

# Non-violent Communication and Stakeholder dialogue

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## Introduction

What is our goal today and how will we try to achieve it? Practice non-violent communication in a more structured way. You as the teacher, group coordinator, or leader can guide participants in the process if they have questions of course!

## Simulating Youth-Expert Policy Dialogue on Water Conservation

First write down on a white board or large flip chart sheet of paper all the results the participants found with respect to who the important stakeholders are.

Participants pick the roles they researched in more detail and get into groups of three or four with others who have picked the same role. Share and exchange your results.

*Note to group coordinator:* You may need to mediate this so that there is an equal number of youth in each group, so some youth may need to go with their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> choice of stakeholder.

**Role play:** Participants write and act out a short role play or sample discussion they could have with this stakeholder. Some participants play the role of “youth” while others are the important stakeholder they might want to talk to. In order to have a constructive dialogue, participants can use the “Feelings/Needs” sheet handed out at the previous module to clarify their feelings and needs on freshwater protection and clean water. They can also use the phrases for non-violent communication (link given above from previous session) in their more structured dialogue, as well as the tips for compassionate listening of course.

Participants now switch roles. This means if you played the role of "youth" before, you now have to play the role of a stakeholder, and vice versa. Participants can use knowledge about their target (who they're communicating with) from their prior role (25 min).

**Now as a big group sitting in a U or a circle:** pretend as a group that you invited officials for a dialogue about the quality of your local body of water. Brainstorm or share together what feelings and needs you have as a group and phrases that would be good to use in your structured dialogue. This can be the same as what you've come up with already in the small groups, from the previous step above.

Two people should take the lead in the dialogue, having a neutral position and opening the dialogue – essentially acting as moderators. The moderators can also keep track of what is going well and what is not, and they may need to intervene in the case of the latter, in order to get the communication back on a non-violent track.

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The two moderators and the people in the role of youth participants are bound to stick to the rules of nonviolent communication.

Those in the role of relevant stakeholders/officials can break these rules a bit from time to time (because we cannot rely on their skills in non-violent communication, however they must know how to be diplomatic).

The aim is to move the stakeholders/officials to do something to implement the WFD or suggest the next, concrete steps the youth can be satisfied with (30 min).

**Feedback/discussion in small groups first, then share as a large group** - discuss the experience together! (15 min).

## Getting ready

In this final Finishing up/Discussion, and last preparations before the meeting with leaders in the community, experts or policy makers, in short - stakeholders – the following steps can be assigned as homework. As the group leader or teacher, you may need to pick the first working group.

In preparation for your meeting with leaders, stakeholders in the community, experts or policy makers etc. you should now consider:

- **Building an embassy or representative group** - it might be more effective if not all of you are going, there are sure to be other important things to prepare in your Big Jump event. It might be useful to take a vote as a group, on the people who want to/are best suited to taking this role. These people are then responsible for consulting with others in the group to determine what the group's needs and feelings are about the water body in their local area. When they actually meet with relevant stakeholders, they must use non-violent communication within a structured dialogue to make the group's concerns known and to make the experience as positive as possible for all parties concerned.
- **Who do you want to invite?** Preparation of invitations, making the invitations, finding out who relevant stakeholders are, and/or contacting the relevant stakeholders can be homework for a different working group within the class or youth group. The participants in the working group for this task might need to be in touch with participants in the working group described above.
- **Where do you want to meet?** If it is an option, maybe consider a walk along the river as a nice frame for the conversation. You could also prepare a picnic/bbq, maybe with fish

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caught from the river if possible... be creative! These logistical details of when and where to meet can be dealt with by another working group made up of different students/participants. Consult with the second working group to tailor the meeting time and place to your guests!

*Allocate responsibilities within your group, who is responsible for what, in the preparation of your meeting (35 min).*

Both sessions of this tool were developed as part of a seminar on social entrepreneurship led by Dr. Rafael Ziegler in the summer term of 2014 at the University of Greifswald. This module draws on ideas by Alexandra Cielas (Germany), Indrani Kar (Canada), and Natalja Thieß (Germany).