



Evaluation Report: French-language free online course on the Theoretical and Practical Foundations of Nonviolent Struggle, Fall/Winter 2025

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Executive Summary

The Organization for Nonviolent Movements (ONM), in partnership with ICNC, the Institut pour la Paix, Non-violence XXI, LUCHA and the Centre de Ressources sur la Non-violence conducted an online course in French titled "The theoretical and practical foundations of nonviolent struggle" from October 21, 2025, to December 5, 2025. Forty-six participants, including 20 men and 26 women from 20 African countries, completed the course and received certificates. However, 153 qualified candidates were waitlisted due to limited resources. This cohort included participants from 9 new countries such as Guinea Conakry, Somalia, and Rwanda, marking significant expansion. The active participants logged over 1,118 hours of study, with a high retention rate (more than double that of the previous session). Above all, the course produced concrete learning gains and attitude changes about nonviolent struggle and fostered a sense of community among participants. As Bienvenu Matumo contemplated during one of the course videos, "Perhaps those who try to use violence do so because they have not yet had the good fortune of encountering nonviolence." This course impactfully reverses this trend, what's more, at a very low cost.

New features and updates

- This session lasted 6 weeks instead of 5, in response to numerous graduates' suggestions. The structure of synchronous vs. asynchronous learning was thus improved, which was made possible by extending the length of the course to 6 weeks. Each module was released on a Friday, followed by a Zoom call each Monday.
- A competitive participant selection process was introduced. Only 31% of candidates were able to be retained, suggesting a need to open a second concurrent session and hire a second coordinator or assistant coordinator; indeed, **153 qualified candidates were waitlisted due to lack of resources**. See APPENDIX for more details about the application process.
- It was announced at the onset of the course that a 71% completion would be required receiving a certificate. Previously, this was 80%. See note in italics after the screenshot on pg. 2 for explanation.
- Far more participants were initially registered (75) than previous sessions (between 40 and 60), in attempt to mitigate the high number of qualified applicants.
- Audio recordings of each video were added as a low-bandwidth option, responding to course graduate feedback.

Participation overview¹

Thirty-eight female and 37 male selected participants confirmed and registered (136 men had applied vs. 92 women). Some inactive participants were unregistered after two weeks, and if we subtract also the moderators and the coordinator, we arrive at the total number of 65 participants, of which 48 were considered “active” (50% completion and up).

Active participants came from several Francophone African countries : 20 nationalities, ensuring even geographic diversity of applicants; no Haitians were accepted this time, contrary to previous sessions). **New countries reflected in participants included Guinee Conakry, Rwanda, Burundi, Chad, Niger, Somalia, Benin, Togo, and Mauritania, marking a major expansion from previous sessions.**

Of the 46 learners who successfully completed the course and received a certificate (71% completion or more), there were about 20 men and 26 women. **Participants completed more than 1118 hours of study time** (avg time to finish = 30H, confirming our estimate). At the end of the course, learners who achieved a progress threshold of 71 % to 90% received a certificate of completion, while those who achieved a progress threshold of 81% to 100% received a certificate of completion with distinction.

Milestones: Participant completion, learning and attitudes gains

The learning progress threshold is as follows:

- 17 enrolled participants completed from 0 to 10% (see “Obstacles” section);
- 1 participant at the 50% to 60% threshold;
- 1 participant at the 61% to 70% threshold;
- 19 participants with just the minimum passing grade of 71% to 90%;
- 27 “star contributors”: 91% to 100%.

¹ The data in this report have a small margin of error (+/- 1 or 2 participants), due to certain limitations of the LearnWorlds platform and its reporting functionalities.

+ Expand all	Section	All activities	Users who completed	Viewers	Avg study time	Total study time
›	Module 1. Introduction à la formation		6	62	02:39h	5d 04:48h
›	Module 2. Pourquoi étudier la lutte non-violente ?		7	51	04:35h	8d 10:55h
›	Module 3. Les concepts clés de la lutte non-violente		11	50	04:13h	7d 11:45h
›	Module 4. L'étude et la pratique de la lutte non-violente : élargir le champs des possibles		17	50	04:50h	9d 05:43h
›	Module 5. La lutte non-violente dans le monde réel		12	51	03:42h	6d 15:08h
›	Module 6. Violence, repression et discipline non-violente		5	50	03:31h	5d 16:41h
›	Module 7. Conclusion, ressources essentielles et la suite		11	48	02:29h	3d 20:43h

See “Avg study time” column to see the per-module distribution of the average 30 hours to complete the course. Note: Participants who did not listen to the audio file of the video AND the video itself (redundant) are automatically penalized by the system, despite having studied to all the necessary content, because it is not possible to mark an activity “optional” in LearnWorlds. Around 40 participants consistently watched videos AND their audio recording, suggesting a **strong desire to achieve a high completion rate despite the announced 71% threshold**. The number of participants who consulted audio files was always a handful more than those who consulted the videos, suggesting greater convenience of the latter, but not overwhelmingly.

Given the workload, required availability, the digital divide, lack of participant resources, and security situation of the target region, it is remarkable that so many participants completed the course. This is perhaps a reflection of:

- The benefits of a competitive selection process (heightening motivation of adult learners due to perception of being part of an elite);
- the additional week to complete the course and improved synchronous/ asynchronous structure improvements this allowed; and
- the devotion of the coordinator, Jean-Pierre, to staying in constant contact with participants beyond the confines of LearnWorlds to encourage them.

In the initial learning and attitudes evaluation:

- The average score participants indicated for “How comfortable are you speaking with others about nonviolent struggle?” was 3.53 out of 5 (5 is the highest).
- Fourteen out of 51 responses to “How many nonviolent struggles or movements do you know about?” indicated confusion about terminology or a fundamental lack of understanding of the difference between a nonviolent struggle/ movement and a nonviolent tactic.
- The average score participants gave themselves for “How familiar are you with civil resistance or nonviolent struggle?” was 2.71.
- Six participants responded incorrectly to the question “The goal of civil resistance or nonviolent struggle is to...”.

By contrast, in the final learning gains and attitudes evaluation:

- The average score participants indicated for “How comfortable are you speaking with others about nonviolent struggle?” was 4.5 out of 5, indicating close to 1 whole point increase.
- Twelve out of 51 responses to “How many nonviolent struggles or movements do you know about?” indicated confusion about terminology or a fundamental lack of understanding of the difference between a nonviolent struggle/ movement and a nonviolent tactic. Overall, participants demonstrated either more confusion or, inversely, a deeper understanding of the question (*bifurcation*). Steps must be taken to clarify terminology and hierarchy of actions/tactics/methods vs. campaigns vs. movements/struggles.
- The average score participants gave themselves for “How familiar are you with civil resistance or nonviolent struggle?” was 4.13, representing a 1.42 increase.
- Two participants (vs. 6 of the initial survey) responded incorrectly to the question “The goal of civil resistance is to...”, reflecting an overall better understanding of the goals of civil resistance and nonviolent struggle.

Screen captures of various Zoom calls, November and December 2025

Not available for reasons of security and confidentiality

Obstacles and lessons learned

The contributing factors observed in the withdrawal of 17 participants include:

- Discouragement due to technical difficulties accessing the LearnWorlds platform;
- Participants living in violent conflict zones (note: the majority of those who did remain active and complete the course lived in such zones, but of course each individual situation is different);
- Lack of basic financial resources to complete the course (funds to access an internet café or cover cell phone credits);
- Unforeseeable personal circumstances (health, security risks, national or local political context, gender-related demands of participants’ time, etc.).

As stated previously, **this session had a significantly higher retention rate than our three previous cohorts (more than double). Indeed, the participant communication duties represent a significant amount of time and are unavoidable if we wish to achieve a high retention rate, in the face of such deep-rooted obstacles.** Due to the unforeseen increase in demand, as well as the exponential growth in time required to overcome the digital divide, we increased the coordinator’s pay for the next session and will aim to hire an assistant coordinator for future sessions thereafter to help mitigate this problem.

Regarding written moderation (responding to participant comments in the discussion fora), the two Africa-based moderators had difficulties accessing the platform and/or the discussion fora. One moderator had to go off the grid and enter into hiding following election violence in Cameroon. As a result, interaction with learners was concentrated to Zoom calls. That interaction however was high quality and participants clearly appreciated this type interaction, reinforcing our belief that **one of the primary benefits of the course is bringing participants out of isolation and integrating them into what is essentially a Panafrican or at least Francophone African learning community.**

For the next session, we plan to have the following role distribution between moderators:

- Amber (based in France) and Jean-Pierre (coordinator), both having easy access to and the habit of using LearnWorlds, will share the written moderation tasks.
- Jean-Pierre and the two additional moderators will participate in the application review and selection process, to be validated by Amber.
- Jean-Pierre and the two additional moderators will alternate co-facilitating the weekly Zoom calls (at least two moderators per Zoom)

Selection of participant testimonials

(Automated translation)

Fatimetou, Mauritania	Elvis, Burundi	Ani-Laure, Cameroon
Fatimetou My name is Fatimetou, I am from Mauritania, and I participated in the recently completed training. I would like to thank the institute for its training programs and for choosing the topic. This training allowed me to understand the true meaning of nonviolence. Furthermore, the training program was flexible; we weren't rushed by the lectures or assessments. The presenters also delivered excellent presentations, using simple language and practical case studies. Once again, I thank the training team and everyone who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the success of this training.	I am a Burundian citizen. First, regarding my experience, the training went very well because your platform is accessible and easy to understand. The content of the PDF documents, audio, and videos is very clear and well-structured. The practical exercises also facilitate immediate application. Furthermore, the WhatsApp group made interaction easy, and there was always someone available to answer our questions. This training required less expense in terms of travel and logistics and reached a larger number of participants.	Participating in this training on nonviolent resistance was a profoundly enriching and transformative experience. It allowed me to verify my hypothesis that violence is neither the only possible response nor, even less so, the appropriate model. I understood that nonviolence is not merely a method of protest or a temporary strategy in the face of repression, but rather a true way of life. It invites us to think, act, and react differently, by integrating peaceful discipline into our daily practices and community engagements. This approach provided us with concrete tools to strengthen the cohesion, resilience, and moral legitimacy of our actions, while also opening new perspectives for advocacy and collective mobilization. I leave with the conviction that nonviolence is a lasting force, capable of transforming power dynamics and building

		more just, inclusive, and harmonious societies. I encourage you to expand these training opportunities to reach as many people as possible.

 **Trésor Mbaïamnodji** • 2nd
Biomedical Laboratory Technician || Environmental Advo...
16h • Edited •

+ Follow ...

I am pleased to announce that I have obtained the certification (advanced level, 30 hours – with distinction): "The Theoretical and Practical Foundations of Nonviolent Struggle", delivered by the [International Center on Nonviolent Conflict \(ICNC\)](#), in partnership with the [Organization for Nonviolent Movements](#).

This training allowed me to strengthen a strategic, comparative and operational understanding of nonviolent struggle as an effective mode of political action for: the defense of human rights, the promotion of democracy, peacebuilding, and social and environmental justice.

Beyond the theoretical content, the exchanges with activists, trainers, researchers and civil society actors from different contexts have profoundly enriched the collective reflections.

👉 In contexts marked by political crises, the restriction of civil liberties and mistrust of institutions, strategic nonviolence appears more than ever as a credible, structured and transformative path.

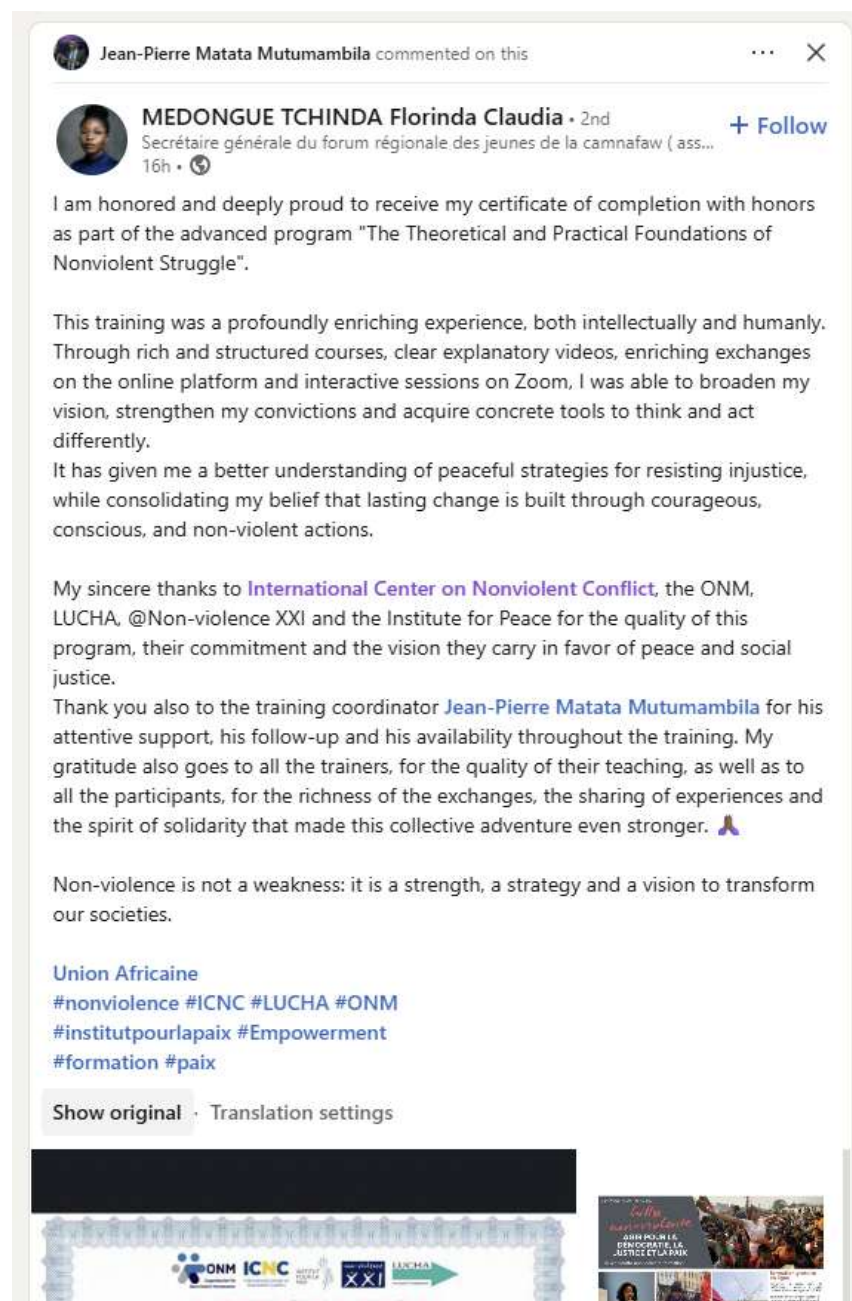
I thank the ICNC team for the quality of the training and I look forward to putting these achievements at the service of citizen initiatives, youth and communities committed to peace and justice.

[Jean-Pierre Matata Mutumambila](#) [Amber French-Griette](#) [Ivan Marovic](#) [LUCHA](#) [Salama Peace Initiative \(SPI\)](#) [Josiane Djikoloum Darwatoye](#) [#NonViolence](#) [#Peacebuilding](#) [#DroitsHumains](#) [#Démocratie](#) [#Jeunesse](#) [#ICNC](#) [#RésistanceCivile](#) [#LeadershipCitoyen](#)

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Conclusion

As Bienvenu Matumo contemplated during one of the course videos, “Perhaps those who try to use violence do so because they have not had yet the opportunity to encounter nonviolence.” This course impactfully reverses this trend.

As ONM is poised to carry out the fifth edition of this online course in February/March 2026, the popularity of the program will likely continue to grow via word-of-mouth, namely in Africa. Although the course was designed for anyone who speaks French, including in France and Europe, the demand exclusively came from Africa this time around. ONM must take special care

to plan better to maximize France- and Caribbean-based partner involvement in outreach (invite GAFE in Haiti as a partner?).

Impact is particularly cost-effective: the approximate per-participant cost to run a session is currently only 35 euros. Considering the notable retention rate, learning gains and attitude changes in participants, and vast geographic coverage bridging countries across Africa, France and the Caribbean in past cohorts, an accessible portal has opened up for people across Francophone regions of the world to finally “have the good fortune of encountering” nonviolent action, in Matumo’s words.

However, **ONM and partner institutions must be ready to support continuing engagement opportunities for star contributors to accompany them along their journey as a new generation of civil resistance leaders.** The unofficial pipeline put in place between partner institutions (LUCHA recommending participants, participants first do the initiation course, ONM running the training and recommending star contributors for the Non-violence XXI small grants program, etc.) must be officialized and more partnerships should be added. In the immediate term, funding and human resources are necessary to support an ONM-operated Nonviolent Action Education Innovation Fund, a small grants program for star contributors who wish to model the curriculum into different, more accessible formats for their communities, including translation into languages spoken by remote populations under threat of war and dictatorship in Africa and also Haïti. To capitalize on the key benefit of the course – bringing human rights defenders out of isolation – it would be worthwhile to consider support for organizing physical gatherings with the help of new regional partners.

ONM is actively fundraising for such initiatives and calls for the support of its partners to leverage their connections in this effort.