

## **KARUNA CENTER'S PHILOSOPHY OF PRACTICE FOR PEACEBUILDING DIALOGUES**

We have a deliberate and structured approach to inter-communal dialogue, so that participants will feel safe, and through which trust and understanding can build slowly and steadily. We believe that the legacy of violence must be thoroughly explored and that a secure future can only be built through an honest reflection of the past. We do not believe that the past can be denied or erased. We have seen that cycles of revenge can be replaced by tolerance and that both individuals and communities can heal and move forward with their lives. To create new communities requires acknowledgement of past wrongs and mutual commitment to a shared and just future. Inter-communal dialogue is one step toward that future.

In each dialogue, we encourage participants to confront the hatred, myths, and stereotypes that fuel inter-communal violence and to speak honestly about their experiences. We encourage them to explore the complexity of their relationships with each other and their feelings of being together in dialogue.

We facilitate structured conversations with the full group and sometimes work in small groups and pairs, where it is safer to manage intense feelings of grief, anger, or disagreement. We apply no pressure toward achieving reconciliation, but are content with small steps of acknowledgement, recognition, apology, and taking responsibility for one's own behaviors. We believe that reconciliation is a long process that develops slowly over many years and is based on the continual testing of trust and understanding.

As facilitators of these dialogues, we have tried our best to be loyal to truth and to acknowledge the suffering caused by violence and war. We know that each individual and each community has a different experience of truth, and that many people face divided loyalties that are very painful. We do not take sides in talking about war. We are on the side of peace and justice, of nonviolent responses to conflict, of learning new skills for managing differences, and of building a viable, safe and reconciled future.