

Quakers in Belgium and Luxembourg Community Day

4 May 2024,

Quaker House, Brussels

Report

17 Friends, and friends of Friends, took part in our Community Day at Quaker House, Brussels.

To help us prepare for the Quaker World Plenary meeting, we learned about the concept of **Ubuntu**, and reflected on the Query: *‘Do you acknowledge, experience, and celebrate your interdependence on the other members of your Quaker community?’*

We were encouraged to consider the Ubuntu way of living together and what it might mean for the different communities to which we belong. Through appreciative enquiry we considered the strengths of our Quaker community and how we might develop them. We heard about the lasting impressions left on one Friend from taking part in a world gathering and considered the different ways we can take part in the World Plenary.



(In the photos you can see the different ways in which we tried to express the concept of ‘community’ using our bodies).



It was a full day of fellowship and fun, learning from and about each other, worshipping and reflecting together, delicious food, loud conversation, enthusiastic singing... and some physical contortions.

We even celebrated George Fox’s 400th birthday with a 17th century cake.



Below, some of the participants say what they took away from the day.



❖ I came away from the Community Day more determined than ever to nurture F/friendly relations among all those who worship with us now and those who have worshipped with us in the past but for different reasons no longer do so.

We were fewer present in Quaker House than I had hoped, but the Light shone on us and there was a spiritual bond underlying the activities of the day, whether it was worship, discussion, fun and games or singing together.

We need to communicate this spiritual bond to all those in Belgium and Luxembourg who share our Quaker testimonies and values and strengthen our gathered community. What unites us is greater than what separates us.

❖ *Pour ma part, c'était un jour de rencontre qui nous a permis de nous exprimer sur les thèmes de la communauté, et ce que cela peut impliquer de diversité, de "limites", de responsabilité individuelle à s'impliquer.*

De plus, l'intérêt d'un "hub" pour prendre part ensemble à l'assemblée mondiale des Quakers au mois d'août me paraît plus clairement évident aujourd'hui.

Egalement, la nourriture était en abondance et les moments de détente bienvenus !

Merci aux quatre Amis qui ont mis sur pied cette journée, pour notre bénéfice à tous".



❖ I think Community Day was important for reflecting on the themes of what kind of community we are striving for.

Sometimes having differing views or disagreements with others in

small group discussions can feel a bit jarring when one is used to the non-debate space of meeting for worship.

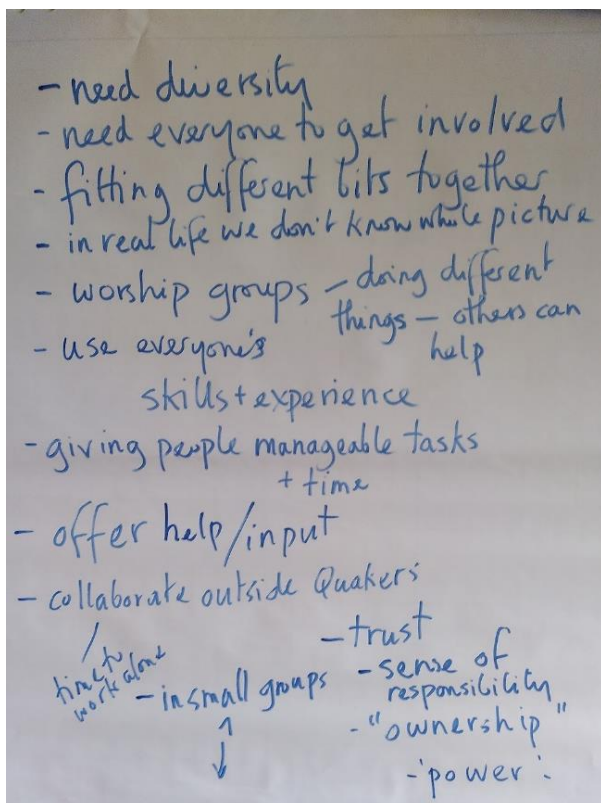
I think as a small community it can sometimes become easy to resist change or feedback from newcomers.

Nevertheless, Community Day provided a great space for confronting the challenges, ideals and objectives that Friends are faced with, especially in regards to diversity and inclusion.

I really appreciated, in particular the small group discussions, celebrating George Fox's birthday and hearing Ruth share her experience about attending a World Quaker Gathering.

Thank you to everyone who helped organize this full day event.

- ❖ *Étant nouveau dans les réunions Quaker, cette journée m'a permis de comprendre un peu plus la manière dont la foie quaker fonctionne surtout par rapport au partage d'idées sans débat. Cela m'apprend qu'il est possible d'avancer sans être d'accord sur tous les points. J'ai beaucoup apprécié les jeux également car c'est quelque chose que je ne fais plus beaucoup en tant qu'adulte.*



Here are some of our reflections about our community, and the individual commitments we made to help strengthen our BLYM community.

