

**Final Report**

## **Nonviolent Peaceforce**

# **Implementing Civilian Protection in the United States: Lessons Learned from the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock, North Dakota December 2016 – March 2017**

**Prepared by:**

Julie A. Warner

**For:**

Nonviolent Peaceforce  
St. Paul, Minnesota

June 2, 2017

**Implementing Civilian Protection in the United States:  
Lessons Learned from the Dakota Access Pipeline at  
Standing Rock, North Dakota**

**December 2016 – March 2017**

	Page
Executive summary	1
Key findings	1
Recommendations	2
1.0 Introduction	3
1.1 Background on the Dakota Access Pipeline	3
1.2 Project assessment and mobilization	4
2.0 Evaluation approach	5
3.0 Project narrative	7
3.1 Building a network among stakeholders in North Dakota	7
3.2 Trainings	9
3.3 Working groups	11
3.4 NP follow-up	12
4.0 Key findings	15
5.0 Recommendations	16
Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Interview questions	17

## Executive Summary

From December 2016 through March 2017, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) conducted a pilot project in North Dakota in response to the tension and violence that arose from the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and its proximity to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. The DAPL follows a route from western North Dakota to Illinois, passing close to the Reservation and under Lake Oahe, a reservoir in the Missouri River. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe became concerned that oil from the pipeline would leak into the waters of Lake Oahe, a drinking water source for the Tribe and surrounding area, and that pipeline construction would destroy sacred ancestral burial grounds along the pipeline route. During the fall of 2016, people, who became known as “water protectors”, came from all over the US and internationally to occupy temporary camps set up on and near the Reservation in support of the Tribe and its opposition to the DAPL.

NP’s original plan was to focus on reducing violence occurring at Standing Rock between protestors and police, and to provide protective presence for civilians under threat of escalating violence. However, as the NP field team arrived in early December, the DAPL situation changed abruptly and NP shifted its focus to Bismarck-Mandan.

The project mission then became that of building relationships in the Bismarck-Mandan and Standing Rock communities and providing training in Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) methods. This work would equip a core group of people with tools and skills to face any subsequent violence related to the DAPL and build a network to address the divisiveness in the community over the DAPL. In addition, such a network could guide the community in a longer-term healing process between Native and Euro-American communities.

This report evaluates the pilot project for lessons learned which will inform the next phase of NP’s work in North Dakota and any subsequent work that NP might pursue in other parts of the United States. Section 1.0 provides background on the DAPL and the process undertaken to assess the situation and mobilize a field team. Section 2.0 discusses the evaluation approach. Section 3.0 provides a project narrative, describing NP’s work and community reactions. Key findings and recommendations are given both directly below and in Sections 4.0 and 5.0, respectively.

## Key findings

### ***Building a network among stakeholders in North Dakota***

**Finding 1 – Initial connections with all sectors** Early meetings with representatives from all interested sectors were NP’s most important activities upon arrival in North Dakota.

**Finding 2 – From an initial core of committed people, potential partners emerged** NP built its first relationships with a group of Euro-American, politically liberal people from the faith community and civil society. From this group, potential partner organizations emerged.

**Finding 3 – Potential partners display strong primacy of local actors** NP’s core value of local primacy would play a role in determining how to balance the amount of support given and to which local actors.

**Finding 4 – Connecting with other sectors** While the team contacted and spoke to people from a range of sectors, it would take more time to build relationships with some sectors, particularly those who hold opposing views.

**Finding 5 – Explaining nonpartisanship** NP’s core value of nonpartisanship was confusing to many and required repeated explanation in an environment where people actively support one side or the other on an issue.

### ***Trainings***

**Finding 6 – Recruiting for the trainings** NP recruited widely among all stakeholders for the trainings, but attendees came mainly from the core group of people NP worked closest with.

**Finding 7 – The most powerful training exercises** Training participants valued the Conflict Mapping and Circle of Truth exercises the most.

### ***Working groups***

**Finding 8 – Working groups emerged from the trainings** Training participants organized themselves into small groups to continue the work after the trainings.

**Finding 9 – Significant action taken by Accompaniment Group** This working group demonstrated local capacity, and with appropriate support from the NP team, planned and carried out an accompaniment activity for the arrival of the water protectors in Bismarck.

**Finding 10 – Capacity of the working groups** The groups had good energy and intentions after the training, but would need help to maintain the momentum.

### ***NP follow-up to the community***

**Finding 11 – Request for additional training and capacity building** Community members wanted NP to return and offer more training in UCP methods and assistance in building capacity to pursue community dialog.

**Finding 12 – Facilitate connections between different parties** Community members wanted to know NP's contacts and its assistance in reaching out to them for the purpose of pursuing dialog.

### ***NP reflection on project implementation and management***

**Finding 13 – Earlier project launch** NP monitored the situation in Standing Rock for weeks, but waited to launch the project. Earlier implementation might have given NP more time to engage with people in the camps.

**Finding 14 – NP team composition** For programming in the US as in other countries, the optimum field team is composed of locals and internationals with complimentary experience.

**Finding 15 – Clear project purpose and team roles** Initially, the project purpose was not clear and team roles were not well-defined, causing confusion among team members.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Capacity building with stakeholders***

Continue to work with initial core group of North Dakota stakeholders through additional training and capacity building in accordance with their request.

Nourish partnerships with Unitarian Church, Dakota Resource Council and clergy group, while watching for the emergence of additional partners.

Reconnect with all initial contacts from other sectors and reassess their interest in engaging in the project.

Maintain NP nonpartisanship and encourage partners who are partisan to seek commonalities with others of opposing views in order to pursue community dialog.

Facilitate connections between sectors with differing views where feasible and requested.

Provide support to existing and potentially new working groups as they need and request.

### ***Trainings***

When recruiting for additional trainings, make extra effort to reach out and include others from sectors not represented in earlier trainings and who hold opposing views on the DAPL (Native Americans, police, government, labor unions, local businesses).

In subsequent trainings, continue to include the exercises that prior participants found most valuable (Conflict Mapping and Circle of Trust) and consider how other sectors might react to them.

### ***Project management***

Provide a project field team of locals and internationals as the optimum composition, and where feasible.

Clarify project purpose and team member roles prior to mobilization. Provide regular check-in from line manager.

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background on the Dakota Access Pipeline**

The Standing Rock Sioux Reservation is situated within North Dakota and South Dakota in the United States. The Reservation is home to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, consisting of members of the Dakota and Lakota Nations. The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), for which construction began in 2016 by Energy Transfer Partners, L.P., Dallas, Texas, is an underground pipeline that extends from the Bakken Formation, an oil deposit in western North Dakota, to a petroleum storage facility in southern Illinois. The DAPL project was proposed by the pipeline company as a safer, cheaper, and more environmentally sound alternative to the overland transport of crude oil by truck and rail.

Originally, two pipeline routes were considered. A route to the north of Bismarck was rejected as being too close to Bismarck municipal water sources and residential areas. The route, ultimately chosen, travels south of Bismarck and passes within less than one half mile of the Reservation border. The pipeline runs under nearby Lake Oahe, a reservoir in the Missouri River, and a drinking water source for the Reservation and surrounding area.

Tribal concerns about the DAPL include potential leakage of oil into the waters of Lake Oahe and the Missouri River; and destruction of sacred ancestral burial grounds and places of cultural significance located along the construction route of the pipeline. Fearing these actions, in July 2016, the Tribe pursued a law suit against the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the federal agency that approved DAPL permits, claiming that USACE had not sufficiently consulted the Tribe and had violated environmental and historic preservation statutes. In September, the Court ruled against the Tribe and in favor of the USACE action. However, the US Departments of Justice, Army, and Interior issued a joint statement in disagreement with the ruling, temporarily halting the work.

Protests against DAPL began in January 2016 after the approval by the North Dakota Public Service Commission of the North Dakota section of the pipeline. In April, Tribe members and supporters set up camp near the site to monitor the construction. Protests intensified over the summer and fall with the Tribe's filing and the later defeat of the law suit. Demonstrators, self-described as "water protectors", consisted of Native Americans both from Standing Rock and Tribes around the country, and other non-Native supporters from all over the US and abroad. Most resided in the camps, the largest of which were Oceti Sakowin, Sacred Stone, and Rosebud, constructed on and near the Standing Rock Reservation in proximity to Lake Oahe. While Standing Rock Tribal leadership committed to and

stressed that all supporters honor the guiding principle of nonviolent action at all times, violence flared numerous times during the fall between water protectors and police. News sources reported that police were heavily armed and used pepper spray, tear gas, and rubber bullets against protestors. By January 2017, the number of water protectors arrested since the action began was reported to be over 600.

On December 4, USACE announced that it would deny Energy Transfer Partners the required easement to extend the pipeline under Lake Oahe, and would begin the process of an Environmental Impact Statement to consider alternative routes. This was a significant, although temporary, victory for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the water protectors. On that date, the Tribal Council requested that all pipeline protestors vacate the camps, although many chose to oppose the request and remained in the camps until their closure in February 2017.

On February 8, 2017, the Trump Administration reversed the earlier decision and granted the easement, allowing the last section of the pipeline to be constructed under Lake Oahe. DAPL began full service on June 1, 2017.

## 1.2 Project assessment and mobilization

**Project rationale** The situation with the DAPL and Standing Rock was not a typical armed conflict that NP has experience with, but the violence that was occurring there appeared similar to other places in which NP has worked. And, because it was so close to its US headquarters in St. Paul, Minnesota, NP was drawn to try to make a positive contribution to the situation. NP has had a long interest in exploring programming in the US, and has both a base in and deep contextual knowledge of the Upper Midwest Region of the United States that would support programming.

As resistance to the DAPL grew over the summer and fall of 2016, and began to be met with force by police, NP staff and supporters were watching the situation and considering whether it was right for NP to establish a presence. Pam Costain, an NP supporter and later a member of the field team, traveled to Standing Rock on her own and reported on the situation. In October, NP sent two international staff, Shannon Radsky and Paul Maloney, to do an assessment. Upon receiving the assessment in November, the Board of Directors instructed NP to initiate the project. In late November, Mel Duncan and Pam Costain traveled to the area, and spoke to people at the camps at Standing Rock, and to people in Bismarck-Mandan, about one hour away by car. In early December, NP sent a field team consisting Martha Hernandez Diaz, Thiago Wolfer (NP Civilian Protectors), and Pam Costain. Martha and Thiago remained from December 2016 through March 2017. Mel returned for a week in mid-December to help build connections, and Pam was present for two weeks in December and two weeks in January. Robert Rivers, an NP trainer, conducted training sessions in January and February, 2017.



Figure 1. NP vehicle at Standing Rock

**Anticipated outcome** NP believed originally that its role would be to focus on violence reduction and to provide immediate direct protection to civilians in and near the Standing Rock Reservation and in the Bismarck-Mandan area. When the NP Board approved the project, violence was still occurring on the

front lines at the camps and nearby Lake Oahe. In addition, the Water Protector Legal Collective, providing legal defense for water protectors arrested while protesting the pipeline, was opening an office in Mandan and was concerned about the safety of its staff and clients. NP proposed training a total of 30 volunteers in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; Fargo, North Dakota; and Bismarck, North Dakota to provide protective presence on a rotating basis both at the camps and for the Legal Collective in Mandan.

While always concerned about the potential for violence between civilians and police, NP also understood that its position on nonpartisanship would not likely serve as a deterrent to violence as it does in other countries. In the eyes of authorities in North Dakota, the NP team would be seen as protestors and might be arrested and detained along with everyone else.

***Change in context shifted the outcome*** On December 4, with the USACE denial of the easement to allow pipeline construction under Lake Oahe, the situation changed overnight and NP shifted its focus to Bismarck-Mandan. Simultaneously, in Mandan, staff and clients of the Water Protector Legal Collective were not experiencing the high level of harassment anticipated and did not need protective presence or accompaniment.

Therefore, NP turned its attention to what would become its mission in North Dakota: building relationships in the Bismarck community and offering training in Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) methods. This work would equip a core group of people with tools and skills to face any subsequent violence related to the DAPL and build a network to address the divisiveness in the community over the DAPL. In addition, such a network could guide the community to consider a longer-term healing process between the Native and Euro-American communities.

***Perceptions from the community on the effects of DAPL*** We interviewed members of the Bismarck community that the NP field team worked closely with and asked them to share their concerns about the DAPL.

Many people commented about the rise in ugly behavior in their community towards Native Americans and anyone thought to be connected with the water protectors. People spoke of their awareness and actual witness of behavior ranging from derogatory comments to yelling at and harassing others in public. One person spoke of feeling fearful of the vigilante-ism that spiked in the fall at the height of the protests. Another mentioned a Native person who doesn't go to Bismarck because it does not feel like a hospitable place. People are aware that an institutionalized prejudice toward Native people has long been present in their community, but they are more recently alarmed by the perception that overt racism is now permissible, and some said, even socially acceptable.

People were concerned that the interests of the Tribe were not fairly represented both in the selection of the pipeline route and in the state and federal processes to secure construction permits. Additional concerns expressed included alarm at the overreach of authorities in their response to the water protectors, fear that people on either side would be killed, and worry for potential effects of the pipeline on the environment.

## 2.0 Evaluation approach

***Purpose of the evaluation*** The purpose of the evaluation is to identify lessons learned from the project in North Dakota that took place over 4 months from December 2016 through March 2017. The lessons include understanding, (1) how beneficiaries viewed the project, what they gained, and its

relevance to the current context; (2) how the NP leadership and field team experienced conducting the project in the US context; and (3) how the project can inform subsequent NP programming in the US.

A theory of change guiding the project assumes that involving well trained local civilians in building an infrastructure for peace will lead to longer lasting and stronger peace. Infrastructure elements include protecting civilians in conflict situations; training civilians in UCP methods and building a pool of trained individuals; providing space for dialog between parties with opposing views; and building the capacity of civilians to further the work on their own.

**Evaluation approach** We conducted a summative-type evaluation, looking back on the project and its outcomes. The objective was to learn what worked well during the assessment and implementation, and management phases, and what may need improvement, so that these findings can be applied to the next phase of the project in North Dakota and to any subsequent programming in the US.

We began by conducting a desk review of internal documentation provided by NP, including a report on the DAPL and Standing Rock situation submitted by the assessment team, and all activity reports submitted by the field team during the project. We also reviewed external news sources to gain understanding of the local and national context of the issue.

We conducted post-program interviews with a total of 19 people, some individually and some in small groups of 2 to 3. Two sets of interview questions were prepared (see Appendix 1). One set was used to interview 13 North Dakota stakeholders about their experience with the project and the NP field team. These encompassed attendees of NP trainings and people with whom the field team worked the closest during the 4-month project. Another set of questions was used to interview 2 NP leadership and 4 NP field team members about their experiences implementing and managing the project.

Data analysis consisted of manual synthesis of qualitative data from the interviews since the sample size was small. For each set of interviews (North Dakota stakeholders and NP team) we grouped the questions into the following broad themes and sub-themes that cover the information that we hoped to learn about the project:

- Building networks among stakeholders in North Dakota – initial team concerns about connecting with stakeholders and ultimate results
- Trainings – both participant and field team reactions
- Working groups – their formation by training participants and evolution
- NP follow-up – Community response to NP, what could have been done differently, and anticipated next phase of the project

In accordance with these themes, information from the interviews was systematically coded for each theme, and generated broad findings for both the North Dakota stakeholders and for the NP team. These findings were then combined and used to prepare a final project report.

**Limitations of the evaluation** Limitations included conducting a summative-type evaluation without collecting baseline data; collecting data from project beneficiaries only and not from those who did not participate; and collecting data from participants who are primarily on one side of the issue in question.

The evaluation was conducted as a final “lessons learned”, and participants were interviewed only at the end of the initial phase of the project. Since the project timeframe was 4 months, we relied on participants’ recall of conditions at baseline and during the project.

We interviewed beneficiaries, those who participated in the project; not those who were contacted initially by the field team but did not participate.



We also interviewed stakeholders who were primarily Euro-American, politically liberal, and in opposition to the DAPL. While the field team spoke to others from a range of sectors and viewpoints, the stakeholders interviewed are the ones the field team worked closely with and who had the most experience with the project.

### 3.0 Project narrative

The mission of the NP project in North Dakota was to build relationships in the Bismarck-Mandan and Standing Rock community, to provide training in UCP methods, and to provide support for program implementation. This work would equip a core group of people with tools and skills to face any subsequent violence related to the DAPL and build a network to address the divisiveness in the community over the issue. In addition, such a network might guide the community to consider a longer-term healing process between Native and Euro-American communities.

The following provides description of the evolution of the project from December 2016 through March 2017 and the work of the NP field team. Included are direct quotations from interviews with project participants and the NP team.

#### 3.1 Building a network among stakeholders in North Dakota

The team was initially concerned about connecting with groups and individuals with a key interest in the DAPL issue. They wondered how open the community would be to yet another outside group when so many were there already. How easy would it be to connect with and talk to important stakeholders? For example, would the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council understand and be receptive to NP's value in building peace and reducing violence? The Tribe's cynicism and exhaustion at the thousands of people who came, many with their own agenda, was understandable. Local police and sheriff's deputies also would not be easily convinced of NP's unique mission. The team knew that it had to stress its nonpartisan position on the issue, because the immediate assumption when talking to anyone was that NP came to support the water protectors.

*"We knew we had to make extra effort to send a message that we came here not to support the protestors. When we first started to meet people, that was the first response of many of them."*

The timing of the project presented additional challenges. The team arrived after a very divisive national election and before the inauguration of not only a new federal administration, but also a new governor of North Dakota. Anticipation of both new administrations was high, fueling an atmosphere of wariness toward anyone from outside the community.

Although protest activity incited by the DAPL changed in early December, there was still tension and fear of violence, and reports of Native Americans being harassed in Bismarck-Mandan. The NP field team began reaching out to the community by reconnecting with people that the assessment team had originally contacted in October. The team made a list of individuals and groups to talk to about NP's work, making sure not to miss anyone who might be important in the process. They were able to meet and have introductory conversations with a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the pipeline issue including representatives of Native American Tribes, water protectors, police and sheriffs, local government, labor unions representing pipeline workers, local businesses, the legal collective defending the water protectors, nonprofit organizations, the faith community, and individuals in the community active in the pipeline issue.

**Finding 1 – Initial connections with all sectors** Early meetings with representatives from all interested sectors were NP's most important activities upon arrival in North Dakota.

These early meetings with all sectors were the most important activity that NP conducted upon arrival in North Dakota. They provided an opportunity to identify key stakeholders, gauge their reception to its presence, and pinpoint gaps that it could fill in accordance with its mission. They set the stage for building working relationships with an initial core of committed people who would hopefully further build the network.

*“It was a chance to see how their perception was, how receptive they were to our presence here.”*

Early on, several key people in the community came forward; an attorney and former elected official, a faith leader, the leader of a local NGO, and a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, to become important first connectors, introducing the team to others influential in the community.

Thanks to these early contacts, the team began to build relationships with a core of people who in general supported the water protectors, but believed it was important to open lines of communication with other sectors, especially those with differing views. These new relationships were primarily with people who were Euro-American and politically liberal, and included faith leaders and church members, a local nonprofit organization, and other active individuals, many of whom later participated in the NP trainings. The early openness of this community became an important base with which to begin the work.

*“We were really lucky that there was this existing network already being spearheaded by the UU (Church), also with DRC (Dakota Resource Council) and other individuals from social services that work with immigrants here.”*

From the initial core of committed people, several potential partners emerged: the Unitarian Universalist Church (UU Church), Dakota Resource Center (DRC), and a group of clergy. The UU Church and its pastor were involved in collecting and transporting supplies to the camps and generally demonstrated their support for the water protectors. The DRC, a nonprofit organization, works for the

**Finding 3 – Potential partners display strong primacy of local actors** NP’s core value of local primacy would play a role in determining how to balance the amount of support given and to which local actors.

sustainable use of North Dakota natural resources and family-owned and operated agriculture. DRC had already facilitated well-attended public discussions about Standing Rock and the DAPL, and wanted to continue community dialog. In addition, a small group of clergy came together during the NP

trainings and expressed interest in continuing to work together.

Both the core group of individuals and potential partners possessed strong local primacy, an NP core value. While these actors displayed vision and capacity on which to build, it would require from NP a balance to determine how much support to give and specifically to whom.

The team had initially made connections with people from a range of sectors involved in the pipeline issue, but it would take more time than its current mandate allowed to nurture some of these into working relationships; to find individuals, for example, in the Native American, police, labor unions, and government communities willing to

**Finding 2 – From an initial core of committed people, potential partners emerged**

NP built its first relationships with a group of Euro-American, politically liberal people from the faith community and civil society. From this group, potential partner organizations emerged.

**Finding 4 – Connecting with other sectors**

While the team contacted and spoke to people from a range of sectors, it would take more time to build relationships with some sectors, particularly those who hold opposing views.

engage in dialog with others who hold opposing views, and subsequently to trust NP and the dialog process enough to invite their colleagues to join.

*“Those are the kind of relationships that take more time to be built – always trying different approaches, different people.”*

*“Law enforcement, we talked to them a couple of times..... they were really defensive to talk to us. When you talk about non-violence, right away they think you came here to protest, and you need to explain everything.”*

NP’s early engagement with a specific group of people may also have led both that community and those with opposing views, to place NP on the side of the water protectors. NP’s core value of nonpartisanship, not supporting either side of the DAPL conflict, was a confusing concept to many, and required the team to continuously explain its position. This would need to be taken into account when considering the longer-term work of promoting dialog among the wider community. The DAPL is a complex issue over which many are strongly for or against, and many choose to actively advocate for one side or the other. This dynamic of activism is a characteristic of not only the DAPL in North Dakota, but currently reflects a strong polarization on many political issues at the national level.

#### **Finding 5 – Explaining nonpartisanship**

NP’s core value of nonpartisanship was confusing to many and required repeated explanation in an environment where people actively support one side or the other on an issue.

*“I think this was a very complicated dynamic in this project because very few people who had anything to do with this struggle were neutral.”*

### **3.2 Trainings**

NP offered three trainings in UCP methods in January, February, and March 2017. The purpose of the trainings was to build the capacity of people and groups in the community to address conflict and to provide space for them to engage with each other on their response to conflict. In addition, the

trainings recognized the role of faith leaders in the community and provided ways to build their capacity to broaden and lead community dialog around the DAPL and to seek longer-term reconciliation.



**Figure 2. Training - understanding conflict**

In preparation for the trainings in January and February, the team created an inclusive list of sectors from which they would recruit people to attend. They shared the training objectives and invited those with whom they had already had introductory conversations. They also enlisted key community members among the clergy, civil society, and Legal Collective, with whom they had begun working more closely, asking them to recruit any from the list they were acquainted with. The team especially encouraged people from specific sectors, Native Americans, police, local government, and labor unions, to attend.

While the team recruited widely for training participants among all individuals and groups it had initially contacted and met with, those who attended were primarily from the core group of people the team built the strongest relationships with, many of whom were already active in opposing the DAPL and supporting the water protectors.

Attendees included clergy and church members, and staff from the Dakota Resource Council. In addition, there were faculty from the University of Mary and United Tribes Technical College, a representative from the Islamic Center, staff from the Legal Collective, individuals who had been active at the camps, and individual residents of Bismarck.

#### Finding 6 – Recruiting for the trainings

NP recruited widely among all stakeholders for the trainings, but attendees came mainly from the core group of people NP worked closest with.

The third training in March was organized specifically for members of the clergy. Participants included several clergy who had attended one of the prior trainings, and additional colleagues whom they recruited.

**Reactions to the training** Participants perceived the training facilitators as sincere and genuine in their desire to bring peace and reconciliation to a tense situation. They respected the trainers for their experience working in other conflict-affected areas of the world, and for their ability to engage with all

parties in a conflict. From the start, the facilitators created an open and trusting environment, and made it clear that they were not there to tell others what to do, but to offer some skills and observations that might be helpful.

*“I think you guys are outstanding hosts, and right away you feel that.”*

The training effectively explained the causes of systemic conflict and conditions under which violence can escalate. It focused on the local issue, but effectively used global examples. Participants felt they didn’t need to know the full context of a global conflict example to understand the local application.

The Conflict Mapping and Circle of Truth exercises were particularly powerful for training participants. The Conflict Mapping provided structure to understand DAPL and the role of each party in the conflict. The Circle of Truth allowed participants to assume the role

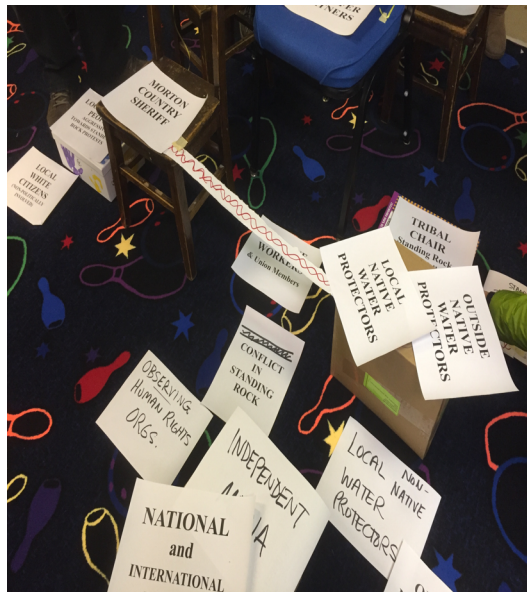


Figure 3. Training - conflict mapping exercise

of other, often opposing parties in the conflict and to speak in their voices.

*“I loved the conflict mapping both times because it gave not just an opportunity, but a really useful structure for understanding and processing the context that we find ourselves in.”*

The facilitators observed substantial capacity and willingness among the participants, even though some expressed concern about participating because of their own partisanship around the issue.

*“A couple people came up to us and said, “I’m going to have trouble doing this because I’m too close to the conflict, but I see that this is really helpful, and it has been really good to step away and look at things from another angle.””*

#### Finding 7 – The most powerful training exercises

Training participants valued the Conflict Mapping and Circle of Truth exercises the most.

The training for clergy was structured primarily to provide time together to reflect on the situation and to discuss how to pursue reconciliation. Participants felt that prior to NP’s presence, some of them had been pursuing this work on their own, and were appreciative of having a supportive group.

*“That was my fondest hope is that a group of faith leaders would come together and find ways to be in even stronger solidarity with each other.”*

While the schedules of busy people are always challenging to work around, participants stated that the initial trainings could have been longer and more comprehensive. With longer advanced planning, more people would have attended. Many stated that they would like follow-up training.

*“The general feeling of our group was that there was an eagerness for the next step”*

**Using what they learned** Many expressed how the training has and will impact their own personal relationships. Those who participated now compose a growing body of people who can support each other in their quest to pursue wider community dialog with others who hold opposing views.

*“It helps me to feel more positive about pursuing these things because sometimes I think - what’s the point?”*

*“The whole thing was pretty much life changing in how I think about things.”*

### 3.3 Working groups

During the first training in January, participants established three working groups for the purpose of continuing different aspects of the work: (1) Protective accompaniment, (2) Facilitate dialog at the community level, and (3) Arrange additional trainings for the community. As a result of the third training for clergy in March, the participants agreed to continue the discussion in an ongoing small group (4). While the group charged with arranging additional training did not have subsequent meetings, the following is a brief assessment of the other groups and their activity.

**Accompaniment Group** On February 22, the camps at Standing Rock were evacuated in response to an order signed by the Governor of North Dakota. Water protectors and others from the camps came to Bismarck-Mandan. The Accompaniment Group, in response to a request from camp organizers, provided hospitality in Bismarck upon arrival of the water protectors. Some came in a bus and others on their own. Martha and Thiago followed the bus by car from the camps to Bismarck. In town, the group had reserved a hotel room where they welcomed approximately 40 water protectors, provided refreshments, and assisted them with any immediate needs.

While direct accompaniment of individuals into and around Bismarck was ultimately not needed, the experience helped reduce the anxiety of those who were prepared to provide assistance, and gave them a sense of what this kind of activity might look like if the need arises again.

*“Days before that this group of people got together, they organized, they created a strategy on how to respond to the needs of the water protectors who were going to come to Bismarck and Mandan..... On that day, it was a clear example of the capacity people had to this point, and to be ready for that kind of situation when it comes to violence.”*

Prior to the evacuation, the Accompaniment Group met to discuss and visualize the steps needed to prepare for this upcoming role. While group members demonstrated their primacy as local actors by responding to the need, and by organizing and implementing the activity, an appropriate level of support provided by the NP team was also an important element.

#### **Finding 8 – Working groups emerged from the trainings**

Training participants organized themselves into small groups to continue the work after the trainings.

#### **Finding 9 – Significant action taken by Accompaniment Group**

This working group demonstrated local capacity, and with appropriate support from the NP team, planned and carried out an accompaniment activity for the arrival of the water protectors in Bismarck.



**Dialog Group** This group was charged with facilitating additional community dialog. While they did not have a set vision for going forward on creating space for dialog in the community, some participants are DRC employees and cited DRC’s efforts to facilitate several recent community dialogs around the DAPL and their interest in continuing to do so. They mentioned a number of other initiatives to facilitate dialog in the community including some by interfaith groups. There was interest in pursuing dialog and potential for sustainability, but uncertain momentum.

*“I do have the list of all the people who were in the group for my training. It’s going to have to come from us.”*

**Clergy Group** After the training for clergy, the participants agreed to meet again among themselves to discuss ways to go forward. They appreciated the opportunity to be together in a group and felt there was some momentum to continue this work.

*“As clergy, we’re getting together a couple more times to talk specifically about reconciliation. We’re really focusing it on – Native Americans have called for reconciliation – to go through that route rather than European Americans saying we need reconciliation. So, we’re responding.”*

**Finding 10 – Capacity of the working groups** The groups had good energy and intentions after the training, but would need help to maintain the momentum.

Just after the training, the working groups had energy and good intentions, especially the accompaniment group that was confronted with an urgent need to focus on. However, without additional assistance to help them clarify longer-term goals and immediate next steps, momentum might be lost.

### 3.4 NP follow-up

**Community response to NP** The overall response of the community that NP worked with was very positive. People who participated in trainings and worked with Martha and Thiago commented on being inspired by them and by the work that they did. NP’s ability to come in as nonpartisan peace builders, to listen to the community, and to build relationships was highly appreciated. They brought people together and helped to stimulate dialog that otherwise may have taken longer to initiate. They helped to build capacity and create connections among some in the faith community who were trying to engage around reconciliation, yet feeling like they were working alone.

*“I kind of feel relieved because before I knew of this organization, we were trying to piece together a way to have some kind of peace and reconciliation meetings.”*

It is unknown whether NP’s presence was responsible for the prevention of violence, however, members of the Legal Collective commented that while they were threatened and harassed in Bismarck-Mandan, they were surprised that staff and clients did not experience physical violence, and that their office was not vandalized. Members of the Accompaniment Group stated that their reception in Bismarck-Mandan for the water protectors who were evacuated from the camps on February 22 was without incident.

*“I was grateful for NP’s presence in the community. When I arrived, and was opening the office, I was frankly very concerned about what the potential for violence against me, against the clients, and for destructive acts against the office itself.”*

Community members expressed interest that NP return to offer additional training in UCP methods, and assist clergy, congregations, and nonprofit organizations to further build their own capacity. Participants gained a useful framework with which to understand conflict, and some new skills to apply in potentially violent situations. However, they wanted additional training to further increase their ability to perform with confidence if there is a renewal of tension or violence. Members of the faith community and nonprofits want to pursue community dialog to address the divisiveness around the DAPL, and to consider a longer-term reconciliation process between the Native and Euro-American communities, efforts that so far, have been pursued on the side by busy people.

**Finding 11 – Request for additional training and capacity building** Community members wanted NP to return and offer more training in UCP methods and assistance in building capacity to pursue community dialog.

*“It’s become really clear to me in this year of active solidarity that we need to do a lot of capacity building among those of us who are in solidarity.”*

**What NP could have been done differently** Several commented that they would have like to know the names of all people NP contacted and met with while they were in Bismarck. While NP did not share with others the names of contacts in its network, some respondents would have appreciated NP’s help in reaching out to these people for the purpose of initiating dialog. It is understandable that with the limited time available, the NP team chose to focus on training and capacity building among its core network. Connecting with and building trust among parties of differing opinions would naturally be part of the next phase of the work in North Dakota.

**Finding 12 – Facilitate connections between different parties** Community members wanted to know NP’s contacts and its assistance in reaching out to them for the purpose of pursuing dialog.

**The project as a model for continuing work in North Dakota** NP is well positioned to apply its core competencies to engage further with the community in North Dakota, and from this work to develop a model for subsequent projects in the US. The process with which NP conducted the first phase of the work in North Dakota offers a broad framework for how to proceed in North Dakota and in other projects in the US.

NP began by identifying key people from a range of sectors in the community with an interest in the DAPL issue. From those contacts emerged several individuals who introduced NP to additional people. All of those early contacts were the beginning of an important network and provided an opportunity for NP to increase knowledge of the context, learn who the key stakeholders are and their perceptions of the issue, and to gauge the interest and willingness of each to further participate in dialog across sectors.

NP looked for early relationships and potential partners. Those in North Dakota with whom NP built the strongest initial associations included the faith community and nonprofit organizations. From that group, several early partners emerged, the UU Church, DRC, and the group of faith leaders.

Those with whom NP worked closely during the first phase of the project demonstrated a strong primacy of local actors. The early partners had a vision for action in response to the DAPL, and had organized activities on their own prior to NP’s arrival. People who participated in the trainings organized themselves into working groups with intention to pursue the work that they envisioned. Members of the Accompaniment Group demonstrated their capacity to organize and respond to a specific need that arose in the community.

Prior to NP's presence, many had felt they were working alone. NP offered an opportunity to learn new skills and to build a network, thus providing both a momentum for next steps and a means of sustaining the community for longer-term change.

As with any project, NP must allocate its resources carefully in assessing local actors. In the second phase of the project NP will need to continue to balance the support it gives, focusing on building the capacity of early partners and watching for additional potential partners to emerge.

Other important sectors that NP initially contacted would take longer to engage with and build trust. The Native community's wellbeing is directly impacted by the DAPL. However, while NP spoke to several Native leaders, they were initially wary of yet another outside group, and after the camps downsized and closed, the NP team focused its work in Bismarck where there were fewer Native leaders. NP also had important conversations with police and sheriffs, labor unions, government, and local businesses. During the next phase, NP should reconnect with all initial contacts and further assess their willingness to engage; and explore ways to connect people of differing views to facilitate dialog.

**Reflections from NP on project management and team roles**

The project in North Dakota launched in early December 2016, just as the easement to extend the pipeline under Lake Oahe was denied, causing the situation at Standing Rock to change. NP leadership had been monitoring the situation for a number of weeks, but waited to begin the project. Looking back, NP felt that if the assessment team had been sent about a month earlier, just after the Tribe's call for supporters in August, there might have been more time for the field team to engage with people in the camps.

**Finding 13 – Earlier project launch** NP monitored the situation in Standing Rock for weeks, but waited to launch the project. Earlier implementation might have given NP more time to engage with people in the camps.

Field team composition, in the beginning of the project in North Dakota, mirrored how NP works internationally; the optimum being a collaboration of people from the subject country and

**Finding 14 – NP team composition** For programming in the US, as in other countries, the optimum field team is composed of locals and internationals with complimentary experience.

internationals. NP should continue this in US programming, where it is feasible. Locals know US social customs and behavior norms, political structures, and the current divisiveness around many political issues. Internationals bring experience from global conflict situations, an ability to see a local conflict from a global perspective, and a position of natural nonpartisanship toward the local issue.

North Dakota is the first NP programming in the US, and the dynamic nature of the DAPL issue at Standing Rock made it difficult to anticipate NP's exact role. In addition, initial funding sources for the project did not require the normal proposal process. Therefore, while NP had more freedom to explore the unfolding situation, the project initially lacked a clear purpose, and each team member's role was not well-defined, leading to some confusion and tension among the team. It is consistently challenging to establish hierarchical roles in a team, particularly in small start-up teams where members share tasks and responsibilities more than in larger teams. From the beginning, NP should build team relationships by clarifying roles and responsibilities, promoting the complimentary nature of local and international experience, and providing regular oversight from the line manager throughout the project.

**Finding 15 – Clear project purpose and team roles** Initially, the project purpose was not clear and team roles were not well-defined, causing confusion among team members.



## 4.0 Key findings

The following provides the key findings as they are given in text boxes in Section 3.0. Further description of each finding is also given adjacent to each text box.

### ***Building a network among stakeholders in North Dakota***

**Finding 1 – Initial connections with all sectors** Early meetings with representatives from all interested sectors were NP’s most important activities upon arrival in North Dakota.

**Finding 2 – From an initial core of committed people, potential partners emerged** NP built its first relationships with a group of Euro-American, politically liberal people from the faith community and civil society. From this group, potential partner organizations emerged.

**Finding 3 – Potential partners display strong primacy of local actors** NP’s core value of local primacy would play a role in determining how to balance the amount of support given and to which local actors.

**Finding 4 – Connecting with other sectors** While the team contacted and spoke to people from a range of sectors, it would take more time to build relationships with some sectors, particularly those who hold opposing views.

**Finding 5 – Explaining nonpartisanship** NP’s core value of nonpartisanship was confusing to many and required repeated explanation in an environment where people actively support one side or the other on an issue.

### ***Trainings***

**Finding 6 – Recruiting for the trainings** NP recruited widely among all stakeholders for the trainings, but attendees came mainly from the core group of people NP worked closest with.

**Finding 7 – The most powerful training exercises** Training participants valued the Conflict Mapping and Circle of Truth exercises the most.

### ***Working groups***

**Finding 8 – Working groups emerged from the trainings** Training participants organized themselves into small groups to continue the work after the trainings.

**Finding 9 – Significant action taken by Accompaniment Group** This working group demonstrated local capacity, and with appropriate support from the NP team, planned and carried out an accompaniment activity for the arrival of the water protectors in Bismarck.

**Finding 10 – Capacity of the working groups** The groups had good energy and intentions after the training, but would need help to maintain the momentum.

### ***NP follow-up to the community***

**Finding 11 – Request for additional training and capacity building** Community members wanted NP to return and offer more training in UCP methods and assistance in building capacity to pursue community dialog.

**Finding 12 – Facilitate connections between different parties** Community members wanted to know NP’s contacts and its assistance in reaching out to them for the purpose of pursuing dialog.

### ***NP reflection on project implementation and management***

**Finding 13 – Earlier project launch** NP monitored the situation in Standing Rock for weeks, but waited to launch the project. Earlier implementation might have given NP more time to engage with people in the camps.

**Finding 14 – NP team composition** For programming in the US as in other countries, the optimum field team is composed of locals and internationals with complimentary experience.

**Finding 15 – Clear project purpose and team roles** Initially, the project purpose was not clear and team roles were not well-defined, causing confusion among team members.

## 5.0 Recommendations

Based on key findings from the project, we make the following recommendations.

### ***Capacity building with stakeholders***

Continue to work with initial core group of North Dakota stakeholders through additional training and capacity building in accordance with their request.

Nourish partnerships with Unitarian Church, Dakota Resource Council and clergy group, while watching for the emergence of additional partners.

Reconnect with all initial contacts from other sectors and reassess their interest in engaging in the project.

Maintain NP nonpartisanship and encourage partners who are partisan to seek commonalities with others of opposing views in order to pursue community dialog.

Facilitate connections between sectors with differing views where feasible and requested.

Provide support to existing and potentially new working groups as they need and request.

### ***Trainings***

When recruiting for additional trainings, make extra effort to reach out and include others from sectors not represented in earlier trainings and who hold opposing views on the DAPL (Native Americans, police, government, labor unions, local businesses).

In subsequent trainings, continue to include the exercises that prior participants found most valuable (Conflict Mapping and Circle of Trust) and consider how other sectors might react to them.

### ***Project management***

Provide a project field team of locals and internationals as the optimum composition, and where feasible.

Clarify project purpose and team member roles prior to mobilization. Provide regular check-in from line manager.

## Appendix 1 – Interview questions

### **Questions for stakeholders in North Dakota**

#### ***Questions about involvement with the Dakota Access Pipeline***

1. How have you been involved with DAPL?
2. What are the things that concern you most regarding the situation with DAPL – both since the situation began and going forward?
  - What are your concerns about tensions among groups of people involved? What could be done to reduce those tensions?
  - Are you concerned about the safety of people involved in the situation? What are your concerns? What do you think could be done to insure greater safety?
3. How could community dialog be used to improve relationships between the different groups of people involved in DAPL?
  - How would you suggest that community members play a role?
  - Which community groups or individuals should be involved?
  - What are some barriers to community members playing a role?

#### ***Questions about the NP Project***

##### **About the NP Training**

1. Did you attend a training? Which one?
  - January – general training in UCP (2 days) / 3 working groups emerged
  - February – training in protective strategies (1 day) / more diverse group
  - March – strategies to respond to and prevent violence (1/2 day) / for clergy
2. What worked well about the training? Was there anything particularly powerful for you?
3. What could be improved?
4. How will you use what you learned in the training?
5. What long-term impact could the training have on reducing tension in the community around the DAPL situation? How?

##### **About the Working Groups**

1. Are you participating in one of the Working Groups that formed after the first training, (or the third training for clergy)? Which one?
  - Protective accompaniment
  - Facilitate dialog at community level
  - Arrange for additional trainings for community
  - Clergy group (emerged from March training)
2. What is the focus of the Working Group you are in?
3. In what ways could the Working Group reduce tension and create greater safety in the community around the DAPL situation?

4. Can the Working Group expand the network of peace builders in the community when NP is gone?
  - How will the Groups do that?
  - What are some challenges that the Groups might face?
  - What additional resources would the Groups need?

About the NP team’s relationship building in the community

1. The NP team contacted people from many different sectors involved in the DAPL in an attempt to build relationships in the community.
  - How did you feel about NP coming into your community?
  - What kind of impact do you think NP had on the community of SR, Bismarck, Mandan?
2. What could NP have done differently?
3. Is there further input that you would like from NP going forward?

***Question about a model for similar work in other parts of the US***

1. How could this project be a model for similar work in reducing tension and protecting the safety of groups of people involved in specific issues in other parts of the US?

-----

**Questions for NP Team**

***Questions about assessing the situation and preparing to go to ND***

1. Describe the process for assessing the situation in ND.
  - What worked well?
  - What could be improved?
2. What was the goal / anticipated outcome of the project?
3. Who are the important stakeholder groups involved in DAPL?
4. What are the concerns of each stakeholder group?
5. What were your initial concerns about DAPL?
6. What were your initial concerns about connecting with stakeholders?

***Questions about building the network of stakeholders in ND***

1. Describe the process of connecting with stakeholders.
2. Were you able to connect with all key stakeholder groups that you intended to?
3. Were there stakeholder groups or individuals that you were unable to connect with? Why?
4. What would be helpful in connecting with stakeholder groups or individuals who were harder to reach?
5. How will the network that you built be able to influence the situation around DAPL long-term?

***Questions about training the stakeholders***

1. What was the purpose of the trainings?

2. Which stakeholder groups attended the training?
  - Were there other stakeholder groups or individuals that you would have liked to be present?
3. What was the reaction of the participants to the training?
4. Do you believe the participants will use what they learned in the training?
  - How will they use the training?
  - What aspects of the training do you believe will be most useful to them?

***Questions about the working groups that emerged from the trainings***

1. Several working groups emerged from the trainings. What will each group focus on?
2. How have you worked with each group to help them to go forward on their own after NP leaves?
3. What additional support could the working groups use, especially after NP leaves?

***Questions reflecting on community building in US context***

1. What was it like to build community in US context?
  - Similarities to building community in other countries you have worked in? Differences?
  - What were the challenges of the US context?
  - What surprised you about working in US?
  - What encouraged you?
  - What discouraged you?
2. How could this project be a model for similar work in reducing tension and protecting the safety of groups of people involved in specific issues in other parts of the US?

***Additional information***

1. What additional information would you like to share with me at this time?