



# **Good Practices in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian to Civilian Protection**

Summary of the Documentation of the Workshop in  
Paynesville (Minnesota), 21-23 October 2019

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## Abstract

This paper is the short version of a report that summarizes the discussions, issues and findings of the Workshop with the title “Good Practices in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian to Civilian Protection” that Nonviolent Peaceforce organized in Paynesville/Minnesota on the 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2019. It convened Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) practitioners, field partners, and academics working in North America (U.S., Canada and on the border with Mexico), to reflect on their work.

## Acronyms

BLM = Black Lives Matter

CLA = Center, Listen, Affirm (a de-escalation method )

CPT = Christian Peacemaker Teams

CSO = Civil society organization

GBV = Gender-based violence

GED = General Education Diploma

HRD = Human Rights Defender

HR = Human Resource

Ibid = see the full quotation above

ICE = United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement

ICRC = International Committee of the Red Cross

INGO = International Non-governmental

Organization

KKK = Ku Klux Klan

LGBTQI+ = Lesbian, Gay, Bi-, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex and others

MPT = Meta Peace Teams

NP = Nonviolent Peaceforce

NV = Nonviolence

NVC = Nonviolent Communication

PA = Protective Accompaniment

PoC = People of Color

PPF – Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

PTSD = Post-traumatic stress disorder

UCP = Unarmed Civilian Protection / Peacekeeping

UNSC = UN Security Council

Nonviolent Peaceforce

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## Good Practices in Unarmed Civilian Protection

Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) is the practice of deploying specially trained unarmed civilians before, during, or after violent conflict in order to prevent or reduce violence, to provide direct physical protection to civilian populations under threat, and to strengthen or build resilient local peace infrastructures.

The workshop took place in Minnesota, in a retreat center close to Paynesville, convening about 30 Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) practitioners, researchers and partners of UCP organizations from North America.<sup>1</sup> It is part of a series of workshops that follow on from stage one of a good practices process initiated by Nonviolent Peaceforce, a case studies research project which was concluded in 2016, whose findings were published in the book “Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence” (2016), edited by Ellen Furnari.<sup>2</sup>

This was the fourth of six regional workshops planned.

### The Workshop

The workshop in Paynesville had in total 28 participants (though some were present only part-time) from the U.S. and Canada, plus a few internationals from other continents who work with NP. They came from 13 different civil society organizations (CSOs, see the list under 6.4). In addition, there were several staff and board members of NP and academics and researchers from Europe and North America.

The participants of the workshop were carefully chosen for their current or previous work doing civilian to civilian protection; receiving protection from such organizations; and/or their academic research and writing on the topic. Some of the participants were interviewed by Ellen Furnari and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara before the workshop took place, to get their input on the agenda and most pressing topics to address.

The workshop was carried out through a mixture of in-depth small group work, and plenary discussions of group findings, putting specific focus on good practices, but also on potential challenges and dilemmas of UCP work. The documentation was done on the basis of notes and recordings of the various workshops and plenary discussions.

### Framework of UCP in North America

The North American workshop was different from the other workshops conducted so far in that most organizations when they engaged in North America they did so in their own country. So they fell into the category of “local” UCP organizations. Some of them work also in other countries / continents or even have the main emphasis of their work elsewhere (CPT and NP in particular), but in North America they were all the “locals”.<sup>3</sup> CPT started out internationally and then began to work locally, Meta Peace Teams (MPT) did both from the beginning, PPF started out in the U.S., and are today only a few international projects, the one at a community close to the U.S. border

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<sup>1</sup> Their documentations can be found here: <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/about-3/new-report-good-practices2>

<sup>2</sup> Available from <https://tinyurl.com/purchaseUCPbook>

<sup>3</sup> In other workshops there usually was a mix of local and international organizations, with the internationals dominating the picture

which is riddled by criminal cartels, plus work in Colombia and Israel-Palestine<sup>4</sup>. Al otro lado is a group from the U.S. that works in the U.S. and in Mexico. NP is insofar a special case as today its HQ is in Geneva (though maintaining an office and a strong donor base in the U.S.), and it worked with international staff in North America. The others are organizations that focus on certain urban communities, or in and around indigenous lands.

Being nationals is also true for the practitioners as individuals: Only NP used some international staff in N. America, and CPT had at one point one partner from the Middle East visiting in Canada; all others involved were North Americans working in their own country or a neighboring country. Those that work in another country, work at the U.S.-Mexican border: Some of them are active on the Mexican side, so technically working abroad from the point of view of the U.S., though the main issue they deal with is the restrictive handling of migration and the treatment of migrants by the U.S. authorities, directly or indirectly (where Mexican criminal gangs profit from the migrants).

The following issues and struggles were reflected in the workshop:

- The situation at the U.S.-Mexican border,
- Gang violence, shootings in cities,
- Struggles of First Nations against infringements of their territories and rights, both in Canada and the U.S.,
- Prevention of violence at demonstrations or other events where violence threatens.

Organizations working with refugees around protection issues in US communities were invited, but for a number of reasons, none were unable to attend.

Shrinking space is not only a phenomenon of the Global South though it is there were civil society organizations first observed it and coined the term. In North America, especially in the U.S., there are two main sources: One is the restrictive politics of the (federal and some state) administrations. The other however comes from the side of civil society itself: the readiness to discriminate and to use violence against other citizens, be it ethnic or religious minorities, LGBTQI, feminists or political progressive groups. The easy availability of guns and the lack of barriers to use them has led to quick escalation of conflicts to violence.

The need for protection that UCP can offer has been on the increase. In North America it is both known as a tool and requested by affected people and groups. The existing peace teams and other organizations however are stretched to meet the demand. As a follow-up to the workshop, a network of UCP organizations in the U.S., the so-called Shanti Sena network, has been revived.

The workshop participants formulated a number of lessons and good practices which can be read in the appendix. Perhaps outstanding among them and repeated in more than one of the working groups was the need to be aware of racism, colonialism and privilege as issues, and to work towards a transformation of society. There was agreement that racism etc. should be included in the trainings of volunteers. It remained however unclear how these issues would be reflected in the actual protective work. Most – not all – participants argued in favour of a “pragmatic” approach regarding using privilege (as whites) when being requested by the partners and where being white was of a protective value. One group formulated that even as a good practice: ‘It is a good practice to be strategic / pragmatic in using different identities (racial, gender, age, sexual orientation) that will be protective in particular contexts, as long as there’s an invitation to do so by folks being protected.’

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/about/>

Other divides – religion, sexual orientation – were also discussed, and the need for UCP practitioners to be as inclusive as possible was formulated. However, some of the UCP organizations in North America are based in Christian traditions and ask volunteers to have faith or spiritual beliefs.

The picture regarding principles in the North America workshop is not so different from that in other, earlier workshops. Besides Do No Harm, there is really no principle that is held true by all participants / members of all groups that were invited. Nonviolence is pretty common with a few dissenting voices, nonpartisanship is not shared by all, regarding “primacy of local actors” there is a sense that this principle requires more refinement (and was ultimately formulated as the primacy of those most affected), and there is a long list of additional suggestions.

### **Tactics of Protection**

The UCP work in North America is mostly done by nationals who work in their own society. This has consequences for the kind of protection work they can do. They have little leverage just by “being there” (with the exception perhaps of North Americans working on the Mexican side of the border). Their legal status was not really commented on, and does not seem to play a role –other than of course not needing the acceptance by the federal or state governments for their work.

On the other hand, where groups engage in working with different groups that are in conflict, or are dealing with perpetrators seeking to change their behavior, the approaches and techniques used are very similar.

As to the question if it matters that there are different government systems, at least theoretically more democracy, more rule of law, then in other parts of the world where UCP/accompaniment is practiced, it seems that the U.S. groups did not experience this factor or might even disagree with the assumption made in the statement.

The protection the various organizations offer in their (more or less local) context seems to stem from various factors. In some situations, it is trust that has been built with perpetrators of violence (Cure Violence). In others, it is respect they earned as a nonpartisan third party (Meta Peace Teams), or of having identity markers (Christian or ethnic identity, for example) in common with people who threaten to become violent. The latter factors are decisive in the situational work – presence at demonstrations for example, because the short-term character of the intervention usually does not allow the building of relationships to all sides.

In regard to communities protecting themselves, the discussion of the group focused around the question of violence and nonviolence in self-protection. Some shared their perception and experience that violence does not work and may do harm to their cause.

There was no example given for a community that does not use outside protection, but from the discussion it became clear that there are such communities and people have experienced resistance to the thought of seeking support.

The violence-interruption model as developed by Cure Violence is an interesting and successful variant of Unarmed Civilian Protection. More than other UCP approaches, it focuses foremost on the perpetrators and their immediate sphere (fellow street organization members, relatives). The focus on interrupting violence can be considered to have both a prevention and a protection angle, but by targeting those who are liable to commit violence, not by working (or at least: not primarily) with the victims. Though this works seems to be rather standardized, as with other approaches to UCP, it requires a good analysis of the local community and trust-building is core.

In regard to advocacy, some UCP organizations engage in it, others rather refrain from it. There were no clear conclusions to the question if advocacy is at counter-purpose with a nonpartisan stance. It rather seems often to be a question of resources if groups manage to engage in

advocacy in addition to their direct protection work. And at least CPT shared an example when they simultaneously did protection and advocacy in the same community in Canada.

The relationship to the law enforcement agencies (police, border control) is ambiguous: In particular a controversial topic was the general attitude towards the police. Generally in the U.S., great hesitance can be observed to engage with police. Local communities, especially communities of indigenous or PoC distrust the police having experienced extreme direct violence (killings). In order to gain trust with them, UCP organizations must be very careful how to engage with police or other authorities, if at all. Some UCP organizations however engage in training police, and some find a middle way: Informing the police about their work, inviting them to share their information with them, but not giving out own information in order not to lose trust from the side of the people they work with. For Canada, the situation is different – both in terms of the way police tends to act, and how CSOs relate to it. There it seems easier and less controversial to work with police.

### **Managing UCP projects**

In the workshop, there was little exchange about the practical questions of management; two break-out groups that were scheduled did not take place.

Most of the organizations involved in UCP work in North America are working with volunteers. Exceptions are the projects implementing what has been called in this report the Cure Violence model –their street workers are paid – and Nonviolent Peaceforce. They all provide some kind of training, but there are differences in regard to recruitment. Some organizations have identified higher standards or longer procedures here than others, but all seem to agree that some vetting is necessary for volunteers as well as staff. As to care, there seems to be a certain reliance on techniques of self-care which the volunteers are encouraged to use.

Operating on a larger scale in the North American context for these participants meant mostly being able to cover more areas. Especially MPT reported receiving more and more requests for presence at demonstrations which they can hardly meet. Another motivator for increasing the protection activities was the widely shared concern about increasing conflicts especially in the U.S., due to growing polarization of society and the fear of violence around the upcoming Presidential elections.

### **Comparison to Earlier Workshops and Studies**

The North American workshop was different from the other workshops conducted so far in that most organizations and groups invited fell into the category of “local UCP organizations” for their work in North America. A few of them also work in other countries / continents or even have the main emphasis of their work elsewhere. Others are focused exclusively on some communities in North America. Some are very local, working in certain parts of certain towns or certain places in indigenous communities, others cover one or a few states or some places at the U.S.-Mexican border. Only NP, though it has a base in the U.S., could be counted as a truly international organization because the staff it used for its U.S. project did not come from North America. And the work regarding the situation on the Mexican border that is done on Mexican ground of course also could be called “international” though the problem it deals with are the U.S. immigration laws and enforcement agencies’ handling of the Latin American migrants.

Being local is also true for the volunteers / practitioners as individuals: With a couple of exceptions, the protection work in North America is done by national citizens in their own country, or in Mexico by U.S. citizens.

Most of the groups had not thought of their work in terms of UCP. Some spoke of “accompaniment” or “violence interruption” that have already been identified at earlier workshops as alternative terms that fall into the field of what NP understands as UCP. Some did not consciously use any of these concepts. However, most seemed willing to use the framework of UCP and consider their work using this label.

As to the kind of work, there were at least three different contexts where UCP is being applied: There is situational/temporary work – prevention of violence at demonstrations; there is work at hotspots of conflict – the U.S.-Mexican border, the extended struggle against the oil pipeline at Standing Rock and other First Nation territories; and there is long-term work in urban areas riddled by gun and gang violence.

The majority of participants in the workshop came from the U.S., and the situation in the U.S. dominated almost all discussions. And it became clear that the U.S. and Canada are very different in regard to protection needs and strategies. There is much more conflict and division within the U.S. (the key words being racism, ethnic, religious and political divides, gun culture, police violence), and there is much more violence involved in the expression of these conflicts. Canada is not alien to the same issues but it seems that there is less direct violence involved (due in part to much stricter gun control laws). Also a very different attitude was expressed by Canadians towards the police as the state actor to whom providing security should fall. (We must not forget: UCP is about stepping in when the regular mechanisms are wanting in their efforts to provide safety and security for all.)

Reflecting the local character of all the groups – that they are working in their own homes, or even when in Mexico, on issues related to U.S. government policies – there was a heavy emphasis on transforming society. In addition to protecting specific people in specific places, the individuals and groups represented have long-term goals of transforming the colonial, racist, sexist, exploitative structures of their home countries to more just, equitable, sustainable structures. This is quite different from other workshops that included local people, but were dominated by groups working internationally, not in their own home. In the other workshops where people from the Global South represented the majority of the participants, racism and neocolonial power structures were mentioned, but by far did not play the role these issues did in North America. This probably can be explained by the dominating conflicts and the narratives of progressive civil society in North America. Awareness of racism and white privilege is a major focus, as is the questioning of the role that especially the U.S. play as a world power.

Some of the work done by local CSOs in North America is not so different from that in other countries – building relationships with all sides, including violence perpetrators and security personnel, and through dialogue encouraging them to change their behavior. This seems hardest when the main problem is state officials like those controlling the border and police. There is very little deterrence power that the local groups wield though in some places the groups have managed, according to what they say, to gain respect from the police. Participants also noticed a tension between holding these authorities accountable and relationship-building with them.

Community violence is being addressed by organizations in many countries. Examples from earlier workshops are the women peacekeeping teams of NP in South Sudan or the work against feuds in the Philippines. Also work with migrants or refugees played a role in other parts of the world though the work done at the U.S. border has an activist touch it missed in the other areas. In Iraq, South Sudan or the Philippines it is the humanitarian and nonpartisan impetus of protecting refugees that is the main rationale of the work; in the case of U.S.-Mexico, the focus is much more on supporting migrants against restrictive immigration laws, and protecting them from abuse and defending their human rights.

Several groups in the Middle East sought, as they explained in the Good Practice workshop in

Beirut, to counter the problem of lack of respect from the side of police and military by including internationals in their teams. The CSOs in North America have for the most part not tried to do so, and it is also doubtful if that strategy would work there: It is assumed that foreigners would not have a protective value in North America because they are not allotted a higher status than nationals. In fact, they may be seen as ‘less than’. That they do so in other countries probably can be at least partly explained by the lingering colonial and racist value systems placing more worth on foreigners, especially but not only, from the Global North. (Traditional values of hospitality also play a role in many places.)

Some studies – for example the one by Ellen Furnari on Mindanao in “Wielding Nonviolence” – touch on the role of local practitioners.<sup>5</sup> And the differences between local/national and international organizations and practices, as well as international versus local staff, came up in all the earlier workshops conducted in the Good Practice series.

In the workshop on Southeast Asia, there were several local groups and individual human right defenders (HRDs) doing accompaniment of threatened individuals, groups or whole communities, monitoring ceasefires etc. It became clear that there were differences between local and international groups regarding the access to conflict parties, deterrent power, knowledge of background and contexts, different Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the issue of nonpartisanship – a principle which local groups in that area found difficult to identify with.

In the workshop on the Middle East region, this comparison between local and international groups was continued and deepened.<sup>6</sup> There were also groups that could not easily be categorized as either “local” or “international”, because they were local groups using larger numbers of internationals as volunteers or they worked in close partnership with an international organization.

The “Activist” and the “Nonpartisan” Paradigm Revisited

In the conclusions of that workshop, two paradigms were suggested, an “activist” and a “nonpartisan” approach. The activist approach was strongly related with the approach of ‘deterrence’ and with a partisan stance to the conflict issues, seeing the protective work as a contribution to a social struggle. It was also observed that the nonpartisan approach, if run by an international organization, may be more “professional” in the sense of being likely to be using paid staff working for the organization longer term, larger HQs, line management etc. The activist approach is often employed by smaller organizations that work with short- and mid-term volunteers<sup>7</sup>, and the working structure is based on consensual decision-making.

The table below summarizes some of the differences in these paradigms, though of course these are generalizations. When looking at these paradigms now with the experiences of the workshop on North America, some aspects need to be added. These differences are marked here by *italics*.

	<b>Activist</b>	<b>Nonpartisan</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Protect activists engaged in a struggle	Protect civilians <i>Protect activists</i>

<sup>5</sup> North America was not included in the study “Wielding Nonviolence”, nor are there to the knowledge of the rapporteur other studies that focus on UCP in the ‘global North’.

<sup>6</sup> In the Africa workshop, this issue did not play a role.

<sup>7</sup> Short-term is defined here up to 3 months, middle term 3 months to 1 year.



	<i>Protect individuals and communities</i>	
<b>Basis of legitimacy</b>	Solidarity with a shared cause <i>Overcome injustice in one's own society</i>	IHL, human rights covenants etc.
<b>Context</b>	Uprisings/revolutions; resistance (civilian-based defense), refugee protection	Civil or international war, armed conflict <i>Intra-societal violence</i>
<b>Position towards conflict issues and actors</b>	Partisan	Non-partisan/impartial
<b>Main values</b>	Nonviolence Primacy of local actors	Nonviolence Nonpartisanship Independence Primacy of local actors
<b>Belief basis</b>	Often religious, but not always	Secular or <i>religious</i>
<b>Strategies</b>	On the ground: Deterrence, relationship building only with limited range of actors, pursue legal action at times International: Building pressure on the opponent through reporting to decision-makers and/or wider public	On the ground: Relationship-building with all sides (encouragement) and deterrence International: At best reminding all sides of the obligations they entered through signing IHL / HR covenants
<b>Activities</b>	Protective presence, accompaniment, monitoring, documentation, interpositioning, advocacy with wider public and decision-makers, going to court	Whole UCP wheel <sup>8</sup> Advocacy: On the micro-level. With decision-makers more limited to finding (political & financial) support for UCP
<b>Practitioners</b>	Volunteers	Staff or <i>volunteers</i>
<b>Organizational structure</b>	Consensus-based	Hierarchical or <i>flat, consensus-based</i>

<sup>8</sup> This is a visual model NP uses to describe its activities. Please see the earlier workshop documentations for it.

### UCP By Local CSOs

Most of the time – also in the earlier reports of the Good Practice series – a dichotomy between “local” and “international” was assumed. This was also how representatives of the various UCP groups in the workshop saw themselves – they described themselves as being either locals (nationals) or internationals. But when looking here at a subcontinent where there are almost exclusively local UCP practitioners (with the exception of NP’s mid-term project at Standing Rock), it becomes clear that this pair of opposites cannot be maintained. Actors have different grades of closeness to the conflicting parties and the conflict object, and vice versa external actors have motives for being involved, invariably pursuing their own interests at least to some degree.

For these reasons, some authors have suggested that the relationship of external parties to a conflict should rather be thought of as a continuum or as an onion with different layers. In its core are fully internal actors (core parties). In the next layer there are active influential and marginal parties, and at the outer border are very few almost uninvolved, purely external ones:

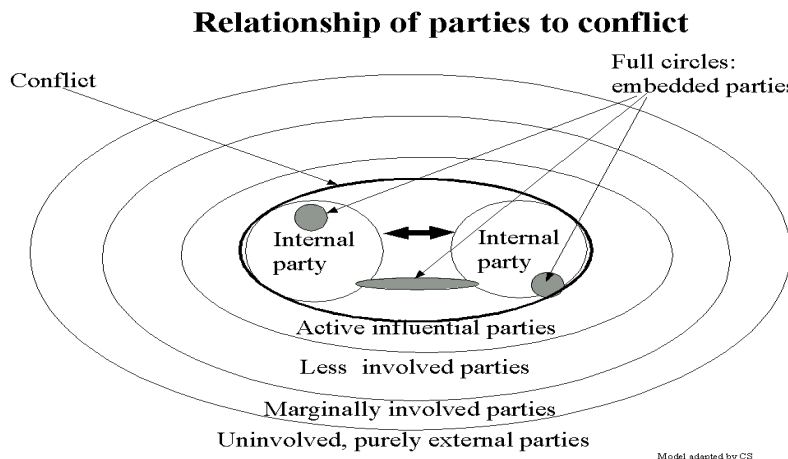


Figure 2 Diagram adapted from Encarnacion, McCartney and Rosas 1990:45, reprinted in Lewer and Ramsbotham 1993:31 and adapted from there by C. Schweitzer 2010.<sup>9</sup>

‘Embedded’ actors in this model are those who are ‘internal’ but who seek to either adopt a non-partisan stance in relation to a conflict of which they do not consider themselves to be a party, or who try to work on the conflict by supporting one or the other side. There are many examples for “embedded nonpartisan work” of this internationally - those individuals, groups and agencies who work for reconciliation between ethnic and religious groups in the midst of violence. In North America, as it was also the case in Palestine, many peace teams stand on the side of one party (be it migrants, PoC, native Americans, LGBTQI, progressive movements, etc.), and try to protect them and thereby open space for them.

<sup>9</sup> (2010) *Strategies of Intervention in Protracted Violent Conflicts by Civil Society Actors. The Example of Interventions in the Violent Conflicts in the Area of Former Yugoslavia, 1990 – 2002*. Vehrte: Soziopublishing. (Dissertation) [Online] at <http://www.ifgk.de/fileadmin/ifgk/forschung/CSchweitzerThesisYU-final.pdf>.

# Appendices

## 1. Summary of Good Practices

### Outlining the Framework of UCP

#### ***Use of Principles***

- Nonviolence is an important principle in most situations.
- Consider do-no-harm as an overarching principle.
- Make the “primacy of local actors” more concrete by speaking of “primacy of those most affected”.

#### ***Shrinking Space and Current Political Climate***

- Use dialogue to bridge polarized communities. The focus should be on connecting people (breaking down divisions).
- UCP groups need to rely on their partners to tell them what is going on.
- A good communication policy with the partners of the UCP groups is essential. This communication must be constant.
- Train the volunteers to be very flexible. On the border, for example, the situation changes all the time.
- Divide work between those doing accompaniment and those who focus on analysis and monitor the changing policies.
- Get the word out about UCP through storytelling.
- There is need for core paid staff to deal with the high demand for UCP.
- Train people in-person.
- Incorporate anti-racism / decolonization issues into the trainings.
- Train teams on how to deal with internal conflicts.
- Refresh trainings every few years.

#### ***Racism in North America and Its Impact on UCP***

- Practice “language justice”, meaning having meetings or calls in all relevant languages.
- Recognize that protection is often mutual, avoid the tendency to think only those with a specific privilege can protect, rather protection may flow back and forth.

- Speak of capacity-recognition rather than capacity-building.
- Support self-protection as a critical good practice.
- Be strategic / pragmatic in using different identities (racial, gender, age, sexual orientation) that will be protective in particular contexts, as long as there’s an invitation to do so by people being protected.
- In trainings, talk about racist / colonial systems and how that plays out in interpersonal interactions and potential protection activities.
- Include self-care as a topic in trainings.
- Ask white people not to burden their colleagues of color (or partners) with their guilt about racism.
- Mentor people (esp. people of color) to realize they have value and can do things they previously may not have realized.
- Documentation of cases (for example the histories of migrants) is important, especially as a resource to be used by affected people in their activism or otherwise. It also helps to copy documents so that they are available online (in case they are taken, for example at a border crossing).
- Connect with migrant-led work in our own communities (or with People of Color, indigenous people etc.) to the extent that this is welcome (in conjunction with UCP / accompaniment work). Many local people who might want protection, feel that North American organizations are more concerned with protecting people far away than in their own communities.
- After accompaniment work, there is need to do broader advocacy / activism work (and be available for it) on the structural problems (racism, colonialism).
- Have teams include multiple identities e.g. race, age, nationality, gender.
- One way to deal with the issue of racism is to have a multi-cultural team on the ground.
- Three approaches to deal with white supremacy in the field were suggested.

- Capacity recognition of the local community.
- Understand that protection is mutual.
- Support self-protection.

***Gender, Age and Other Identities and Their Impact on UCP***

- Consciously build relationships with LGBTQI leaders.
- If you work with LGBTQI populations, include LGBTQI on the team and in the leadership.
- Provide additional training/internal education on LGBTQI issues.
- Provide additional emotional support for LGBTQI team members.
- Ensure that protection work includes specific needs of non-binary individuals.
- Understand and utilize gender strengths in UCP work.
- Similar to the discussions in other small groups (like the one on racism), make use of the overt “profile” of a protector, whether it be gender, age or other apparent identity markers. This requires having a diverse team.
- Acknowledge gender pronouns expressing diversity. This should be indicated by declaring the preferred personal pronouns on name tags in workshops.
- Create safe space for LGBTQI; for that they need to be asked what level of disclosure they are comfortable with. This is also a reflection on the principle of the primacy of local actors in a new context.
- Acknowledge security issues/vulnerability of LGBTQI staff/volunteers/community.

***The Role of Religion in UCP***

- Tolerance by Christians towards non-Christians and atheists.
- Distinguish between faith and its institutions (churches).
- Faith-based groups doing UCP should make a lot of noise and take the narrative space that fundamentalists occupy.
- Faith-based UCP groups can use institutional connections for staff recruitment.
- When possible, religious ceremonies and rituals should be organized in a way that people need to opt-in rather than to opt-out.

- Revisit membership criteria for faith-based UCP groups, and ask: “Are there ways we are excluding people?”
- When partners say it is helpful, the clergy can signal “moral authority” by wearing their regalia.
- Having faith can open deeper spaces for discussion, and that can be useful.
- Religious people (may) donate more to religious groups.
- Identifying as “church volunteers” instead of as UCPs can be a protective factor.

Tactics of Protection

***Accompaniment and Interpositioning in the North American Context***

- Use a diverse team, create an intentional strategy around racial dynamics. (Putting people where they can best connect with people). Clear identification of team members when the context allows it, such as
  - vests
  - card to hand out.
- In many contexts educate police about peace teams.
- Helping / convincing protesters to adopt unarmed strategies.
- Techniques for de-escalation include distraction and peeling away instigators of violence.
- Find common ground using techniques like Nonviolent Communication.
- Human dignity is a core value.
- Include anti-racism training to prepare U.S. teams.
- Continuously build relationships (within context).
- Contact key stakeholders ahead of time – especially when the conflict might be particularly intense / violent.

***Communities Protecting Themselves and Mutual Protection***

- Acknowledge that some groups do not ask for outside help.
- Acknowledge that sometimes unarmed protection is not warranted.
- Ask what the long-term goals of the movements are, how nonviolence may play

into it and what the longer-term strategy is.

- Identify change agents of affected communities. Sometimes outsiders come and assume that their power is enough.
- Recognize the context in which protection is needed, and shape the response accordingly.
- Acknowledge your own identity and its history.

### ***Protection in Communities Impacted By Shootings and Gang Violence***

- The Cure Violence model has been successful.
- Do context/community analysis. Many elements are universal, but the model probably needs to be customized for each community.
- Those historically pushed should be leading the response – this should be a universal principle.
- Need to ask first: “What is your purpose?”, then need to find out their needs, and then use the needs to motivate people to reduce violence.
- A violence interrupter has to be:
  - credible (must be from the community)
  - bring the right competencies (professional attitude, trustworthiness, being responsible and reliable, willing to work without violence)
- Meet the clients where they are.
- Make gangs live up to their own moral codes.
- The violence interrupters need to be a role model to provide mentorship – a parental model, showing through their example that change is possible.
- The work requires consistently stopping by and checking on clients – being a constant presence.
- They teach the ability to differentiate between behavior vs. person (“I don’t like what you did.” vs. “I don’t like you.”).
- Invest community in the process. Work with communities brings less reliance on the police.
- Adding women to the team helped tap into the natural respect that men have for their mothers.
- There is no judging involved – clients can be in a gang, can deal drugs, etc. The whole focus is not to resort to gun violence.
- They seek out street leaders and street organizations (a.k.a. gangs) to engage with them to reduce violence by referring to the codes and systems gangs have created themselves.
- They convince the police to give information to Cure Violence workers, but Cure Violence workers never share information with the police.
- It is important that the city administration sends the message that the city wants to reduce violence
- Change requires:
  - Community investment
  - System realignment
  - Individual transformation
- The projects developed a shooting response every time there is a shooting (even if the outcome is only a small graze):
  - Checklist for work done within 72 hours after a shooting
    - Analyze the shooting (who got shot, who did the shooting)
    - Deploy violence interrupters to stop retaliation (at hospitals, with family, etc.)
    - End with a public communication campaign to share the facts and demonstrate that gun violence is not acceptable in this community. (Reeducation of the community)
  - The public response to every shooting must happen quickly - within 72 hours of the shooting.
  - It also requires work to involve others from the community (church leaders, community leaders, “key grandmother”, etc.)
  - It does not directly involve the police – this is a community action
  - Successfully motivate the community to believe “this is not normal; this is not acceptable”. Thereby it empowers the communities to be accountable for themselves.

### ***Protection, Advocacy and Activism***

- It is important to define activism and advocacy in UCP work.
- UCP is creating space for activists to do their work more safely.
- Clear communication on the role of UCP practitioners at a given activity is important.
- Discuss ahead of time the specific roles and tasks (i.e. is preventing heckling or hate speech a UCP role?).
- It is important that affinity teams can make decisions on the spot (model of decentralization). This of course needs to be based on UCP principles as guidelines.
- Engage in strategies that build trust prior to high profile events.
- Engage in transformation beyond protecting people.
- Consider how previous activism may impact the ability to provide UCP (i.e. activists may find it hard to be considered nonpartisan when coming as UCP practitioners to a rally).
- Advocate for principles rather than for a group of people.
- Each situation has its own context and decisions must be individualized/contextualized.

### ***Working with the Legal System and Authorities***

- Work collectively:
  - Let people play the role they are best suited for (race, skills, education, experience).
  - Roles will evolve as people grow in their work.
- Communication:
  - Let authorities know who you are and what you do.
  - Be authentic, sincere, and respectful in your communication.
  - In some contexts one-way sharing of information with police → from police to Cure Violence/Man Up – is appropriate because reporting back to the police would undermine community trust in CV/MU.
  - Establish communication with police ahead of violent action.
- Showcasing nonviolent work:

- Successful nonviolent de-escalation may show authorities/law enforcement that they are not needed.
- Building respect with authorities helps in getting space for UCP work from them.
- Relationship-building:
  - Relationship-building is a long-term task.
  - Constant trust-building between all actors can help avoid dependency of local communities on outside protections
  - Give people space to discuss their own issues.
- Deterring threats and violence from authorities/law enforcement?
  - There is a core dilemma: Trying to hold authorities accountable, while at the same time building basic working relationships.
  - Harness the power of other people (in general, celebrities, people with status) through presence and advocacy.
  - Outsider protection should be limited to emergencies and needs to be accompanied by capacity development/enhancement in communities.
  - Provide for lawyers and legal advice in advance, so as to be prepared for arrests etc.
  - Civil law suits against law enforcement officers are possible, but takes a long time, are costly, and often do not stop agencies from doing the same thing or even getting more aggressive.

### ***Similarities and Differences between UCP in North America and in Other Parts of the World***

- Recognizing the number of UCP groups and the energy for reconstituting a network, a group from the workshop committed to rebuild a network.
- It is important to uphold successful examples of work to reduce violence.
- Provide education in nonviolence and UCP in the face of the militaristic culture.
- International workers bring different perspectives that can be helpful.
- Recognizing local capacity, and incorporating it into action plans is critical.

- Building of a local support group around a Peace Team is useful.
- Utilize the concept of rule of law with legal accompaniment (in the border context) is useful.
- A New York police institute trains police to use unarmed policing (transforming policing).
- Make a rule to leave the guns at the door and encourage people to bring their differences to the table.

### Managing UCP Projects

#### **Volunteers and Staff**

- Flexibility is a key skill.
- Providing introductory trainings to introduce people to the work.
- Volunteers need to be vetted.
- The best vetting may be very different from traditional human resource background checks.
- Providing access to trained counselors to deal with trauma post-deployment.
- Trainings of a minimum of one week are recommended.
- Hiring staff from the community served works well.
- Having people work first as volunteers before considering them for staff positions.
- Elements of “healing within” can be: motivational interviewing, talking to counselors to vent and let the team hear back through reflection; restorative justice circles, heal each other in the circle and then heal others; pastoral counseling, spiritual healing, natural remedies; accountability partner or support, weekly mentoring, UCP “recovery” sponsors; morale building activities in the group; setting boundaries for oneself, turning the phone off, so that people can better serve when they are on duty; scheduling time off, “me time”; making sure the partners are supportive of the work that the teams do; mental health first aid; regular doctor checkups, making sure one’s physical health is intact to do the work; everyone identifies their own resilience strategies; positive acknowledgments of team members.
- On site, the following techniques can help: medic tents, herbs and body works (massage), stress relief, acupuncture; foot

massage, meditation; healing ceremonies; yoga classes, walking groups; energizing group activities before work; protocol - prayer, song, and dance were listed. For avoiding stress and assuring self care, reassessing the threat, checking in and dealing with the threat as it escalates; knowing what support systems are available and having a group that shares responsibilities can help.

- For self-care, it is important to know where food & water stations are.
- Also at conferences, certain activities may be important for self-care: yoga, meditation; walks, silent groups or walk & talk (discussion groups); kayaking; energizing activities; checking in with an accountability partner or support person; trauma informed care, safe space; recreational activities; embroidery, poetry; sharing stories.

The full documentation of the workshop contains also a list of challenges that participants identified, and recommendations for future workshops.

## 2. Attendees

Name	Organization(s)	Country	Country (countries) they work/ have worked in with a UCP organization
Elliot Adams	VfP/ Meta Peace Teams (MPT)	U.S.	U.S.
Erin Anderson	Al otro lado	U.S.	Mexican border
K. Bain	Cure Violence	U.S.	U.S.
Berit Bliesemann de Guevara	Aberystwyth University	Germany	Facilitator
Sal Corbin	D.C.Peace Teams	U.S.	U.S.
Pete Dougherty	MPT	U.S.	U.S.
Mel Duncan	NP	U.S.	Organizer
Tiffany Easthom	NP, PBI	Canada	Organizer; Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South Sudan, Lebanon
Little Feather	Standing Rock	U.S.	U.S. (Standing Rock)
Ellen Furnari	NP	U.S.	Organizer; Sri Lanka
Leoyla Giron	Water Protectors Legal Collective	U.S.	U.S. (Standing Rock)
Kathleen Hernandez	MPT Southern CAL Border Hub	U.S.	Mexican border
Martha Hernandez	NP	Colombian	U.S. (Standing Rock)
Randy Janzen	Selkirk College	Canada	researcher
Esther Kern	Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT)	Canada	First Nations' territories, Middle East
Adele Lenning	NP	U.S.	guest
Eli McCarthy	DC Peace Teams	U.S.	U.S., Middle East
Michelle Naar-Obed	CPT	U.S.	Mexican border
Jan Passion	NP	U.S.	Organizer, Sri Lanka



Gay Rosenblum-Kumar	NP	U.S.	guest
Christine Schweitzer	NP, IFGK, BSV	Germany	documenter
John Thompson	YMCA	U.S.	U.S.
Karen Van Fossan	Unitarian Universalist Association	U.S.	Mexican border
Molly Wallace		U.S.	researcher
Julie Warner	NP	U.S.	guest
Timothy Washington	Man Up!	U.S.	U.S.
Alison Wood	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship	U.S.	Mexican border, Agua Prieta
Ayo Yetunde		U.S.	facilitator