Nonviolent Peaceforce and the University of Minnesota Human Rights Lab

Good Practices in Unarmed Civilian Protection

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Thank You

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I sincerely hope you enjoy this report and find some insight for your work in the field of unarmed civilian protection.

Paige McLain

Introduction

This report aims to review in depth select good practices in unarmed civilian protection (UCP). Unarmed civilian protection is an alternate security paradigm to armed protection. Unarmed civilian protection uses civilians to protect other civilians without the threat of violence or arms. The goal of UCP is to reduce violence and threats of violence against civilians as well as create safer spaces for civilians through non-violent methods. Other terms used to describe this work include peace teams, accompaniment, unarmed civilian peacekeeping, and third-party nonviolent intervention.[1]

The significance of UCP lies in its identity as an alternative security paradigm to armed and thus inherently violent methods of protection. Whereas an armed security paradigm relies on weapons and the threat of violence as its tools of deterrence and protection, UCP relies on relationships. Furthermore, in contrast to the primarily "one-way-street" protection dynamic common in armed security paradigms, relationships formed through the practice of UCP create a dynamic of mutual protection – that is, relationships formed between UCP actors and others not only increase the security of local actors, it also increases the security of UCP actors as they perform their work.

This report was written as a collaboration between the Human Rights Lab at the University of Minnesota and Nonviolent Peaceforce. As a preface to this report, Nonviolent Peaceforce hosted 5 regional workshops between 2017 and 2020 on good practices in unarmed civilian protection.[2] These workshops brought together UCP practitioners from around the region to discuss their experiences with UCP and highlight what UCP practitioners believed to be good practices in UCP. Research for this report began following the fifth workshop, but prior to the sixth to be hosted in Europe.

The goal of this report was to understand in greater detail how practitioners implement the selected good practices across different regions and the specific challenges of each practice. The authors selected the good practices for this report after reviewing a listing from each workshop of agreed to good practices from the participants. At the end of each workshop, an activity was completed where the practitioners could vote on the good practices that were most important to them and from this a list of the top 5 or 6 good practices were identified across each workshop. From there, the authors selected six practices they wanted to investigate further. These practices include primacy of local actors, relationship building, accompaniment, community capacity enhancement, non-partisanship, and advocacy. While some of these practices may be considered principles or mechanisms of UCP, it became clear from the workshops and other literature it is vital to also implement these as practices. Therefore, this report will address all of these as practices and focus on how UCP actors can implement each practice. At the end

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[1] Julian, R., & Gasser, R. (2019). Soldiers, Civilians and Peacekeeping–Evidence and False Assumptions. International Peacekeeping, 26(1), 22-54.

[2] Schweitzer, C. (2020a). Good Practices in nonviolent, unarmed, civilian to civilian protection: Documentation of the workshop in Bogota, 13-25 January, 2020. Hamburg: Nonviolent Peaceforce.; Schweitzer, C. (2018a). Good Practices in nonviolent, unarmed, civilian to civilian protection: Documentation of the workshop in Beirut, 18-20 June, 2018. Hamburg: Nonviolent Peaceforce.; Schweitzer, C. (2018b). Good practices in nonviolent, unarmed, civilian to civilian protection: Documentation of the workshop in Manila, 7-9 December, 2017. Hamburg: Nonviolent Peaceforce.; Schweitzer, C. (2019). Good Practices in nonviolent, unarmed, civilian to civilian protection: Documentation of the workshop in Nairobi, 12-14 November, 2018. Hamburg: Nonviolent Peaceforce.; Schweitzer, C. (2020b). Good Practices in nonviolent, unarmed, civilian to civilian protection: Documentation of the workshop in Paynesville, 21-23 October, 2019. Hamburg: Nonviolent Peaceforce.

of this report, the authors also address a few larger challenges UCP organizations face related to the use of privilege by UCP actors and how UCP is changing.

While this report will discuss each practice separately, the authors attempt to identify when there are overlapping steps between practices or challenges between practices in the applicable sections. The authors do so to highlight their belief that UCP is most effective when approached as a system instead of individual practices. For example, the primacy of local actors must be implemented throughout all accompaniment work such as incorporating the local actor's knowledge into the accompaniment plan to create a more robust and successful protection plan.

The primacy of local actors and relationship building are discussed first. The authors assert these two practices precede all the other practices and must be incorporated into all other practices for UCP to succeed. Then accompaniment will be discussed as one of the traditional methods of UCP and capacity enhancement as a newer practice that needs further reflection. Lastly, the report will look at non-partisanship and advocacy as two practices that differ greatly among UCP organizations based on the UCP organization's approach to the work. Lastly, the report will cover two overarching challenges for UCP organizations and actors: the use of privilege in UCP and how UCP has changed. These topics emerged from the literature and interviews as important topics that need further discussion. The authors felt it was important to highlight these for this report and to encourage future research on these challenges.

Methodology

This report is part of a larger project hosted by Nonviolent Peaceforce with the goal of expanding the global understanding of unarmed civilian protection as an alternative security-paradigm to armed protection. As stated previously, these practices were selected from a shortened list of the most agreed to practices coming out of each workshop. While the practices range greatly from principles to concepts to practices, each offered valuable information to UCP actors on how to implement their work. While not all agree that these practices are strictly UCP practices, the authors believe the information provided on implementing these practices and the challenges UCP organizations and actors face in doing so outweighs this concern.

 After completing an in-depth review of the existing literature on the selected practices, the primary source of information for this report was in-depth interviews with practitioners in the field. The interviews ranged on average from approximately sixty to ninety minutes and took place between July 1 and August 7 of 2020. A total of twenty-two interviews were conducted of which four were conducted in Spanish and the rest in English. Of the twenty-two practitioners interviewed, thirteen UCP organizations were represented of which less than half were based in the United States, and six were working in their own country or region where their headquarters were located.

Practitioners had experience conducting UCP throughout Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. The types of violence the practitioners had experience working in ranged from civil war settings, to Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps, to peace communities resisting state-based violence, to clan and blood feuds within and between communities. There was also experience in using UCP practices in the United States, specifically around an alternative to police-based protection preceding the recent racial justice unrest and growing experience right now given the current state of the United States. While there were six practitioners interviewed working in their home

countries or regions, a majority of the practitioners from the interviews as well as the workshops worked for international UCP organizations. Therefore, the focus on this report weighs heavily on the experience of international organizations, but when applicable and possible the authors raise points for local and national UCP organizations and actors.

The authors conducted semi-structured interviews. There was a primary list of questions to start the interview, but as the interviewing author felt it appropriate s/he focused more on certain good practices or challenges with specific practitioners. Because the interview time was restricted, yet the authors wanted to cover a broad range of practices, this offered greater flexibility for the authors to deep dive on practices and challenges each practitioner had the most experience in. Throughout the report, when the authors felt it appropriate to demonstrate agreement on a concept between practitioners, the authors included the number of practitioners who agreed. Because not all practitioners were asked all the same questions the numbers vary. A higher or lower number of practitioners should not equate to stronger or weaker agreement, instead the authors specifically include the numbers to demonstrate agreement among practitioners. The authors felt this offered greater insight into how they arrived at their conclusions as well as how the practitioners felt about certain concepts and this benefit outweighs the lack of consistent questions for each practitioner.

Lastly, this research and project was reviewed by the Internal Review Board at the University of Minnesota. Interviews were only conducted with practitioners about their work and professional opinions, so the research was deemed non-human research and the authors were free to proceed with this project without IRB approval.

Good Practices

The following sections will outline the different good practices investigated for this report. The authors start with the primacy of local actors and relationship building, because they feel these practices must be considered when implementing the other practices. When appropriate, the authors identify how some practices work together or where there were challenges in implementing more than one practice. Following these sections, this report will specifically address two broader challenges for practitioners and UCP organizations to consider when considering the good practices highlighted here.

Primacy of Local Actors

Primacy of local actors means incorporating local actors, their knowledge and experiences into the UCP work. It also means focusing the UCP work on those most oppressed by violence. This is a primary principle for all UCP organizations. Of the practitioners interviewed for this report, all referenced the need to incorporate local actors into the UCP work by looking to local actors for their knowledge, to understand their needs and wants, and sometimes to lead the work themselves.[3]

According to Julian and Gasser the primacy of local actors means "Peacekeeping organizations do not arrive with an agenda set externally, nor bring their own 'solutions' to the 'problem', but identify resources and solutions located in the area and among the people who live there."[4] The solution is developed together between the UCP organization and local actors from the problem understood

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[3] All 23 practitioners interviewed described the incorporation of local actors in the work.
[4] Julian, R., & Gasser, R. (2019). Soldiers, Civilians and Peacekeeping–Evidence and False Assumptions. International Peacekeeping, 26(1), 22-54. 8.

through the eyes of those affected by the violence. While UCP organizations bring a wealth of knowledge, incorporating local knowledge makes the protection plans more effective because they are specifically built for and with those experiencing violence or the threat of violence. As Bonick states, "if humanitarian agencies are to realise their full potential for protection, they must understand how people already deal with the threats they face."[5]

Lastly, the principle of the primacy of local actors is not just about taking steps to incorporate local actors into UCP work, but also about local actors providing direction for the work. The primacy of local actors includes keeping in mind those most oppressed or vulnerable to violence as a guide for the UCP organization. Two practitioners specifically described the need for UCP organizations to continue to make strides towards working with all individuals impacted by the violence and being aware of those unduly affected by violence, using the terms most oppressed and most vulnerable. However, nineteen practitioners described their work by discussing the specific work they do when focusing on vulnerable groups, including work with IDPs and migrants, indigenous peoples, LGBTQI+ peoples, women, and youth. These practitioners highlighted that these groups of people experience violence differently and may have different needs and wants then the rest of their communities.[6] The authors found in their analysis the concept of the most oppressed is an important addition to the way UCP organizations carry out the primacy of local actors.

Defining Local Actors

UCP organizations work with many different kinds of people ranging from state officials, militaries, paramilitaries, the police, non-state armed groups, international and local CSOs and NGOs, local communities, human rights defenders, and those most oppressed by the violence. However, when implementing the primacy of local actors, UCP organizations specifically focus on civilians for protection activities and any formal relationships, such as with another NGO. Based on the authors' findings from the interviews, there are four categories of local actors that UCP organizations work with to implement the primacy of local actors. These categories are local NGOs and CSOs, local communities, human rights defenders, and those most oppressed by violence. While the authors found these four categories best describe the types of local actors UCP organizations work with, it does not mean that individual actors do not fit in more than one category or that actors in the same category do not have different needs or wants. This will be further highlighted in the following paragraphs.

All four of these categories are types of local actors UCP organizations incorporate into their work for their knowledge and expertise as well as focus their protection work. However, it is the last group, those most oppressed by violence, that practitioners in the interviews described as particularly important to focus their protection efforts. The following paragraphs will discuss the benefits and challenges of each group.

Local NGOs / CSOs:

Local non-government organizations or an existing civil society organization tend to be one of the first groups that UCP organizations interact with when starting a new project. All 22 practitioners discussed

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[5] Bonwick, A. (2006). Who really protects civilians?. Development in Practice, 16, 8.

[6] Interviews with MN, EV, IL (The authors assigned random initials to represent the different practitioners interviewed to protect their confidentiality as well as the individuals they referenced in their interviews.)

relationships with NGOs or CSOs as part of their work.[7] Local NGOs and CSOs provide essential information about the community, violence and culture. NGOs/CSOs also provide access to other local actors. Some UCP organizations choose to partner formally with these other organizations when this relationship is anticipated to be long term, while other times these relationships are less formal. Occasionally, a UCP organization will also provide protection to a local NGO or CSO though most practitioners interviewed described this relationship as an opportunity to learn about the context and conflict, and to reach other local actors.

Many times, a local NGO or CSO requests the presence of the UCP organization in their community or country to help with the current violence. Of the practitioners interviewed, fifteen referenced the requirement by their organization to receive such an invitation prior to starting work in a new location. For some of the UCP organizations represented in the interviews, the organization requires an invitation specifically from a local actor, such as a local NGO/CSO, local community or actor. A few practitioners gave examples of invitations coming from an international organization requesting their presence.

From the interview some of the examples of local NGOs or CSOs requesting UCP support included a religious network in Colombia requesting support from a U.S.-based UCP organization to reduce violence against church leaders. Another example included a community living in the middle of a civil war between the state and a guerilla group that wanted to create an arms free zone. They reached out to several international UCP organizations to provide support to deter violence from either side in the civil war against their community. Another example included community leaders coming together looking for a way to reduce violence at a nearby migration shelter on the border of Mexico and the United States. In the United States, a local farmers collective wanted a non-violent way to stop harassment and threats against sellers at a farmer's market and reached out to a national UCP organization. In more recent examples, the increased violence around racial justice concerns in the U.S. have led to more invitations to local UCP organizations to provide community-based protection mechanisms instead of traditional police models.

One practitioner raised concern about the requirement for UCP organizations to receive a local actor invitation. This practitioner specifically highlighted the situation in which there is a lack of awareness about UCP and therefore no invitation can be expected. Instead, an introduction of UCP and its benefits may be needed before a formal invitation is made.[8] This practitioner referenced experiences in South Sudan, while another practitioner made note of the need to educate a community about UCP in the United States before UCP was understood and thought of as a viable protection solution. The practitioner described the process of developing a UCP project in the U.S. where UCP was not commonly understood, "The assessment involves letting people know what [UCP is] all about. And where it has worked and where it has not worked and where it may not. And then giving that information out enough that people can make a considered, analytical decision [about UCP in their community]."[9]

With these examples, the authors argue UCP organizations need to be willing to do their own outreach and provide for a period of learning and awareness raising of UCP before they expect an invitation.

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[7] Interviews with AO, AZ, BY, CW, DF, DX, EV, FT, GS, HR, IL, IO, JR, KL, MN, NK, PO, RY, SV, TI, VP, YE
[8] Interview with PO
[9] Interview with MN

Today's literature fails to make this distinction, which may be an obstacle to UCP organizations as they decide to work in a new location.

Another challenge a UCP organization may face is its own capacity to reach those most in need, because of things like the number of volunteers, funding, or security concerns. When these restraints exist, supporting a partner organization may be the best way a UCP organization can support those most oppressed by violence by proxy. One practitioner interviewed described their organization's work on the U.S.-Mexico border. This U.S.-based UCP organization did accompaniment work on the U.S.-Mexican border and partnered with a migrant shelter on the Mexican side of the border. In this partnership, the shelter had to request the UCP organization to be clearer with its volunteers about priorities and expectations. This practitioner had to explain to the volunteers that they cannot provide support for everyone that comes to the shelter and/or the border. Instead, the primary reason the UCP volunteers were there was to support the shelter director. By saying yes to different accompaniment requests by migrants, the UCP organization was leaving the shelter director vulnerable to attack because those volunteers were not available to accompany the shelter director for his/her work. Additionally, this creates an additional burden on the shelter director and other locals when the accompaniers are not there.[10] This example demonstrates the complexity of putting into practice the primacy of local actors. While the argument could be made that the UCP organization is not fulfilling the primacy of local actors by denying migrant requests, this ignores the fact the UCP organization does not have the capacity to always be present and support those migrants. Implementing primacy of local actors can be a challenge given the many different groups and needs within an area coupled with what a UCP organization can do given resources, funding, and timing constraints.

Local Communities:

Local communities are another local actor group that the authors found vital to UCP organizations in implementing the primacy of local actors. Twenty-one of 22 practitioners specifically referenced the work they do with local communities to incorporate them into their work most especially by learning from local communities about their experiences with the current violence and existing protection mechanisms. Work with local communities also included developing trust and relationships to build more successful UCP protection plans.

Julian, Bliesemann de Guevara, & Redhead describe the importance of UCP work to incorporate the lived experience of local actors. This helps UCP organizations to gain vital information about the area, culture, and violence.[11] This knowledge is essential to building a successful plan capable of reducing threats of violence. Eighteen practitioners highlighted ways they consult local actors, let them lead, or drive local ownership in their work.[12]

The most common example given by the interviewed practitioners of incorporating local communities' experiential knowledge was in setting up early warning, early response systems (EWER). One practitioner described, "the community, for hundreds and hundreds of years, have had their own coping mechanism when conflict happens. They run to this particular location because the swamps are safe ... so you just need to adapt to that and try to understand what they're doing." This practitioner went on to

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[10] Interview with KL

[11] Rachel Julian, Bliesemann de Guevara, B., & Redhead, R. (2019).

[12] Interviews with AO, AZ, BY, CW, DF, EV, FT, GS, HR, IL, IO, KL, MN, PO, SV, TI, VP, YE

explain how this information is then used to create a context-specific protection plan for the community.[13]

Another practitioner described how the process of co-creating an EWER takes time to develop with the local community. As part of an international organization working in South Sudan, this practitioner and team wanted to help a community create their own mechanisms to increase their security through an EWER. To start the UCP organization gathered with the community and started by asking the community, "how do you know when a threat is present?". The practitioner described that at first this was a very confusing question for the community. The practitioner had to coax the community to think about their own experiences dealing with threats of violence. At first the community thought the UCP organization was the one responsible to develop plans and identify the threats.

Eventually the community started to identify different events that highlighted potential threats. These examples included, the market not opening or the youth disappearing. The UCP organization then went on to ask how the community would respond, including asking what had worked and what had not worked in the past. With this information, the UCP organization co-created a formalized response to potential threats of violence from the community's experience and knowledge.[14] As Bonwick states, "protection is not a commodity that can be delivered alongside food and water. It is civilians themselves who are central to their own safety."[15] The authors agree that early warning, early response is most effective when the plan is co-created. Local communities can identify potential security threats and with the support of the UCP organization create or build on a predetermined response in case the threat is realized.

Two primary challenges were frequently highlighted in the interviews when discussing UCP work with local communities: exclusionary practices and existing community violence. Four practitioners specifically highlighted the challenge of exclusionary practices based on existing community structures. One practitioner gave the example of developing EWER. The practitioner stated,

> "[when starting EWER] you've got to deal with community hierarchies which is another complication ... you want to balance that with respecting social structures and hierarchies as they exist because that's how communities function, all of us, but also recognizing that those can be exclusionary and, you know, miss perspectives by design, also true of all of us."[16]

Another practitioner specifically referenced concerns about the exclusion of women and the lack of youth participation in any decision making, while another raised concerns about the exclusion of people with disabilities and LGBTQI+ people.[17] The authors argue one of the strengths of UCP in comparison to other protection methods is the focus on individual experiences of violence and adapting protection plans to these experiences. Therefore, the exclusion of any groups of local actors is detrimental to creating a robust UCP plan capable of creating safer spaces for all civilians.

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[13] Interview with AZ

[14] Interview with MN

[15] Bonwick (2006), 8.

[16] Interview with PO

[17] Interview with DX and IO

This concern is also prominent when dealing with existing community violence either within the community or with other communities, which was raised in the literature and practitioner interviews. Three practitioners specifically referenced the concern about inter-community violence, especially in dealing with revenge killings or blood feuds. Examples were given from South Sudan, Albania, and the United States. All three of these practitioners specifically talked about working with the communities to raise awareness of alternative non-violent options for dealing with conflict. One practitioner shared a story of changing the hearts and mind of one family stuck in a cycle of revenge.

> [T]his young man lost his brother in a homicide for blood feuds because their cousin killed someone else. So the cousin was in jail and the other family decided to take revenge on the two cousins. So, one was killed, in front of him. They were playing football out of their home and he was wounded, he has a small piece of metal near the heart. And he lived for a while thinking to take revenge. Then, of course it's not only our intervention that changed his mind, he married a beautiful girl and they had a daughter. And, of course, also the church worked a lot on this family ... after years and years of meetings and friendship... he decided to tell us the one thing that they, his family, decided to leave this story of the blood feud and to honor the brother every year, of course, but not to take revenge anymore because they have to raise up the baby girl they have.[18]

As the example highlights, it took years for a change to occur with one family. With both exclusionary practices or community violence, the practitioners interviewed highlighted the challenge of the need for time to change existing community behaviors. In fact, several practitioners struggled with existing repressive measures within communities and the desire of the practitioners for this to change while also respecting the communities and their leaders. This was especially challenging for UCP practitioners working where violence was occurring within the community. An example given several times was domestic violence, particularly against women. The authors found the most common method of UCP practitioners used in dealing with this challenge was being firm with community leaders and other community actors that they do not accept this behavior, but also to be patient with change. Future research should look to provide additional direction on how UCP actors can handle this specific challenge.

Human Rights Defenders:

Human rights defenders (HRDs) are another local actor group some UCP organizations work with primarily to provide protection. Human rights defenders can be more vulnerable to violence given their work. Some UCP organizations find that local human rights defenders are typically working for the benefit of local actors in their community, country, or region. By supporting human rights defenders, these local actors can be change makers for others experiencing violations of their human rights, including those most oppressed by violence. Of the 22 practitioners interviewed, 5 specifically discussed their work with human rights defenders.[19]

Similar to other local actors, prior to starting work with a human rights defender, usually providing protection, the UCP organization needs to vet the individual. Two local/national organizations that specifically focus on providing support and protection solely for human rights defenders, emphasized

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[18] Interview with GS

[19] Interviews with AZ, JR, NK TI, YE

this point.[20] While anyone may call themselves a human rights defender, ensuring this person is not tied to organized crime, gangs, or other illegal groups is essential to maintaining the UCP organizations image.

<u>The Most Oppressed by Violence:</u>

The final category the authors found to make up the definition of local actor in UCP work is those individuals most oppressed by violence. This group is important because it is not only about identifying the most oppressed, but finding ways to incorporate their experiences of violence into the work. Additionally, creating safer spaces for those most oppressed by violence is the goal of working with all local actors and a way for UCP organizations to stay focused in their work. As one practitioner stated,

> "I found that I actually don't start off working with the most vulnerable. I found that I start working with the ones that I can. Because the fact of the matter is, especially when you walk into such vulnerable communities, almost everyone needs help. The voices of what we would term as not necessarily very vulnerable, they also need to be heard. So, my aim is to go to the most vulnerable. But I will work with the ones whose voices are not necessarily the most vulnerable and work towards that."[21]

As discussed in the section on local communities, those most oppressed by violence are very often found in the communities a UCP organization is already working in. Therefore, part of identifying these individuals is having many conversations with different community members. As a few practitioners highlighted, it is important to expand conversations between the UCP organization and community beyond just the community leaders or designated individuals by local leaders. These conversations are essential to understanding the different needs and wants of those most oppressed by violence as well as identifying ways to support these individuals and incorporate their needs into the protection plan. While those most oppressed by violence are almost always a marginalized group, it does not mean that all individuals have experienced violence the same way or need protection in the same way.

Beyond the local communities, UCP organizations can also gain knowledge about those most oppressed by violence through conversations with state actors and other NGOs or CSOs, local, national, or international.

The most oppressed may change as the violence or context changes. Ongoing context analysis was highlighted by several practitioners as essential to continue to assess the situation as things shift, including potentially a change in those who are most oppressed by violence. For example, one practitioner described the violence caused by blood feuds like table tennis. The UCP organization's goal is to work with the whole community to stop blood feuds and offer other non-violent paths for conflict resolution, but in working with the community, a family that is the victim of a blood feud one day may be the perpetrator of violence the next day. This is a very tricky situation for UCP organizations working in these contexts. This requires a very fluid understanding of how to move through a community while respecting who is suffering the most that day.[22]

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[20] Interviews with JR and NK

[21] Interview with MN

[22] Interview with GS

Putting Primacy of Local Actors into Practice

Though this principle is highlighted in many UCP organizations' mission statements and guiding principles, implementing the primacy of local actors is riddled with challenges and requires constant reflection on the part of the UCP organization. This struggle was highlighted at the Unarmed Civilian Protection Good Practices Workshops hosted by Nonviolent Peaceforce in recent years.

The primacy of local actors is put into practice by recognizing local knowledge, which is gained through lived experience. In international humanitarian projects, a common critique is that outside organizations often believe those in need are not capable of identifying what and how they need aid. Instead, the outside organization may dictate the terms of their support, which often leads to poorer outcomes. This is a lesson for UCP organizations, as well. Julian, Bliesemann de Guevara, Redhead remind UCP actors that "understanding that people already have agency, that their actions have value and importance in the local context, and that people's everyday experiences based on these actions make them valuable holders of experiential knowledge that gives them the capacity to act knowingly."[23] Trusting in this local input is essential to building strong UCP plans.

> "And this is why, for me, like, the concept of the primacy of the local actor is one that's so important to drill into people, into your teams, because if they understand it then they will go about the activities in a way where that is a sort of motivating principle."[24]

In addition to incorporating local knowledge into UCP protection plans, utilizing existing local structures and methods for problem solving and dialogue can improve the success of the UCP work. One practitioner gave an example of accepting local traditions for conflict resolution even when it seems contrary to their own culture,

> "[the] Western understanding [of it] might be problematic because people come together, they sacrifice a bull and then let's say, the blood money as they call it, is paid. And then they shake hands and end of the story. And it has been like that for ages, you know. So, who are we to come here and try to change the way they make peace? That's why I would say UCP wherever you go you need to try to adapt more to local ways of doing things."[25]

As a means to respect a community or local actors' culture and traditions, UCP can be adapted to existing practices. However, there will be times UCP organizations cannot adapt when local practices are violent or repressive to others. For example, some organizations, as part of their work, conduct trainings with the communities where they work to discuss the concepts of nonviolence and UCP. Though the organization can request those attending the training leave their weapons at home, some practitioners described attendees arriving with weapons. These practitioners described ways to meet these attendees in the middle, for example requesting they return their weapons to their car instead of turning the person away. These practitioners highlighted that the transition from armed to unarmed is a process. It cannot be forced by outsiders but needs to be accepted by the community and its members on their own terms. Some flexibility, within reason, is needed.

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[23] Julian, R., Bliesemann de Guevara, B., & Redhead, R. (2019). 217.

[24] Interview with PO

[25] Interview with AZ

Building relationships with local actors is essential to developing trust and successful protection plans. One of the challenges of developing these relationships with local actors is local actors' other needs. UCP is specifically focused on providing protection and for most UCP organizations this means other humanitarian services or resources are not provided by the UCP organization to local actors. For most of the UCP practitioners interviewed, their UCP experience was in UCP organizations that only provide protection. These practitioners described confusion by some local actors when they emphasized their need for food, money and shelter first. "'Why should we allow you to be here if you don't give us anything?' And a big thing is money, so they were always saying, 'You don't do anything, you're just here. That is nothing tangible.' "[26] Another practitioner stated the confusion for local actors and state actors, "Of course here the leadership, government authorities and all of that sometimes it's really difficult for us to explain our work because what people want are material [things], I mean we're not going there to build latrines or something like that, so it takes a while for them to see the importance of our work."[27] Another practitioner highlighted that these material requests are difficult to reject, especially when trying to build trust and a relationship with a new local actor. This practitioner gave an example of giving the local actor a ride as a small material thing to start to develop a relationship. However, when the requests are bigger, such as food, money, shelter, these are things most UCP organizations cannot provide. This highlights once again the need to educate people about UCP and the mandate of the organization to create an understanding on what the UCP organization can do for the local community.

Primacy of Local Actors and Capacity Enhancement

Capacity enhancement within UCP means enhancing a local community or actors' ability to protect themselves without the presence of an outside organization. This practice will be discussed later in this report, but it cannot be done without putting into practice the primacy of local actors. Unarmed civilian protection lacks sustainability on its own, especially if only conducted by foreign actors. While in some ways this is an acceptable method, there is a growing need for more sustainable UCP practices. Therefore, building local knowledge of UCP is essential to sustainability of the work and peace structures. UCP organizations can build on local capacities for self protection, and they can do this better by always including local actors and communities in their work from the start. International UCP organizations not only benefit in improving their protection plans by incorporating local actors, but also allow for local ownership of the UCP activities and future protection. Several practitioners interviewed identified this as a method to make UCP more sustainable at the local level. Capacity enhancement as a good practice of UCP is discussed later in this report.

Relationship Building

UCP is a cooperative activity and thus based in human relationships. Relationship building in UCP work involves a complex and dynamic web of relationships between a number of different actors. These actors include a mix of UCP organizations, armed actors, including state and non-state actors, and, most centrally, local actors which UCP work seeks to benefit.[28] While UCP actors often acknowledge the

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[26] Interview with YE

[27] Interview with AZ

[28] Local actors as defined in the Primacy of Local Actors section which includes local NGOs/CSOs, local communities, human rights defenders, and those most oppressed by violence.

benefits of forming large and diverse networks of relationships, the practical basis for forming relationships in the context of UCP is to leverage them to enhance UCP protection plans.

It's also important to note that there may be contextual reasons for deciding not to form relationships with certain actors at certain times, including an organization's mission and capabilities. This is most often seen when a UCP organization excludes armed actors, including state and non-state actors from their work. Such decisions are often based on an organization's approach to their work, a concept which will be discussed further in the non-partisanship section of this report.

This section will explore three different aspects of relationship building and their implementation: existing relationships, new relationships, and maintaining relationships. Existing relationships are activated and leveraged to find entry points to UCP work and to carry out accompaniment and capacity enhancement. New relationships are then formed to find further entry points, to bridge gaps between disparate groups, and to bring more local actors to the table. Finally, UCP work seeks to maintain relationships to deepen trust and eventually to create sustainable community-centered peace networks.

Existing Relationships

For UCP work to begin, an "Entry Point" is required. As discussed in the Primacy of Local Actors section, this often, though not always, comes in the form of an invitation sent to a UCP organization from a local actor, typically a local Civil Society Organization, but sometimes a state or international organization. In this way, an existing relationship between two contacts is leveraged so that each party gains access to a larger network of actors in which new relationships can be formed, weaving the "fabric" through which UCP work takes place. Even in cases without the incidence of a typical invitation, such as when an already local and embedded actor begins UCP work, leveraging existing relationships and creating new ones is essential to the work.

In keeping with the practice of Primacy of Local Actors, UCP relies heavily on existing relationships within a community. Existing relationships have multiple benefits. The first is that, at a very human level, an established relationship is usually based on higher levels of trust and understanding than a new one.

Gaining the trust of new contacts is difficult, and 14 out of 22 UCP practitioners interviewed stated having a trusted community member facilitate introductions was crucial to gaining access to communities.[29] One practitioner described her experience in utilizing existing relationships to create new ones describing:

> "When we first meet a new partner… They don't know me. They don't trust me; they don't believe in me and for all they know I'm going to make them even more vulnerable than they [already] are. But they know my colleague who's probably speaking their language and they trust them, and they want to help their colleagues, who then introduces me with love and trust and acceptance..." - MN

Existing relationships are not only useful for establishing new ones for UCP practitioners. UCP actors can also use existing relationships with community members to make introductions and foster new relationships between different local community members. One practitioner gave an example of inviting

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[29] Interviews with CW, GS, AZ, IO, KL, MN, BY, EV, FT, DF, TI, YE, RY, DX

an army commander and a community leader to lunch, which, after an awkward start, led to a budding dialogue where there was previously no communication.[30]

In addition to often serving a crucial role in creating entry points for UCP work, existing relationships between UCP organizations, community members and, depending on the organization, armed (including state) actors are critical to carrying out the practice of accompaniment effectively.[31] While accompaniment on its own can have a deterrent effect towards would-be aggressors, a more holistic approach to reducing risk can be found through establishing additional relationships within the environment of accompaniment, if and when this is appropriate to the organization's mission and the specific context. This is the basic premise of the proactive, nonviolent, relationship-based security paradigm of UCP. One practitioner interviewed indicated how familiarity with armed actors can decrease the overall risk level of a situation, "They didn't perceive us as a threat to them because they knew, clearly, which is our focus of work."[32]

A limitation of relationship-based security is access, lying in the fact that forming meaningful relationships of influence with certain actors is not always possible. Certain actors may operate in remote conditions, or have been ruled illegal by the state, or simply not want to work with UCP actors. Fourteen of 22 interviewees addressed these issues of access and leverage.[33]

Even in cases where relationships with potential aggressors can't be formed, as is sometimes the case with armed groups which have been ruled illegal by the state, existing relationships with state actors can be leveraged in order to create a level of accountability.[34] For example, announcing planned accompaniment activity to state actors can influence them to reduce the risk level of a situation, or at the very least can be held accountable if something were to occur during the accompaniment. Examples include denied access at a checkpoint or an attack by a paramilitary group.

> "For us to be in a safer position, we have to engage with politicians at a higher level, especially the commissioners and governors because most of these commissioners and governors are former commanders. So, once we bring this, sometimes we want to do an accompaniment and sometimes you can be ambushed easily by the perpetrator. So, we always rope in the commissioners and governors and tell them that we want to do this kind of stuff and we want to support a survivor who is a member of the community, somebody's daughter, somebody's wife. And so, we tell them, please use your influence to make sure that the perpetrator does not attempt to do any harm to the family, to the survivor, or to the members of humanitarian organizations such as us. This has really worked very well for us."[35]

Leveraging existing relationships is also critical for other protection activities, particularly for the formation of Early Warning/Early Response (EWER) systems. EWER systems rely on human networks to identify the existence of a threat, warn the proper parties, and respond in a way that reduces that threat

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[30] Interview with AZ

[31] Furnari, E., & Julian, R. (2014). Comparative study of unarmed civilian peacekeeping: contexts, processes and impacts. International Peace Research Association, Istanbul.

[32] Interview with IO

[33] Interviews with GS, MN, EV, HR, DF, YE, RY, KL, BY, FT, PO, TI, VP, IL, DX, SV

[34] Rachel Julian & Gasser, R. (2019).

[35] Interview with HR

or decreases the potential for violence. Effective EWER systems rely on having the right contacts and the right levels of influence.

Additionally, the formation of some relationships, while accessible to UCP practitioners, may not provide meaningful leverage towards reducing the threat level in the environment in which the UCP is carried out. An important step in relationship building in the context of UCP therefore is identifying and seeking out which relationships have the most potential to produce wanted effects of improving the UCP protection plans.

In all of these cases, existing relationships within a community have the benefit of being grounded in knowledge of the local community and context, which is invaluable for both further relationship networking and for the context analysis necessary in effective UCP work.

New Relationships

While existing relationships are often used to introduce new actors to each other, sometimes UCP actors may choose (or be required) to form new relationships without the assistance of an introduction. As one practitioner described, relying on the primacy of local actors and trusting this principle can lead to the formation of effective relationships.

> "I find that I just talk to everyone. Even if they're not directly affected by the violence, but everybody everybody's affected by the repercussions of the violence. And that, I find, tends to be a good entry point… And already right from the beginning is putting a network of relationships, without worrying too much that, "Am I entering at the right place?" I think I let people guide me to get there."[36]

The challenge of gaining trust can be more salient without an introduction from a trusted community member, especially if long-established perceptions of mistrust exist between groups.[37] Two concepts were identified as particularly useful in surmounting this challenge: taking time to develop relationships, and connecting empathetically with the community. Ten practitioners affirmed that listening to the grievances of affected community members and acknowledging their experiences and political views affirms their dignity and helps to develop essential bonds of trust.[38]

The same logic extends to state actors. One practitioner described how something as small as asking how a soldier's day went can go a long way in creating the type of interpersonal trust necessary to UCP work.[39]

It is important to reiterate that the question of with whom to form relationships will be different on a case-by-case basis, determined both by the context on the ground and by the animating mission of the UCP organization. For example, while some UCP organizations identify as non-partisan and strive to work with all actors, including state and non-state actors, some UCP organizations are explicitly against this. These organizations may claim to stand with and for the most oppressed, often stating that they stand in solidarity with civilians and refuse to work those whom they identify as the perpetrators of

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[36] Interview with MN

[37] Schweitzer, C. (2018b).

[38] Interviews with CW, AZ, GS, KL, BY, EV, FT, VP, DX, SV

[39] Interview with BY

violence. These dynamics can create limitations to the efficacy of relationship-based peace. This concept will be explored further in the section of this report on Non-Partisanship.

While an organization's mission or capacity may be factors precluding relationship building with certain actors, it's also true that different individuals within a UCP organization may be better or worse suited to be the one responsible for forming and holding a particular relationship. For example, whereas a local staff member with some preexisting experience with a militia group may be better suited than an international staff member to engage in a relationship with that group, an international staff member may be better positioned to engage in a relationship with a state actor viewed with distrust by the local community.[40] It's important to note that while such considerations may sometimes be deemed necessary for immediate security reasons, in the long term, UCP seeks to foster an environment that bridges the gaps necessitating this practice. Instead, the goal is to create mixed teams of UCP practitioners that can operate in holistic networks of relationships regardless of those actors' privileges, regardless if those actors are local, foreign, male, female, or something else. This is part of creating a more sustainable system in which UCP can be carried out without specific kinds of individuals, especially internationals. As will continue to be discussed, the space for international UCP organizations is shrinking, so increased local and national capacity is needed. Therefore, it is vital for UCP organizations to think about sustainability in the way they foster and create relationships. These types of dynamics provide fertile ground for important future research.

Similarly, in addition to creating new entry points for UCP work, new relationships formed between members of the community are essential for bridging gulfs of understanding present in areas of conflict and creating the kind of community cohesion necessary for lasting peace. UCP actors use the network of diverse relationships they have developed to bridge gaps in connection within the community.[41]

Maintaining Relationships

While much attention in UCP analyses is paid to forming new relationships and the question of how to leverage existing ones, the process of nurturing and maintaining relationships is crucial to effective UCP work both in the short and long term. Precisely because UCP relies on relationships for the protective factor of mutual security, maintenance of these relationships is inescapably related to the maintenance of this security. Problems that arise within relationships need to be addressed promptly to prevent their deterioration and thus the deterioration of the security situation. Eleven practitioners spoke to the importance of maintaining relationships with a long-term perspective in mind.[42]

The nurturing of relationships should take place in both the short and long terms. While some activities of UCP, such as accompaniment by foreigners, can be inherently unsustainable, relationships associated with short-term activities can be integrated into long term ones, such as advocacy and capacity enhancement of local and national groups.[43] Sustainability can be one of UCP's greatest strengths, but this sustainability depends on fostering and nurturing long-term relationships.

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[40] Interview with PO

[41] Sanford, V. (2003). Eyewitness: Peacebuilding in a war zone: The case of Colombian peace communities. International Peacekeeping, 10(2), 107-118.

[42] Interviews with AZ, BY, CW, DF, DX, EV, FT, GS, IO, JR, MN

[43] Schweitzer, C. (2019).

These practices of relationship building and the primacy of local actors are vital to all other UCP practices and should be incorporated into all UCP work. Though these practices alone cannot make up UCP, UCP cannot be done without them.

Accompaniment

Accompaniment is a specific UCP practice in which UCP actors utilize their physical, bodily presence to deter violent and/or armed actors from inflicting violence on a local actor or community. Accompaniment is probably the most well-known term related to unarmed civilian protection both within UCP circles and to the general public. In fact, some UCP organizations prefer the term "accompaniment" to "unarmed civilian protection" to describe their work, and do not make a distinction between accompaniment and UCP (Schweitzer, 2020a). However, given the broad activities that UCP organizations can conduct, the authors found benefits of distinguishing accompaniment as a distinct practice within UCP.

This type of protection activity, depending on the UCP organization, is sometimes referred to as either "accompaniment" or "presence". Among some organizations and contemporary literature, these two terms are differentiated by the manner in which they are carried out. Accompaniment is distinguished as deterring violence between locations as the accompanied moves from place to place, while presence is deterring violence in a specific location, such as a local community or IDP camp. When reviewing the implementation of accompaniment or presence, how the work is conducted is similar. For the purpose of this report, distinguishing between the two practices did not bring additional value. The term accompaniment will be used for this report, but these lessons can be applied to situations where protective presence is used in one location or moving between locations.

In addition to its function as an immediate protection mechanism, some UCP practitioners and academics found accompaniment is also an effective tool for providing moral and/or psychological support beyond physical protection. For example, a UCP actor may accompany an individual to a court hearing where there is no threat of physical violence, but threat of psychological violence because of having to face their perpetrator. This practice recognizes the harm trauma can do and some UCP organizations offer their services to provide this different kind of support. However, in the Good Practices Workshop in Bogota, Colombia hosted by Nonviolent Peaceforce, UCP practitioners recognized this kind of accompaniment requires special training and not all UCP organizations have the capacity to do this.[44] The authors highlight this point to raise awareness to the additional benefits of accompaniment and encourage future research to expand on this benefit. For the purposes of this report, the authors felt there was not enough material collected to state anything further on this point.

Planning

Accompaniment is an approach that some UCP organizations use to provide protection to local actors and give them the space they need to do their work. How accompaniment manifests in the field is contingent upon its environment, but some common examples are: accompanying human rights defenders in their daily activities; accompanying protestors at a demonstration; accompanying a group

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[44] Schweitzer, C. (2020a).

of civilians to and from areas to collect resources; accompanying an individual being specifically targeted by violent actors in their home, work, or community.

To reduce the risk of potential violence during accompaniment a great deal of time must be dedicated to planning. Planning is the multi-faceted process of analyzing the space the accompaniment is expected to play out in to ensure that the accompaniment makes sense based on the specific protection needs of the local actor and the capabilities of the UCP organization.

Accompaniment should start with putting the local actor or community at the heart of the planning activities. As previously discussed, the primacy of the local actors is a constant practice in UCP, and this is true of accompaniment work as well. When planning an accompaniment, the UCP actor should rely on the accompanied to help build the plan for the accompaniment. The UCP actor can ask: what threats have you faced before when traveling to this area? What times of day do you face more threats or less? Has anything you have done in the past decreased these threats? These are examples of how the UCP actor can utilize the local actor's experiential knowledge to improve the UCP work.[45]

Another essential component of planning for accompaniment is understanding the physical environment in which the accompaniment will take place. This means being aware of one's physical surroundings and developing an appreciation for what these surroundings represent, both materially and symbolically.[46] It is important for organizations to do this because it helps them familiarize themselves with the terrain in which the accompaniment will take place. This familiarity will enable the accompanying organization to safely develop an analysis of their prospective accompaniment: knowing where checkpoints are; what areas signify the presence of an armed group; having a general spatial awareness needed for adaptable accompaniment measures.[47]

Just as it is important to develop a logistics plan prior to each accompaniment, so is having a strong network between the UCP organization and other actors within and outside the community.[48] These actors should be notified of the accompaniment in advance, which enables a UCP organization to draw on those other actors' influences to decrease risk during an accompaniment.[49] The end goal of notifying others is to ensure no surprises during the accompaniment.

These networks can enhance the organization's protective reach during an accompaniment by assisting the accompanying organization in the act of an accompaniment, filling in for an organization when they cannot accompany, or providing an external influence to draw international support for the accompaniment.[50] As two interviewees relatedly noted, this is your "emergency contact" list, so that you have someone on-call for backup or support.[51]

These relationships can also provide a safety net if something goes wrong throughout the course of an accompaniment by providing "safe houses" or locations if there is an unexpected event during the

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[45] Interviews with KL, MN, EV, HR, CW, FT, PO; Schweitzer, C. (2019). 43.

[46] Eguren, L. E. (2015). The notion of space in international accompaniment. Peace Review, 27(1), 18-24.

[47] Interviews with AZ, IO, EV; Schweitzer, C. (2019). 43.

[48] Schweitzer, C. (2019).

[49] Furnari, E. (2015). Relationships are critical for Peacekeeping. Peace Review, 27(1), 25-30.

[50] Interview with CW and HR; Schweitzer (2018a); Liam Mahony, (1997). Unarmed bodyguards. Peace Review, 9(2), 207-213.

[51] Interviews with AZ and CW; Schweitzer (2019)

accompaniment, such as an attack.[52] A network with military officials can potentially be utilized as well if something were to go awry during an accompaniment that takes place in an area under the military's control.[53] The actors in an organization's network may include but are not limited to: government/military officials, other civil society organizations, non-state military groups, and international NGOs. These relationships and how a UCP actor might use them was discussed previously in the relationship building section.

UCP organizations should also thoughtfully consider who they select for each accompaniment. All practitioners interviewed made clear that accompaniment, like most UCP work, is a team activity. When selecting staff or volunteers, the UCP organization should think about which team members offer the best deterrence factor to violence or are potentially the best messengers to potential perpetrators of violence.[54] These individuals could be vital in avoiding violence during an accompaniment. For example, certain accompaniers, depending on their race, age and/or gender, may have more leverage to deter or mitigate violence in particular contexts than other accompaniers. One interviewee noted that at a Black Lives Matter demonstration, when positioning accompaniers near the police, white accompaniers may be better able to deter violent responses from the police towards demonstrators.[55]

In part, this means utilizing a diverse team. Accompaniment takes place in a variety of settings, with many different actors. For a team to effectively respond to these diverse environments, they should have an equally diverse team. This will enable the accompanying organization to adapt and utilize their various influences in different environments.

For some UCP organizations, typically those individuals that work with all sides of a conflict, especially the government, it was considered a good step to notify government and military officials, and non-state actors of their accompaniment prior to its initiation. Providing an advance notice of accompaniment to authorities in the area of the planned accompaniment will ensure authorities are aware of the accompaniment.[56] This step encourages the authorities to maintain accountability, keeping them from turning a blind eye to any potential violence inflicted on the accompaniment party.[57] If authorities are informed that an accompaniment will be carried out in an area under their influence, the onus of the accompaniment's protection in part lies with the government. For example, if an accompaniment party encounters an armed group in an area under the control of an authority figure who was warned of the accompaniment and violence ensues, the state can be held accountable. Assuming the state wants to maintain a positive image in the public's eye, they will make it their responsibility that the accompaniment party is not hurt. An interviewee relatedly noted that authority figures who are warned of accompaniment may serve as a conduit for this information to "targets" who normally inflict violence on those the organization is accompanying (communication via proxy).[58] For example, in many instances, a UCP organization has limited influence on paramilitary groups and thus has limited capability to deter paramilitary-inflicted violence on those the organization accompanies.

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[52] Interviews with AZ, IO, HR
[53] Interview with IO
[54] Interviews with HR, CW, IL
[55] Interview with CW
[56] Interview with JR
[57] Interviews with IO and HR; Schweitzer (2020a)
[58] Interview with IO

However, by making the military responsible for the safety of the accompaniment, the military may pass along an order to the paramilitaries not to attack the accompaniment party.

Determining the Threat and Knowing when to Decline a Request

An exceedingly difficult aspect of accompaniment is deciding when to say "no" to an accompaniment request. This might be required because of a requestor's personal association with specific groups, because of a UCP organization's ability to deter violence, or because a UCP organization has limited resources and capacity. These difficulties are addressed below.

Some environments are so interwoven with various political and armed groups that it can be difficult to differentiate between civilians and armed/political actors. An interviewee mentioned that in the Latin American context, it is sometimes difficult to tell if a human rights defender, the potential subject of accompaniment, is involved in a political party, the cartel, or the paramilitary.[59] Accompanying any of these aforementioned individuals may develop an unwanted association between the UCP organization and that of the accompanied. Another example shared was from a practitioner working in Albania, who declined an accompaniment request because of the accompanied's ties to organized crime. Accepting these accompaniment requests risks the UCP organization's reputation, relationships with other community members, and perceived impartiality.[60] It was recommended that in these situations, the UCP organization declines the accompaniment request.

Another difficult aspect that UCP organizations must consider when accepting or declining an accompaniment request relates to a UCP organization's ability to deter violence. Much of a UCP organization's ability to protect civilians from threats of violence during an accompaniment is through deterrence, where the UCP actors' presence discourages armed actors from attacking civilians. If this deterrence is unlikely, the accompaniment is impotent. For example, certain armed actors make it exceedingly difficult for the accompanying organization to protect civilians, as these actors do not feel deterred by the presence of a UCP organization. This is very often experienced with guerillas, extremist groups, and organized crime.[61] In fact, some armed actors may seek to harm accompanying organizations to boost their own profile and notoriety. (This is discussed further in the section on How UCP has Changed.) When this is the case, the accompaniment should be denied, as its ability to protect civilians will be severely limited.

Is a threat required to say "yes" to an accompaniment?

Throughout the course of the literature review, it was repeatedly noted that UCP organizations should identify if a genuine threat is posed to the potential accompanied. However, seldom was it mentioned throughout the course of the interviews that the "need for a real threat" was required or that local actors were required to prove the threat of physical violence existed. Furthermore, the notion that the accompanying organization must first detect if there is a real threat undermines and contradicts the practice of the primacy of local actors. Instead, several practitioners disregarded the notion that the UCP organization should question the reality of the threat and instead trust in local credibility, which is based

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[59] Interview with JR
[60] Interview with GS
[61] Interviews with IO, DF, AZ

on their lived experience, as to question a local actor's claim is colonialist and demeaning.[62] However, as previously discussed, UCP organizations do need to be aware of who they are accompanying to ensure they are not jeopardizing their own reputation by providing an accompaniment to groups, such as gangs, guerillas or other armed individuals. This was highlighted as a specific challenge when accompanying migrants where it is common for perpetrators of the violence to call themselves victims.[63]

Sometimes accompaniment is simply meant to provide moral support which increases the civil space in which the accompanied can do their work and have their voice heard.[64] Therefore, this report does not support the notion that a physical threat must be present for a UCP organization to accept an accompaniment request. Instead, the UCP organization needs to review their own capacity at the time of the request and if the accompaniment is for moral support and meant to reduce the threat of violence, they must consider if their presence can adequately deter violence against the accompanied. These are more important aspects of deciding to accept or decline a request for a UCP presence rather than verifying that the threat of the requestor is real.

Sustainability of Accompaniment

The practice of international accompaniment is by design short-term, as it seeks to provide immediate protection for those in a conflict without enhancing the capacity of those very same individuals to protect themselves independent of the UCP organization.[65] In other words, the risk is that a situation develops in which local actors will always be reliant upon foreign influence to protect them from violent conflict.[66] When conflict becomes long-term and entrenched, this does not enable local protection or self protection mechanisms, which the authors argue limits the effectiveness of UCP in the long term as situations change. With this appreciation, UCP organizations can strive for local-owned protection; using local actors' capacity to carry out UCP by themselves should be a focus of the accompanying organization. This ultimately means shifting the practice of UCP from mostly foreign intervention to local intervention when possible. One can see this shift occurring in recent years from the traditional accompaniment models by international organizations in the further development of the good practice called community capacity enhancement.

Community Capacity Enhancement

Community capacity enhancement in UCP is about identifying a community's existing protection capabilities and, as appropriate, enhancing those capabilities to improve a community's capacity to self protect. Ultimately, a community's capacity for self-protection has been effectively enhanced when a community can implement local security measures that reduce the threat of violence without the physical presence of an international, or non-local, UCP organization.

While capacity development is a more common term in humanitarian work, this report distinguishes between capacity development and capacity enhancement. This report does so because the use of the

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[62] Interviews with EV, CW, BY

[63] Schweitzer (2020a)

[64] Interview with KL; Mahoney (1997); Schirch, L. (2006). "Civilian Peacekeeping: Preventing violence and making space for democracy."

[65] Schweitzer (2018b) 39.

[66] Schirch (2006).

term "enhancement" takes special care to identify existing capacities and incorporates these capabilities into the UCP work. Eleven practitioners highlighted the ways their organization identifies existing capacities and enhances those capacities within local communities.[67] An additional 13 practitioners raised examples of development opportunities that focused specifically on broader trainings about non-violent conflict resolution and human rights awareness. These examples were more detached from existing practices and local contribution.[68] Community capacity enhancement is not a short-term practice because of the need to incorporate existing local knowledge and cultural awareness; it requires time and resources to implement and relies on the other good practices to do well. However, the authors argue when this practice is implemented successfully it creates a more sustainable system for UCP and non-violent conflict resolution.[69]

Identifying Capacities

Capacity enhancement starts with identifying the existing protection capacities within a community and acknowledging that societies have been protecting themselves non-violently for generations. Tapping into these approaches creates a strong foundation for further non-violent self protection. Seven practitioners gave examples of identifying existing mechanisms for protection, including formalizing existing EWER systems by the community, developing women's involvement in decision making related to their security, and even understanding local concepts of protection and whose responsibility it is to protect.[70] To identify these existing capabilities, UCP actors practice the primacy of local actors and relationship building. Putting into practice the primacy of local actors means relying on local knowledge, practices, and experiences respecting existing local structures and practices and relying on local knowledge to understand these capabilities.

> "You need to try to find out what are the current mechanisms of people dealing with protection issues. Who do they communicate with when there is a protection issue? It's quite often not the official route ... From the community's aspect, you need to understand the realities of how the protection mechanisms work and how the structures are there. Then you can analyze which is actually working and which is not, but you should not go and change things, because this is the natural order of things and for sustainability reasons it's better that you start capacitating the patriarchal village chiefs on something, than trying to replace it with your own committees or something which will not last and will not be accepted or these are things that when you try to change cultures as such. It's not our job. ... And the community is to be understood that there's many communities in the community. So, you need to understand how children do and not just children, but to the boys and girls."[71]

This practitioner's experience highlights the difficult balance for UCP actors to identify existing capacities and utilizing these to create a sustainable protection plan based in the existing culture, but also the desire for UCP actors to influence improved rights, such as improved rights for women in this example. However, another practitioner identified this as just the starting point. Continuing to develop

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[67] Interviews with AZ, CW, DF, DX, EV, GS, IL, MN, PO, SV, YE

[68] Interviews with AZ, CW, DF, EV, GS, HR, IL, MN, RY, SV, TI, VP, YE

[69] Julian, R., & Gasser, R. (2019). 6.

[70] Interviews with AZ, CW, EV, IL, MN, PO, SV.

[71] Interview with EV

relationships with the community often opens other avenues to discuss human rights to address these other issues.

Putting into practice relationship building is important when developing trust among the community so they are willing to share their knowledge but is also about using existing relationships to identify potential local leaders of UCP. If community capacity enhancement of UCP practices is to be successful it needs to be supported by local actors. This is why finding potential leaders within the community is so vital.[72] Five practitioners described finding potential leaders within the community to partner with, specifically individuals that may not currently be in a formal leadership role. These individuals were identified specifically for the UCP organization to partner with to further the work.[73]

> "In some communities it is easy. The women are already super present, or the young people, right? In other communities, not so much. So, we try to work it in gently. In the workshops, sometimes there are different practices, such as how to encourage the participation of a group through another group that is very accustomed to speaking out. That happened to us in practice once, in the field, during a workshop… women there, we realized, they do not speak in front of men, so we separated by gender. For men there, they took notes and everything and it was great, super easy workshop, but the women… none knew how to write, right? So, there you get other tools from your box of methodology and ideas, how, how to work with them."[74]

Enhancing Capacities

Once existing capacities are identified, as well as potential gaps, the UCP team can work with the community to identify what of these capabilities could be enhanced or gaps filled. For example, identification of existing accompaniment practices might include a local actor knowing that if they go with their friend to the market, their friend is not harassed at the market. Or if a group of women go to collect firewood outside the community instead of going individually, the women know it is safer to coordinate a time to go together. UCP actors should build on this existing knowledge. Just as accompaniment can be taught to a new volunteer or staff member, this education and training can be done in communities where a UCP organization is working but adjusted to the local context with the help of the community.

Relying on local knowledge to develop local UCP groups and practices is vital to sustainability and success. Several practitioners interviewed from Nonviolent Peaceforce described the Women's Peace Teams in South Sudan to describe community capacity enhancement. One practitioner described the Women's Protection Teams as followed,

> "is to be basically a space to discuss their own issues, trainings and discussions and then they start helping out with different things, like the domestic violence, like early marriage and there are so many different issues, and they start taking the lead on that, and I would say the end goal

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[72] Furnari, E., Julian, R., & Schweitzer, C. (2016). Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping: Effectively Protecting Civilians Without Threat of Violence. 14.

[73] Interviews with AZ, CW, EV, FT, VP

[74] Interview with DF

is that [Nonviolent Peaceforce] can leave and the community themselves, they're doing all the work that we were doing before. This is the sustainability of it."[75]

Another practitioner gave the following example, "we also provide capacities for these traditional mechanisms in terms of the technical skills in identifying triggers of conflict. Recognizing these triggers of conflict and when they're recognized, what immediate response can they can do at their own level to prevent the conflict from escalating... We input the technical skills together with the practical way or the traditional way that they are already doing in the town."[76] This is the kind of partnership with the community that enables capacity enhancement and local ownership of UCP.

It is important to note that many UCP organizations do not spend robust time and resources focused on community capacity enhancement. Most, but not all, (17 of 22) of our practitioners described engaging in community capacity enhancement.[77] In some ways, capacity enhancement comes naturally with the implementation of other UCP practices, but dedicating resources and a UCP organization's capacity to capacity enhancement is not as robust in practice. For some organizations, this is not an organizational strength or an available capacity for the organization to take on, while other UCP organizations see community trainings as an interference in local life and do not feel this is an appropriate application in their work. Nevertheless, there are clear benefits to increasing local capacities, primarily in creating sustainable UCP solutions that do not rely on foreign or outside intervention.[78] Therefore, the authors recommend that UCP organizations consider how to incorporate the practice of community capacity enhancement more deeply into their work.

Non-Partisanship

All UCP work takes place within the context of relationships with a range of actors, some of whom are in conflict with each other. How a UCP organization chooses to create new relationships or restrict relationships with other actors is influenced by the organization's observance of non-partisanship. For UCP organizations that adhere to a non-partisan approach to their work, there is not one universal definition or way practitioners describe the practice. However, most UCP practitioners agree that non-partisanship means UCP actors do not take sides in the conflict yet, non-partisanship also means actively standing in between conflicting parties to create space for dialogue and peace. As one practitioner explained, "I see non-partisanship as the very active and not passive role of trying to be equally close to two parties to a conflict. In order to provide a possible third solution or third pair of eyes or a mediation point."[79]

Unlike the other good practices discussed in this report, non-partisanship is not a universally agreed principle or practice in UCP work. It can be difficult to explain and difficult to put into action in the many different contexts that UCP takes place. Of the 22 practitioners interviewed, only 9 practitioners used the term non-partisanship to describe their work.[80] Three practitioners preferred to use non-

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[75] Interview with AZ

[76] Interview with DX

[77] Interviews with CW, GS, MN, AZ, IO, EV, HR, JR, PO, DF, TI, YE, VP, RY, IL, DX, SV

[78] Schweitzer, C. (2018b).

[79] Interview with BY

[80] Interviews with AZ, BY, CW, DX, EV, JR, MN, PO

interference or not interfering to describe their work.[81] Nine practitioners used the phrase not taking sides.[82] Seven practitioners used the term neutral, sometimes on it's own and sometimes to describe non-partisanship.[83] Some practitioners preferred to only use one of these terms because they believed the others were not as accurate, while some practitioners used two, three or all the terms.

For a few practitioners there was a strong distinction made between non-partisanship and neutrality. These practitioners made a strong connection between UCP work and general human rights work. For example, some practitioners made the distinction between non-partisan and neutral when describing the practice and referenced their focus on protecting those most oppressed by violence. As described in the section on the primacy of local actors, part of the UCP work is about those most oppressed by violence. This means UCP organizations will not be neutral to the abuses people are facing, but they will be non-partisan in how they choose to non-violently end those abuses. One practitioner who used the term neutral to describe UCP work went on to explain what neutral was not. "I'm not neutral to human rights abuses. I'm not neutral to injustice," but neutral to the parties of the conflict.[84] Furnari, Julian, and Schweitzer describe, "While many UCP organisations state they are nonpartisan in relationship to local and national political parties and debates, they are clear they are partisan for human rights and civilian safety."[85]

While one definition of non-partisanship was difficult to find across the practitioner interviews, the goal of non-partisanship across the different organizations was clearer. Non-partisanship can offer increased security opportunities and non-partisanship opens more relationship opportunities beyond local actors, as described in the primacy of local actors section.[86]

Therefore, UCP practitioners that adhere to the good practice of non-partisanship utilize terms like not picking a political party, not engaging in local politics at all, not intervening in local activities or the activities of the local actors they work with. For example, while a UCP team may accompany a local actor to a meeting with the government, the UCP team does not participate in the meeting. If the UCP team is requested to participate, it is only in a moderator capacity.

> "UCP practitioners for example, we shouldn't be activists. We work with activists and protect activists and all that but in order for us to do our work we need to be non-partisan. That's the reality. How many times have I had to sit with genocidal generals and have coffee with the guy and have good relations and all of that? This is the work so I think it's problematic. And I think one of the internal tensions of UCP is that because it's very difficult to detach yourself from your beliefs, of course I'm an activist in the things that I do, but when I put on my uniform and represent the organization, I need to be careful with that because it can jeopardize my work."[87]

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[81] Interviews with BY, GS, IO

[82] Interviews with AZ, BY, CW, DX, FT, IO, JR, PO, YE

[83] Interviews with BY, CW, DX, EV, GS, IL, RY

[84] Interview with BY

[85] Furnari, Julian, and Schweitzer (2016).

[86] Local actors as defined in the Primacy of Local Actors section which includes local NGOs/CSOs, local communities, human rights defenders, and those most oppressed by violence.

[87] Interview with AZ

While non-partisanship is not engaging in local politics or activities, this is also meant to create space for dialogue between conflicting parties, specifically between conflicting communities or families to have a non-violent space to work out their conflict. Unfortunately, it is more difficult for UCP organizations to create this same space between organized armed groups and civilians but can work well for community level violence. One practitioner described this communication across different groups, but also affirmed how this improves protection. "Your position is to be in the middle of things to understand and be able to communicate with all different sides because it is by far the most effective protection there is."[88]

To not take sides while also actively creating space for dialogue, practitioners need to ensure they are talking with all people involved in the conflict from all sides of the conflict. It is about inclusivity, but also about creating a space for local people and structures to find non-violent ways to solve their own problems. This was another important aspect of non-partisanship. In creating space for dialogue and peace it is the role of the UCP organization to support the local people in finding solutions, but not to decide what those solutions should be on the behalf of the local population. This is putting into practice the primacy of local actors when thinking about non-partisanship.

While there are commonalities in the way different UCP organizations define non-partisanship, each has a slightly different definition. For some there is a clear link to the political connotation of the work, but as described above the term means more than just non-partisan to a location's politics. This difficulty UCP organizations and actors have in describing non-partisanship and finding consistent meaning within the UCP field is exacerbated when trying to explain the concept to non-UCP actors. It is easy to see how confusing this term could be for local partners, whether state actors, military actors, or local communities and local actors. One of the purposes of non-partisanship is to gain broader access to all parties of a conflict to create dialogue, but if those parties do not understand the concept of non-partisanship, this hinders the effectiveness of non-partisanship. One practitioner with extensive experience working in UCP found the term non-partisan less than useful for parties outside of the UCP organization.[89]

For armed actors, it is difficult to understand why UCP primarily focuses on civilians and provides protection for civilians and communities. For local communities experiencing the violence, it is difficult to understand why a UCP actor might converse with an armed actor, who might also have been the person who committed violence against them. This has a direct impact and strain on relationship building with all actors involved in a conflict. Many practitioners interviewed described this strain and discussed the additional time and energy that it takes to maintain good relationships when working with another side of the conflict. For example, one practitioner described that every time he talks with a military actor, he must immediately after this conversation go back to and talk to the community, letting them know what he was doing so he doesn't lose trust with the community. This is part of maintaining relationships, but the practice of non-partisanship makes this more difficult. UCP as a field of study may consider an alternate term or phrase to reduce confusion and drive more clearly at the purpose of this practice.

As mentioned, non-partisanship is not a universally agreed-upon good practice across all UCP organizations. Some UCP organizations believe that non-partisanship contradicts their mission to stand

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[88] Interview with EV
[89] Interview with IO

in solidarity with the people experiencing human rights violations. Many of these organizations felt that non-partisanship went against the purpose of UCP work, which is to support civilians directly affected by violence. Six practitioners felt strongly about identifying with the term solidarity and did not find benefit in a non-partisan approach for their UCP work.[90] These practitioners included experience from local, national, and international organizations. There are benefits and challenges of doing so.

For organizations that strive to stand in solidarity with oppressed communities, relationship building with these communities is much easier. There are less conflicts with the practice of primacy of local actors. However, especially for international organizations, this more one-sided approach to the work puts their permission from the state to access the area at greater risk. Of the international organizations that do not practice non-partisanship, these organizations tend to do more work speaking out against armed actors, which many times is the state. There is a correlation with this type of advocacy work and challenges these UCP actors face in terms of access, such as denied visas and other conflicts with the state. But nevertheless, these organizations are not obliged to compromise their personal opinions of human rights abuses to build relationships with the state in the way non-partisanship organizations are required.

Another challenge faced by UCP organizations that do not practice non-partisanship is overall security. Coy argues that intervening in local affairs in this way puts the UCP organization and its staff or volunteers at greater risk.[91] One of the goals of practicing non-partisanship is to incorporate the state and non-state armed actors into the work not just to create dialogue, but also to create greater security. As discussed in the accompaniment section, building relationships with the state and non-state armed actors may establish additional layers of security through accountability by the state to reduce potential violence during an accompaniment. UCP organizations that refute the practice of non-partisanship do not have these relationships to rely on as strongly as other organizations do. It can be a challenge to be as well informed or aware of potential attacks or who to turn to if an attack does occur.

Non-partisanship does not always serve a UCP organization's mission or values. It is at the organization's discretion to decide if this practice can further an organization's goals, while also weighing the benefits and challenges of doing so.

Advocacy

Advocacy in the context of UCP can most simply be defined as activities meant to shape the contexts of violence which civilians experience day to day, and to increase the viability of UCP by shaping the environment in which UCP takes place or is supported. Seventeen interviewees reported engaging in some type of advocacy activity.[92]

Educating and lobbying are the primary categories of advocacy explored in this report. Educating includes activities which seek to increase the capabilities of actors to perform UCP work, thus promoting its use and dissemination as a practice; to inform all actors of their rights and responsibilities; and to influence actors' behavior, including establishing norms regarding civilian protection and human rights.

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[90] Interviews with AO, EV, FT, IO, KL, TI

[91] Coy, P. G. (2012). Nonpartisanship, interventionism and legality in accompaniment: comparative analyses of Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and the International Solidarity Movement. The International Journal of Human Rights, 16(7), 963-981.

[92] Interviews with CW GS MN EV HR AZ KL BY FT JR DF TI YE IL DX AO SV

Lobbying is a subset of educating which seeks to use persuasive behavior to influence governments and international institutions, such as the UN, to change laws or policies. It has also been found that mobilizing people is another means of advocacy performed by some UCP organizations. Mobilizing seeks to activate networks of actors to work towards these goals. This concept, while important, was not discussed in depth within our qualitative research and thus will not be addressed in this report.

Approaches to Advocacy

The mission and methodologies of an organization in relation to the good practice of nonpartisanship is a strong factor in determining the way an organization approaches advocacy. As previously discussed, many practitioners interviewed describe themselves, at the very least, as "advocating for human rights" or "advocating for peace".[93] Furnari's analysis of UCP practitioners seems to affirm this sentiment: "While many UCP organisations state they are nonpartisan in relationship to local and national political parties and debates, they are clear they are partisan for human rights and civilian safety."[94] Where organizations differed was in whether they publicly implicate a particular side as responsible for the conflict. Organizations that strictly adhere to non-partisanship tend to avoid statements about culpability, because doing so would violate this practice. These organizations adhere to non-partisanship to increase their entry points and to allow access and relationships with all actors. Though there are benefits of non-partisanship, some practitioners communicated a tension between the benefits of non-partisanship and the desire to act as an advocate. These UCP actors may have strong personal views regarding a conflict yet feel as if they cannot speak out about the issues they care about. This is a tension that needs to be better understood, because it can take a clear mental toll on UCP actors.

For organizations that do not attempt to build relationships with all actors, including armed actors and/or state actors, the organization's advocacy work is focused on the violence and causes of violence experienced by those that the UCP organizations work with. This can range from advocacy within the same location of UCP work or, for international organizations, in their home countries. For these organizations, they do not have the same restrictions as groups that want to build relationships with all actors and can speak out against the perpetrators of violence, such as the state. However, in speaking out against the state, these organizations may be risking their access to the country. This is one of the biggest complexities of advocacy. Organizations must balance continuing their security work against the desire to address what they perceive as the root causes of the violence.[95]

Another difference in approaches to advocacy can be found within work done to advocate on the behalf of UCP itself as a viable option for civilian protection. This is not a common or well-developed approach to advocacy with most of the practitioners for this report. However, it is a practice that can help to advance the field of UCP. Unarmed civilian protection is a difficult concept to understand for many societies. In fact, it is often not even understood as a viable security option. This makes funding and policy changes to promote unarmed protection extremely difficult. If UCP is to grow as a practice to meet the very demanding need for alternative protection, its profile needs to significantly expand. The challenge with this is having the resources and funding to do so. Spending energy and time on this work may reduce the time and energy available in a local situation that needs resources. With this kind of

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[93] Interviews with CW, AZ, IO, KL, MN, BY, EV, TR, PO, DX, AO
[94] Furnari, E., Julian, R., & Schweitzer, C. (2016).
[95] Schirch, L. (2006).

advocacy on the behalf of UCP, as with all advocacy work by UCP organizations, the available resources and overall capacity of the UCP organization affects the scale of its advocacy activities.

Lastly, advocacy within the UCP field can take place at different scales, from the local level to the international level. While all UCP work is rooted in the primacy of local actors and thus inherently involves local and conflict-specific advocacy activities, some UCP organizations include in their mandate advocacy activities beyond the community and conflict in which they work, or at least are part of networks with reach beyond their immediate geographies. An additional way to understand this spectrum is that UCP work can take place both within conflicts and outside of conflicts. For example, a UCP organization may attempt to lobby a national government to support the promotion of UCP in general. Such advocacy is not conflict-specific and can thus be understood as advocacy outside of conflict.

Educating

Educating increases the capabilities of actors to perform UCP work, simultaneously promoting UCP as a legitimate practice (promotion), seeks to inform actors, including local, armed, state, and international, of their rights and responsibilities (norm establishment), and to influence actors, who are violating these rights, to change their behaviors to be in alignment with these norms.[96]

Educating as a way to increase the capabilities of actors to perform UCP work is done for two reasons. The first is to increase the ability of local actors to do UCP on their own. This can be done with training in a community interested in the possibilities of UCP but not actively working with an organization, or it can be done as part of an ongoing project in an established community by the UCP organization. This second example is about increasing a community's ability to self-protect. It cannot be separated from the advocacy work but is a good practice on its own, referred to as capacity enhancement.[97] However, the second reason for education to increase the capabilities of actors is because through education, a UCP organization is creating awareness and viability of UCP beyond the UCP organization's capacity to reach and perform the work themselves. Educating one community or even one person on how to do UCP will spread to other actors. This kind of education about UCP furthers the awareness of the practice by non-UCP actors which is vital to increasing the awareness of this practice. It is free advertising for UCP as a legitimate alternative to armed protection.

Educating also seeks to inform actors of their rights and responsibilities and change behavior that violates these rights, and this can take place on a local, national, or international level, both within conflict and outside of conflict. Educating on these norms is important for several reasons. For local actors, understanding international human rights law can empower them to speak out on their own behalf. For armed actors, educating is about highlighting their responsibilities regarding humanitarian law and protection of civilians. For the international community, education could refer to campaigns attempting to sway international public policy regarding the importance of a certain conflict. Some UCP organizations which rely on international volunteers include as part of their volunteerships the expectation that those volunteers will continue to work as advocates after returning to their home

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[96] In the context of human rights, norm establishment refers to seeking to ensure actors' acceptance of and compliance with the body of universally applicable hard- and soft-law that makes up the international human rights protection framework

[97] See the capacity enhancement section for further details.

countries. In this way, advocacy is also done outside the conflict and can increase the international pressure on a state or group violating these norms.

A challenge to the practice of education by UCP practitioners is that, depending on the content and context, education could veer into partisan advocacy. The posture a certain UCP organization takes in regards to education will likely be influenced by their particular stance on nonpartisanship. Additionally, the capacity of an organization to engage in education may be limited by resources or by the demands to provide accompaniment or other services.

Nevertheless, 16 practitioners reported incorporating education into their UCP work.[98]

Lobbying

Lobbying is a persuasive activity meant to influence governments to change laws or policies in order to create an environment more conducive to the goals of UCP. This can take place from local governments to national ones, and even reach international organizations like the UN or Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Specific lobbying targets depend on the mission and capacity of the organization in question, but examples given by practitioners ranged from lobbying the United States government to change its immigration policies to lobbying the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to consider a particular human rights case. Eleven practitioners reported engaging in lobbying, although, as discussed above, the scope and scale varied widely across organizations.[99] Challenges to lobbying include uncooperative governments as well as contexts in which weak governments have little leverage to affect the situation on the ground. Lobbying is especially prone to tension with the concepts of non-partisanship and the primacy of local actors, particularly in situations in which UCP organizations are present or operating with the consent of those governments. Again, the relative partisanship of an organization is likely to determine the form of any lobbying activity it performs.

Overarching Challenges to UCP

The Use of Privilege in UCP

A difficult aspect of UCP work is that UCP organizations and actors have to work within unjust power structures that have benefited from colonialism, racism, and sexism, and continue to do so. This is a difficult aspect of UCP because UCP work is inherently human rights work which aims to dismantle these systems. However, in prioritizing security and reducing threats of violence against civilians, sometimes UCP organizations can benefit from using these systems to their advantage. For example, historically, international UCP organizations purposefully used Global North actors to deter violence against local actors in Global South countries. UCP actors from the Global North (many times White UCP actors) could use the privilege of their citizenship to stop violent actors from harming civilians. This type of passport privilege is embedded in the history of colonialism.

Over the course of the last 30 years, international UCP organizations and local or national UCP organizations in the Global North that work in communities of color have reflected more and more on

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[98] Interviews with CW, AZ, GS, KL, MN, BY, EV, FT, JR, DF, TI, YE, IL, DX, AO, SV

[99] Interviews with CW, GS, KL, MN, FT, JR, TI, IL, DX, AO, SV

this aspect of UCP. In the North America workshop hosted by Nonviolent Peaceforce on Good Practices in UCP, one of the agreed good practices was to use whatever identity might protect civilians but coupled with deep anticolonialism work.[100] This reflection by UCP organizations and actors is also true of issues related to sexism, especially where women's rights and rights of LGBTQI+ people are not respected. The authors found over the course of the interviews that UCP actors can utilize privilege for the benefit of those they are trying to protect. The authors also found that UCP actors are using their own privilege to break down unjust systems that repress civilians by using their privilege to raise the voices of those repressed by the current system.

> "I was surprised by how rarely inequity and privilege were talked about explicitly amongst accompaniers, given that the premise of accompaniment is that some bodies are less likely to be attacked, which ultimately means that accompaniment uses systems that value some lives more than others to try and build a world where everyone's life is valued. Yet none of the basic explanations given by the different groups on their sites about what accompaniment is and how it works mention privilege. It would be useful for accompaniment organizations to more directly and regularly talk, internally as well as publicly and online, about how accompaniment uses privilege."[101]

The authors specifically asked several practitioners questions about how they perceive their role in their work given the different types of privilege they possessed. The authors found that UCP actors benefitted from reflecting on the type of privilege they had and when it was appropriate to use it. Several practitioners highlighted they do this by consulting with local actors. For example, looking to the local actors to understand if it would be helpful to have an international UCP actor attend a meeting with the government or a locally based UCP actor. Another example a practitioner from a national UCP organization described was typically preferring to use local actors for the work, but when it was more beneficial (such as providing additional security), his UCP organization would reach out to an international UCP team for additional support.[102]

The authors also found that UCP actors have many different kinds of privileges, beyond the traditional privileges stemming from unjust social structures. One practitioner explained, we all have privilege that can be used in different contexts; the key is to reflect on what that privilege is and how it can be used to support others. For example, this practitioner explained when looking for an entry point with a community in South Sudan, she as a Kenyan UCP actor had more privilege than her white counterpart, because the South Sudanese community believed the Kenyan woman had a better understanding of their culture and needs. This connection is important and is a privilege the Kenyan UCP actor can utilize.

This practitioner went on to explain that it was her responsibility then to reflect on this type of privilege as well. She explained she now had the responsibility to take this privilege and pass it on to her white teammate, so this teammate also has the opportunity to engage with the community and build relationships.[103] Using privilege in this way is an opportunity for UCP organizations and actors to turn colonialist systems meant to repress people to instead lift people up. A practitioner described privilege

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[100] Schweitzer (2020).

[101] Koopman, S. (2013). The racialization of accompaniment: can privilege be used transparently?. Fellowship, 77(7-12), 17.

[102] Interview with NK

[103] Interview with MN

as the umbrella we all have; it is our responsibility to learn how to take our umbrella and pass it to others so their voices can be heard.[104] The practitioners interviewed described this as important for relationships both within UCP teams as well as between UCP actors and local actors. Nevertheless, the authors found this a difficult aspect to discuss across the interviews and suggest future UCP research reflects on this component of the work.

How UCP Has Changed

International UCP organizations can further evolve their practice by reflecting on how UCP has been effective in all regions of the world using local and international staff from a range of countries, and not only by depending on Global North actors in the Global South. In general, the authors argue the field of UCP needs to expand its understanding of existing models of protection. People have found ways to non-violently protect themselves around the world without foreign intervention for centuries, though they may not call it unarmed civilian protection. This furthers a belief by Global North actors (states, NGOs, etc.) that UCP is only taking place by Global North UCP organizations, which is a false understanding and is a neo-colonial way of viewing other places, typically the Global South. Instead, UCP organizations and UCP research needs to further its understanding of traditional methods of protection so that UCP organizations can enhance these methods when needed, and as requested by local actors. This means enhancing the existing local capacities, not only in the Global South but around the world where conflict is taking place.

Additionally, more recently international, Global North UCP organizations are facing new challenges with the use of Global North actors in the Global South. These challenges include issues of extremism, rejection by states claiming UCP organizations to be neo-colonial, and a general push back on human rights as a western imposition.

In general, it is extremely difficult for UCP actors to respond to and accompany individuals in environments where armed groups specifically target civilians for the purpose of recognition (sometimes these groups are labeled extremists).[105] As UCP focuses on using unarmed civilians to lessen violence, when armed groups specifically target civilians and therefore UCP actors, UCP is less effective. According to the literature, this situation is more common in the Global South context, where targeting of Global North accompaniers takes place, because there is international recognition given to these armed groups when killing or harming a Global North actor. Examples found in the literature as well as the interviews included ISIS and other more regional groups. However, to combat this increased violence against foreigners, the literature and participants at the Nonviolent Peaceforce workshops, explain that this is the reason to increase local, national, and Global South UCP actors in the Global South context, instead of relying on or utilizing Global North actors.

Another problem Global North UCP organizations face are claims by the state that the organization is a neo-colonial imposition on the host government. Governments have used this reasoning to deny UCP organizations access to their country and to civilians experiencing violence. Again, when being a foreigner or from the Global North does not serve the goals of UCP, local or national staff may more

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[104] Interview with MN

[105] Schweitzer, 2018a; Schweitzer 2018b

easily be able to gain access to the situation. This was also found true for Global South accompaniers working in the Global South.

This is also true when different parties from the Global South make claims that human rights and any associated work for human rights is a western imposition. Parties can reinforce this view when the UCP actor promoting human rights is from the Global North and working in the Global South. To combat this, local, national, or Global South UCP actors are needed. One practitioner made it very clear that in the East and Horn of Africa, the UCP organization, which was local to that area, was able to do more, because it's UCP actors were from the areas in which they worked. Governments or other parties had a much harder time claiming that human rights were a western imposition when their own people were propagating them.

These examples focus primarily on the actions by Global North organizations and actors in the Global South. In addition to these examples, attention needs to be given to accompaniment and need for accompaniment or UCP developing in the Global North. Considering the recent publicized police brutality and rising violence within the United States, more attention needs to be given to Global North accompaniment and potential ways UCP practices can help to reduce violence. Unfortunately, this is a gap in this report, but filling this gap starts with understanding the needs for protection and support of local actors in these contexts.

These are all examples of why many UCP organizations need to think about how to expand their own efforts to support and enhance local actor efforts to implement unarmed civilian protection as a way to combat these challenges and to create more sustainability in the work. Therefore, efforts to increase a local community's self-protection capabilities is vital and previously discussed in the community capacity enhancement section of this report.

Concluding Thoughts

While the elements that comprise UCP have been practiced in some forms throughout human history, as a methodological field it is a relatively new practice. Despite its relative novelty, it continues to gain acceptance as a legitimate alternative to the armed security paradigms which have dominated peacekeeping and development in the past. Much work remains to be done to increase its profile and acceptance, and this work will not go uncontested by those who benefit from violence and conflict. Without a doubt, though, there is a tremendous amount of exciting work being done around the globe by growing networks of UCP practitioners and advocates. This report has sought to advance the promotion of this field by identifying good practices, as shared through the experiences of practitioners on the ground, and articulating strategies for putting these into practice. While our qualitative research has yielded many insights, it has also identified gaps in understanding which require further investigation.

Among the most important points made by practitioners was the idea that UCP organizations need to continue to strive to combat colonial thinking and structures. More specifically, it was communicated that colonialism, just like the violence UCP seeks to prevent, is not just an issue for Global North staff to confront in the Global South: violence and colonialist structures very much exist in the Global North. It is important to be cognizant of this point as the modern iteration of UCP evolves from a practice of Global North organizations operating in the Global South to being a more lateral, universal, locally based practice. Evolving societies' understandings of such power structures will play an important role in the future of UCP work.

Internationally, UCP work can still be effective in certain contexts, but will need to continue to evolve as the environment for international organizations to operate becomes increasingly difficult. If the trends of the last decade continue unabated, UCP will need to accelerate its shift away from reliance on international accompaniment. Research of how the changing international geopolitical environment affects this practice is needed.

The question of if and how to interact with armed actors in the context of UCP work loomed large across the many contexts practitioners were able to share with us. Questions of safety, capacity, and organizational mission interact in complex ways to determine which relationships a UCP organization should seek to establish in its efforts to create relationship-based security. UCP is often advanced as an alternative to armed security paradigms, yet, for the foreseeable future, will need to exist in an environment still dominated by such paradigms. As such, these questions will likely have an outsized importance in determining the proliferation and success of UCP as an accepted practice.

Across all good practices, organizational mission and methodology, as well resources and capabilities, affect how organizations choose how to implement each good practice and to what extent. How such factors work to determine implementation, and the ramifications for UCP as a practice, are areas of important future inquiry.

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