

Institute of Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy  
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UNICEF  
Education for Development

**MUTUAL EDUCATION: GIRAFFE LANGUAGE  
IN KINDERGARTENS AND SCHOOLS**

**The report on the realisation of the Project  
October 1995 - June 1996**



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## GOALS OF THE PROJECT

### **The Project has two complementary goals:**

1. to enable adults working with children to apply non-violent compassionate communication and constructive conflict resolution programme and to develop the mutual education model, of which suppositions are:

- \* active role of children in educational process
- \* autonomous, inner motivation vs. coercion
- \* self-discipline vs. discipline founded on obedience and fear of punishment
- \* respected authority vs. fearing authority
- \* mutual understanding, respect and co-operation among adults and children in educational process

2.\* children and young people to adopt basic skills of non-violent communication, to learn to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings constructively and to become active participants in process of education, so whatever they do, they do it out from inner motivation and not because of force or obedience based on fear of punishment.

\* children and young people to adopt values of culture of non-violence: to understand and experience that autonomy does not mean to be free from others but to be free with others, that self-respect, self-approval, responsibility for one's own acts imply mutuality, respecting differences, equality, co-operation, support, compassion.

**Long-term goal** is that adults and children use skills and knowledge gained through the workshops out of them, in they everyday lives. These programmes are stimulus for adults and children to chose different attitudes toward themselves and the others, relationships that imply respect of oneself and others and viewing mutual differences as chances for personal growth and enrichment. Participants learn to find out sources of their misunderstandings and conflicts with others, to overcome them in constructive way and gain skills of expressing and receiving that make more personal satisfaction and relation with others more harmonious, and that represent alternatives to violence in any moment.

In short, knowledge and skills that participants gain through this Project could be applied in:

- preventing misunderstandings, conflicts and violence in interpersonal relations
- intervening and resolving intra/interpersonal problems and crisis
- affirming and developing a non-violent model of interpersonal relationships which implies autonomy (freedom of choice and personal responsibility), mutuality and interdependence.

## SPECIFIC GOALS OF THE PROJECT

In order to make the model of non-violent communication and mutual education integral parts of our educational system as soon as possible, we made a plan:

1. to make our Project team grow following the education of educators principle (so the larger number of professionals gets skilled to educate others);
2. to conceive a special educational programme for adults who would apply model of non-violent communication and mutual education, a programme that in terms of time (training days) and content suits to the specific context of pre-school and school institutions;
3. to perform a continuous supervision of educators and evaluation of the programme application, in order to maintain certain standards of education and realisation of the programme;
4. to involve local teams of educators (teachers, psychologists, pedagogues); the plan is to educate the more participants from the same institution the possible, so they could work as a team in implementation and further development of goals of the programme in their own environments;
5. programmes of educative activities with children are to be performed by those who work with them (their pre-school and school teachers) with the help of psychologists and pedagogues from their institutions;

6. programmes with adults and children are performed through interactive workshops and learning by experience. This goal is set based on the experience of the former Project "Smile Keepers", which approved the efficiency of such an approach in both education of adults and work with children;

7. to prepare and print special programmes of workshops on non-violent communication for teachers who work with children of different age spans, that could fit in regular activity schedule (class, school terms, etc.). The plan is to do the programme with the whole class in school and with the whole educational group in kindergarten, so all children could profit out of it;

8. to prepare instructive material and translate and print Marshall Rosenberg's "A Model for Non-violent Communication" as basic literature for adult participants in the Project.

## THEORETICAL BASE OF THE PROJECT

**Mutual education concept** is based on interactionistic approach towards mental development and on Marshall Rosenberg's Model for Nonviolent Communication which defines theoretical frame of the Project. Mutual education is the process in which children and adults are equal partners in sharing. It means that adults listen with attention and open mind, receive and respect what children communicate, try to take children point of view in relation to subjects of sharing with no expectations about the answers wanted from children formulated in advance. An open attitude towards what comes from children could help not only to children but to adults also to gain new insights, to enrich their experiences and knowledge, to change.

Of course, that does not mean that adults and children have the equal developmental role to intervene: asymmetry in knowledge and experience that exists between them is one of the basic starters in development of children. Readiness and ability of adults to guess what is in the zone of proximal development of children and to offer appropriate stimulus determine development of children in a very important way. What is the most important, though, is when and how do adults offer their knowledge: they help children to make it clear

and ask for what they need instead of giving answers before children became aware of what they want and formulate requests; they do not try to model children in accordance to images they have about them ("this is a smart but lazy child, so he needs so and so") but tend, in any moment, to hear developmental needs of children, making difference between them and their own expectations and prejudices; they give chances to children to chose and make their own decisions instead of imposing ready-made solutions; they try to hear reasons for certain children behaviour, especially when it is not in harmony with values they want to transfer, instead of punishing. In the process of mutual education there are two basic questions that adults put to themselves:

1. What do we want children to adopt?
2. With what motivation we want children to do so?

There is one answer: we want everything that children do to be a result of their inner motivation, of their interests and positive choice and not of their fear from punishment or rejection.

Educational programme for adults and intervention programmes for children they are both based on **M. Rosenberg's Model for Non-violent Communication.**

In this Model Giraffe is used as a symbol for non-violent, compassionate communication and Snake symbolises communication which leads to conflicts - judgement, analysing, criticism, interpreting, denying personal responsibility. demanding, justification of punishment.

The Model operationalizes two basic skills in non-violent communication: 1. clearly expressing and 2. compassionately receiving messages in four basic steps:

1. expressing/receiving what is observed (facts)
2. expressing/receiving feelings in relation to those facts
3. expressing/receiving needs underlying those feelings
4. expressing/receiving requests in terms of specific action in the present.

Application of this simple scheme in specific, everyday-life situations, though, asks for a whole sequence of refine cognitive differentiation and capabilities. They are necessary to develop autonomy and personal responsibility on one side, and, on the other, tolerance and

mutual respect. Here we are going to note only the most important ones:

- a. differentiation of observed facts from interpretation, subjective judgements, prejudices, stereotypes;
- b. differentiation of clear expressions of feelings from interpretation;
- c. making connection between feelings and underlying needs;
- d. differentiation between motivation based on force (must, should) and autonomous motivation (I want);
- e. differentiation between needs and requests;
- f. differentiation between requests and commands;
- g. differentiation of characteristics of communication that leads towards constructive/destructive conflict resolution;
- h. ability of decentration and compassionate receiving of four basic elements of messages no matter how they are formulated;
- i. differentiation between empathy and other kinds of feed-back.

All these abilities and communication skills are practised and developed through concrete examples of communication (child-adult, child-child, adult-adult) in different and relevant life situations.

## DYNAMICS OF THE PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The realisation of the project was performed in 5 phases:

### Phase I (October 1995.)

1. The programme for educative seminar for adults was made.
2. Instructive material for the education was made and printed.
3. Evaluation instruments were prepared.
4. A six days seminar for education of educators was held for 15 participants (psychologists and pedagogues).

### Phase II (November 1995. - January 1996.)

1. The programme for children consisted of 4 workshops was prepared.
2. 19 local educative seminars were held for those who are to do the programme with children.
3. Instructive and working material was prepared and distributed to cover work with 196 groups of children.
4. 10 supervision meetings were held with 12 educators.

### Phase III (January - March 1996.)

1. Three manuals were made and printed under the common title "Words are windows or they are walls"; manuals for teachers working

with children 5-10 years old (63 pages), elementary school children (81 pages) and high school children (81 pages).

2. M. Rosenberg's "A Model for Non-violent Communication" was translated.

Phase IV (March - April 1996.)

1. 14 local educative seminars were held for those who are to do the programme with children.

2. 7 supervision meetings were held with 12 educators.

3. 19 evaluative meetings with participants in the project educated in the Phase II were held.

4. Data on evaluation of effects of the programme were collected

Phase V (May - June 1996.)

1. 14 evaluation meetings with participants in the Project educated in the Phase IV were held.

2. Data on evaluation of the effects of the programme were collected from the participants in Phase IV.

3. M. Rosenberg's manual "A Model for Non-violent Communication" was printed.

4. Instructive and work material was prepared and distributed to cover work with 128 groups of children.

5. 33 final evaluation meetings were held with all participants in the Project

6. Data on evaluation of the program were analysed and final report was made.

## METHODOLOGY

### **The content of the Programme**

1/ Programme of the educative seminar for adults is based on the starting idea that experiential learning and exercising examples from participant's praxis is the most efficient way to improve their personal development and communicative and educational competence.. The seminar for adults lasts for 48 hours in six days - three days twice, with a week of break in between. The break is necessary for participants to assimilate new knowledge and skills, to try to apply them in their work and/or family environments and to have a chance to deal with these trials with their trainers.

The programme for adults consists of two parts:

I Getting to know the Model of Non-violent Communication through lectures and exercises on concrete examples from life experience

II Application of the Model for Non-violent Communication in the process of education, through lectures and exercises too

The manual for education of adults consists of following items:

Day 1st (8 hours)

1. Introduction of participants (reason of participation, expectations, anxieties)
2. "Giraffes around and in us" (experiential examples of non-violent communication)
3. "Snakes around and in us" (experiential examples of violent communication)
4. Introduction to non-violent communication (lecture)
5. Exercising basic elements in giraffe language:
  - a. expressing observation
  - b. expressing feelings
  - c. expressing needs
  - d. expressing requests
6. Exercising empathy: how to react to a snake feed-back
7. Exercising in making difference between empathy and other kinds of feed-back
8. Self-empathy

Day 2nd (8 hours)

1. Expressing feelings with gestures
2. How do we receive messages: 4 options (experiential examples)
3. Why do we fear to express our needs (small groups work)
4. Making difference between request and command (small groups work)
5. Empathy in conflict (small groups work)
6. Anger (making difference between cause and trigger) (exercising with experiential examples)
7. Relaxation exercise
8. Exercise in expressing appreciation

Day 3rd (8 hours)

1. Exercise in expressing feelings
2. Empathy with person in pain (small groups work)



3. Accepting responsibility for our own feelings (exercising with experiential examples)
4. Accepting responsibility for our own acts (translating "I don't like it, but I do it" into "I do it because" - exercising with experiential examples)
5. "Secret messages" - insight into the impact of roles on ways of reacting
6. Expressing "No" in language of non-violent communication
7. Self-empathy: what do I tell to myself in relation to learning non-violent communication

Day 4th (after the break of 7-10 days) (8 hours)

1. Sharing experiences: what happened meanwhile
2. When is it difficult for us to empathise with children (small groups work)
3. Empathising with message "It hurts me when you tell me that" (small groups work)
4. Empathising with snake messages from childhood (small groups work)
5. Values: precious messages from childhood (small groups work)
6. Translating absolute judgements into "I messages" (sharing)
7. Language of positive action: translation of "I don't want children to do ..." into "When I tell that, I want children to do ..." (sharing)
8. How to make life in work environment more beautiful (sharing)

Day 5th (8 hours)

1. "Labels" - insight into the impact of images that adults have of children on their reactions
2. Estimation of accomplishments of children in language of non-violent communication - when it is and when it isn't in harmony with values of adults
3. Discipline - alternatives to punishment
4. How to say "I'm sorry" in language of non-violent communication
5. Mutual education concept: differences between giraffe and snake teacher (talk, role play)
6. Hot spots: what they did not gain through this education that they would like they had

Day 6th (8 hours)

1. Mediating in conflicts (experiential examples, exercise in pairs where the third person mediates)
  2. Exercising presentation of the model for non-violent communication in work environment
  3. The programme for children: questions, comments, requests, doubts
  4. Expressing appreciation in language of non-violent communication
- Programmes of non-violent communication for children

The programmes of non-violent communication were made, for children

5-10 years old, elementary school students and adolescents.

In each of these programmes, workshop topics are in such a sequence and make a whole in order to enable children to obtain skills of non-violent communication gradually.

The programme was made to be done with whole classes in schools and educational groups in kindergartens. It is planned that a workshop lasts for 45 minutes (school class) and there is stressed if there is more time needed (2 school classes).

Rhythm of workshops depends on circumstances but it is recommended that breaks between two workshops do not last longer than a week. The optimal rhythm would be two workshop a week.

In order to help teachers to focus on the goal of each specific workshop, we stress the point of each workshop before the script. Activities for children are various and appropriate to ages and main goal: listening to poems or stories, games, discussions, drawing, pantomime, role plays, dramatisation, problem solving, written work, etc.

#### 1/Programme of educative seminar for children 5-10 years old

The programme consists of fourteen workshops focused on following topics:

1. GIRAFFE HEART: basic characteristics of non-violent and violent communication
2. IF I WERE GIRAFFE: differences between non-violent and violent communication
3. I FEEL LIKE THIS: expressing feelings, feelings vocabulary
4. HOW ONE FEELS WHEN: connection between feelings and needs
5. UMBRELLA: differences between needs and ways to meet them
6. CAN YOU HEAR ME: different ways to receive messages

7. A CHILD AND A DOG: expressing fear, empathy for fear
8. ON SHAME: feeling ashamed: expressing, causes, overcoming
9. BEETLE: anger: expressing, causes, overcoming
10. GIRAFFES IN CLASSROOM / KINDERGARTEN: difference between request and command
11. WHEN I DON'T WANT: expressing "No" in language of non-violent communication
12. WHO LIKES WHAT: expressing requests
13. WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE OUR LIVES MORE BEAUTIFUL: common project: how to make life in the institution more beautiful
14. IN THE GIRAFFE WORLD: evaluation of the programme

#### 1/Programme of educative seminar for elementary school pupils

The programme consists of sixteen workshops focused on following topics:

1. HELLO GIRAFFE, HELLO SNAKE: basic characteristics of non-violent/violent communication
2. WHAT IS IN THE CIRCLE: observation exercise, difference observation - interpretation
3. THREE CHAIRS AND WEATHER FORECAST: expressing and receiving feelings
4. MADONNA, RHINOCEROS AND BROKEN CASSETTE TAPE: connection between feelings and needs
5. UMBRELLA: difference between needs and requests
6. SPEAK CLEARLY SO EVERYBODY CAN UNDERSTAND YOU: expressing requests
7. HELLO, DO YOU HEAR ME: different ways to receive a message
8. ANGER: connection between anger, judgmental thoughts and needs
9. GET TO KNOW YOUR SNAKES SO YOU COULD LIKE THEM MORE: how are feelings of guilt, shame and fear made
11. I GIVE YOU - YOU GIVE ME: expressing "No" in language of non-violent communication
12. I THINK I MUST, BUT I WANT: accepting responsibility for own choices
13. I DON'T WANT TO - WHEN YOU TELL ME THAT WAY: empathy to commanding persons

14. I ASK YOU, ASK ME: exercising non-violent communication
15. WORD MAGIC: common project on presentation of values of non-violence
16. WHO WE WERE WITH, HOW IT WAS: evaluation of the programme

## 1/Programme of educative seminar for adolescents

The programme consists of sixteen workshops focused on following topics:

1. WORDS ARE WINDOWS OR THEY ARE WALLS: introducing non-violent communication (NVC), differences between NVC and violent communication (VC)
2. "OURS AND THEIRS": making difference between observation and interpretation
3. MAGIC F.N.: connection between feelings and needs, "I messages"
4. WHAT IS HIDDEN BEHIND ANGER: connection between anger, thinking and needs
5. TURN IT IN, TURN IT OUT - EARS OF SNAKE AND EARS OF GIRAFFE: different ways to receive messages
6. TUNE TO F.N.: differences between offensive/defensive and compassionate communication
7. REQUEST CLEARLY SO IT DOESN'T COME TOO LATE: expressing requests
8. SECRET MESSAGES: connection between prejudices, expectations and way of reacting
9. PRAISE AND APPRECIATION: receiving and expressing praise and appreciation in language of nvc
10. HOW "I MUST" BECAME "I WANT": accepting responsibility for own acts
11. SNAKE TREASURE: connection between violent communication and feelings of guilt, shame, anger and depression
12. HOW SHALL I ASK YOU: exercising skills of NVC
13. HOW SHALL I SAY "NO": expressing "No" in language of NVC
14. LET'S GIRAFFE: common project on actions to contribute to more pleasant life in school
15. WORD MAGIC: values of non-violence
16. JOURNEY THROUGH WORKSHOPS: evaluation of the programme

## Programme implementation strategy

Programme implementation was, following concentric circles principle, done in three steps:

1. Education of educators: The Project Director with two members of the Project-team as assistants led a six-days intensive seminar for 15 psychologists/pedagogues, educators to be (48 hours of training). Out of these 15 educated professionals (all of them attended basic courses in non-violent communication with Marshall Rosenberg, Christa Morf and Kelly Bryson), the ten expressed readiness to educate, so the team of educators consisted now of 13 members (see appendix 1).

2. Education of leaders of programmes for children: The 13 educators held 33 six-days seminars (**1584 hours of training**) with 552 participants from 15 towns in Serbia (see the Table 1.).

**Table 1. Participants in educative programmes**

Number of educated groups from:      Number of participants according to their profession:

Town	School	Kinder garten	psychologist pedagogue	school teacher	preschool teacher	other	Total
	5	9	42	46	123	3	214
Zrenjanin	2	1	14	17	15	3	49
Jagodina	1	0	8	9	0	2	19
Kikinda	0	1	1	0	16	0	17
Kragujevac	1	0	5	7	0	0	12
Kula	1	0	10	3	9	0	22
Loznica	1	0	7	14	0	0	21
Niš	2	0	15	19	2	0	36
Novi Sad	1	0	18	1	0	0	19
Pančevo	1	1	9	9	18	1	37
Smederevo	1	1	9	9	16	0	34
Sombor	1	0	13	5	0	0	18
Subotica	0	1	6	0	9	1	16
Užice	0	1	2	0	15	0	17
Vrbas	1/2	1/2	10	5	6	0	21
	17,5	15,5	169	144	229	10	552

3. Realisation of the programme with children: About 60% of educated professionals expressed their wish to do the programme with children, so that programme is being done in 324 groups - 225 pre-school groups and 99 school groups. About 6000 of pre-school children, about 3100 children 7-14 years old and about 280 adolescents are going through the programme of workshops in non-violent communication that started in April 1996. Total number of children and young people involved in the programme of non-violent communication is about 9380.

Total number of workshops that are to be done with children is 4734: 3150 with pre-school children and 1456 with elementary school children and 144 with high school students.

## TARGET GROUPS/PROGRAMME USERS: REVIEW

**Table 2. Institutions in which the Programme is being realised**

institutions	Beograd	Vojvodina	Serbia	Total
kindergartens	9	6	7	22
elementary schools	14	44	43	101
High schools	12	5	1	18
Other	2	10	2	14
Total	37	65	53	155

Note: "Other" stands for Institute for Health Protection for Mother and Child, Centres for Social Welfare, Special schools, EHS psychosocial counselling, Institute for Education of children and youth, Students Home.

**Table 3. Programme participants: adults**

psychologists/ pedagogues	169
teachers	144
pre-school teachers	229
others	10
total	552

Note: "Others" stands for students, directors of the institutions, co-workers in Ministry of Education

**Table 4. Programme participants: children**

children 5-7 years old	6000
elementary school children	3100
high school children	230
total	9330



**Evaluation data were collected in three ways:**

**1. daily effects evaluation** - during educative seminars for adults every participant evaluated daily effects of education; so, each participant made 6 evaluations of the effects in 6 days of seminar (see Appendix 2.)

**2. immediate effects evaluation** - immediately after the seminar each participant answered to the Questionnaire 1 and estimated relevant effects of the seminar and competence of educators (see Appendix 3)

**3. delayed effects evaluation** - after leading some workshops with children, all participants answered to Questionnaire 2 and estimated relevant effects of the programme in whole (see Appendix 4)

Besides, there was applied:

**1. Communication skills estimation scale** given on the beginning and at the end of educative seminar: Comparing participants' statements given on the first and on the sixth day we got data on changes in their communication skills.

Effects of the Programme of Non-violent Communication on behaviour of children were gained through:

**1. daily evaluation** done by children participants (see Appendix 5)

**2. evaluation** done by leaders of programmes for children (see Appendix 6)

**3. to older elementary school children and to adolescents** two estimations scales were given before and will be given after the programme: Confidence in people estimation scale and Readiness to co-operate estimation scale (see Appendix 7)



## EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS: RESULTS

Daily evaluations on seminar effects were used by educators to make dynamics and programme of work in tune with immediate needs of participants. So, in this analysis these data will not be discussed. Here we will present data gained through immediate and delayed effects evaluation.

### IMMEDIATE EFFECTS EVALUATION : ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRE 1. ANALYSIS

Participants in educative seminar estimated their satisfaction with the seminar as a whole and with certain components of the seminar - content, method, choice of examples and illustrations, possibilities given to participants to be active. Estimation was done on 0-5 scale where 0=not satisfied and 5=very satisfied. These data are shown are on the Table 5.

**Table 5. How satisfied are participants with seminar**

what is estimated	mean	st.dev.	min.	max.	N
seminar as a whole	4.85	.36	3	5	428
content, topics	4.78	.47	2	5	428
method of work	4.82	.44	2	5	427
examples, illustrations	4.74	.49	2	5	426
opportunities to be active	4.90	.36	3	5	426

As it is shown on the Table, participants (428 that were questioned) are satisfied with the seminar as a whole and its components: mean values are 4.32 to 4.85.

Estimation of educator's competence is also high, see the Table 6.

**Table 6. How satisfied are participants with competence of educators**

what is estimated	mean	st.dev.	min.	max.	N
knowledge on topic	4.98	.15	3	5	428
communication skills	4.96	.20	3	5	421

It was shown that participants are very satisfied with what they personally gained through this seminar, and little bit less satisfied with their own competence to transfer these skills to others. In estimation of their own educative abilities there are huge individual differences, judging by grades varying from 0 to 5 and by high standard deviation (see Table 7.)

There are, also, statistically important differences in relation to reliance in their own ability to transfer knowledge and skills obtained in the seminar between psychologist/pedagogues and pre-school teachers. Pre-school teachers feel less secure (mean value of estimation is 3.45) than psychologists/pedagogues (3.72) to transmit gained knowledge to others.. Differences between teachers and pre-school teachers as one and psychologists and pedagogues as other group are not significant statistically.

**Table 7. How satisfied participants are with their own improvement**

what is estimated	mean	st.dev.	min.	max.	N
personal achievement	4.80	.46	2	5	424
educative competence	3.62	.78	0	5	428

To the question "What did you personally gain through this seminar?", 417 participants answered. The answers could be put in 3 categories:

1. insights and learning about oneself and others
2. increased self-confidence and positive energy
3. new methods of work and communication skills that make quality of life better

**Table 8: What did you personally gain through the seminar**

type of achievement	percentage of answers	
insights into oneself and others	125	30 %
self-confidence, energy	142	34 %
new methods of work and communication	222	53 %
total	417	

Total percentage is above 100% because some participants named more than one achievement

On the Table 9. the data on estimated gain are shown. It is important that there is no "nothing" as answer nor answers that would point that seminar did not respond to expectations.

**Table 9. Estimated gain out of the seminar**

type of gain named	percentage of answers	
one	345	83 %
more than one	72	17 %
total	417	

Participants were also asked to give their suggestions to improve seminar and, as the Table 10 shows, the most often suggestions deal with organisation: to many of them it was hard to master new skills and methods in 6 days. They asked to prolong seminar and organize it that way so that it does not last more than 6 hours per day. 17% of them asked for better conditions: seminars were held in poorly heated rooms in schools and kindergartens during the winter. 23% of participants do not want to change anything, but they suggest to cover more people with the programme because they think that the knowledge gained is valuable and want more meetings with educators and educated in order to refresh knowledge.

**Table 10. Participants' suggestions on how to improve seminar**

type of suggestion	percentage of answers	
seminar should last longer	151	43.4 %
better physical conditions	61	17.5%
more examples for exercises	42	12.1%
more relaxation games	26	7.5%
more participants and meetings	81	23,3%
total	348	

Total percentage is above 100% because some participants gave more than one suggestion.

Generally speaking, immediate evaluation showed that seminar was very well accepted and that immediate effects are in complete harmony with goals of the project.

**DELAYED EFFECTS EVALUATION:  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRE 2. ANALYSIS**

This questionnaire was answered after some time passed after the seminar: for 70% of them it was 3 months, for 30% it was a week to three months. All of them applied gained knowledge in that period and some of them started programmes with children.

245 questionnaires were analysed: 102 answered by pre-school teachers, 58 by teachers and 85 by psychologists/pedagogues.

Some questions from the Questionnaire 1. were repeated in order to check stability of answers. To the question "How do you now, after some time, estimate the NVC programme and are you satisfied with the seminar?" a large number of positive answers (96%) was gained to testify that positive estimation of the seminar was not a result of actual mood but of insight into values of gained knowledge (see Table 11).

**Table 11. How satisfied are participants with NVC seminar**

delighted	47.0%
satisfied	39.8%
satisfied but need more exercise	9.6%
not satisfied	3.6%
answered	245

Question "What is the most important thing about NVC according to you?" was put to see if there is a harmony between what we wanted to transfer by the education and what participants adopted: Answers prove that there is a great harmony, i.e. participants stress as valuable the most often what represents the advantage of this model - mutuality and operationalization of skills of expressing and receiving. (See Table 12.)



**Table 12. What is the most important in NVC?**

self-improvement, insight into set-backs	3.3%
clearly expressing	12.7 %
receiving and empathising	47.0 %
mutuality, making contact before problem solving	27.3%
conflict resolution	4.1 %
not clear answers	5.7%
answered	245

Asked what of the learnt in seminar they applied, the majority clearly names specific concrete skills of non-violent communication applied in every day life context plus workshops for children they are supposed to do (that's why total percentage is above 100%).

**Table 13. Did they and if yes, what knowledge gained in the seminar did they apply?**

yes, do not name what	14.7%
workshops for children	46.7%
specific communication skills	86.5%
nothing	2.2%
answered	231

It was asked from participants to estimate the type of change in personal way of communication with different partners in communication: colleagues, children, children parents, superiors and family members. Data shown on the Table 14 show that the less improvement was made in communication with superiors and the most in relation with children and family members.



**Table 14. Type of change in way of communication (percentage)**

type of change	with colleagues	with children	with parents	with boss	with family
better expression	14.7	7.4	8.5	6.9	15.7
better receiving	36.7	33.4	19.9	11.2	27.4
less conflicts	27.4	50.1	37.5	25.0	40.7
undefined change	8.7	4.3	5.7	3.4	8.1
no change	12.0	4.9	11.3	40.5	8.1
answered	150	162	141	116	172

Participants were asked to estimate intensity of these changes on a scale 1 to 7 (where 1= I communicate much more difficult, 4= no change, 7= I communicate much more easy). On the Table 15 mean values of intensity of change in communication with different partners are shown, from the highest to lowest. This proves the former finding; the largest improvement in communication participants made with children and family members (differences between these values are not statistically significant), than with children parents, than with colleagues and the less improvement was made in contact with superiors (all these differences are statistically significant). The more valuable data, though, is that participants note they communicate more easy with all partners in communication (all values are above 5).

**Table 15. Estimated intensity of change in communication (on 1-7 scale)**

easier communication with	mean	standard deviation	number of answers
children	6.20	1.05	193
family	6.06	1.10	193
parents	5.60	1.23	193
colleagues	5.51	1.19	194
boss	5.10	1.31	193

A task to estimate how much confident they feel about applying non-violent communication in contact with different partners on a 1-3 scale, where 1=I don't feel confidence, 2=i'm partly confident, 3=I'm confident, discovered that participants feel the most confidence in contacts with children, than with family members, and they are partly confident in contacts with colleagues (see table 16).

**Table 16. Self-confidence in relation with own NVC skills in communication with different partners**

partner	not confident	partly confident	confident	mean value	stand. dev.
children	2%	34%	63.9	2.62	.53
colleagues	17.6 %	54.1%	28.3%	2.11	.67
family	6.6%	41.2%	52.3%	2.46	.62

That was expected since training prepared them for communication with children they work with. But, the next question points that reasons for this differences are possible in different reactions they face in contact with children and colleagues.

Question on difficulties they faced trying to communicate non-violently discovers that the majority do mind reacting of people around them (see Table 17). If these data are related to the former, it seems that the least amount of reserve and mocking towards non-violent communication is with children and family members.

**Table 17. Difficulties in applying the Model of NVC**

Personal inhibition, skills not developed enough	37.2%
Reactions of others (confusion, mocking)	41.2%
Not specified	8.8%
No difficulties	12.8%
Answered	226

The encouraging data is that the majority succeeded to overcome these difficulties (see Table 18)

**Table 18. Did they succeed in overcoming these difficulties**

not yet	28.7%
yes	65.7%
not clear answers	5.6%

**How do participants see the effects of changes in ways of communication?**

Asked if they noticed any changes in their lives after the seminar in NVC, only a few answered negative. The majority names positive changes in relations with others (understanding, conflict resolution, co-operation, etc.), which, as a matter of fact, was the goal of the education (see table 19).

**Table 19. Did the knowing of NVC lead to changes in participants**

yes, not specified change	8%
yes, positive change in self-awareness	29%
yes, positive change in self-expression	32%
yes, positive change in relationships	67%
no changes	3%
answered	243

**Table 20. Number of changes named**

yes, one change	64%
two or more changes	33%
no changes	3%
answered	243

Concerning changes in communication with colleagues and effects of those, the majority is satisfied with effects, naming that they co-operate better or they succeeded to talk to somebody they did not talk before, with pleasure on both sides, and only a few says that they tried and were faced with negative reactions.

**Table 21. Effects of changes in ways of communication with colleagues**

there are changes, not specified effects	30.1%
positive changes (better co-operation)	44.3%
negative feed-back from colleagues	6.4%
no changes	19.2%
answered	219

Asked if they applied NVC in conflict resolution, 157 of them answered positive, only 2 negative. On Table 22. there is a review of types of conflicts resolved.

**Table 22. Type of conflict resolved by applying NVC**

not specified	10.7 %
me - others	18.9%
child - child	42.1%
colleague - colleague	6.3%
colleague - child	10.1%
parent - child	7.5%
parent - colleague	3.1%
no conflict solved	1.3%
answered	159

## EFFECTS OF THE APPLYING NVC IN WORK WITH CHILDREN

The majority of participants works programmes of NVC with children (See table 23).

**Table 23. Realisation of the Programme of NVC with children**

doing programme	63%
not doing programme	37%
answered	173

Table 24. shows ages of children the participants work with.

**Table 24. Age of children involved in the programme (evaluation sample)**

pre-school children (5-7 years)	39.3%
elementary school children (7-10 years)	49.5%
elementary school children (11-14 years)	8.4%
high school students(15-17 years)	2.8%
answered	107

Adults and children involved in the Programme are very satisfied with the Programme (see Table 25).

**Table 25. Reactions of adults and children to the Programme of workshops for children**

reactions	adults	children
delighted	84.1%	89.5%
satisfied	14.3%	10.5%

not satisfied	1.6%	0
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No matter if they do or do not perform the Programme of workshops for children, participants were asked if they have changed way of communication with children they work with and what effects they have noticed. The majority of them states that their relationship with children improved (mutual openness, honesty, understanding, making deals, etc.), than that relationships between children are more harmonious, and 10 of them state that this knowledge was useful in solving individual problems of children they work with, as it is shown on the Table 26.

**Table 26. Effects of changes in ways of communication with children**

there are changes, not specified effects	31.9%
positive changes in adults-children relation	44.3%
positive changes in children-children relation	11.1%
individual children problem solving	4.3%
no changes	8.5%
answered	235

Participants who said that there were changes in their reactions towards children behaviour were asked to name type of children behaviour to which they after the seminar react differently. See the Table 27.

**Table 27. Type of children behaviour that is treated differently after the NVC seminar**

type of behaviour	%
mischieves	26.4
refusal, No	15.1
aggression	38.4
sadness, fear	10.1
not specified	7.5

These data we consider of extreme importance because they prove that one the expected effects of the Programme was achieved: teachers have made a shift in attitudes and reacting to those behaviours of children that are usually considered as "conflict-generating" (mischieves, refused obedience, aggression); the empathy of adults for feelings of children and underlying needs in these situations is what is necessary for children to develop awareness that there are other, more successful ways to satisfy those needs.

Since one of the most important goals of the Project is the transfer of knowledge and skills obtained into everyday life rather than just performance of the workshops from the Programme, participants were asked if anything has changed in their work and work environment (See Table 28). The majority of them noted that some general changes have occurred after the seminar, and that these led to changes in ways of working with children out of the workshops too: for example, a teacher says that, thanks to knowing NVC, she did not mind for the first time to hear complaints and protests of children about bad marks, that she had not accepted these personally, but that she had succeeded to hear them empathically (and to say that to them) how they had felt and what they had wanted, and that for the first time she had succeeded to express what she wanted and that children listened to her with attention. She was pleasantly surprised with the atmosphere of acceptance and co-operation that they had made in that, at the beginning very unpleasant, situation.

More than one third of them notes changes in physical appearance of work environment which we consider as a good sign of integration and generalisation of knowing NVC as well.

For example, a teacher notes that it used to be a problem for her to keep the order in classroom during breaks when children stay in the classroom. She scolded, forced them to stay at their desks, but, in spite of that, children went on running around. Teacher feared of someone getting hurt because there is no much space between sharp edges of desks. After the seminar, she tried to hear and tell to children their needs (for different activities, play, relaxation) and her own (that children be safe, that she relaxes and get some rest) and than came to an idea to bring along boxes in which wash-machines and TV's are packed and together with children to make a "building" out of it in one

corner of classroom. Children made that "building" a castle and a theatre and every break they rush there to be there and play. Teacher and children are very satisfied with the change. We tell this example in extenso in order to show that a change in environment, as a matter of fact, is a reflection of a more substantial change in attitude to oneself and others.

**Table 28. Effects of NVC programme in work environment**

positive effects - not specified	11	5.6
change in environment (space...)	62	31.7
change in work method	92	46.9
no changes	31	15.8
answered	196	

## ASSESSMENT OF THE CHANGE IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS

1. Communication skills estimation scale given to the adults on the beginning and at the end of educative seminar consisted of request to participants to express their evaluation of what they experienced that day ( first and sixth day of training) in terms of their feelings and needs. We classified the statements in 3 categories( for the details of the classification criteria see appendix ):

- 3.well articulated ( completely in accordance with NVC standards)
- 2.partly articulated
- 1.not articulated

So each participant has got the mark designating his level of articulation at the beginning and at the end of seminar.

Comparing these marks participants has got on the first and on the sixth day we obtained the data on changes in their communication skills, presented on table 29



**Table 29. Assessment of the changes in adult’s communication skills**

change in articulation 1.day/ 6 day comparison	N	%
less articulated than before	14	4.19
without progress in articulation	91	27.24
well articulated ( same level)	89	26.64
better articulated ( + change)	140	41.91
answered	334	100%

As could be seen 69% of participants are showing the skills aimed at by the training. 27% of them demonstrated these skills already at the end of the first day of training but 42% made a progress from unclear, unarticulated expressions made on the first day, to the well articulated messages given at the end of the training. It is amazing result having in mind the complexity of the processes involved , and relatively short period of training and could be probably attributed to the participant’s high motivation for learning .

Among those who are designated as less articulated than before there are some who were so delighted by the experience they’ve passed - so instead of expressing themselves in terms of feelings and needs they simply wrote “ Wonderful” or “ It is great” which was categorised as unarticulated message by the criteria of the NVC model.

It is proved by these results that six day training is efficient in developing the NVC skills in the majority of participants, but that about one third of them need more training.

## RETROSPECT:

We will present here major difficulties teachers confronted in the process of training. This analysis was done on the basis of reports submitted by educators - workshop leaders.

First of all, analysing the process of their learning the skills of self-expression in the mentioned four steps - the most difficult part for them was to get aware of their own needs and to express clearly the action requested from others - adults and children in connection with these needs in concrete action language. I don't know if this findings are reflecting setbacks characteristic for woman , or this illiteracy for needs

and requests is more general because the majority of our teachers (95 %) involved in project, were woman.

Especially difficult task was to translate the snake statement "I don't want children to be" in positive action language connected to personal needs "I would like children to do ...because I need"

Teachers had difficulties also in translating static evaluations into process evaluation - I messages: for example "That's right" or "It is excellent" into "I like that because I need.." The habitual practice of giving evaluations in the form of absolute judgements was very resistant to change.

What was blocking compassionate response, tuning to the child could be summarised in the next three points:

1. their image about what the child is, a kind of static categorisation, labelling.

Actually the most challenging task in designing program of training was to structure group interaction so that teachers become aware how much labels they attribute to children influence their way of responding to them. The teachers were divided in six small groups, each group has got the same sentence "I haven't done my homework" but different label for the child that is saying it: shy, stupid but diligent, aggressive, intelligent but lazy child, good, docile child, lying child. From the fact that teachers accepted the labels without any question after four days of training in non violent communication it was already obvious how the labelling is automatized. Than each group was asked to react using NVC skills, choosing the appropriate reaction- giving empathy to the child or expressing themselves - if they find it more appropriate. They didn't know that all groups are

dealing with the same set of child's reactions decided in advance: after the first sentence child (i.e. Workshop leader playing the role of the child) would respond: "I don't know", then after teacher's response, "I am sorry", and then "I don't know". The way they responded was strongly influenced by the label, i.e. by the expectation from certain category of children.

They decided to give empathy to a shy, stupid, aggressive and lying child but not to intelligent and docile child. In these two situations teachers found appropriate to express their own feelings of dissatisfaction.

Also, their reading of child's feelings and needs was different depending of label.

All exchanges were written on paper and when these papers from different groups were put side by side - teachers started to laugh getting insights about self-fulfilling prophesy mechanism of labelling.

2. setback for compassion was the image teacher has about him/her self as educator, the expectation connected to the role - what we call inner snakes: I should, I am responsible, I am not good if... so teachers needed lots of empathy for their own confusion and pain because their needs for stability, safety, respect etc. were not satisfied, in order to be able to hear children in distress.

Especially hard to hear messages from children were "No, I won't" and "it hurts me when you tell that", in short- all strong expressions of refusal and negative emotions. Teachers took them personally - blaming themselves for not being "good enough" in the role of educators.

3. factor blocking adults to tune to the child's present feelings and needs is the image of the educative objective, future goal.

It was evident especially in situations when children were doing something in conflict with teacher's values and educative objectives. Than they were switching back to non-empathic feedback

The findings which we have presented here represent only the beginning of the analysis of data gathered.

Still, even on the basis of this first step analysis we can say that by practicing compassionate communication skills participants experienced two major shifts in:

1. what we call social metacognition, self reflexive strategies, kind of dynamic, dialectical analysis registering moment-to moment changes in and between participants in communication.

2. in deliberate compassionate attitude-“making present” to use Martin Buber expression , or in “emotional literacy”

3. in operative “knowing how” to communicate with children in order to foster their development and learning - one teacher expressed this by sentence “We learned always what we should do to children, what we should avoid to do, but this is the first training teaching us positive action language”

In analysis of the effects of the program on children, teachers reported that children are

- better able to understand the consequences of their behaviour
- better able to manage their feelings especially anger
- better at conflict management, negotiating disagreements
- have fewer fights and upsets
- more positive feelings about self and peers
- better able to focus and take another perspective
- have improved empathy and respect for the feelings of others
- better at listening to others
- have more sharing, co-operation and mutual respect
- have better relations with teacher
- have more willingness to learn
- have school performance better

## PROSPECT

To sum up what was said until now:

The program of training and the programs for children were exceptionally well accepted by participants, and gave expected results. Participants not only acquired communication skills leading to better mutual understanding and tolerance but also made a shift in their attitudes toward themselves and the others, that imply more respect of oneself and others and viewing mutual differences as chances for personal growth and enrichment.

So, we would like to continue with the program with the new groups of teachers and children and to introduce some changes in order to make the programs even more efficient:

1. to provide two educators per group instead of one: this is necessary because of the complexity of the interactional dynamics and need for the division of roles : one person would lead the education process, the other would monitor the exchanges taking notes.
2. to involve more teachers from the same institution together with the principal - which would change the atmosphere in the whole
3. to involve parents in the program.
4. to organise a form of follow up of trained teachers giving them support and informations to expand further the programs and to make their own contribution and application of it.