

ENCOUNTERS

In association with Combatants for Peace

Rainbow of Identities

Looking at the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in another way



Rainbow of Identities is a day-long interactive workshop facilitated by members of Combatants for Peace. Workshop participants will be invited to witness and contribute to a process of examining how we can start to look at the Israeli/Palestinian conflict through different lenses. The workshop will be led by ex-combatants on both side of the conflict who feel that the time has come to put down arms and look at non violent solutions to the situation.

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is as complex a situation as can be found in the world today. Both people are locked into a prolonged, polarised cycle of fear, anger and in many ways despair. In England we receive many contrasting view points and from afar the situation either seems so very clear and at times to confusing to even start to look at. This workshop will offer participants a personalised, emotionally led, creative experience in which the opportunity to see both sides of a coin will be paramount.

Rainbow of Identities will present stories, experiences and personal witnesses from members of Combatants for Peace of their participation in the violent conflict. We will explore what personal identity is made of and how individuals perceive their own. In the workshop we will try to trace the hierarchical system which imposes on an individual or a group and how it represents a set of identities. In the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict we will draw on Augusto Boal's methods in "Rainbow of Desire, Image Theatre and Forum Theatre" to look at how our identity forms in such extreme situations and how this affects our actions. We will try and address key elemental "identity issues" to enable us to see the "other" in the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

Participants will have an opportunity to examine oppressive/oppressed relations on individual and group identity levels. Drawing on their own personal stories around conflict, identity formation and oppressed/oppressor scenarios, participants will first present these from a polarized individual identity perspective. The participants will then have an opportunity to reflect through the variety of theatre techniques on each other's identity/identity formation. These reflections will create a gateway for the group to look at the archetypes, stereotypes, prejudices and judgments we all project on each other's identities.

The workshop will demonstrate how it is possible to create a platform for non violent negotiation, in situations of extreme conflict through the simple transformation of identities through a process of personal/political/power action. After "dismantling" individual identities into fragments, and putting them in a context of a "We" (I.E. including the 'Other') the workshop will enable the participants to be acquainted with how they choose to form and act within their individual and in-group identities, transforming these into a more collective identity of acceptance and tolerance of the other. The aim is to offer a space where participants can examine their personal starting points and response to the conflict and how, through participating in the workshop they might come closer to understanding and able to empathise with 'The others' response to it.