



## Nonviolent Peaceforce– Case Study August 2019 Juba POC

### From Gang Fights to Peace Marches Nurturing Youth Peace Leadership through Engagement and Role-Modeling

Nonviolent Peaceforce's (NP's) Juba Protection of Civilian site (Juba POC) team has helped decrease gang violence and recruited youth to participate in community protection activities. In the Juba POC, youth gangs cause continued safety and security concerns to the community, particularly to the community's most vulnerable members. NP's Juba POC team responded to the gang violence through a three-pronged approach. First, by organizing dialogues between rival gangs to help them resolve their conflicts nonviolently. Second, by establishing Youth Protection Teams (YPTs) to build a self-sustaining local community protection mechanism whose members could serve as role models for other members in the community and providing Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) trainings, mentoring, and safe space for dialogue. Third, by encouraging YPTs to engage in independent activities that serve to make the POC a safer place.

While youth violence has been endemic to Juba POC since its establishment, there has been an increase in conflict and violence in 2019, often perpetrated by the approximately 350 self-identified gang members under the age of 25 living in the POC. Feared by the community, these gangs are thought to be responsible for a significant amount of crimes committed inside and outside the POC, often targeting single, female-headed households. Gang membership is often spurred as a negative coping mechanism in response to years of violence, intergenerational trauma, as well as a lack of livelihoods, recreation, and other opportunities. NP sought to reduce this violence by meeting with the leaders of local gangs within the POC, a section of the population not engaged with by other INGOs. During the initial meetings, the gang leaders requested capacity building and recreational activities for their members. During May 2019, the Juba POC team conducted trainings for the selected members from each gang on life skills and conflict mediation. The team also conducted a football match among these gang groups on the World Refugee Day.

After identifying the need for sustainable youth groups that would increase the agency of youth to reduce violence in their communities and serve as an alternative youth group to gangs, the Juba POC team worked with the youth, including former gang members, to establish YPTs. The team then worked to build the capacity of the members of the YPT through trainings centered on self-awareness, effective communication, relationship-building, decision making, conflict management, and prevention and response to Gender Based Violence (GBV). Those trainings included UCP, GBV Prevention and Response, and Life Skills. NP has found that youth participation in the YPTs is an effective method of engaging with this demographic and helping them develop and identify positive behaviors, contributing to decreased violence and insecurity in the POC.



## Elimination of Sexual Violence Against Women & Girls During Conflict Campaign Messaging

*"We are your mothers, daughters, sisters and wives. Don't rape us."*

*"Say no to sexual violence against women and girls during conflict."*

*"Stop early and force marriage against young girls."*

*"Stop raping women and girls in conflict zone."*

*"Real men don't rape women."*

Following these foundational trainings, the YPTs, empowered by NP, conducted independent activities to encourage other young people to embrace nonviolence through recreational and artistic activities, workshops, information dissemination and mobilization campaigns. A prime example of such activities was when the youth organized a large campaign in commemoration of "International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls During Conflict" on June 19, 2019. While marching during the campaign, YPTs and NP's Women Protection Teams (WPTs) sang songs and carried signs with the messages written in the local language, English and Arabic. During the event, the YPT members also performed a street drama reflecting the need of the community to work together to eliminate sexual violence against women and girls.



Youth & Women Protection Teams' International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence Against Women & Girls During Conflict March, June 19, 2019

Looking to the future of the YPTs in Juba POC, the YPTs have already developed plans to implement more independent peace awareness activities in the zones and on the topics of their choosing. Prior to implementation, NP will provide assistance in the planning of these activities as well as customized mentoring sessions, technical support, and information guidance on the specific topics of their choosing so the youth are better able to disseminate their messages to the community. There are also many more youths who have expressed their interest in joining YPTs and NP will continue to provide trainings, engagement, and mentoring to include these youth in its programming.