

## **What makes an effective ally for Ukrainian NVC community and the Ukrainian people**

An appeal from Ukrainian CTs on the war and its impacts

We are offering you an outline of the key messages that are important for us to convey to our fellow trainers and practitioners around the globe. We hope that it may provide insight into the Ukrainian context and can support our community in finding an aligned response and becoming an effective ally for the Ukrainian NVC community and the Ukrainian people.

### **Listening to uncensored pain**

Being a Ukrainian now means going through immense stress and challenges. Because of this, we may have many judgments and our thoughts might not be as clear as they would be under other circumstances.

Request: NVC practitioners are trained to hear the essence: in terms of the beauty and also in terms of the logic behind words. In our conversations please, try to listen to us as much as you can even though it may be hard. Most probably you have more resources for this at the moment.

### **Amplifying Ukrainian voices**

We find it hard for us to be heard: until now Ukrainians have often been viewed only as victims, someone to whom things happen, not as people whose opinion is important because we are affected the most, and we contribute the most. It's also hard to be heard when speaking from another context and being under constant stress. We see NVC trainers as people with a huge social capital of trust. This is why we are so grateful when we receive support in amplifying our voices, be it a [Manifesto](#) written in support of Ukraine, a [space](#) created where we can be heard or just your private conversations with friends where you can convey some of our messages.

Request: we are asking you to use strategies available to you to amplify Ukrainian voices and messages: in your private conversations, in social media, on public platforms that you have access to.

### **Narratives matter**

We see what is happening in Ukraine as the largest use of “power over” in Europe after WWII.

The Ukrainian nation is fighting not only for its land, freedom and dignity, but also for its physical survival. Ukraine resorts to the protective use of force, and we view it as an adequate response when being significantly outgunned and outnumbered.

Request: We ask you to look at what is happening in Ukraine through the lens of ‘protective use of force’, as this is the interpretation that in our view matches the reality the most, and we believe that narratives and interpretations matter.

### **Building a shared reality**

It may be confusing to hear all kinds of interpretations and opinions about such a charged topic. Also, the way we experience this war may differ from your assumptions about wars.

Request: we ask you to follow on social media those who are on the ground: Ukrainian journalists, activists, artists, and historians or those closely connected to Ukraine. We believe it will help you to understand and shape your response in the most effective way. Also, it will spare our stretched resources: we won't need to explain the whole context to you.

Here you may find a [list](#) of whom we recommend to follow.

### **Learning from Ukraine**

Our country was predicted to resist for a maximum of one week. To everyone's astonishment, Ukraine still exists and now liberates its territories. We believe that this became possible mainly because our civil society once more demonstrated an outstanding ability to come together and cooperate, creating the miracles of "power with". We witness how the soft power of fragile human connections shows amazing resilience in the face of the scariest manifestation of violence.

Request: We ask you to closely follow what is unfolding in Ukraine right now because we believe that the NVC community can get enriched witnessing a major NVC concept tested on a country scale and in the toughest circumstances.

### **Timing for dialogue**

For many Ukrainians, even seeing an invitation to a dialogue or a training with Russian participants is painful and triggers many judgments, including judgments about NVC as a method. It comes from a place of longing to be seen in our reality, where we don't have space for understanding other people's pain when our pain is acute and gets triggered every day as the war continues.

Request: please, for the time-being, support Ukrainian and Russian NVC communities separately. If for any reason you still decide to get involved in a dialogue activity - please, keep it confidential because any publicity about it would most likely trigger frustration and disappointment with NVC trainers and NVC in general.

Here you may find a [more detailed argument](#) about this.

### **Consulting with Ukrainian trainers**

We see a country at war being a very sensitive environment, where consultation about the context and cultural guidance are important to work effectively and do no harm.

Request: when invited to do something new in our country (a new format of work, a new organiser or a new target group) or prompted to issue a message about Ukraine, please, consult any of us first.

These are our email addresses:

Angela Starovoyotva: [crimeanangela@gmail.com](mailto:crimeanangela@gmail.com)

Elena Melnik: [m-e-m@ukr.net](mailto:m-e-m@ukr.net)

Lena Kashkarova: [ahibada@gmail.com](mailto:ahibada@gmail.com)

Kateryna Yasko: [katerina.yasko@gmail.com](mailto:katerina.yasko@gmail.com)

Pavlo Kozeletskyi: [kozeleckij@gmail.com](mailto:kozeleckij@gmail.com)

### **Supporting NVC communities in Ukraine**

We are grateful for the tonnes of empathy, workshops conducted free of charge and donations you made. All of it helped us to deal with overwhelming challenges and enabled us to support Ukrainians with empathy. Also, just a friendly warning:) sometimes we might not be ready for a 'preplanned empathy session' and then the pain starts flowing out during a conversation.

Request: we just want to express our gratitude and ask you to continue supporting us this way.

### **Donating to trustworthy initiatives**

Since February, we have received lots of financial contributions from you, our friends and colleagues. It enabled us to support other people in even more vulnerable circumstances, and also to continue our work with less anxiety about the next day.

Request: if financial support is something that meets your needs, we suggest dedicating a little amount to be donated on a monthly basis to one of the [trusted initiatives](#) we can recommend. It would help them to continue important grassroots work and might be one of the ways for you to make a very practical contribution.

### **Courage to stand for something**

We think that in the NVC community we are great at empathy for everyone involved in the painful situation and at support through dialogue. We do value these skills and approach, and yet we are afraid that they may lead many NVC trainers to not understand what we see as vital in the given situation: a clear stance that helps to stop the aggression. We believe that this is needed first and foremost, then would come a time for support in laying the groundwork for dialogue and then the dialogue itself. We are very grateful to Mary Mackenzie for formulating it in more detail here. We especially appreciate the point that being an ally for Ukraine doesn't mean being against Russia or the Russian people.

Request: we ask you to consider our requests and become an ally to Ukraine so that the violence towards our people and the land stops as soon as possible. We are afraid that maintaining neutrality is not a real option because we believe that in a situation of violence trying to stay neutral and not involved in practice plays out as support for the aggressor.

### **Making effort to stay connected**

We know how hard it may be to look at such a devastating situation. It easily triggers all kinds of traumas and may bring up helplessness and despair.

We are grateful to you for choosing to read this. It takes courage to touch a tragedy of this scale while being aware of our human limitations.

Request: please, continue to witness the tragedy which is unfolding through trusted people and sources, though it might be really difficult. We believe that this is by itself the most precious contribution because the most terrible things happen when people choose to look away.

Lena Kashkarova,  
Kateryna Yasko,  
Elena Melnik,  
Angela Starovoyotva,  
Pavlo Kozeletskyi,

Ukrainian CTs