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War Resisters' International (WRI) produced this Handbook, drawing on the experiences of groups in many countries and different generations of activists. At the heart of every nonviolent campaign are the resourcefulness and commitment of the activists involved and the quality of the message with which they reach out—a message that may raise questions about how things are, stir people out of resignation about what is happening or might happen, attract allies, or demand a say in decisions that affect their/our lives. One of the notions central to nonviolent campaigns is 'empowerment': a sense of how you can make things happen, especially if you join with others.

There are many dramatic images of nonviolent action. Indeed, the ability to dramatise an issue is one of the strengths of nonviolence; it tries to make people see and act on what often passes unnoticed. However, this drama doesn't just happen. It gestates—in groups or cells of activists, in discussions, in training sessions, in reflecting on previous experiences, in planning, in experimenting, in making contacts. That is why this Handbook is grounded in what groups have done and how they have done it. We are not attempting to present a definitive model, but to suggest methods that have worked in various contexts and that can be adapted by creative nonviolent activists in their own situations.

Thus, this printed Handbook is a selection of a wider range of material available from War Resisters' International or on the internet. It combines texts introducing certain themes, experiences, and group exercises. This introductory section outlines what we mean by nonviolence; the importance of nonviolence training; issues for your group; and a few brief examples of historical nonviolence. Section Two looks at one specific instance of oppression within our movements: gender. Section Three outlines tasks and tools for organising and facilitating trainings. Section Four describes nonviolent campaigns and actions, including constructive programmes and the role of the media. Section Five offers specific tips for effective organising at all stages. Section Six provides stories and strategies from around the world.

Throughout the Handbook we describe some of the advantages of nonviolence in action and give examples of how it works. If you are unfamiliar with terms in the Handbook, see the glossary ([Section Nine](#)).

Section Seven gives examples of exercises for working in nonviolence. These group exercises aim either to deepen a group's understanding of an issue and of each other or to help the group be more effective in carrying out nonviolent actions and campaigns. In general, the exercises need somebody to 'facilitate' them, that is to introduce them, explain what to do and why, and keep the process moving, encouraging timid people to speak up and extroverts to listen, especially in the 'debriefing' at the end.

We hope that readers will copy parts of this Handbook and translate them or hand out to their groups. If you do this, feel free to adapt what is written to suit your needs. Section Eight offers advice—and therefore encouragement!—for you to tailor what you find here or on the WRI Website to your own situation. Section Ten is some selected resources. If you find something in this Handbook particularly interesting, you can also go to the WRI Website (http://wri-irg.org/wiki/index.php/Nonviolence_Handbook) to find out more. You will find longer versions of some articles, additional articles and exercises, and plenty more resources. In WRI we try to share rather than provide resources, meaning that others would love to read what you have learnt in your experiences with nonviolent campaigns or training. So please contribute to the WRI Website. And if you do translate part of the Handbook, please send your translation to info@wri-irg.org so we can add it to the Website.

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