



*Said, Sapina, Dayang, Rohanisan, Naima, Amina, and others showing off their organically grown bitter melon crops.*

## Rewriting the roles of women

### DISMANTLING TRADITIONS THAT ENABLE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Women are key players in the progress and success of peacebuilding — even though they might not see it in themselves at first.

In Lanao del Norte in the Mindanao region of the Philippines we work alongside women to address safety concerns and co-create peace in their local villages. Many of these women are former members of an armed group and are still trying to figure out their place in the community now that the peace process is underway. On top of this, the pandemic has made life more difficult for women who are experiencing increased violence and threats.

In response, NP started a new women-led peacebuilding initiative.

The first step of this initiative was to provide trainings to women in the community. Trainings covered topics such as women's rights, the importance of women in peacebuilding, and peace advocacy.

Women in the group expressed that prior to these trainings by NP, they were completely unaware of women's rights.

**“In the face of abuse, I did not know how and where to get support before these trainings with NP,” shared Fati-ma.\* “Through the training, I learned that I can uphold our rights as women, and that we can seek and receive the help and support we need.”**

The trainings also explored the dynamics of child abuse. The women discussed norms in their community, such as child marriage, that are used as a way to help a child escape poverty, but all too often lead to abuse. In another session, they observed their own parenting practices, and identified ways they could be calmer and gentler with their children. They noticed their children responded more positively when they engaged them more peacefully.

The next step of this project was for the women to explore what they wanted to do with the new skills and understandings they gained in the trainings.



First, they wanted to share what they learned with their community.

“Our group tends to think not only for our own family unit, but also for the whole community,” reflected Tala.\* “And, we value relaying what we’ve learned with other people who are willing to listen, because we have seen first-hand how these trainings have impacted our lives in a positive way.” With the whole community participating, change is magnified.

Next, the training participants decided they wanted to tackle the issue of food insecurity. Breaking another norm in the community, that of women being confined to the home, they started a livelihood farm.

Being the peacebuilders they are, the women know that when there is food on the table, when there is proper livelihood for everyone, and when there is a sense of unity and caring for the community, peace is more present.

The training participants now recognize the broader purpose of the role they play in their community.

**“ The role of women in society is not confined to what tradition dictates,” Nisa\* reflected. “Through the trainings with NP, I realized that we are able to take on more roles as women. ”**

Thanks to your support, women and youth have access to programs that help them dismantle cultural norms that enable violence. Thanks to you, women are able to build peace in their communities.

*\*Names changed*

## You keep people safe from eviction

Last December, Mullah Jassim, one of the leaders of Rey Al Jazeera, an informal settlement of displaced communities in Iraq, was notified by the Mayor of an eviction notice: All 70 families would have to leave Rey Al Jazeera by early February. These families wanted to return to their original homes they had fled, but didn't have the resources to do so yet. The forced eviction would leave them with nowhere to go, especially dangerous during winter.

Thanks to supporters like you, NP was able to immediately coordinate advocacy efforts to postpone the eviction. NP contacted the Mayor's office to explain the housing situation facing the families. When the Mayor agreed to postpone the eviction until permanent housing was arranged for the families, NP convened a meeting between the Mayor and Mullah to formalize the agreement in writing. When the date for eviction passed with no such action being taken, instead of despair, the feeling among families in Rey Al Jazeera was that of increased safety and security, and renewed hope.



“NP saved our lives,” Mullah said in reference to NP's advocacy for his community. According to him, were it not for NP, the settlement's wives and children might have died after being evicted in the middle of winter.

With your support, NP will monitor for any signs of an upcoming eviction and continue to advocate for families to remain in the camp until they are safe to leave. And we will work with the families to ensure a dignified return to their permanent home.



Monitoring in Rey Al Jazeera, April 2022



NP (center two) visiting a Women's Shelter in Lviv, April 2022



**Our team is going to hard-to-reach places:**  
*Lviv, Kyiv, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Odessa, and Vinnytsia, and back to Lviv*



**And with your support, reaching:**  
*Youth orgs, women's shelters, humanitarian centers, displaced Ukrainians, and religious groups*

## You Support Protection in Ukraine

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, NP sent an assessment team on the ground.

NP is meeting with communities to collaborate on how and what way these groups would welcome unarmed civilian protection strategies. One possible area for support that has been identified, for example, is accompanying refugees who are vulnerable, such as unaccompanied children and women, when traveling and crossing the border.

A Ukrainian woman told us, "People would show me photos of their homes that no longer exist. They have been destroyed by shelling. What can you say to a person who has lost everything?"

**NP and unarmed civilian protection is one part of that answer.**

# SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT



Linda Marie Richards, Ph.D.  
at Hiroshima Peace Park

**Working towards a more peaceful world has been a life-long passion for Linda** — a nonviolence trainer, researcher, and professor. In fact, she walked 3,700 miles from L.A. to D.C. in 1986 on The Great Peace March to advocate for a weapons and nuclear-free future.

“On that walk, I thought of each step as a prayer, a wish, and I feel as though organizations like yours are a manifestation of all that wishing — not just of me but all those who have been lost due to war.”

Since the war in Ukraine began, Linda has been supporting NP through monthly donations to grow our capacity to protect civilians caught in violent conflict. She believes, like many, that we must invest in the world we want to create.



**We don't have the resources to continue funding weapons. We need other ways to protect civilians from war, and NP is doing that work. By supporting NP, you're supporting us all.**



## Transform communities with us!

Go to [NonviolentPeaceforce.org/Make-a-Gift](https://NonviolentPeaceforce.org/Make-a-Gift). Three ways to magnify your impact:



Monthly gifts provide a stable source of reliable funding, reduce our admin costs, and ensure that even more of your donation protects communities.



NP has partnered with a free online resource to help you protect your future — by creating a will. With FreeWill, you can make a legal will in just 20 minutes.



By donating stock directly, rather than selling it, you avoid capital gains tax and receive a charitable tax-deduction equal to the full, current value of the stock.

For more information on ways to give, go to [NonviolentPeaceforce.org](https://NonviolentPeaceforce.org) or call 612-871-0005.