A place to meet, listen and practise Nonviolent Communication

I am a Nonviolent Communication Mediator and am currently undertaking the certification programme to become a Trainer at the Centre for Nonviolent Communication.

I first encountered Nonviolent Communication about twenty years ago, when I became a mother.

Since then, it has become much more than just a tool I have studied: it is a journey that has accompanied me through life and has enabled me, step by step, to build a personal and relational life that is increasingly in line with my values.

Today, as I embark on the certification programme to become a trainer, I feel that something is changing in my perspective.

For many years, I have practised Nonviolent Communication mainly in my personal life and relationships. Today, I feel a growing desire within me to broaden that perspective from the personal to the collective.

I ask myself: How can I put the skills I have developed to use for the benefit of the community in which I live?

It is from this question that La Casa con le orecchie Giraffa was born.

A terrace with the potential to become a special place

In Syracuse, there is a terrace measuring around 80 square metres.

At present, it is a space that still needs work – a self-contained, independent space with its own entrance, separate from the flat below – but it already has something special: light, fresh air, a view of the city, and the potential to become a place where people can come together.

I would like to transform it into a simple, beautiful and welcoming space where Nonviolent Communication can be encountered, practised and shared.

A place where we can listen and learn to listen, explore our needs, navigate conflicts and experiment with different ways of relating to one another.

A place for meetings, workshops, practical sessions, small groups and retreats.

And also a place where people can stay for a few days and immerse themselves in this experience.

This terrace is located in the Borgata, an ancient and very central neighbourhood of Syracuse, which still retains its working-class and artisan character, but which is gradually slipping to the margins.

I would like ‘La Casa con le orecchie Giraffa’ to bring life and beauty here too — quite apart from Nonviolent Communication. I would like people to find a reason to stop off in Borgata too.

And, if one day a large and stable community forms around this space, my greatest dream is that it might also become a place where we can help people navigate conflicts and polarisation, remaining in dialogue even when viewpoints are far apart.

Why ‘Giraffe Ears’?

In Nonviolent Communication, the giraffe is a symbol of listening and the ability to hold together what is happening within us and what is happening in our relationship with others.

Its large ears remind us to listen.

Its big heart reminds us to seek connection.

The House with Giraffe Ears was founded with this aim: to create a space where listening can become a tangible experience.

Where do we start?

The terrace already exists.

What’s needed is to transform it into a space capable of welcoming people, gatherings and activities.

To do this, we need to:

- lay tiles over approximately 80 m²;
- plaster and paint the walls;
- reinforce and repair the perimeter walls;
- run electricity to the terrace;
- install lighting;
- purchase tables, chairs and other furnishings;
- add greenery and create the right atmosphere for the space.

The existing waterproofing is in good condition and therefore does not need to be replaced.

Where we want to go

I imagine a green and welcoming terrace, with plants, shade, lights, tables and spaces where people can linger.

But above all, I imagine relationships.

Relationships that can blossom, be heard, bridge differences and evolve.

I would like ‘La Casa con le orecchie Giraffa’ to be a place where we can weave connections: thread by thread, encounter by encounter, through listening, presence, curiosity and the opportunity to recognise what unites us without erasing our differences.

A place where Nonviolent Communication is not just something to be learnt, but a way of being together.

I would like to help create a space where relationships can become more mindful and where it is possible to experience that connection does not mean agreeing, but being able to remain connected even when conflicts, differences and misunderstandings arise.

A place where, together, we can cultivate the ability to move from ‘you and me’ to ‘us’, without losing the richness and uniqueness of each individual.

This is the place I would like to help bring into being.

Why a fundraising campaign?

Because I would like this House to come into being together with the people who share this vision.

You can contribute with a donation, however small, or choose one of the experiences we have devised to support the project.

Every contribution brings us closer to the possibility of transforming a terrace into a living space.

A home can be born from a terrace. Relationships can blossom from that home. And from those relationships, we can weave a sense of belonging together.

Welcome to the House with Giraffe Ears.