

co·wonders



giraffe news

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What is it about:

- sharing news of hope and social engagement from around the world
- creating a space for inspiration and empowerment by exploring how individuals and communities respond creatively and empathetically to challenges
- learning how stories can influence our sense of connection, empathy and agency

SOURCE: Nonviolent communication - framework by Marshall Rosenberg and the International Intensive Trainings (IIT) by the Center for Nonviolent Communication

domains: social engagement, storytelling, empathy, community building, celebration

approach description:

“Giraffe news” is a communication activity based on sharing stories that demonstrate hope, care, courage, empathy and peaceful social engagement.

In Nonviolent Communication (NVC), the giraffe symbolises compassionate, empathetic communication. Inspired by Marshall Rosenberg’s heart-centred approach, giraffes can also be a metaphor for seeing the bigger picture: looking beyond immediate problems and noticing people who are taking action, supporting others or creating alternatives.

The Center for Nonviolent Communication (CNVC) is using the concept of *“Giraffes around the World”* inter alia as a title of the session at International Intensive Trainings (IIT). In this session NVC practitioners from various places share their experience how they implement NVC for peacebuilding, activism, and education in their local communities. It is a way to celebrate the many forms people use NVC to move from reactivity to presence, disconnection to connection, and misunderstanding to mutual understanding.

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Inspired by the Giraffes Around the World sessions held at NVC International Intensive Trainings (IITs), our approach “**Giraffe news**” invites learners to share stories of hope and social engagement from their own communities and around the world. The choice of news is not to be limited only to the news about the use of NVC. The learners may use any news (about which they have first-hand experience or they heard of), which contribute to building a culture of peace.

aim of use:

Participants are invited to share their stories (news) and learn from each other by exploring examples of projects, stories, inspirations which contribute to building a culture of peace.

“Giraffe news” are stories of hope and social engagement from around the world. They are inspired by the idea of “giraffe language” as a symbol of compassionate communication and serve as a practice of celebrating hopeful and peaceful narratives.

The focus is not to ignore the difficult stories, but to broaden the perspective and share stories of agency.

educational method:

- **Step 1: Invitation to share stories**

Present to participants the idea behind the “giraffe news” (as in the *approach description* and *aim of use* above). Invite them to think of a story or piece of news (story of individual, grassroots initiatives, communities, organisations, everyday acts of solidarity or inspiration, such as a book, a movie, a poem) which brings hope and shows social engagement.

Inform the participants that the format of sharing stories would be around 3 minutes per story (person), thus they do not need to prepare exhaustive presentations. It is more a format of a “pill of inspiration”.

If your activity lasts for a few days, our advice would be to present the idea on the first day, and give participants a few days to think if and how they could contribute. During those days you can also encourage participants to share the stories.

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● Step 2: Preparation of the story sharing

You may support participants with the structure of their stories. The storytellers can, but do not have to follow the proposed questions.

The possible questions can be:

- Name of the initiative and by whom it is done?
- To which challenge the initiative answers?
- What is the initiative about?
- For whom and with whom it is done?
- What makes this story hopeful or inspiring?
- How is the person telling the story connected to the initiative?
Or how do they know about it?

For the purpose of effective time management, invite the participants to have their story ready when the moment of sharing comes.

● Step 3: Story sharing

- Prepare the space for story sharing. Make sure that everyone has space to sit. You may prepare a place (chair) for a storyteller, keeping in mind if they would need this space to be exposed, or maybe more like among the others.
- Choose the order of sharing. Choose (or invite a group to choose) a system of order of sharing. The order of sharing can be done by lottery, by drawing numbers, by drawing names, by alphabetical order of names of people or their initiatives, by passing the object to next person, by online randomiser, etc.
- Keep a list of storytellers ready. Consider introducing every storyteller to the group by telling their name and the name of the initiative they would like to present.
- Be the time keeper. Ask people how they would like to be supported with measuring time. You can propose a timer set for 3 minutes, and also that 1 minute and 30 seconds before the end someone from the audience would show A4 papers with written remaining time on it.
- Hold the space. Help storytellers keep to the agreed time, and also that the audience is ready for active listening. Consider proposing energisers, or changing places in case the concentration drops and it is hard to focus on listening.
- Further conversations. Propose a way how the group could ask more questions or simply interact with the storyteller. It can have a form of mingling around after all the stories has been shared.
- Celebrate. Make sure to find a way to celebrate each storyteller and their courage to share, for example by clapping at the end of their story. And also to celebrate all the stories shared at the end of the sharing.



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- **Step 4: Debriefing**

As the mood after sharing can be celebratory, you may consider to propose a short debriefing in pairs or groups of 3 (“talking to your neighbours” style). The guiding questions can be:

- How are you feeling after hearing the stories?
- Which of the stories could you apply or adapt in your own community?
- Was there something in the stories which inspired you to act?
- What are two things you are taking away from the activity?

read more:

- **website:** [nvc matters uk](#) - about the giraffes around the world
- **website:** [the Center for Nonviolent Communication](#) - introduction to NVC

communication canvas



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notes:

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