand up for peace (echo response)
<i>Saab ke hit ke vaaste</i> (echo response)	For everyone's wellbeing (echo response)
<i>Aapna sukh visare ja</i> (echo response)	Forget personal gains (echo response)
Quieter - <i>Aapna sukh visare ja</i> (echo response)	Quieter –Forget personal gains (echo response)
Quieter - <i>Aapna sukh visare ja</i> (echo response)	Quieter – Forget personal gains (echo response)

This song will be available here. Take it with you. Try to mobilize it. It has good meaning – Borderless.

I want to thank you for this invitation, great opportunity. I was here for the last few days so I could observe what is happening. Many of you are my friends now. We will continue to have this relationship. I am very happy that this time you are speaking about social change and solidarity. That is my area.

I was brought up in an educational system called Nai Talim. Nai Talim means the educational system introduced by Mahatma Gandhi, and Mahatma Gandhi was also inspired by Montessori. Nai Talim is also speaking about education for life, education not just for livelihood. Education for livelihood to education for life was the agenda that was proposed by Mahatma Gandhi as well. A person, some of you may know, Marjorie Sykes. Marjorie Sykes is from the Quaker movement of England. She has written many books on Nai Talim educational system in India, proposed by Mahatma Gandhi. So if you get an opportunity look at the Nai Talim system of education. It is important that children work in the field. We spin our own cloth. We should weave our own cloth. So everything is built into that educational system: spinning, weaving, agriculture, etc., etc.

Because Gandhi was greatly opposed to this industrial education where children are put into a machine, preparing for industries. We can see a lot of parallel in what you discuss and what is happening in the Nai Talim system of education.

My work is basically based on Gandhian philosophy. What I am doing in India or in different parts of the world is basically based on Gandhian philosophy. Many of you know what is Gandhian philosophy, but briefly lets take some of those points that Gandhi said to see what is that philosophy, so important in today's world.

Gandhi was asked how India should proceed after freedom. Gandhi was approached by leaders of India and asked: How should we proceed? How are we going to plan for a country with large population like India?

What he said was very interesting. He said, **whenever you contemplate an action or a plan, think of the poorest and weakest person you have seen in your life. Bring the face of this poorest and weakest and see whether your actions are going to empower that person.** The criteria for any development plan will be based on whether your plans, your schemes, your programs are going to empower the last person in the society.

If you look at what is happening today it is basically to empower or stand on the people who are already powerful. Much of the programs are not addressing the poorest in society, the weakest in society. For Gandhi, that was very important that all your programs should basically address the issue of empowering the poorest and weakest. That is one important area. So my work is basically to empower the poorest at the bottom.

The second thing that Gandhi said was, which is a famous quotation from Gandhi, is that, **"There is enough for everyone's need and not enough for anybody's greed."**

So he believed that this is a need and greed battle. By people never-ending greed - I want more, and more, and more. As a result, millions of people will have nothing. So he said that nature has enough for everyone's need, not enough for anybody's greed. How do you challenge a greed based development model and turn it into a need based development model? To give justice and resources to everyone. That is one important area of my work. To remind the state, remind the decision makers, remind people who are in powerful positions that look, this is greed based and needs to be changed to a need based approach.

The third thing about production in Gandhi's position is that he said, **what is important is not mass production but production by masses.** You understand that difference. What is happening today's mass production, companies are producing and dumping in the market, and millions of people without work. So what is important is not mass production, but production by masses - everyone getting opportunity to produce what they want.

So much of my struggle is basically redistribution of resources, so that people can produce their own food. People can produce their own cloth. They are not running to the market to buy everything. So how do you create a self-sufficient, self-governed system is very important in my work.

And then he says, a very interesting thing, he says, **means are as important as ends.** Ends will not justify the means. That because you made a lot of money, there is no justification. You got into power is no justification. What method did you use in achieving power? What method did you use in making money are also very important? So, means are very important. Gandhi was insisting on good means, not only achievements in terms of result.

And ultimately he spoke about **Sarvodaya** – the philosophy of Sarvodaya, wellbeing of all. Sarvodaya means wellbeing of all. We have seen wellbeing of minority. We have seen wellbeing of majority, but wellbeing of all. That was the ultimate philosophy he gave to the world – **wellbeing of all.**

Much of my work is to see how these principles and ideas can be put into practice. How do you bring it into reality? And we know that one or two people cannot do it.

So the idea was to work with the young people. You are with the children and with youth. There is a difference. I work with large number of young people in different parts of the country.

See, as you travel through, what you find - young people are angry, plus frustrated Large number of young people are frustrated and angry. Angry because of unemployment. Angry because of injustice. Angry because of corruption. Angry because of various reasons.

So a huge column of anger around you. The question is, if you reach out to these angry young people, you can direct them to positive action. If we fail to reach out to these young people, their anger can be used by anybody for violence.

What you see in the world is basically angry young people are being recruited to do violence. So it is a very challenging area. How do we direct this anger into positive action? So, that is my main work. So, getting young people, understanding their anger, and see how this anger can be diverted it into positive action.

It demands quite a bit of work, but it is possible. It is like wind energy, or solar energy. Anger energy. Anger is a real energy. When people are angry, you see how much energy they have. This energy, that is the time when they can kill. If this energy can be used for positive action, a lot can change. This is what I have understood through my work – in working anger into positive action.

This is an increasing in today's world, because of the globalization process. You know what is globalization. In countries like India, globalization began back in 1991. What is globalization? Globalization is marketization. Globalization is mechanization. Globalization is a lot of things.

Globalization has really brought about a situation where powerful people are encroaching upon all the resources. They need more land to widen the roads. To urbanize the country. So urbanization, industrialization, mechanization, privatization. All that has led to less and less employment - as a result - huge conflict.

So, we need to understand the society in which we live is full of conflict. The conflict can be between rich and poor. The conflict can be between indigenous people and others. Conflict can be because of landlessness. Conflict can be because of political parties - full of conflict.

How do we handle? If we don't handle conflict – it can be turned into violence. So the capacity to understand the level of conflicts around us, and address this conflict before it becomes violent is very important.

I was trying to engage young people in this process. What was important was to identify young people in every village and train them as change agents. So at the moment they are angry and they want to destroy. You can get these young people and get them through a process of involvement, call it a process of education; there is a chance that these young people can become change agents.

That is how I began my work. Because I worked with the outlaws and I understood that this anger, if it is not directed properly, can create a lot of problems. So, directing anger was very important that I did.

Educating young people to become social activists, that was one area of my work all these year. You get fifty young people together. I know that you are also looking into a possibility of making it a movement. How do you turn an institution into a movement? That is very important. I was getting fifty, hundred young

people into a youth camp or youth training program. I had a team of people to help me. We are basically working with young people in building their confidence.

So very often young people from the villages, they lack confidence because for many years we were repeatedly telling them that you are useless, you are stupid, you don't know anything, you are not educated. When you say repeatedly a thing for a hundred times, you don't have to say it anymore. They will start saying it. We are stupid, and we are useless, and we are uneducated. People keep saying it themselves.

Such young people are brought together. When you engage them in a discussion, because the first day they will say, sir we don't know anything, we are stupid people, we are from villages, etc. But if you start to talk to them about what all they do, and many will tell you, look how know how to plow the land; I know how to milk a cow; I know how to sing; I know how to climb on a tree. If you make a list of these; these are very interesting work. And they look at me and ask me, whether you know how to milk a cow, and I don't know how to milk a cow.

Then they understand, look, probably Rajagopal knows how to read and write, but then he does not know how to milk a cow. Maybe he knows how to read a law book, but then he does not know how to plow the land. They understand, look we are all equals. In some areas you may be big, but in many other areas we know much more than you know.

So confidence building is very important. Giving importance to what they do, respect what they do is very important. That is how we are building their confidence. We are all equals now. You know how to read and write, but then I know how to produce food. What is greater than producing food? At the end of the day, we all need food. This confidence that producing food is not a stupid activity, working on the land is not a stupid activity, producing milk is not a stupid activity. These are activities that are as important as reading and writing. That confidence needs to be built. That was the first area. The first part of the training program is for that.

The second part of the training program is basically social-political analysis. To say, why poverty? So very often in countries like India, people believe poverty is God given. I am made poor by the god. To break that notion that poverty is God made to poverty is manmade or woman-made- this takes time. There is great difficulty in believing it, because many years of orientation that you are poor because of your karmas of the last life. You do something this time and it will get better next time. People are made to believe it. Breaking that, understanding that poverty is manmade, and that even if it is manmade, man can change it. We can change it. Let us get together to change our own situation rather than waiting for somebody else to come and change our situation. That comes very strongly in the second part of the training program; then you should see their face. The result is very different.

Third part is to understand institutions and laws. In countries like India and many parts of the world there are very interesting laws in support of the poor people. Many institutions, like there is a women's commission, there is a commission for children, there is a commission for deprived people, and there are many laws in support of poor people.

These are not implemented because of international pressure. Every country has made some laws in support of the poor and deprived. These are not implemented. If young people understand that there are institutions and laws that need to work in our interests, and we can make it work, that is the third part of the training program. Reaching out to institutions. What is the role of the police station? Not to beat people, but to provide you with protection when you are being beaten up by somebody else. What is the role of different offices? What is this health department? Understanding the institutions and laws of the country will make people more powerful. They will know this is a tool that I can use.

Finally at the end they are supported to make a plan of action. When they get back. So they can see also the consequences of their action. Not only make an action plan, but also see the consequences of their action plan, because when you get back, you are getting back to a very hostile climate. The moment you say all the land should be distributed, the landlord will be unhappy. The moment you say the officials should not be corrupt, all the officials will be against you. The moment you say there should not be caste system, the upper caste will be against you. The moment you say anything, people are going to be against you. So understand that you are going into a very hostile climate. At the end of the training program, everyone want to make a revolution in one day. They are so excited. I will go back and change my village. You need to halt, and say this excitement will lead to trouble.

It is not only important to create confidence and create excitement to change one's own life, but also as a trainer take the responsibility to hold them and help them legally, politically, morally, financially, so that they can become a real change agent in their own village.

Why I am saying it, look, each one of us, even if we work for twenty years, thirty years, that can only make a very small change. If you create change agents everywhere, it will have multiplying affect. Our energy should not be spent in doing something in one village all through our life. What is important to see hundreds and thousands of people taking the responsibility to change their own life. Their own educational system. Their own health care system. How do we multiply our action is very important. I was doing it for many years, and thousands of young people. There were many people who got beaten up. Many people who ended up in prison. I can tell you stories and stories, because it is not always pleasant that you are against a wall. The powerful lobbies will not change and they don't want to change. And you want to change non-violently. So, you are up against a wall.

With that understanding, with that patience, if you continue to move, I think we can multiply our action and the situation can change. When you say I was leading a march of 100,000 people, who are the organizers? These are the young people in the villages organizing their community and coming along. Saying that we have made change in the village, now we want to make change in Delhi.

This is the level of awareness and empowerment that can come into young people, especially young people who believe that they can do nothing and they are useless.

So this is very important task in engaging with young people.

Then it goes through an action-reflection process, and it is a long story.

Now, this also invites an amount of intellectual work. In the sense, how do you change many, it is important to visit some of those concepts and words and relook at it - like **development**?

Development is a word used everyday. Everything is in the name of development. The poor people are displaced in the name of development. The water is put into the bottle in the name of development. Everything is in the name of development. So what is development?

Young people start looking at this word, development. They say, look, development cannot be just an external process. The road, the airport, big buildings, these are all external. What is happening to human beings and inside of human beings? Are we developing internally? If our sensitivity is completely dead and we develop all the highways, and all the airports, and all the buildings, is that a society worth living?

How can people development externally as well as internally? Development is not a one-way process, we have to address internally as well. That is one thing that young people understand and they argue for it. They go and tell every officer that - development is not external it is also internal. If you are so cruel, if you are so aggressive that only shows that you haven't developed internally. You need to development internally as a human being, etc., etc. That is very important to understand some of this analysis.

Same with modern. What is **modern**? People get organized and the government is using police force against organized non-violent movements. We often think, how can this happen in modern world? Modern is all about speaking, isn't it? This was a very primitive system, that the powerful will use the power against the powerless. Using power against the powerless is a very old system. What is modern in fact?

Modern will be to sit down and talk, but across the globe, you see when people get organized they make genuine demands. The rulers of those countries will apply only one method. That is sending the police and the army to deal with it. Police and army cannot change anything. Police and army doesn't have a role in making plans. So modern cannot be just because you have a mobile phone. Just because you have a laptop, you don't become modern. You don't become modern just because you have a good dress. Modern is a behavior.

What is that modern behavior? If you look around you will see people are all externally modern, internally very primitive. Use the same old method. When you are angry you will raise your voice, and you will start beating, you will start throwing, you will start using force. So, it is not important that we are externally modern; we should also be internally modern.

Same way we will revisit the word – **poverty**. Poverty is interesting to understand. It is good to understand when we work with poor people. Whom we call poor are economically poor, but they are culturally, socially, spiritually very rich. And whom we call rich, are economically rich, but socially, culturally, spiritually very poor. So if you are addressing poverty, you are not only working with the poor people, you are also working with the so-called rich, because they are also poor.

You are very kind to them also, because you see, these poor guys, they have money, but they sit in front of the television all through. But whereas you go to village, they will be dancing. You go to village; they will be sharing their food. You go to the rich man; you need to have an appointment before he meet you. So, poverty needs to be revisited. Poverty socially, culturally, spiritually rich people, economically poor, but socially, culturally, spiritually poor, economically rich. Both are poor. So, your own understanding will change.

I am only taking this example to say, look, while training young people it is important to revisit many of these concepts, which are already internalized by people.

When you say development, you have a notion, what is development? And that needs to change. Modern, there is a notion; that needs to change. Poverty, that is a notion, and that needs to change.

There are many words that we need to revisit and change. In my work we call it 4C's

1. The first "C" is **community organizer**. That is very important. Whatever the action, the beginning is a community organizer, a girl, a boy, according to our situation. India has 600,000 villages. So we need 600,000 community organizers if you really want to work across India.
2. The second "C" is the **capacity** of this person to go and organize the community. It is not good enough to have a community organizer, but the capacity of the community organizer to go back and organize the community.
3. The third "C" is called **community action**. Community is not organized just for the sake of organizing. Community needs to act but it is to act. If the ration is not distributed, the community needs to raise voice. If the teacher is not coming to the school, community should stand up and ask for the teacher to come. If the medicine is sold in the black market, the community should stand up and stop black marketing of medicine by the hospital. If there is no land distribution –

community need to act. No one person can bring about change in any way. If the community is organized, and I have seen the last many years how powerful an organized community can be. How much changes they can bring about in their own life by organizing as a community. They take a lot of responsibility in risk in that process.

4. And finally, the **communities** need to **come together** for larger actions. That is where the solidarity part comes in. That I can change my village, but then when you struggle for changing your village, what am I doing? I should be there. I should come and help you.

So, community organizer going back and organizing the community, then the organized community taking actions, and communities coming together. This is 4C on which I was building my work. When you see thousands of people marching, it is basically these organized communities coming together to act for larger change.

This is all because of empowerment. People who believe that they cannot change, but as you empower them, they start believing in themselves and start making changes. This word empowerment is very loaded. What is empowerment? Just go to village and organize a meeting and saying people are empowered. No, they are not empowered. Just a meeting is not going to empower people. Five visits, people are not empowered.

Empowerment is something that needs to be measured. That is very interesting. What I developed is a six-step process. In working with villagers I thought there are six areas that need to be looked into. For your sake I will tell it, because when you work with communities, probably you can use it. First step, because what I am addressing is poverty – economic poverty. So find it.

- I. So the first step – empowerment stage number one I call it. **The capacity of the person or the community to say look, we want to get out of poverty and oppression.** If people don't decide that they want to come out of poverty and oppression, how are you going to try? Nothing is going to change. People haven't desired it. It is all social workers wanting to change everything. And people have not desired it, that they want to change. So stage number one is people desiring, and it is a lot of work before they decide. They need to trust you. They need to understand your language. They need to really feel what your are trying to communicate. People desiring that we want to get out of oppression and poverty. It is a huge decision in life. From poverty is God given to that.
- II. The second part is also more important, that because I want to get out of poverty and oppression **I will not shoot on my own foot.** Is that expression in English? Shooting on your own foot? Because you see, you give them land; they will sell it. If they have not decided that we want to change, whatever you give we get into the market. You give them a cow; tomorrow it will be sold. This providing is not going to change anything. This is what government does not understand. Providing does not change anything unless people have desire to retain what is available. So, the second level of empowerment is to say look, I want to get out of oppression and poverty, so I should stop shooting on my own foot. Otherwise I can get money and I can drink alcohol, and that is the end of it.
- III. The third level of empowerment is called – **I need to move.** Things are not going to change just because I have decided that I want to get out of poverty. I need to move now. I need to go to the offices. I need to work for my rights. I need to go to officers. I need to meet people. I need to go to the bank. I need to fight for my rights. I need to move. I need to move. That is the third level of empowerment.
- IV. The fourth level of empowerment is called – I need to move, but then alone things are not going to change. **I need to move as a group.** That is where the group formation begins in the village.

Everybody will feel that. Alone, no system is going to work if I go alone. How do I take people along? So, group formation.

- V. The fifth level of empowerment is that I need to move; I need to act, but **I need to do that non-violently**. The moment I start becoming violent, then the police will be the answer. I will not get anything done. So, I need to do it non-violently.
- VI. And finally, I need to **fight for my rights, but I also need to fight for your rights**, be it in Brazil, be it in Kenya, but my rights, fighting for my rights alone is not going to change the world. I need to stand up for your rights as well.

You need to observe and when you go to a village, we need to understand what level are the people? Are they at the receiving level, or are they at the level of standing up and saying that we want to change our life? Are they really getting organized, because organized where we can make our change? Do they really understand what is violent action and is non-violent action? Will they stand up for the rights of others if there is a struggle somewhere else, etc., etc.?

So empowerment is a long process. You can begin today, but it is very important to measure the level of empowerment every time. If you come with me to some villages I will tell you this is stage number four, this is stage number one, etc., etc. So you will understand, okay, these people are beginning and these people have come to a level six, etc.

But, very often this change process is not possible because people say look, how can we do all that work without resources? Who is going to finance all this? I want to train large number of young people. I want to organize the villages. I want to organize rallies, etc., etc. How do we act? And, interestingly people are finding solution to that problem also.

What we did was – it is called “The Magic of One.” That is what it is called - “The Magic of One.” What is this magic?

1. Magic is one rupee a day. Every person who is part of this movement will be allowed to put one rupee. That is the smallest coin available in the world. That rupee into the pot, where respectfully all family members will come together in front of the pot, and then put one rupee in. Imagine 1.2 billion people in the country. One rupee is good enough for me to do my work all through my life. If all people will contribute one rupee a day, that is going to be 1.2 billion.

So, one rupee is a very, very important thing. That is small coins. It could be one euro. It could be one dollar, but can everybody contribute to a change process, rather than expecting an agency to finance it?

2. The second part is one handful of rice or wheat. Everyday in a pot you need to deposit one handful of rice or wheat before you cook for you family. Imagine the quantity of rice or wheat that can come to organize large programs. So, one handful of rice, one rupee a day.
3. Then the third part is one postcard to the prime minister of India. You have to remind him, look, my dear friend, prime minister, you are not doing what you are supposed to do in relation to my. I need land. I need resources. So, it is not everyday. That don't have to write a postcard every day; they have to write a postcard every year. So, one postcard.
4. And ultimately, one person from the family needs to come for a large action.
5. Every action that we organize is for one month. So when we walk from one point to New Delhi it is for one month. So one month of walk. Well there can be many one.

But then, one rupee, one handful of rice, one postcard, one person from one family, and one month of march. You see it makes a lot of difference. If it is everyone from a family, then it is very difficult for them to come. But, if it is just one person from the family, it is okay. The husband will take care of the family and the wife is coming to walk. It is possible.

No one-day action is going to succeed. That we should understand. One-day, government is not concerned about all these one-day action. The days are over. Unless you have persisting pressure, for policy change I am speaking. If you really want to change policy, change in the village is small. But changing policy at the global level, at the national level, it demands a lot of pressure. So long march, long action are very, very important.

We were organizing that for the last many years and we have found it is working. It is really working. So "The Magic of One" is one important thing.

The interesting thing, which may be useful for you, will be the kind of business management jargon. Converting difficulties into possibilities. In social movements, how do we convert difficulties into possibilities? I was thinking about it for many years now. How can you do it? And slowly, I found an answer to that question.

Take the example of 100,0000 people marching. How did that happen? These are basically putting problems into possibilities.

When I go to the village, people say look, what is the main problem that we are facing, because we have to walk kilometers, and kilometers to bring water? We have to walk kilometers to bring firewood. We need to walk kilometers to find work. So walking is a big problem. Everyday they have to walk long distance to find employment, find water, find firewood. That is a problem basket. You bring that into the possibility basket, that means people can walk. Walking can be an action in which these people are clever. Any other action will be difficult, but then walking is something they can do. You brought that difficulty into the possibility basket.

Then you ask them what is the other problem? The problem is that we have to walk in the hot sun everyday. Every day in the field is hot sun. So that is a problem. But you bring it to the possibility basket then you understand even if it is very hot, they can stand it. If you bring the middle class people on the national highway, they will run away. After ten o'clock they will not stand. But the poor people, because they have the capacity to work in the hot sun every day that can be a possibility of action.

And the third thing they will say, look, even if we work the entire day, we are only able to have one meal a day. So that is a real problem, one meal a day. But, bring that into a possibility basket. One hundred thousand people walking together, you can't provide two meals a day. What is possible is one meal a day. So that is also a possibility.

And then they say, look, we have a small house; five people are there to sleep. So, they do not have enough space to sleep. What does it say? In a possibility basket, even in difficult conditions they can sleep. So bring it there.

So the possibility basket says they have the capacity to walk; they can walk in hot sun; they can sleep in difficult conditions, even on the national highway. So all those things you bring into the possibility basket. So, rather than waiting for a wonderful situation to change the world, what is important is to use what is available. See, people's capacities in the most possible area, and research on peoples' capacities and peoples' possibilities, that is how the world can change.

Nothing is going to change from top. Everything need to change from the bottom. In the bottom, it is our responsibility to find maximum possibilities to bring about change.

The final part on this, and then I will come to the non-violence part, if the time permits, because non-violence is very important.

It is not only important to understand people's power can change everything. People's power is not only to elect a government, but people's power is also to challenge the government, when it is needed. People's power is also to control the government, because the state is like an elephant. The state is a white elephant, so unless there is a (mohoot?) to make it walk. So the people's power should really handle the state power in terms of how the state should behave. The state cannot be always serving the powerful and rich, and keeping millions of people poor. The state needs to change. The culture of governance need to change radically in the world. And that will happen only when people start raising this question.

So finally, how do we succeed in a social movement? There are four pillars, four pillars for successful social movements.

1. **Power of the poor** – economically if poor people have real strength and power they can bring about success in social movement.
2. **Power of the Young** – there is a huge number of young people, a large number of young people. This youth energy is not brought into a process of change. Youth energy is wasted. Huge energy wasted. This energy needs to be brought together for a change process. So the success of a social movement will be how far we are able to reach out to the young people and make them responsible for changing their own life situation.
3. **Power of Solidarity** – I have experienced that. When 25,000 people marched in 2007 from a city called Golia to the capital of India. We had 25,000 letters from all over the world to the Prime Minister. And he was really scared, so the military is coming. It is an easy thing to do. There were hundreds of schools in Europe collecting one euro a day to support the march. There were many people sending their footprints. We can't come to march, but then my footprint is with you. Solidarity is very important. Wherever the actions are taking place. Wherever people are trying to change their life, solidarity is important. Solidarity of various kinds.
4. And finally, the **Power of Nonviolence**

If you can put these four pillars together: Power of the Poor – the marginalized; Power of the Young People; Power of Solidarity; and the Power of Nonviolence. If you can put all that together into an action, there is great possibility that we succeed in the action. And those actions will bring about change. One village, two villages you and me can change. But when there are thousands and thousands of villages all over the world, who are waiting for change, who are waiting for help, who are waiting to seek a new life, very small actions are not going to work.

Your idea of moving from an institution called a Montessori school to making the Montessori system a movement. People standing up to change their own life is very, very important. You cannot do that with children directly, but somewhere the seeds can come into the mind of children. We will pick what is possible. Everything may not be possible with the children. Organizers of this Montessori school, where there are thousands of them in every village, they are not just addressing the question of education. They are addressing the question of life. Life of the village. Life of the people. Then I see a tremendous possibility to bring about change at a larger scale.

That will be the first part and end on my presentation on the social movement building part.

But then I would like to go into the nonviolence part. Do we have time now? You want to make a photo, you said.

Good, the non-violence part. Good. Thank you! So thank you for this part, and I will come back later. Thank you!

Lynne: Perfect timing. We have a few minutes where we could see if we have any questions now, then we will go and have the photo, have tea, and then come back for the second part, which is about nonviolence. Does anyone have any questions they want to raise straight away?

Megan Davies: Thank you. That was a very challenging presentation because it asks us to interrogate the words that we use in our every day language and really to look at what they mean in our world. I have an article that I shared with a few people the other day, which is titled "Against Activism," and the point is that is encouraging this concept of organizing. If I am able to just read the last sentence, which is that:

Organizing is long-term and often tedious work that entails creating infrastructure and institutions, finding points of vulnerability and leverage in the situation you want to transform and convincing atomized individuals to recognize that they are on the same team and to behave like it. Successful organizers, in contrast to activists, are more difficult to shrug off because they have built a base that acts strategically, the goal of any would be world changer should be to be part of something so organized, so formidable, and so shrewd that the powerful don't scoff, they quake.

Vidya: Very inspiring work. What she said, what you are doing, more of organizing. I wanted to know first what states you work in? What kind of political pressures did you face? Because you have done it in our country. I have also been traveling far and wide, but I am inspired by what you do. I will take home some of that points which you will share. Of course we will have another discussion, but I would definitely want to know what kind of flack you faced. You said the wall. I just wanted to know this.