

Certificate of Advanced Studies: International Law and Nonviolent Popular Struggle, Organizing for social Change

Organized by:



International Institute
for Nonviolent Action



UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA



In collaboration with:



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Introduction

The second on-line education program in the advanced interdisciplinary study of nonviolent conflict resolution, popular struggle, organizing, advocacy strategies and International Law applied to Nonviolent social transformation campaigns, taught by leading scholars and practitioners of strategic nonviolent action and authorities of International Law. The Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) helps organizations and practitioners working in nonviolent conflict activities to improve the quality, effectiveness and sustainable impact of their programs.

The Certificate is organized by NOVACT-International Institute for Nonviolent Action, that encourages civilian-based nonviolent strategies to defend human rights and justice worldwide and the University of Barcelona.

The Certificate is supported by the Popular Struggle Coordination Committees and the Al-Quds University.

Intended audience

The CAS has been developed to involve 30 civil society organizers. It is designed for people active in ongoing campaigns involved in social justice; leaders of popular struggle movements, grassroots organizers, middle to senior level policy and decision makers; political representatives, national and international civil society development, Human Rights and Peacebuilding organizations.

Intended learning outcomes

At the end of the course, the participants will:

- Be familiar with the dynamics of civil resistance and nonviolent strategies.
- Be able to connect their principles to their theory of change, and will be able to place their struggle in a global context.
- Be familiar with group organizing methods based on the dynamics of “Intelligent groups”.
- Be familiar with Strategic Planning and Foresight Methodologies
- Improve their capacities related to Program Design, Development and Implementation
- Have analyzed the new communications strategies in the 2.0 world compared to their media, and advocacy work.
- Be familiar with International Humanitarian, Criminal and Human Rights Law

Method

Principles:

The Certificate for Advanced Studies is an on-line program based on

- **Significative learning:** Everything will be done based on real examples, using the experiences and struggles of each participant as our reference, to make learning significant for each one of us. Students base class work on real campaigns they are working on.
- **Theory and practice:** Theoretical concepts and reflections will be mixed with their practical use, we won't talk about tools and methods. We will use them. Learning by discussing and DOING. Each block of contents will have a theoretical introduction adapted to the participant's context, done by a leading scholar that will be available for specific questions on the topic. **Then, participants will have to apply the contents to their real campaigns guided by 1 facilitator to every 15 students.**
- **Individual and Collective thinking:** The presentation of different concepts will be followed by moments of individual thinking and collective thinking, giving space to our personal and collective reflections in order to enrich our thoughts with the groups' suggestions and the groups' knowledge with our knowledge. **To facilitate the group interactions the 30 participants will be divided in 2 groups, with a specific facilitator for each group.**
- **Dialogical learning:** Learning is something social, we learn by talking with others, by interacting with others, by others experiences. Learning is for transformation, not just adaptation; therefore learning is focused on personal and social change. Our method will be based on the seven principles of Dialogical learning.

Structure/learning tools:

Participants will be divided into 2 groups of 15 with a specific facilitator for each group. Each group will work alone, having at least two collective moments with the other 2 groups.

- **Live lectures:** In Every module the participants will share an on-line lecture with their specific group lead by their facilitator to go over the contents and the obligatory readings and videos. The live lectures will be together with the 3 groups.
- **Forums discussions:** Every module will include a live space or a forum to discuss the work done by the participants within their own group, as a way of building the knowledge together in a joint learning experience. Every discussion will present the work of two students, so that at the end of the course every student will have had the time to participate and show their work
- **Readings/videos:** Most of the videos of the Certificate are developed specifically for the course by leading scholars and activists involved in real campaigns. The readings are a selection also carried out by a group of people with expertise in the field, both from the academia and the social movements.

- **Reflection papers/homework:** Every week participants will have a specific task to be done either individually or in couples or small groups. The task will connect the contents with their own campaign.
- **Final project:** At the end of the Course each participant will have to present a project of their own campaign reflecting all the work done during the 8 modules. Participants will need an estimated 125 hours of dedication.

Students commitment

The students' work in the online Certificate will be divided as follow:

		Weekly hours	Total hours
Lectures: Theory and Practice	Lessons: Recorded/Streaming theoretical/practical lessons	1,5	75
	Obligatory readings: Readings or videos connected with th weekly lessons	2	
	Optional readings: Readings or videos connected with the weekly lessons	1,5	
Guided work	Practical exercises connecting the lessons with the students' campaigns	2,5	37,5
Self work	Time to work on their campaigns	2,5	37,5
Final project	Project and campaign report		125
Total			275

Requirements

Participants:

- Each participant will come with a concrete campaign he is currently working on, or a specific idea of a campaign he will work on.
- TheGood level of English, to write and understand political texts.
- Participants are required to have access to good internet connection.
- The course requires 10 hours dedication per week, 1,5 hours of theoretical-practical lectures, 2,5 hours of guided work, 3,5 hours dedicated to obligatory and optional readings or videos, and 2,5 hours dedicated to their campaign. They are also required to develop a project/campaign with a dedication of a minimum of 125 hours.
- Participants will have to pay 75 euros to have access to all materials.

Contents

To successfully overcome the Certificate of Advanced Studies, participants will have to overcome 11 credits according to the European Credit Transfer System. Each credit corresponds to 25 hours of teaching or activity hours. The credits will be organized in 9 modules, the first 8, with 150 hours of practical and theoretical learning (70% dedicated to attend classes, readings and practical exercises, and 30% applying concepts to their organizing project) and the last module with 125 hours intended for practical work and own-project development. The practical work is intended to develop an organizing campaign and implement it during the duration of the Certificate. An academic committee will evaluate all participants at the end of the Certificate.

weeks	CONTENTS	Lectures: Theory/practice (hours)	Guided work (hours)	Self work (hours)
Introduction: week 1	Getting used to the learning environment platform	5	5	
Module 1: weeks 2,3	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: From where we come to where we go. My story my principles.	10	5	5
Module 2: weeks 4,5	OUR CAMPAIGNS: People, power and social transformation	10	5	5
Module 3: week 6	INTERNATIONAL LAW: Key elements to understand law as another tool for change.	5	2,5	2,5
Module 4: weeks 7,8	ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE: Structuring our team and relations	10	5	5
Module 5: weeks 9,10	COMMUNICATION: Our messages, our audiences, our tools	10	5	5
Module 6: weeks 11,12	BUILDING UP THE STRATEGY: From what we have to what we need to get what we want	10	5	5
Module 7: weeks 13, 14	ACTION: Action that mobilize, dilemma actions.	10	5	5
Module 8: weeks 15	EVALUATION AND CELEBRATION: Our impacts and the relevance of visualizing them.	5	2,5	2,5
Module 9: weeks 16 to 20	Final project		125	

Block contents

Module 1. Theoretical Framework: From where we come to where we go:

Our way of organizing, our personal and collective compromises are influenced by our past and by our vision of the future. We all have a theoretical framework based on our practice, on theoretical references, on other examples. We all have story of self that is the base to engage with others and is the motor of our actions. Making this frameworks visible, organizing our principles, identifying the sources of our principles and the relations between them, and organizing the way of building our “story of self” according to this is the first step in organizing our movements

Content

- ***Nonviolent Resistance, the right to Resist and the different frameworks to do it through nonviolent actions.*** What do we understand by Popular Struggle, by Nonviolent resistance? From what have we learnt? Legitimacy and legality of Nonviolent resistance. Evolution and historical examples.
- ***Glocality:*** When we think of changes do we do it at a local level or do we consider the global level? Do we understand the connection between the different struggles taking place in this very moment? Are we linking our local efforts for transformation with the global change? Are we able to connect our claims with others claims? What are the advantages of the global-local connection?

Module 2: Our Campaigns: People, power and social transformation

Power is based on people, social movements are a key element of this power and nonviolent struggles have learnt and contributed to the evolution of the notion of participatory democracy. This relation entails a theory of change based on social justice not just as a goal to reach, but as a practice to develop while doing. Understanding some of the key elements of the sociology of social change that can be adapted to our different local context is quite important when building up our social movements.

Contents

- ***Theory of Power: Democracy is a process not a procedure:*** What is power? Where is it and who has it? What is the relation between nonviolence and a participatory democracy? The notion of people power.
- ***Theory of Change and change vs social transformation: The role of social movements:*** How do social movements start and evolve? What moves people to act? Social changes are not just the result of socioeconomic conditions, spontaneous efforts, or causality, collective actions take place in a complex frame of relations and elements that define a certain *structure of political opportunity*. How important is it? How do we work to create that structure of political opportunity? Do we claim for social justice or do we build social justice?

Module 3. International Law:

Since the declaration of Human Rights, the international law frame work plays an important role in Nonviolent Popular Struggles, either as a tool for international legitimacy, or as a tool to claim and fight for our rights. The International law frame work establish a set of rules that we have to consider when planning our nonviolent popular struggles.

Contents

- **Key elements to understand International Law as a tool for change:** How can we gain legitimacy through International Law? When and where we can apply? Which are the different international bodies and tools that a social transformation movement or campaign can use or apply to?

Module 4. Organizing for change: How we do is what we will be.

The internal organization of any movement or campaign is crucial for its future success, in terms of reaching their goals. In any transformation process, the type of organizations we build, the relations we establish will deeply mark the type of changes we will be able to reach. Doing with, instead of doing for, creating intelligent dynamics and not just sharing work is basic in a transformation process. Transformation is not only something we look for, it is something we have to apply to our daily life.

Content

- **Intelligent groups: Leadership, interactions and motivations:** Are we taking the collective intelligence into account? Are our groups working as intelligent groups? What kind of Leadership do we have in our groups? What type of Leadership do we want? Collective and shared Leadership are the most effective for social transformation. Have we analyzed the type of interactions happening in our groups? Do we know what the motivations for being involved in group dynamics are?

Module 5. Communication: Our messages, our audiences, our tools

The democratization in the access to new technologies (2.0) and internet has radically changed the way of communicating, forcing our movements to adapt from our previous communication strategies to the new situation. Our actions are more visible, our Communications role is more active, our ideas can be spread faster.

- **From one way mass media to mass auto communications:** What are the dynamics of the mass media? What are the contributions of bi directionality, horizontality, multimedia (mobile phones, internet, radio, press), what are the consequences of self generated contents and the self selection of contents?
- **Communication is not improvisation:** How do we adapt messages to the different audiences and keep our coherence? How do we combine or differentiate between messages applying to emotions, mobilizing messages, and solid, consistent and rigorous arguments? How do we build a common language that connects with the reality of those we are talking to? The role of fiction and symbols in our messages.

- **Our practice Speaks for us:** What do our public actions say for us/about us? How do we combine our need to communicate our messages with the need to manage the media distortion/manipulation?

Module 6. Building up a strategy.

Strategy is how we turn what we have into what we need to get what we want. It is both analytic and imaginative, figuring how we can use our resources to achieve our goals. How do we keep high expectations without frustration? We need to be realistic to what we are, but ambitious with what we want. Establishing our goals in terms of transformation goals, planning giving space to emergencies and unexpected situations, being prepared to improvise, the strength of the simple, the tactics we use and the actions we select as motivation factors for further mobilization are all elements to consider when building up our strategy.

- **From what we have to what we need to get what we want:** Learn how to strategize turning what you have (resources) into what you need (power) to get what you want (outcomes), adapting to changing conditions as they emerge

Module 7. Mobilizing for action: Building up our actions:

Our campaigns and our movements come to the final step of mobilization and deployment of resources to take actions, following our strategies, based on our principles and theories of change and carry on with the commitments of others (our group, our constituency). Actions describe who we are and also help us to mobilize people, to add people to our campaigns.

- **Organize actions:** What are the key elements that make actions effective? How much control do we have over them? How do we choose the best actions to reach our goals?
- **Actions that mobilize people and power:** How can actions help us gain people in our campaigns? Do we connect our actions with the people's motivations? Are our actions connected to the needs of the people?
- **Dilemma actions:** Actions as the way to delegitimize the power that is oppressing you, and actions that contribute to give you more legitimacy.

Module 8. Evaluation and Celebration: Our impacts and the relevance of highlighting them.

Every campaign and movement needs moments to reflect on their practices, to re-think what they are doing, and to do this at different levels. Incorporate evaluation as part of our campaign, marking specific moments and facilitating tools to check and change while doing is incorporating the idea of change as an ongoing process too. Celebrating our success and highlighting what we did is part of the change. In this module we will do this with our course, while we provide some tools so as to do it in our campaigns.

Evaluation methods

The evaluation of the CAS will consider different aspects (contents and learnings, group dynamic, course organization, group coordination, quality of the teachers and the materials). Each aspect will have its own evaluation method and evaluation tools.

General tools to evaluate the course:

- Weekly work, tasks
- Participation in the discussion forums
- Final project
- Direct observation by the facilitators
- Evaluation questionnaires paying attention to: satisfaction, organization, learning, utility and impact.

Requirements to get the certificate:

- Assistance to all the virtual lectures
- Submit all the tasks
- Participate in the forums
- Submit the final project
- Each task will have specific quality criteria that have to be met in order to get the approval.

Three levels of evaluation:

Learning goals and competencies:

- Participants will have to do a weekly task and participate in virtual lectures and forums. Each of the facilitators responsible for one group of participants will supervise the quality of the work and will make comments for its improvement. In some of the tasks experts on a specific topic will be required to help on this supervision.
- Participants will have to do a practical project to be submitted at the end of the course. This project will be done under the supervision of the facilitators, who will follow up the application and the level of understanding of the contents.
- A follow-up report of both types of tasks will be submitted to the academic board (formed by one representative of UB, al-Quds, Novact and PSCC), who will take the final decision regarding the final approval regarding the acquisition of the learning goals and competencies.

Group dynamic: participation and group work

- Permanent evaluation with two specific moments, at the 7th and 16th weeks where a participative evaluation will be done, supported by an evaluation questionnaire.

Organization of the course, quality of the materials and capacity of the teachers and facilitators

- Permanent evaluation, supported by two evaluation questionnaires and an open space during all the course to give any suggestions that can improve the course.