

CASE STUDIES: STORIES AND EXPERIENCES

Case studies

This section is a collection of stories and experiences on the use of nonviolence around the world, written by activists who took part in the campaigns. Stories help us learn from past experiences; the motivation to act can be influenced by what has been done elsewhere, and we can be inspired by the creativity and success of others. Many of the stories describe how people learned strategies from campaigns in other parts of the world, or were inspired by contact with activists from other regions. On some occasions, the visit of a member of another group was the catalyst; in others, reading materials produced elsewhere or attending an international event led to ideas for campaigns. Additionally, many of the stories explain how campaigns were strengthened through international cooperation.

While these stories differ according to circumstances, they all have nonviolence as a common feature. Some cases focus on education and promoting nonviolence within the activist scene in a country, as in the Turkey example. Solidarity work – such as with South Africa during the anti-apartheid movement – can be a model for other situations. Learning across borders took place between Seabrook, Wyhl and Markolsheim, between Israel and South Africa, in South Korea, and when nonviolence trainers from the UK visited Kenya.

The work of building alternatives to violence and against human rights violations in conflict areas was helped by key contributions from the nonviolence movements of Chile and Colombia. Other case studies – like the story of the castor blockade in Germany – demonstrate how a large number of people can be mobilised to take nonviolent direct action, while the contribution from activists in West Papua demonstrates how nonviolence can be used en masse in even the most hostile environments. The case studies about the Eritrean diaspora campaign Arbi Harnet, and the use of social media in South Korea, show how new technology can be used to enhance a campaign. The contribution from Afghanistan is an excellent motivator for producing material about nonviolence for our own situations.

When planning your campaigns, it is always good to research if others have done something similar before, and to learn from their successes and errors. Remember to document your own campaigns, and share your own stories.