

## **Let's Promote Peace in the Digital Space through the Power of Nonviolent Communication**

### **#DigitalNonviolentCommunicators**

The world is witnessing an unprecedented increase of polarization, hate speech, radicalization and extremism happening both offline and online. In his book, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*, Cass Sunstein discusses how today's internet is driving political fragmentation and polarization and explains why online fragmentation endangers the shared conversations, experiences, and understandings that are the lifeblood of democracy.

To counter the proliferation of hate speech in the digital space, The Peace Gong is promoting the idea of **DIGITAL NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATORS**. People across the world are being encouraged to become **DIGITAL NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATORS** who would promote the idea of encouraging language which do not encourage hatred, polarization and fragmentation; instead it encourages emotional bridge-building and soul-to-soul communication.

The Vietnamese Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh has said, "The words we say are nourishment. We can use words that will nourish ourselves and nourish another person. What you say, what you write, should convey only compassion and understanding. Your words can inspire confidence and openness in another person.

Let's remember the 5 pillars of nonviolence we must keep in mind while communicating: Respect, Understanding, Acceptance or Empathy, Appreciation, Compassion.

Use of appropriate language and words are key to nonviolent communication. Inappropriate use of language and words can contribute to conflicts while use of nonviolent expressions can help in resolution of conflicts. Nonviolent communication is based in language skills that bring forward our inherent compassion, apathy and anger dissolve, and mutual understanding is cultivated. In nonviolent communication we should avoid cruel, evaluative, judgemental, critical and stereotyping language. Nonviolent communication means complete lack of violence in the way we communicate with others. It includes both verbal and nonverbal communication. It also means we practice nonviolence in our thoughts and ideas.

So, come and join in this Global Initiative to encourage people especially youth to become **DIGITAL NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATORS** and help counter hate speech and intolerance.

As a **DIGITAL NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATOR**, you can write blogs; share innovative ideas of digital peacebuilding; counter posts that promote hatred; design templates that promote peace and nonviolent communication; share posts extensively in different social media platform that promote **Nonviolent Communication**.

Here is our Coordinator from Nepal, Dr Ankita Poudel:

When we start practicing Nonviolent Communication, it brings revolutionary changes in the way of our thinking, speaking, feeling and shaping of our perspectives. Differences within groups tend to disappear and we all are at ease with each other. We feel more responsible.

By learning to be a nonviolent communicator we can aim to develop the foundation of a good character. We young people must realize that character is the foundation of success, happiness and meaning in our lives, hence the need to work from the inside out.

At a time when we young people are extensively using the social media; **nonviolent communication digital literacy education** is important. When we are nonviolent communication literate and digitally literate, we can make critical use of the digital space for promoting peace and nonviolent action. Young people must learn to be digital peacebuilders to counter hate speech and radicalization online. Hundreds and thousands of nonviolent communicate literate youth can span out in the digital space to challenge the forces of hatred so as to make the digital space a 'garden of peace and harmony'.

For this to become a reality, Universities, colleges and schools across the world should introduce nonviolent communication education in their curriculum so that children and youth can contribute towards a global culture of peace and nonviolence.

