



# **Good Practices in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian to Civilian Protection and Protective Accompaniment**

Documentation of the Workshop in Bogotá (Colombia),  
13-15 January 2020

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## **Abstract**

This report summarizes the discussions, issues and findings of the Workshop entitled “Good Practices in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian-to-Civilian Protection” organized by Nonviolent Peaceforce in Bogotá, Colombia, on the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of January 2020. The workshop convened practitioners of protective accompaniment (Unarmed Civilian Protection), field partners, and academics working in/on five countries of Latin America, to reflect on their work.

Nonviolent Peaceforce Documentation of the Workshop in Bogotá, Colombia, 13-15 January 2020 Author: Christine Schweitzer Photos: Christine Schweitzer Hamburg, August 2020
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## Executive Summary

Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) is the practice of deploying specially trained unarmed civilians before, during, or after violent conflict in order to prevent or reduce violence, to provide direct physical protection to civilian populations under threat, and to strengthen or build resilient local peace infrastructures. In this document “UCP” and “protective accompaniment” will be used interchangeably since in Latin America the latter term is preferred.

The workshop in Bogotá took place in January 2020 – before the Covid-19 pandemics hit the continent – and had in total 40 participants (though some were present only part-time) mostly doing accompaniment in five countries in Latin America: Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. In addition, there were a few people practicing unarmed self protection. There were also some internationals from Ecuador, the U.S. and Europe who are working with NP or are researchers on UCP. The event was part of a series of workshops that follow a good practices process initiated by Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) which resulted in a research project of case studies which was concluded in 2016. The findings were published in the book “Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence” (2016), edited by Ellen Furnari.<sup>1</sup>

This was the fifth of six planned regional workshops.

### Methodology

The participants of the workshop were carefully chosen for their current or previous work doing civilian-to-civilian protection; receiving protection from such organizations; and/or their academic research and writing on the topic. Some of the participants were interviewed by the facilitators before the workshop took place to get their input on the most pressing topics needing to be addressed.

The workshop was carried out through a mix of in-depth group work and plenary discussions of group findings. They put specific focus on good practices, but also on potential challenges and dilemmas of UCP work.

### Accompaniment / UCP in Latin America

In the workshop, there were organizations that varied quite a lot in their practice. Perhaps three categories could be distinguished. The first and largest category included those international organizations that focus on providing physical accompaniment to local groups and communities. The second, smaller, category were local organizations – sometimes with some international volunteers – that pursue a much broader field of activities, not limited to protection. They were, for example, working with youth gangs and in prisons or doing different kinds of development and peacebuilding work. The third category were rural communities who focus on unarmed self-protection, represented in particular by the Colombian peace community of San José de Apartadó.

The following points of discussion were reflected in the workshop:

- Human rights and other civil society organizations threatened by armed political actors;
- Peace communities establishing weapons-free zones and distancing themselves from guerilla and government forces alike;
- Challenges of working with youth gangs and youth in prison;
- Dealing with the threat of organized crime and multinational companies entering the territories

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<sup>1</sup> Available from <https://tinyurl.com/purchaseUCPbook>

- of peasant or indigenous communities.
- Addressing the structural violence that creates or contributes to the local violence.

### Key Themes

The workshop participants formulated a number of lessons, good practices and challenges which can be read in the appendix (1). There were many good practices listed by the small groups. Some were identical to those already stated in earlier workshops – like the requirement of training for volunteers or the necessity of security protocols. Outstanding practices that were repeated in more than one of the working groups include:

- Combine the different forms of accompaniment -- physical, political, legal and psychosocial<sup>2</sup> -- and consider the four to be intrinsically interlinked.
- Cooperate with other (I)NGOs for political accompaniment (advocacy) both inside the country and internationally. The idea here was that sometimes sharing the tasks is beneficial – one organization concentrating on physical accompaniment and leaving part of the advocacy to others. Sharing in this way avoids putting the work on the ground at risk.
- Provide accompaniment only when requested.
- Non-interference in internal decision-making of local communities or accompanied organizations was a principle held by most.
- Have clear agreements (contracts) for physical accompaniment with those accompanied.
- Establish clear protocols for action between governments, embassies and accompanying organizations.
- Accompaniment requires communication to state institutions about the presence of the accompanying organization and what it intends to do (letters of notice to authorities, meeting with representatives of state agencies).
- Careful and ongoing analysis was emphasized, similarly to other workshops, as essential.
- Gender policies both for internal functioning of the UCP organization and for accompaniment played an important role in the discussion.
- In order to counter colonial and racist stereotypes, some international organizations have started to work with nationally and ethnically mixed teams.

Also some challenges that were repeated in more than one small group include:

- How to deal with threats that cannot be tracked back to the government (organized crime, multinationals, armed nonstate actors).
- Dependency may be created when there is long-term accompaniment: When organizations or communities are accompanied for a long period, they might get used to it and stop building resources of their own for self-protection. This is politically problematic and also risky, given the precarious financial basis of most accompanying organizations.
- Divided communities and handling of intra-communal conflicts are a challenge for the accompaniers who sometimes try to mediate and sometimes must stick strictly to the principle of non-interference.
- Accompaniers sometimes hold some different values than those accompanied. How to address such issues while respecting the autonomy of the local community and its values? This refers *inter alia* to gender norms, but also to the degree to which violence is an accepted behavior that can be

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<sup>2</sup> Sometimes people in the workshop spoke of only three forms of accompaniment, leaving out the “legal”.

chosen in certain situations.

- The issue of racism as a source for leverage – white people granted higher status and therefore wielding protective power.
- Holding the state accountable without increasing risks to those accompanied.
- Scarce financial means and competition for funds is one of the biggest challenges all organizations face.
- Finding enough good Spanish speaking international volunteers is a challenge for the international organizations.
- Rotation of volunteers and maintaining an institutional memory was listed as a challenge as well.

## Acronyms

Acronyms or explanation in English	Spanish (in some cases, organizations use their English name)
APP = Witness for Peace	APP = Acción Permanente por la Paz
ARN = Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization, Colombia, responsible for reintegration of FARC fighters	ARN = Agencia para la Reincorporación y la Normalización
CIDH= Interamerican Commission for Human Rights	CIDH = Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos
CPT = Christian Peacemaker Teams	ECAP = Equipos Cristianos de Acción por la Paz
CRS = Catholic Relief Services	CRS = Catholic Relief Services
CSO = Civil society organization	organización de la sociedad civil
ETCR = Areas where former FARC members are settling	ETCR = Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación y Reincorporación)
EU = European Union	EU = Unión Europea
FARC = Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia	FARC = Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FOR = Fellowship of Reconciliation	FOR = Fellowship of Reconciliation
FOR-PP = Fellowship of Reconciliation Peace Presence	FOR Peace Presence = Fellowship of Reconciliation Peace Presence
FrayBa = Center of Human Rights Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas AC	FrayBa = Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas AC
GAM = Mutual Support Group for Families of the Disappeared (Guatemala)	GAM = Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo
GBV = Gender-based violence	GBV = la violencia de género
HR = Human Rights	HR = derechos humanos
HRD = Human Rights Defender	HRD = = Defensor/a de derechos humanos
IAP = International Action for Peace	IAP = International Action for Peace
Ibid = see the full quotation above	Ibid = ver la cita completa arriba
INGO = International Non-governmental Organization	INGO = = Organización internacional no gubernamental
IOM = Organizaton for International Migration	OIM = Organización Internacional para las Migraciones
LGBTQI+ = Lesbian, Gay, Bi-, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex and others	LGBTQI + = Lesbianas, Gays, Bi-, Transexuales, Queer, Intersex y otras

NP = Nonviolent Peaceforce	NP = Fuerza de paz noviolenta
NV = Nonviolence	Noviolencia
OC = Organized Crime	Crimen organizado
OHCHR = Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights	ACNUDH = Oficina del Alto Comisionado para los Derechos Humanos
Operazione Colomba = Operation Dove	Operazione Colomba = Operation Dove
PPF = Presbyterian Peace Fellowship	IPC = Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia
PWS = Peace Watch Swiss	PWS = Peace Watch Swiss
SIPAZ = International Peace Service	SIPAZ = Servicio Internacional para la Paz
SweFor= Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation	SweFOR = Movimiento Sueco por la Reconciliación – SweFOR
UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	ACNUR = La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados
UNP= National Protection Unit	UNP = Unidad Nacional de Protección

## Contents

Abstract .....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
Methodology .....	3
Accompaniment / UCP in Latin America .....	3
Key Themes.....	4
Acronyms.....	6
Contents .....	8
1. Introduction.....	12
1. Introduction .....	13
Program of the Workshop .....	14
Latin America: Accompaniment Organizations .....	14
What Happened Since the Workshop .....	16
About the Documentation.....	17
2. Outlining the Framework of UCP in Latin America .....	18
2.1 Principles of UCP .....	19
The Tables.....	19
Nonviolence .....	19
Impartiality and Nonpartisanship .....	20
Primacy of Local Actors .....	20
Independence .....	21
Do No Harm .....	21
Solidarity.....	22
Other Basic Principles.....	23
Conclusions.....	23
2.2 Protective Accompaniment and the Different Forms of Violence in the Latin American Context	26
Questions to Discuss .....	26
Discussion .....	26
Good Practices .....	28
Challenges.....	28
Conclusions.....	28
2.3 Basic Strategies for Protection to Dissuade Violence and Strengthen Respect for the Security and Well-being of Civilians.....	30
Questions to Discuss .....	30
Discussion .....	30
Good Practices .....	32
Challenges.....	32
Conclusions.....	33
2.4 Protest, Justice and Governance in Latin America.....	34

Questions to Discuss .....	34
Discussion .....	34
Good Practices .....	35
Challenges.....	35
Conclusions.....	36
2.5 The Role of Gender and Sexual Identity in Accompaniment.....	37
Questions to Discuss .....	37
Discussion .....	37
Good Practices .....	39
Challenges.....	40
Conclusions.....	41
3. Tactics of Protection .....	42
3.1 Accompaniment of Human Rights Defenders in Latin America.....	43
Questions to Discuss .....	43
Discussion .....	43
Good Practices .....	44
Challenges.....	45
Conclusions.....	46
3.2 Accompaniment of Peace Communities and Other Self-Protected Communities .....	47
Discussion .....	47
Good Practices .....	48
Challenges.....	49
Conclusions.....	49
3.3 Accompaniment of Indigenous Communities and Other Communities with Specific Cultural Identities.....	50
Questions to Discuss .....	50
Discussion .....	50
Good Practices .....	51
Challenges.....	51
Conclusions.....	52
3.4 Accompaniment in Cases of Gang Violence and Organized Crime .....	53
Questions to Discuss .....	53
Discussion .....	53
Good Practices .....	55
Challenges.....	55
Conclusions.....	55
3.5 Accompaniment with Displaced People and Migrants .....	57
Questions to Discuss .....	57
Discussion .....	57
Good Practices .....	59

Challenges.....	59
Conclusions.....	60
3.6 Accompaniment in the Context of Multinational Companies, Exploitation of Resources and the Defense of Rural Areas.....	61
Questions to Discuss .....	61
Discussion .....	61
Good Practices .....	62
Challenges.....	63
Conclusions.....	63
4. Managing UCP Projects.....	65
4.1 Volunteers and Staff.....	66
Questions to Discuss .....	66
Discussion .....	66
Good Practices .....	69
Challenges.....	70
Conclusions.....	70
4.2 Cooperation Between Different Accompaniment Groups .....	71
Questions to Discuss .....	71
Discussion .....	71
Good Practices .....	72
Challenges.....	73
Conclusions.....	73
4.3 Exit Strategies .....	74
Questions to Discuss .....	74
Discussion .....	74
Good Practices .....	75
Challenges.....	75
Conclusions.....	76
4.4 Widening Accompaniment in the Region.....	77
Questions to Discuss .....	77
Discussion .....	77
Good Practices .....	77
Challenges.....	78
Conclusions.....	79
4.5 How to measure success?.....	80
Discussion .....	80
Good Practices .....	80
Challenges.....	80
Conclusions.....	80
5. Conclusions.....	81

5.1 Plenary on Good Practices .....	82
Discussion .....	82
5.2 Summary and Conclusions.....	88
Good Practices and Challenges.....	88
Comparison to Earlier Workshops and Studies and Work in Other Parts of the World .....	89
Between Nonpartisanship and Solidarity .....	90
Strategy of Deterrence .....	91
Accompaniment and UCP – Are These Concepts Identical?.....	91
Questions and Recommendations for Future Workshops .....	92
6. Documentation .....	93
6.1 Summary of Good Practices.....	94
Outlining the Framework of UCP .....	94
Tactics of Protection.....	96
Managing UCP Projects .....	100
6.2 Summary of Challenges .....	103
Outlining the Framework of UCP .....	103
Tactics of Protection.....	106
Managing UCP Projects .....	108
6.3 Agenda as Carried Out.....	111
6.4 Attendees .....	115

# 1. Introduction



## 1. Introduction

This was the fifth of an intended series of six regional workshops to gather and discuss good practices as well as challenges in protective accompaniment, also known as Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP). This is the practice of civilians protecting other civilians against violence, without using violence themselves. In this document “UCP” and “protective accompaniment” will be used interchangeably since in Latin America the latter term is preferred.

The workshop took place in Bogotá, Colombia, convening about 40 practitioners (“accompaniers”, as most preferred to call themselves), researchers and partners of accompaniment organizations from Latin America. It was one step in a four-stage “good practices” process initiated by the INGO Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP). The purpose was to improve and expand what NP has developed as Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP), especially to influence policies to protect civilians, to prevent violence, to support local initiatives that create a sustainable peace and to build a community of practice. These four stages of the process are:

1. Conduct case studies in four areas of the world where UCP is being practiced: South Sudan, Colombia, the Philippines (Mindanao) and Israel/Palestine. The researchers reviewed the work of more than twenty local and international organizations, and identified and described 77 UCP good practices. Their findings were published in the book “Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence”, edited by Ellen Furnari.
2. Convene six regional facilitated consultation groups made up of UCP practitioners, field partners, beneficiaries and academics for three-day sessions to review their work, analyze findings of stage one and validate good practices and emerging themes; as well as identify dilemmas or challenges raised but not answered by the cases. The first such workshop took place in December 2017 in Manila, the second in June 2018 in Beirut, the third in November 2018 in Nairobi, the fourth in the USA in October 2019.<sup>3</sup> The fifth was this one in Bogota, reviewing UCP work in Latin America. The last one will focus on the European continent and was meant to place in the fourth quarter of 2020. (Due to the Corona crisis, this may not happen or may be replaced by online meetings.)
3. Assemble the first international UCP Good Practices conference -- gathering practitioners, field partners, beneficiaries, policy makers and academics to discuss the findings of the case studies and consultation groups. And to validate UCP good practices that can be scaled up and replicated as well as to improve upon existing practice. The organizations currently practicing UCP have never all met together. The conference will also help to establish an international UCP network. It is provisionally scheduled to take place in the first half of 2021.
4. Publish, disseminate and evaluate findings. After the good practices are identified, analyzed and validated in stages 1-3, they will be disseminated to all of the organizations currently practicing UCP for integration into training materials. Findings will also be presented to potential new practitioners, policy makers and funders including the United Nations Department of Peace Operations, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UN Friends of Protection of Civilians, regional organizations including ASEAN, the African Union, the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Civil society networks will also be included, like the West African Network for Peace Building, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, self-protecting communities and other local groups that attended one of the workshops, the Alliance for Peacebuilding, Frontline Defenders, War Resisters International and others.

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

The workshop in Bogotá had in total 40 participants (though some were present only part-time) who were doing protective accompaniment in five countries in Latin America: Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. In addition, there were a few internationals from Ecuador, the U.S. and Europe who are working with NP or are researchers on UCP. (See the attendee's list in Documentation, section 6.4).

The participants of the workshop were carefully chosen for their current or previous work doing civilian-to-civilian protection; or for receiving protection from such organizations; and/or for their academic research and writing on the topic. Some of the participants were interviewed by the co-facilitators Berit Bliesemann de Guevara and Beatriz Elena Arias Lopez before the workshop took place in order to get their input on the agenda and on which would be the most pressing topics to address.

### Program of the Workshop

The workshop followed the model of the previous ones. It started with an introductory plenary, followed by a "World Café" on principles of protective accompaniment in which participants move from table to table to discuss different principles.

The participants then broke into the first of five rounds of working groups which stretched over the next 2.5 days. Each group was organized around a topic and received a list of questions to discuss based on the pre-workshop interviews. The group facilitators decided whether to go through them all or to pick only some of them. Each session of working groups was followed by a plenary with a report back from each group and then a discussion of the good practices and challenges identified.

On the third day, there was a plenary where participants were asked to name the good practices discussed during the workshop that they had found of particular importance. After the list had been created, everybody was asked to mark those three good practices they thought were the most important ones and to mark those they may not agree with or felt warranted more discussion. Seven topics were then chosen to be discussed in more depth in a second World Café (instead of small groups). The workshop then closed with short reports from these groups, a plenary process of listing central good practices and some farewell messages by the hosts. (See the workshop agenda in Documentation section 6.3.)

The workshop took place in Spanish, with simultaneous translation provided for the few non-Spanish speakers.

### Latin America: Accompaniment Organizations

The organizations working in Latin America for the most part use the term protective accompaniment to describe their work. Unarmed Civilian Protection, the term that NP prefers, is not used by any, and one or two do not have a special term at all for the kind of work that would fall under protective accompaniment.

The groups represented included the following organizations: Peace Brigades International (PBI)<sup>4</sup>, founded in 1981, has worked over the years in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, North America, Haiti, Nepal and the Balkans. Currently they have field projects in Colombia (since 1993), Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico as well as in Indonesia, Kenya, and Nepal. At the workshop there were PBI representatives working in Colombia and Guatemala. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF)<sup>5</sup> started in the 1940s as a group that provided support to Conscientious Objectors to World War II. It provides

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.peacebrigades.org/en>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/about/>

protective accompaniment at the border between Mexico and the U.S. and as a partner of the Presbyterian Church in Colombia since 2004. Permanent Action for Peace (APP) is the translation of the Spanish name which the U.S. organization Witness for Peace gave itself for its work in several countries of Latin America<sup>6</sup>: Colombia, Cuba, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. At the workshop, there were APP representatives working in Colombia. Peace Watch Switzerland<sup>7</sup> is or has been sending (mostly Swiss) volunteer human rights observers to Guatemala, Mexico (Chiapas), Honduras, Colombia and Palestine/Israel. Their representative at the workshop is working in Honduras. SweFOR<sup>8</sup>, the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, has accompaniment programs in Guatemala, Mexico and, since 2004, in Colombia. The representative from SweFor at the workshop was working in Colombia.

Acoguate<sup>9</sup> is an organization that – as its name says – works only in Guatemala. They were founded in the year 2000, and have volunteers sent by its national committees in France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, the U.S. and Canada. They do physical accompaniment as well as political advocacy, distribute information and give workshops on protection for those they accompany.

Several groups' work in Latin America is restricted to Colombia: The Spanish organization International Action for Peace (IAP) was founded in 2011. They do protective accompaniment and what they call development education<sup>10</sup>. Christian Peacemaker Teams<sup>11</sup> are active since 2001 in the area of Magdalena Medio and in the city of Barrancabermeja. The FOR Peace Presence<sup>12</sup> (Fellowship of Reconciliation) had until recently been working in the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó in Colombia but they had to wind down due to lack of funding. It was supported mostly by FOR U.S. and FOR Austria. Operation Dove (Operazione Colomba)<sup>13</sup> is an Italian Organization accompanying the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó since 2009. The Fundación Alvarallice<sup>14</sup> is a Colombian NGO founded 2003 in Cali. At the workshop they presented their work with marginalized youth. The Peace Community of San José de Apartadó<sup>15</sup> was created in 1997 by 1,350 farmers from various hamlets of the Apartadó region. In response to multiple and continued aggressions perpetrated by all factions involved in the Colombian armed conflict, they declared themselves "neutral" in the war, defended their right to peacefully remain to work their land and created a community bound together by the ethics of nonviolence and solidarity. For El Salvador, there was a representative from Catholic Relief Services (CRS)<sup>16</sup>. CRS has wide-reaching programs; protection is only one part of their overall work. Cristosal<sup>17</sup>, founded in 2000 as a collaboration between Episcopal clergy in the United States and El Salvador, works to advance human rights in Central America through rights-based research, learning, and programming, including seeking to repair the effects of human rights violations through strategic court cases. They also work with communities to build environments where peace is possible.

From Honduras, there were representatives of a program run by Cure Violence<sup>18</sup>, and representatives from the Association for the Development of the Zacate Grande Peninsula (ADEPZA) that fights for land

<sup>6</sup> <http://witnessforpeace.org/el-trabajo-de-accion-permanente-por-la-paz/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://peacewatch.ch/de>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/sweforcolombia/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://acoguate.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.actionpeace.org/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cpt.org/>. They also have programs in other parts of the world: Palestine/Israel, Turtle Island (indigenous term for North America), Iraq and Greece.

<sup>12</sup> <https://peacepresence.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.operazionecolomba.it/en/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://alvarallice.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cdpsanjose.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/where-we-work/el-salvador>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.cristosal.org/>

<sup>18</sup> Cure Violence also has programs in the Mexican states of Juarez and Chihuahua, in El Salvador and in Brazil. See <https://cvg.org/where-we-work/>

and beach preservation in southern Honduras.<sup>19</sup>

In Mexico, there is the Servicio Internacional para la Paz – Sipaz (International Peace Service).<sup>20</sup> They were founded one year after the armed uprising of the Zapatistas, in 1995, by a group of international organizations with a long history of work in the areas of peacebuilding, human rights, and nonviolent activism. They offer accompaniment, do field trips and observations together with other organizations as well as advocacy work. Since 2005, SIPAZ has expanded its work into the states of Oaxaca and Guerrero by making visits there. A local Mexican organization, the Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolome de las Casas A. (FrayBa, for short) was represented.<sup>21</sup> As a human rights center they focus on legal and social support against human rights violations affecting not only but mostly indigenous people. Like SIPAZ they also engage in protective accompaniment and human rights observation in the Mexican state of Chiapas.

Nonviolent Peaceforce had a Latin America Regional Coordinator between 2002 and 2008 who, among other things, conducted an exploration for possible projects in Colombia, but its only project on the subcontinent was a short-term protective accompaniment in Guatemala to protect against politically-motivated violence through the volatile period before, during and after the September and November 2007 elections. It started out with an invitation by the organization of a Guatemalan human rights defender who also was on the board of NP. The mandate was then widened to respond to other protection requests in the second half of that year.<sup>22</sup>

### What Has Happened Since the Workshop

The Workshop took place from the 13-15<sup>th</sup> of January 2020. This was little more than one month before the Covid-19 pandemic struck the continent. In the months to follow, much accompaniment work stopped or had to be reduced. Currently (July 2020), “Latin America and the Caribbean has become a hotspot of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, exacerbated by weak social protection, fragmented health systems and profound inequalities”<sup>23</sup>. Between March and July, more than 3.8 million cases have been recorded, and more than 160,000 people have died, with Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Mexico being the most affected countries.<sup>24</sup> The pandemic also influenced the human rights situation in Latin America for the worse. According to data from end of June by Peace Brigades International, in Guatemala there has been more military on the streets, and citizens are afraid that basic rights might be abolished. In Honduras the restrictions on free movement and the growing militarization increases the difficult situation for families in the countryside – there is a real threat of a hunger catastrophe. In Colombia, there have been calls for a cease-fire during the pandemic but it has not been fully realized. According to the Institute for Studies on Development and Peace, 47 indigenous HRDs have been murdered this year in Colombia. Also violence against women is on the rise. In Mexico, HRDs who support migrants face hostilities. In 2020, already 141 attacks on HRDs and journalists have been registered.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> <http://zacategrande.blogspot.com/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.sipaz.org/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://frayba.org.mx/>

<sup>22</sup> Confidential Guatemala Rapid Response Project, Report on the Findings of the Exit Evaluation, Christine Schweitzer, 25 February 2008

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg\\_policy\\_brief\\_covid\\_lac.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_policy_brief_covid_lac.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-52711458>

<sup>25</sup> Peace Brigades International Germany, letter to its German supporters dated 26.6.2020.

## About the Documentation

This documentation seeks to strike a balance between documenting what took place and summarizing/drawing conclusions. Similar to the earlier four documentations, the chapters mostly reflect the findings of one small working group.

The language used to describe the work has been adapted. While in the earlier documentations, we mostly used the term “UCP”, sometimes with “/accompaniment” added, here the practice of the Spanish-speaking groups using the term accompaniment has been adopted.

The report has the following structure, which seeks to copy that of the earlier workshops: It begins with those working groups and panels that could be summarized under the headline “2. Outlining the Framework of UCP in Latin America”. These first five sections are followed by summaries of those working groups that dealt with “3. Tactics of Protection”, and “4. Managing UCP projects”. These sections are followed by “5. Conclusions”. In section 6.1, the most important good practices and in 6.2, challenges of UCP work in North America have been summarized. The other appendices (6.3 and 6.4) are the agenda of the workshop and a list of the participants. The good practices and challenges listed in each chapter are mostly those presented by the working groups in the plenaries afterwards. Only in a few cases a few more that were found in the notes of the working groups were added. All of them were reformulated to full sentences, and sometimes points have been left out.<sup>26</sup> In the summary of good practices (6.1.) similar points have been put together.

The Latin America workshop was prepared by Berit Bliesemann de Guevara who had already facilitated the first four workshops and her co-facilitator Beatriz Elena Arias Lopez. Jan Passion and NP’s former regional Director Alvaro Ramirez-Durini, together with Juan Ocoro (from Bogotá), organized logistics. Berit Bliesemann de Guevara and Beatriz Elena Arias Lopez facilitated the workshop. Ellen Furnari, the editor and co-researcher of “Wielding Nonviolence”, read and worked with the author on the report of the workshop. Last but not least, the workshop and its documentation would not have been possible without the many participants who took over roles of facilitation and notetaking during the working groups.

The rapporteur thanks Ellen Furnari for commenting and editing the report, and Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, Mel Duncan, Anne Haas and David Grant for their comments and revisions! Nonviolent Peaceforce also thanks the Appleton Foundation, the Jubitz Foundation, Marna Anderson, Christine and Steve Clemens, Dr. Ann Frisch and David Hozza, George C. and Lorie Halvorson, Rick M. Hayman, Al and Nancy Jubitz, Michele Kirschbaum, and David Zimmerman and John Lineberger, whose donations made the workshop possible.

Last but not least, Nonviolent Peaceforce gives its thanks to all participants who came to Bogotá, and, through their contributions, made the workshop a very enriching event!

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<sup>26</sup> Some did not seem to make sense or were too cursory to understand afterwards what was meant. In addition, there was the challenge for the rapporteur that the handwritten sheets were sometimes hard to read.

## 2. Outlining the Framework of UCP in Latin America



## 2.1 Principles of UCP

### The Tables<sup>27</sup>

To start off the workshop, an initial set of conversations, World Café style<sup>28</sup>, reviewed basic principles of nonviolent civilian protection and discussed how these are expressed in good practices in different contexts and by different organizations. These differences included approaches to nonpartisanship, the differences between international and national or local organizations, and any thoughts about how these differences are particular to a broadly Latin American, specifically national or local context. The tables were:

Table 1: Nonviolence

Table 2: Impartiality / nonpartisanship

Table 4: Primacy of local actors

Table 4: Independence

Table 5: Do No Harm

Table 6: Solidarity

Table 7: Other basic principles

### Nonviolence

All groups represented agreed that nonviolence<sup>29</sup> was a basic principle and a key value. Nonviolence is considered an indispensable strategy in the work and the way to transform the conflicts and the existing culture of violence. At the same time, it is seen as a guiding principle for the internal work of the organizations. Working by consensus or using nonviolent communication were mentioned as examples.

People at the World Café table discussing nonviolence expressed the desire to understand it in the broadest sense possible, including domestic and other forms of violence that exist in the communities where the groups work. The question is: How much can be tolerated because it is part of the local culture and where must lines be drawn? Some groups said that they make decisions case by case -- with withdrawing accompaniment as the ultimate response in cases of serious or criminal violations.

Some accompaniment organizations require their partners and those accompanied to accept and live up to the principle of nonviolence. Many said they would not accompany people carrying guns, for example. At least one organization however said in another working group<sup>30</sup> that if they declined travelling in dangerous territory in Chiapas / Mexico with people who were armed, they could not implement their work where it is most required, because in some regions being armed is seen as a necessary means of self-protection.

It is a challenge for most organizations to respond to the non-physical forms of violence – verbal, psychological or structural violence for example.

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<sup>27</sup> The World Café tables were facilitated by the following participants who also took the notes: 1. Marion Girard, 2. John Lindsay-Poland, 3. Marion Brastel, 4. Juan Ocoro, 5. Beatriz Arias, 6. Oliver Kaplan and 7. Alvaro Durini. Some notes from other workshops have been added to elaborate on some points.

<sup>28</sup> There were seven tables, one for each topic, and the participants rotated every 15 minutes from one to the next.

<sup>29</sup> Participants wanted to spell it in Spanish *noviolencia*, not *no-violencia*, for the same reasons why in English, activists usually prefer *nonviolence* over *non-violence*. This is because non-violence indicates the absence of violence, whereas *noviolencia* or *nonviolence* indicates an active strategy.

<sup>30</sup> On working with gangs and organized crime.

## Impartiality and Nonpartisanship

The World Café table discussed different aspects of this principle – aspects which were far from being shared by all. To start with the terminology: Most groups prefer the term “impartiality” (*imparcialidad*). Only a few, like PBI, use “nonpartisanship” (*no partidismo*).

In any case, whichever formulation, the term means the same for all: not to take sides in regard to political parties -- at least not in the country where they are providing protection. Most said that while they are impartial or nonpartisan in a broad sense, they are standing on the side of the victims of human rights violations. However, while some (like PBI, SweFor and Acoguate) consider this congruent with the principle of nonpartisanship and impartiality, others (like CPT) said they could not call themselves impartial because they protect victims and or human rights.

It was repeatedly stated that the groups would not accompany private enterprises or, some added, paramilitaries or state agents. At least one organization accompanies local communities even though they may be divided in regard to issues like mining. They work both with communities that are in favor of such businesses as well as those that are against them.

There were differing policies regarding reporting violations of human rights or other crimes to authorities or international bodies. These relate in particular to advocacy work. Representatives of PBI, SweFor and Acoguate said that they do not engage in targeted denunciations (leading to criminal prosecution) because that would put them and those they accompany at risk. They leave denunciation to the groups they work with or to other international organizations (e.g. churches). Those three organizations said that they do “raise issues” – by expressing them directly with state institutions or by expressing them as general concerns in publications directed at the international level.

Other accompaniment organizations, like Peace Watch (Sweden) and IAP have made denunciations, and some also do advocacy work or publish reports about what they see. SIPAZ, for example, has a webpage with reports about the situations they find and they seek to be a voice for the indigenous communities they accompany.

Some groups emphasized “non-interference” as a related concept, though like impartiality there were different understandings of what it means. For some it means keeping out of conflicts in the local community. For others it goes beyond that and forbids the expression of opinions regarding local issues or advice about the implications of their partners’ opinions. For PBI, non-interference is the strategy for implementing the principle of nonpartisanship. Still others combine accompaniment with capacity-building measures (e.g., trainings).

## Primacy of Local Actors

All organizations confirmed that this is an important principle. Those accompanied are the actors of change – without that being the case, there would be no purpose in accompaniment. Several of them (PBI, Acoguate and IAP were named in the notes) only work on invitation by local organizations, and they make a contract with them defining the mandate of the international organization – as well as conditions of physical, political and psychosocial support.<sup>31</sup> The principle “primacy of local actors” is also expressed in the policy to never become a spokesperson for the local group. People needing protection are accompanied to advocacy meetings, but at those meetings it is the locals who speak, not their accompaniers.

Several challenges to this principle were identified at the World Café table. As in earlier workshops, the question “who indeed are the local actors?” is always an issue and requires careful analysis. Sometimes

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<sup>31</sup> An exception for AcoGuate is election monitoring. They undertake that without invitation.

local communities want their international partners to share opinions and advice. However, as noted above, many of these organizations would understand this as undermining the primacy of local actors, as well as non-interference, and refrain from doing so. Also one organization reported that since they have been around for so long, local leaders ask them about what happened in the past because they maintained a better institutional memory than the local community itself. The voices of internationals often carry more weight in advocacy, which also challenges the primacy of local voices. Respecting the decisions made by the accompanied person or the community when they go against the judgment of the accompanying organization is also challenging. The example given was of a young woman who went to the shelter with her daughters for reasons of violence but decided to return to her neighborhood even though the accompaniers felt that was not safe for them.

When accompanying communities, a challenge is that these communities are often divided, and different people hold different opinions. Ongoing analysis is needed to understand and respond to these issues. Other challenges result from possible differences in values between accompanied and accompaniers. Sometimes, for instance, the security regulations of the accompaniers may conflict with the expectations of the accompanied. Accompanied communities are part of a complex system of oppression and the accompaniers may feel that, in order to make an impact, they need to actively engage. They may, for instance, feel the need to link the accompanied to actors at other levels of society – difficult to accomplish without undermining the centrality of the local actor.

It was also emphasized that there is the need to be aware that the accompaniers will eventually leave. And the locals will stay. To make protective accompaniment sustainable, some organizations offer trainings to their local partners.

### Independence

Independence was deemed an important principle. The following points were made:

- Strengthening the local leadership of communities and leaders helps to maintain independence.
- A clear line must be established between the local organizations with its leaders and the organizations providing protective accompaniment.
- Clear protocols for action must be established between governments of the host countries, embassies and accompanying organizations.
- Local organizations and leaders must have clear and defined objectives that guarantee, after the accompaniers leave, the independence and sustainability of their projects.

As elements that are needed for accompaniers to be independent, the following points were listed:

- Financing: money for the projects (financial security).
- Governments need to allow NGOs to work independently.
- Acceptance of political independence by local authorities even if sometimes authorization or permissions by mayors or others are needed.
- Political independence from national or local governments.
- Organizations need independence from mass media; by having, for example, their own publications.

### Do No Harm

The general opinion at the World Café was that it is impossible not to do some harm. The various imbalances in power between accompanying organizations and those accompanied inevitably lead to

harm in the sense that imbalances and stereotypes are strengthened (e.g., North-South, Black-White, privileged-underprivileged). It is also necessary to be aware that local communities have experienced harm before the accompaniers came – harms which makes those communities sensitive and circumspect.

Several major forms of doing harm were listed:

- Relationships and attitudes of “helping” (“*asistencialismo*”) generate mental and material dependencies.
- Those being protectively accompanied can become overly dependent upon the accompaniers, especially if decisions are taken by the accompaniers and not by the local communities.
- An influx of money can do a lot of harm, especially if the source (the donor) is aligned with certain political interests. Money that comes from governments or certain companies can also be detrimental.
- Mishandling of intra-community conflicts can do harm.
- Singling out leaders for accompaniment can create conflicts in their organizations and communities themselves. It can isolate the leaders from their people and eventually lead to them being co-opted by the accompanying organization.
- The same is true for advocacy trips abroad. It is better to leave the decision of “who goes” to the local organization rather than have it made by the international organization.
- Representation of a local community by the international accompaniers is harmful and should be avoided.

The World Café table also discussed what could be done to avoid such harm. These items were deemed essential: careful ongoing analysis of context and conflict; continual communication with the local communities; development of long-term and diverse relationships; leaving decisions to the local groups and communities. Internationals often cannot foresee the harm they may be doing. If there is financial support, organizations should make sure that the whole community, not solely one group, benefits from it. That said, it is better to refrain from material aid at all because it easily creates conflicts, or to clearly separate the activities. Instituting security protocols for accompaniment makes tasks more efficient and roles clearer which also helps to prevent harm.

Local accompaniers find it especially hard not to interfere in local issues; here the presence of internationals can help. Those accompaniment organizations that understand their work as solidarity work – that are not impartial – also face challenges regarding the need not to interfere into decision-making of the local communities. They tend to want to get involved. and this can create harm by undermining local ownership or even contributing to poor decisions.

Generally, good training of the accompaniers, space for reflection on past actions, and self-care to avoid burn-out – all limit harm to those accompanied (and to the accompaniers as well).

### Solidarity

Solidarity was an important principle for many of the participants, and an end by itself, rather than a means to an end. Some translated it to “know that someone is there when you need it”. Solidarity referred not only to the relationship between accompaniers and accompanied. The workshop participants also connected it to the relationship within and between communities -- as well as to its international aspects. It was noted that as protection professionalized it moved away from its origins of solidarity. Solidarity became less important. People at the table felt a need to return to the roots and make solidarity again the basic approach.

The table also observed that there are links to other principles and challenges. There was the example of the danger of creating dependencies. Or of the need to remain aware of the principle of non-interference, even though being in solidarity. Or the complications involved in drawing boundaries in regard, for example to supplying material aid.

### Other Basic Principles

As in the other workshops, a number of additional principles were listed<sup>32</sup>:

- Freedom of all inhabitants of a local community, as long as they do not harm the community and take on responsibilities
- Transparency in decision making
- Flexibility when choosing new directives when there is a sense that change is necessary
- Transparency in information, both internal and external
- Horizontal decision making (consensus) is a highly valued principle and practice for several of the organizations that came to Bogotá (e.g., PBI). But some groups decide through democratic majoritarian means. And some organizations are more hierarchical in their decision making.
- Dialogue before and during decision-making
- Truth, sincerity, honesty
- Building mutual trust
- Citizen participation
- No tolerance of injustice
- Deep reflection
- Pragmatism
- Adaptation to new realities (e.g., gender, accompaniment by Latin Americans instead of internationals)
- Adequate contextualization
- Permanent evaluation
- Including issues like racism and gender into the work

### Conclusions

There was little said about principles in this workshop that in one or another form had not already come up in earlier workshops – especially regarding the principle of nonpartisanship / impartiality that is not universally held.

Some accompaniment organizations describe their work as being in solidarity with the local communities or the groups they accompany. Solidarity was expressed as an important principle more than in most other workshops, with the exception of those groups working in Palestine for whom this principle is also very important.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> In addition, partiality/impartiality and solidarity were also listed by this table.

<sup>33</sup> For that reason, there was a world café table of its own to this topic that had come up a lot in the interviews before the workshop.

Nonviolence again was a very basic and important principle for all, and one that does not only refer to dealing with others but also to internal organizational functions and how to deal with each other. Perhaps more clearly than in earlier workshops it was stated that “it is not possible not to do harm” – the question is only how to limit it as best as possible.

With one exception, no table formulated explicitly good practices or challenges, but nevertheless it is possible to extract some from the notes:

#### *Good practices*

- Understand nonviolence as a strategy to overcome a culture of violence.
- Practice nonviolence within one’s own organization.
- Observe the principle of non-interference into internal decision-making of local communities or accompanied organizations.
- Work only on invitation by local actors.
- Never speak for local actors when meeting with third parties (e.g. authorities or media).
- For sustainability, offer trainings to enhance capacities so that communities can better self-protect.
- Strengthen the local leadership of communities and leaders to support and maintain independence.
- A clear line must be established between the local organizations and local leaders and the accompanying organizations.
- Establish clear protocols for action between governments, embassies and the protective accompaniment organizations
- Local organizations and leaders must have clear and defined objectives that guarantee the independence and sustainability of the active projects including for when the internationals leave.
- It is necessary to be clear about the concept of independence and understand the relationship between being independent while simultaneously respecting the primacy of local actors.
- Engage in careful, ongoing analysis.
- Trustworthy communications should be maintained with the local communities with the goal of establishing long-term and diverse relationships.
- If there is financial support, organizations should ensure that the whole community, not solely one group, benefits from it. It is better to refrain altogether from providing material aid because it easily creates conflicts.
- Protocols for accompaniment tasks and roles are essential contributors to security.
- Good training of the accompaniers, space for reflection on past actions, and self-care to avoid burn-out are good practices.
- Do not lose the principle of solidarity when professionalizing protection work.

#### *Challenges*

- An issue that came up here, perhaps more distinctly than in other workshops, was the challenge of dealing with conflicts within local communities.
- It is often less clear how to deal with non-physical forms of nonviolence – verbal or psychological or structural violence.
- There are tensions between impartiality and supporting actors fighting for human rights or communal self-determination.
- There may be tensions between being asked for advice and opinions on strategy or history of the

movement, while upholding primacy of local actors and non-interference.

- The realization that, in advocacy, the voices of internationals have more weight.
- Sometimes it is hard to respect the decisions made by the accompanied person or the community when they go against the judgment of the accompanying organization.
- Working with divided communities and handling of intra-communal conflicts poses particular challenges.
- Accompaniers may hold different values than those accompanied.
- Standard operating procedures for security conflict with the needs and practices of the community accompanied.
- Accessing funding for the projects (financial security) is always a challenge.
- Governments need to allow NGOs to work independently.
- When authorization or permissions are needed from officials, it can be hard to simultaneously get political independence accepted.
- There is frequent pressure to compromise political independence from national or local governments.
- It is impossible to completely avoid doing harm.
- The relationships and attitudes of “helping” (“*asistencialismo*”) generate mental and material dependencies.
- Influx of money especially if the source (the donor) is aligned with certain political interests can do harm. Money that comes from governments or certain companies can do a lot of harm.
- Singling out leaders for accompaniment or inviting them to advocacy trips abroad can lead to conflicts in their organizations / communities, isolate these leaders and lead eventually to their cooptation by the accompanying organization.

## 2.2 Protective Accompaniment and the Different Forms of Violence in the Latin American Context

### Questions to Discuss<sup>34</sup>

- For “external” protectors: what are the good practices in deciding who to protect and who, if applicable, to exclude?
- From whom and from what are communities being protected from / what kinds of violence? This might include communities being protected from national and international organizations (military, political, guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups, armed gangs and militias, etc.)?
- What are the links between community self-protection and protection by external organizations (national or/ international) regarding different forms of violence?

### Discussion

In the workshop, there were accompanying and accompanied organizations from five countries in Latin America. They found that their experiences are very similar though there were also some particularities to each country. Having a common language to work in (Spanish) helps the groups in Latin America to form a solidarity network, and also the history and challenges in many countries are rather comparable. In general, the organizations speak first of physical, political, legal and psychosocial<sup>35</sup> accompaniment, and consider the four to be intrinsically interlinked. The term physical accompaniment is the only one used in all workshops. But in other workshops terms like advocacy, legal or psychosocial support were used for these other forms of accompaniment or UCP. Also, the goals of many of the accompaniment organizations are wider than providing physical protection, for some – especially some local organizations – it is only one activity among many. Similar to some of the UCP organizations in the North America workshop, some of them explicitly see their work related to their struggle against the politics of their own government. Witness for Peace for example wishes to stop military assistance from the U.S. to certain Latin American governments. FOR-PP and PPF are also motivated by their criticism of U.S. politics. In Chiapas, but also regarding the Peace Communities in Colombia or the environmental activists in Honduras, there is a strong element of solidarity and identification with the struggle of local activists.

Physical accompaniment may mean different activities – presence in communities or at offices of organizations, walking or travelling with people under threat either on certain occasions (for example at court trials, when visiting prisons or when meeting with authorities) or at all times, including shopping or taking kids to and from school, presence at public activities (demonstrations, vigils), accompaniment of the ‘caravans’ of migrants moving towards the U.S., accompaniment of the return of refugees, or periodic visits to certain communities when a permanent presence is not needed or not feasible.

The working group started with the question of how to decide whom to protect. Most organizations present said that there are two preconditions: They only consider accompaniment if they receive an invitation by a local actor; and if there is a real armed threat.

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<sup>34</sup> The “questions to discuss” were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop. The working group A1 was facilitated by Julieta Arboleda. Sources: Notes of Group A1, taken by Sara Akerlund; notes of plenary after Groups A, taken by Christine Schweitzer; also some notes from the World Café on principles have been used. Table E5 discussed working with former armed actors; the notes have been used for a paragraph here, because there was not enough information for a chapter of its own.

<sup>35</sup> Sometimes people in the workshop spoke of only three forms of accompaniment, leaving out the “legal”.

The groups or individuals who are accompanied include human rights defenders (HRDs) and local people (for example lawyers) who support HRDs, environmental activists, indigenous peoples, Afro-American and peasant communities, migrants and refugees.

There is also some accompaniment of ex-guerilla or ex-paramilitaries. In Colombia, former FARC are resettled in communities but are sometimes rather isolated. IPC and FOR-PP accompany ex-FARC. The former fighters are isolated in some places, and in need of political support to help them integrate into society. There is risk that if their stigmatization is not countered, they may be attacked, killed, or they might rejoin an armed group again. Also in Guatemala, PBI has accompanied families of former fighters.

It was pointed out that there is a need to be aware that paramilitaries also like to consider themselves victims because they have been attacked by guerillas. This does not mean that they are considered automatically eligible for accompaniment though there may be situations in which members of such groups become vulnerable and seek support.

In El Salvador, Catholic Relief Services works with youth who are enticed into joining criminal gangs (see chapter 3.4). These youth are often threatened by the police – there are many disappearances – and they also need support while in prison.

The kind of threats responded to vary a bit from place to place. Mostly these are threats by armed actors – paramilitaries, “guerrilla”, military or other state security forces. The term “guerrilla”<sup>36</sup> though it was used in the workshop a lot is somewhat oversimplifying a rather complex situation. There are different armed non-state (or “civil”) actors – groups with clearly defined political aims, groups which may have started out as opposition to the government but who got heavily involved in organized crime activities and small local groups without a clear profile that may also be involved in organized crime or with local politics.

Some accompaniment/UCP organizations try to respond also to domestic violence against women and children (see chapter 2.5) while others exclude that from their mandate. And there are also threats coming from the international community – be it military support for the government or from incoming multinational companies.

Another difference to consider is the context. In certain situations, such as before, during and after elections, the threat of violence is especially high and more protective accompaniment may be needed. The same is true after HRDs have published reports or have returned from an international speaking tour or when courts are dealing with political cases.<sup>37</sup>

In Colombia, after the signing of the peace agreement with the guerrilla group FARC, paramilitaries have started to enter the territory that the FARC has left which leads to new threats.

In Mexico, drug trafficking is a major challenge, also because of the liaison between criminals and security forces. In Colombia, there is also drug trafficking and paramilitaries’ support for it. In several countries, the entry of multinational enterprises for mining, hydroelectric installations or large-scale agriculture are a threat both to nature and to those who seek to protect it. Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable because these activities violate their connection with the land.

In some places, local communities have created their own forms of self-protection, sometimes with weapons as in communities in Guerrero and Chiapas in Mexico, sometimes (like the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó) without weapons. It was pointed out that inviting international accompaniment is itself an element of a strategy of self-protection.

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<sup>36</sup> Therefore, in this report we speak mostly of “armed nonstate actors”.

<sup>37</sup> See also the discussion in the groups A3, here in chapter 3.1, and group C3, here in chapter 2.4.

## Good Practices

- Select high-risk and vulnerable communities and have criteria to determine this.
- Commit longer-term, if needed.
- Work only on request.
- Continue accompaniment though there are threatening conditions.
- Try not to exclude anyone who needs accompaniment, but exclude all armed players.
- Accompany the victims of violence.
- Promote a culture of peace in high-risk communities.
- Seek to prevent micro-trafficking of drugs.
- Seek dialogue with companies.
- Try to activate state institutions to fulfill their protection responsibilities.
- Engage in dissuasion through international accompaniment.
- Legitimize self-government and security.
- Engage in continuous dialogue.

## Challenges

- It is a challenge how to decide whom to accompany.
- Economic factors (e.g., entry or presence of multinationals) are presenting new challenges.
- It can be confusing to know how to deal with perpetrators who portray themselves as victims, when the mandate is not to exclude anyone.
- Possible Infiltration by paramilitaries must be watched for and avoided.
- Organized crime can terrorize communities and exert territorial control.
- It is difficult to gather sufficient information about drug trafficking groups who exercise violence against the community.
- Accompaniers can end up being victims.
- The state is often a major source of violence.
- The communities themselves have developed processes of self-protection, however the state does not support them.
- Traditional ethnic or indigenous leaders have been delegitimized.
- Changing contexts require constant rethinking of the work.
- When access to needed information is limited, context analysis may be compromised.
- Financial limits and lack of personnel resources for accompaniment are frequent limitations.
- Given the many needs and threats it is not always easy to prioritize when or whom to accompany.
- Normalization of violence undermines resistance to violence.
- Political accompaniment requires contacts to embassies; psycho-social accompaniment needs special training. Often organizations do not have the capacity to do these two well.

## Conclusions

The situations in the different countries have many things in common as well as many differences. Things in common are threats by armed actors, often paramilitaries or state security forces. Protective accompaniment in Latin America is heavily based on dealing with violent threats that come from groups that are very close to the government-- which is itself often authoritarian and only formally democratic. Drug trafficking, multinational companies entering into territories, and domestic violence can also be found everywhere. But even given these similarities, each country, sometimes each region in a country,

needs to be looked at and analyzed separately. And political developments like the peace agreement with the FARC in Colombia change the situation over time as well.

Regarding the concept of accompaniment, the UCP groups in Latin America tend to distinguish different forms of accompaniment, with physical protective accompaniment being one, but other activities like advocacy, psycho-social and legal support also subsumed under “accompaniment”. This is perhaps similar to the way Nonviolent Peaceforce tends to subsume different humanitarian or social activities (like the reunification of families in South Sudan) under UCP. This topic will be taken up again in chapter 5.2.

## 2.3 Basic Strategies for Protection to Dissuade Violence and Strengthen Respect for the Security and Well-being of Civilians

### Questions to Discuss<sup>38</sup>

- What are the sources of influence to deter violence and / or promote respect for civil security in different types of conflict?
- How do you decide whether to use deterrence or encouragement or some combination? Which are the criteria that help you to decide to focus on deterrence or encouragement, or both? What are the specific challenges?
- With which parties to the conflict do you seek direct contact, and with which do you not? What do you communicate with these parties? How to assess the risks of working with / excluding them?
- What are the most common risks and how do you face them? What other allies have to face these risks?
- How is this different / similar when communities protect themselves, or when national / international organizations protect others?

### Discussion

The subject of the working group was to discuss different strategies of protective accompaniment, in particular deterrence and encouragement and how this relates to relationship-building.

As instruments for leverage respectively, the following sources of power were identified:

- Being international.
- Being seen at first glance as coming from U.S. or Europe because of white skin. For that reason some accompaniment organizations only work with white people. Others have mixed teams, also to overcome the latent racism that leads to the lives of white people being seen as having more worth than the lives of Latin Americans. However, there was also a statement that this factor has stopped working in some areas, especially when threats come from drug dealers.
- Accompaniers from the U.S. have a special deterrence value with armed actors that are supported (directly or indirectly) by the U.S.
- Achieving visibility as people not from the local community through clothing or symbols (logos, T-shirts, vests, caps etc.). Some organizations are stricter on this than others; and there are also groups (like PPF) that do not wear any identification.
- Warnings or notifications that some organizations send to the authorities to ensure they are accountable. These are letters sent in advance of trips and visits to the local authorities, the police or the military as well as sometimes to embassies and UN offices. The letters inform the authorities of the intention of the accompaniers to go to certain places and remind them of their obligations to protect civilians. The expectation is that the authorities communicate such warnings to the paramilitary groups with whom they cooperate.
- Support by parts of the Catholic Church which some organizations, mostly those close to the church, can elicit. However, the Catholic Church may, as observed regarding Honduras, also be an ally of those who threaten human rights, supporting for example international companies

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<sup>38</sup> The "questions to discuss" were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop. The working group B1 was facilitated by Germán Zarate. Sources: Notes of Group B1, taken by Libertad Gercowski Ariza; notes of plenary after Groups B, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

and speaking out against local activists. And in some indigenous communities, the Christian Church might not be welcome at all.<sup>39</sup>

- Political support by influential actors, including other important NGOs; or building a network of organizations.
- International advocacy. It may be carried out in the country where the accompaniment takes place (for example by offices of the organizations in the capital, if they have any), or back home in the countries the accompaniers come from.
- Advocacy on the national level resulting in support.
- Dialogue with armed forces at the local level.
- Confidence-building with local communities is important in order to move safely in certain regions.

Some organizations like PBI solely contact those armed actors that are related to and influenced by the government. They do not seek direct contact to non-state armed groups (guerillas, etc.) that are not related to the government, because they may be seen as supporting 'terrorists' and risk being thrown out of the country. Additionally they assess that they do not have influence with them. The theory of this influence is that paramilitaries are linked to the national government, and that the national government cares about staying on the good side with certain powerful states like the U.S. Therefore, an attack on an accompanier coming from such a powerful country (or belonging to an organization that is respected in that country) might have negative consequences for the government. For that reason, it is assumed that the government would stop paramilitaries from attacking HRDs or local communities if there is danger that the accompanier might get hurt or killed (or just document the attack).<sup>40</sup>

Others like Operation Dove have a policy not to talk to any illegal armed actor, including paramilitaries. That said, those who are accompanied may have relationships with and talk to illegal armed actors who are near or visit their communities. So there may be indirect communication.

As part of the influence upon the armed actors depends on predicting how potential perpetrators can be deterred, when new armed actors enter the scene, it is sometimes difficult to assess what may deter them. Examples are drug dealers and international companies.

In regards to using the power of "encouragement" -- in addition to the power of "deterrence", policies vary. PBI said that they only rely on deterrence. Others seek to establish relationships with many different parties. For example, when working with indigenous communities, it is important to talk to all sectors, including village guards.

Similar to earlier workshops, it was recognized that the protection relationship goes in two directions. Local activists at the workshop observed that they also protect the accompaniers, making protection a mutual relationship.

Another topic the group discussed was the issue of language. Not speaking Spanish well may lead to dangerous situations, and language is a challenge also for Spanish speakers when working with indigenous communities because they have their own languages.

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<sup>39</sup> The rapporteur did not find anywhere in the notes remarks on protestant /evangelical Churches and their role in Latin America regarding accompaniment though some of the accompaniment organizations are clearly not Catholic but rather Protestant, and therefore might be seen to be closer to these groups than to the Catholic Church. In general, the actions of some of these churches (aggressive proselytization for example) is seen very critically by observers of the situation. (See, for example, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/feb/19/latin-american-voters-turn-evangelicals-social-con/> ; <http://www.waccglobal.org/articles/changing-religious-landscapes-and-political-communication-in-latin-america> )

<sup>40</sup> This theory of how deterrence works was first elaborated by two researchers close to Peace Brigades International: Mahony, Liam and Eguren, Luis Enrique (1997) *Unarmed Bodyguards. International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights*. West Hartford: Kumarian Press

While the general sentiment was that protective accompaniment is effective, there were also cases when it could not prevent an armed attack or an arrest of an HRD. The monitoring of trials by internationals, however, may have an effect even if the arrest could not be deterred.

Some accompaniment organizations have an additional focus on advocacy. Especially Witness for Peace (APP) works in the U.S. against policies that affect peacebuilding in Latin America. Most organizations, when supporting advocacy in the countries where they also do physical accompaniment, seek to ensure the primacy of local actors. They are careful not to become spokespersons for the local groups. They do this by accompanying them to meetings with embassies, institutions, etc. but the locals then do the speaking. For written communications, they directly quote the social leaders and allow them to review the communication before publishing.

### Good Practices

- Political advocacy abroad creates pressure on the local government.
- Activities that help reconstruct the social fabric of communities is valuable as it strengthens their capacity to prevent and resist violence.
- Use deterrence stemming from the religious identification of the accompanier when relevant.
- Deterrence by physical presence in a specific area is often effective.
- Use mixed teams of both nationals and internationals when possible and appropriate.
- Visible identification (vests, hats, t-shirts) contribute to protection when appropriate.
- Regular dialogue with the armed forces (in Colombia<sup>41</sup>) at local level has been effective.
- Use the image of a relationship with the U.S. to have deterrence.
- Send warning letters ahead of time.
- Have an activation network for emergencies.
- For a church organization: When entering indigenous land do not necessarily identify as being from the church, as it may undermine connections.<sup>42</sup>
- Learn some words of the indigenous language.
- Accompaniment in judicial hearings.

### Challenges

- Understand the world view of indigenous communities.
- Understanding the self protection actions of indigenous guards that people from the Western world and urban society may see as acts of violence, can be difficult.
- It is critical and can be difficult to accurately analyze post-peace accord scenarios involving new (private) actors and new types of conflict that can occur.
- Identifying post-agreement armed actors is very difficult.
- There is tension between the desire by communities for accompaniment and activism, and the need to respect the mandate in the face of state institutions.
- Paramilitaries wearing civilian clothes are the most difficult groups to influence – either to deter their actions or merely to engage in dialogue -- because their reactions are unpredictable.
- Talking with the army is difficult when it enters communities of peace because they claim that they are there to protect, despite the fact that they are endangering protected individuals.

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<sup>41</sup> This is how it was written down in the workshop. It can be assumed that the statement may also be true for other countries.

<sup>42</sup> This 'good practice' might also be a bad practice. Entering without full disclosure is ethically problematic and may have repercussions when found out.

- Journalists' visits to communities must be organized carefully to prevent putting people in the community at risk.
- It is very important to understand the fine nuances of language and its meanings.
- Mutual protection between accompaniers and residents is sometimes slow to develop which poses security challenges.
- Observers must be aware of their position as internationals to protect the social fabric of the communities.
- There are local actors who provide information to the state or extractive companies.

### Conclusions

The organizations in Latin America focus their strategies more on deterrence than on relationship-building with potential perpetrators. The policies regarding whom to talk to vary. They range from talking to a broad range of actors to limiting contact to those who are close to the government (and therefore probably more vulnerable to international pressure). Some also limit their protection only to those with a legal status in the country. These policy decisions are rather different from the general impression from other workshops. This issue will be taken up in the conclusions of section 5.2.

## 2.4 Protest, Justice and Governance in Latin America

### Questions to Discuss<sup>43</sup>

- How are elections, forms of governance and cycles of violence related in different countries of Latin America?
- What are the roles of corruption? How does protection / accompaniment address corruption and structural violence?
- How do weak government services and structures at different state levels affect protection / accompaniment work?
- What are the links between politicians, armed groups and / or grassroots communities?
- What role does the influence of the U.S. play regarding the threats that the accompaniment / UCP seeks to counteract?
- What is the current or potential protection / accompaniment role around elections and / or social mobilizations? What role do or can local organizations play in this?
- What are the protection problems related to the rise of populism?
- What is the current or potential role of protection / accompaniment regarding transitional justice and / or the fight for justice and against impunity?
- What are the good practices and challenges involved in protecting the population deprived of liberty as political prisoners?

### Discussion

#### *Relationship between elections, forms of governance and cycles of violence*

Election times in most countries are times of increased violence and repression, in spite of the political differences among the individual states. The buying of votes is widespread, especially in rural areas. Followers of parties that are in opposition to the government are often threatened, and sometimes murdered. In some countries, the same families have wielded power since colonial times. Often, there is no political representation of indigenous people. Women often follow their husbands in choosing whom to elect. In some countries, coup d'états have interrupted democratic processes.

#### *How weak government services and structures at different levels of the state affect protection work*

Civil society in Latin America has little trust in governmental structures -- due to corruption and the failure of the states to meet democratic standards, including the work of the police and the military. In Mexico, for example, the police need to fulfil a quota of detentions and they often arrest innocent people. Torture is widespread. In Honduras, participants said, the government has deteriorated to a dictatorship representing the big enterprises, not the people. In Colombia, the absence of a functioning state has created the need for protective accompaniment. In El Salvador, the state is strong, but that is manifested, for example, by military presence at demonstrations. In many countries, social services are not working either.

There are various social movements in all countries – human rights, environment, indigenous, LGBTQI, feminist. . A problem is demonstrations sometimes become violent.

In Honduras, it is difficult to fight impunity. Participation in forums of international human rights organizations is practically impossible. The protection organizations seek to accompany social

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<sup>43</sup> The “questions to discuss” were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop. The working group C3 was facilitated by David Vladimir Solis. Sources: Notes of Group C3, taken by Yasmin Christina Mosquera; notes of plenary after Groups C, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

organizations (in the health sector, for example). They monitor demonstrations and conduct risk analyses in times of elections. Public education is another area of work. And they accompany witnesses of armed conflict and their lawyers when they are under threat.

In response to the increase of violence during election periods, some accompaniment organizations provide more accompaniment – not necessarily on election days, but before and after. It may also be that the elections themselves are not the trigger. But an unexpected outcome may be the trigger-- like in Honduras when the opposition won a national election that nobody had expected.

#### *Good practices and challenges involved in protecting political prisoners*

In Guatemala, protective accompaniment is provided to political prisoners. Basic training in the management of stress in these overcrowded prisons is offered through continuing visits and expressions of moral support to these prisoners.

In El Salvador, there are people who have promoted dialogue with armed factions in order to reduce political and social tension, but the state is holding these former fighters in prisons and does not allow contact with them anymore.

#### Good Practices

- Accompaniment of HRDs who mobilize movements makes these movements stronger when accompaniment is requested by these organizations.
- Advocacy is done through third parties (for example, local Caritas) because the mandates of international NGOs are limited.
- Tackling issues related to impunity / human rights is carried out in a collegial way with international NGOs, regional and university human rights mechanisms, visits by rapporteurs etc.
- In the case of public law enforcement, it is very important for the accompaniment to have/give clear information. In demonstrations, monitoring is conducted and the authorities present are made aware of it.
- Make sure to present yourself whenever there are new authorities in the prison system so that they know what the visitors are doing and so that the guards do not limit the intervention.

#### Challenges

- Elections create more violence locally and nationally, they make “the other” an enemy.
- Candidates do not fulfill their promises (there is corruption, they do not represent everyone, there is little transparency).
- There are always the same families in government – sometimes since colonial times.
- This leads to diminishment of trust, participation in elections goes down and frustration goes up.
- There is no trust in the institutions (due to impunity, for example). This brings in more corruption and cooptation. No one gets fair treatment.
- The consequences of the election processes are often violence, displacement, increased tensions between communities, more violence against women.
- Challenges that have to do with weak government structures include:
  - Slow processes, slow investigations.
  - A big part of money goes to militarization.
- Work with prisoners: Working with political prisoners has psychosocial impact (sadness, injustice).

## Conclusions

The political situation in the countries where the accompaniment organizations work is generally challenging, and the state and actors close to the government are one of the main sources of threats to human rights defenders. In times of elections, violence often is on the rise. Some organizations nevertheless monitor demonstrations and make the authorities aware that they are there. This is comparable to what participants stated in the earlier workshop on Sub-Saharan Africa. Election times there also bring particular threats.

Impunity is widespread which makes advocacy work with national structures a challenge. Often accompaniment organizations leave such advocacy to well-established institutions or NGOs like Caritas that are less vulnerable. In other cases, like when working inside a prison, it is essential to maintain good contacts to the administration of the institution in order to be allowed to continue the work.

## 2.5 The Role of Gender and Sexual Identity in Accompaniment

### Questions to Discuss<sup>44</sup>

- How do sexism, misogyny, entrenched patriarchy, racism, etc. affect protection / accompaniment work in Latin America, and what are the good practices and challenges to deal with this?
- What is the relationship between gender-based violence (GBV) / femicide, domestic violence and the larger cycles of violence in the region / specific countries?
- What are the good practices to address gender violence / femicides?
- How are GBV and gender rights integrated into the broader protection / accompaniment framework, and how should it be complemented with other strategies to be effective?
- How does the gender of personnel impact on the effectiveness of protection / accompaniment?
- When and how, if at all, should local gender norms be challenged?
- How does your work help local women to protect themselves?
- How do organizations address discrimination or harassment of members of the LGBTQI+ community? Is this part of your protective work?
- How do different sexual or gender orientations of staff affect protection / accompaniment work?

### Discussion

The group discussed these issues both in regard to their own internal functioning and in regard to accompaniment.

#### *Accompaniment and gender*

Most organizations found that an issue and challenge for them is that there is an imbalance regarding women and men in protective accompaniment in the countries where they work: The majority of the accompaniers are women, the majority of those accompanied are men. This has led to concerns among the female accompaniers about their own security. One organization tried to raise this with their partner, though they were concerned that it might be taken wrong or seen as an expression of Western feminism. A local activist working in prisons confirmed this. His accompanier is a woman and it is sometimes challenging when he starts to work with the men in the prison because they may not have seen a woman for a long time. One object of their work is to tackle machismo, and to help men who often have a history of having suffered abuse themselves to develop a different masculinity.

The organizations all try to make conscious decisions about who does what in their protective accompaniment. IAP tries to counter role stereotypes, for example, by breaking gender roles: When meeting with military patrols it is the women accompaniers who talk to the patrols, not the male ones. CPT seeks to emphasize that they are teams by always working in gender-balanced pairs when they have meetings with community representatives. Several organizations give workshops for women on self-protection or related issue. CRS, for example, forms women's groups in the prison. In situations when people are being interviewed, Alvaralice uses women psychologists to deal with women; and men to deal with men.

CPT explained that they have strict policies against sexism and racism of any form. They accompany some very conservative and evangelical communities which have had little exposure to views on sexism.

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<sup>44</sup> The "questions to discuss" were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop B 4. The working group B4 was facilitated by Kim Aumonier. Sources: Notes of Group B4, taken by Teresia Carlgren and notes of plenary after Groups B and World Café table E3, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

So, a CPT member said in the workshop, if for example a woman is given a compliment like "you are beautiful", they raise the issue with the person who made the compliment. They also do not allow sexist jokes in their team house because they want the house to be a safe place. The same policy of "zero tolerance" is pursued by SweFOR.

Acoguate, like CPT, makes a contract with the community or organization they accompany; rules about sexism are part of it. They talk regularly about it, and intervene if something serious happens. For accompaniment, they analyze situations regarding risks for women, both for the accompaniers and for accompanied women. For example, if they are accompanying a male leader but it is women who bring the evening food for him, the accompaniers watch out for those women and their security as well. And when doing a risk analysis, the accompaniers have to start by talking to the leader but then they also will interview the women who work with him.

PBI (and probably other organizations as well) keep a register of incidents -- with sexual violence being one separate category.

Acoguate and other organizations train their volunteers in gender issues, and make special provisions when accompanying women to address their security needs. For example, at demonstrations they monitor the places women need to go to for toilets.

Some organizations stop accompaniment if the accompanied person is suspected or known to exert domestic violence. Others are more hesitant to make judgments but it is always a case by-case-decision.

PBI has employed an expert on gender to work with the teams on issues of gender, and the volunteers have embarked on a process of self-education and sensitization on the topic. They also created same-sex spaces in their team houses, and make sure that traditional role patterns are broken (for example, by men doing the cooking). Similarly, IAP said that they have a feminist approach in their internal work. They pursue a policy of breaking up typical gender roles, for example by sharing household tasks.

SweFOR hired an external expert who analyzed the situation in the three countries where they work (Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico) interviewing accompaniers and partners. The objective of the process was to develop accompaniment with a focus on gender.

IAP respects a feminist approach of the accompaniers and has a protocol for cases of sexual harassment, as does CPT. CPT also acknowledges the possibility of harassment from the side of accompaniers, and has a policy to deal with that, including possible criminal prosecution. SweFOR distinguishes different cases – sexual violence between observers, of observers against those accompanied, of accompanied against observers or between those who are accompanied. There have been cases when they had to suspend accompaniment partly (stopping accompaniment for one particular person but not the organization) or fully. Because of their policy of non-interference, they raise such sensitive issues like sexism formally only if requested to do so.

### *Speaking about gender*

IAP communicates their work to the outside as "working with women" or "on gender". Another participant commented that in Colombia the word "gender" was not well-liked ("satanization of the word") and that its use might cause problems. CPT has experienced the same. They try to circumvent the problem by talking generally of "oppression" when they give workshops. They learned a lot from women's organizations about how to approach the issue of sexism. Alvaralice does the same – they approach the topic either informally or in their workshops carefully and indirectly.

In Guatemala, there is a women's movement that tries to formulate its own understanding of feminism, liberating itself from "white feminism".<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> It did not become clear from the notes if that has any impact on accompaniment.

### *Dealing with gender-based violence*

There is a lot of violence against women – beatings and also rapes are quite common, and the number of femicides is growing. Some participants thought that violence against women was something ‘embedded in the culture’ (machismo) but that this was recently changing for the better. Others thought that the normalization of violence, also the murder of women, was still going on regularly. Related problems are the number of suicides of women who have been raped, the repressive laws against abortion along with the resulting criminalization of women, the use of rape as a weapon in war by the armed groups and the structural violence against women.<sup>46</sup>

At the same time, GBV is a challenge for accompaniment because the method of accompaniment is built upon armed actors as perpetrators, and it is difficult to deal with gender-based violence that happens in the private sphere. There is also the risk that accompaniment in such cases raises public attention to a level which women who have suffered violence often want to avoid. One accompaniment organization, SweFOR, has started to train its volunteers in the legal proceedings around violence and rape because they have started to accompany women to legal hearings. PBI focuses on the “social fabric” -- the context in which women act to defend themselves in a sustainable manner -- while recognizing the dependency of women on men. Acoguate emphasized the need to first remove the women from the violent situation, if necessary, before any accompaniment can begin. CPT cooperates with a feminist organization that supports such processes of supporting women who suffered violence. In some communities, gender committees have been established which can be approached.

Some of the organizations also work with men, addressing the issue of machismo and violence in their workshops and seeking to model a “new masculinity”.

### *LGBTQI+*

There are two sides to this: LGBTQI+ people providing protective accompaniment for others; and protective accompaniment provided for LGBTQI+ people. Several organizations mentioned that homosexuality or other expressions of LGBTQI+ are still not accepted in the local cultures and people try to be invisible. It is also a challenge for those accompaniment organizations that are related to the Catholic Church because church doctrine is not friendly towards homosexuality.

Two organizations mentioned that they had Trans people working with them which they found a deep learning experience regarding the special challenges Trans people face. CPT said that inside the team it was no problem, but it was a problem for acceptance in the local communities.

Some organizations address these issues in their workshops, others do not.

CPT pointed out the issue of intersectionality. For example, when a white European is accompanying a gay Colombian they do not speak of “gender” but simply of “oppression”.

Acoguate regretted having not yet received any invitation for accompaniment by a LGBTQI+ organization.

### Good Practices

- Use gender techniques to strengthen intervention (such as working in pairs).
- Address gender issues with organizations that are protectively accompanied.
- With partners agree on a non-negotiable gender protocol.
- Establish gender policies for the spaces of the shared team house and ensure the workplace is a safe space.

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<sup>46</sup> This was discussed in Group E3.

- Create protocol for a line of communication with the partner organization if there are accusations of harassment or abuse by the accompanied person.
- Identify macho (and homophobic) patterns that may arise internally.  
Create same-sex areas in the team house.
- Designate a team member to keep an eye on gender issues within the team.
- In formation of teams, try to keep them balanced (e.g. if only two on the team, one man and one woman).
- Work toward a culture of new (less violent) types of masculinity.
- Share a methodology and then replicate it (learn from each other).
- Hold workshops to “undo oppressions”.
- Dialogue with women organizations to get advice, build networks, find allies.
- Have clear policies regarding sexual issues (both within the organization and outside in the community).
- Record situations of harassment or aggression.
- Hold workshops on protection and self-protection with accompanied women.
- Dialogue with religious figures in the communities.
- Extend protective accompaniment to the fight against impunity in cases of GBV.
- Develop advocacy strategies with local organizations regarding gender.
- Have internal strategies that challenge local gender norms.
- Apply protective accompaniment to prevent violence and decrease uncomfortable situations for Trans people.  
Provide special training for the safety of women who are companions working in prisons.

### Challenges

- The great majority of the people who participate in gender training are women. It is difficult to reach men.
- The social dynamics are unbalanced between the accompanying women and the men they accompany. Women feel at risk in their accompaniment, and they also fear the potential violence of becoming a victim in doing their job.
- Companions may face very strong cultural dynamics in what may be very conservative organizations that they accompany.
- Companions experience resistance or reluctance when explaining the rules of the organization in relation to gender.
- Companions must work to recognize their own internalized sexism. recs?
- Approaching protection from a gender perspective is complicated.
- Organizations operate internally as a feminist organization, but to the outside need to moderate their language.
- Gender identity is not only about women, but about identity in general.
- Dealing with gender issues takes a lot of internal training.
- In some organizations there is resistance to the concept of "gender".
- The work with gender generates a lot of frustration.
- Accompaniment cases need to be suspended in cases of investigations of harassment or violence against volunteers and / or accompanied persons..
- It takes time and commitment to develop internal gender policies.
- Religious culture affects gender roles and violence. Machismo and homophobia are very deeply embedded in the communities in Latin America.
- There is a heavy impact of rapes and other violence on women.

- Women's economic dependence on men creates challenges.
- Advocacy strategies can generate harm to victims.
- The principle of non interference in relation to gender norms creates tensions.
- Transgender accompaniers may have suffered discrimination and experience challenges in the communities, and access to justice institutions.
- There are many dynamics that go beyond gender, there is a need to recognize- intersectional oppressions.
- It is hard to undo the learning incorporated in relation to gender roles.
- LGBTQI + suffer high levels of violence and that violence that is normalized.
- There can be tensions when workshops are facilitated by LGBTQI staff.
- Many organizations focus on their specific struggles and are not receptive to addressing gender issues.

### Conclusions

Gender-related issues receive much attention by these accompaniment organizations. The group discussed three main items:

The internal aspects – most organizations seek to break down traditional gender roles and are aware of gender-based violence and harassment within their own organization.

Gender and accompaniment – The Issues here relate to the fact that there are many more women who do the accompaniment than men, but that the majority of those accompanied are men. Female (and LGBTQI+ accompaniers) face the risk of becoming victims themselves to harassment or GBV. Another challenge is how to respond if men who are being accompanied are suspected or known to have committed GBV in the community.

The third issue discussed was how to raise gender-related topics in the local communities, how to integrate them into trainings and into agreements with those organizations that are accompanied. Here the organizations seem to pursue different policies. Some are very outspoken in their critique of machismo, others are more careful or hesitant to raise the issues. But – unlike what was discussed in some of the earlier workshops – all organizations seem to agree that GBV is an issue that needs to be dealt with, and that accompaniment organizations have a role in that.

Compared to the earlier workshops, the depth in which gender issues are recognized and explored by the accompaniment organizations is impressive. While the challenges of discrimination and harassment of women is of a rather global character, the particular attention and focus given to this dimension of the relationship between UCP organization and its partners is notable.

### 3. Tactics of Protection



### 3.1 Accompaniment of Human Rights Defenders in Latin America

#### Questions to Discuss<sup>47</sup>

- What are the good practices and challenges involved in protective accompaniment?
- Who is being protected through accompaniment (for example, human rights defenders, social leaders, etc.), of what / whom?
- Under what circumstances do people become vulnerable / need accompaniment?
- How does racism affect the accompaniment of human rights defenders in Latin America, and what are the good practices and challenges to face racism?
- What is universal and what is specific to the accompaniment work in Latin America?
- What role does visibility or lack of visibility play in the accompaniment?
- Which strategies work and which do not, in what context and why?

#### Discussion

'Human Rights Defender' (HRD) is a rather broad term in Latin America. It is not necessary that people identify themselves as such. Explicit human rights organizations often are well-based and have built sufficient protection for themselves so that they do not need physical accompaniment.

The protective accompaniment organizations accompany a wide range of people who may be considered HRDs. They may be facing death threats, criminal investigations, and (for some organizations) occurrences of gender-based violence. One criteria for accompaniment is often the legal prosecution of a person or a group by the state. In Honduras, for example, activists in the environmental movement, along with those who fight against land grabbing are threatened by having their actions criminalized. They are accompanied when having to go to court.<sup>48</sup>

In Colombia, though the main focus of accompaniment probably lies with the peace communities, there is also accompaniment of human rights organizations and of individual activists. These include people who work with the peace communities -- social and church leaders, ex-guerillas who are quite isolated in some places, and of groups that rely on international solidarity to address the issue of exploitation and land grabbing by multinationals. PBI typically prefers to accompany groups rather than individuals. NP widened its accompaniment during its short-term project in Guatemala. It had had started with protectively accompanying one person but then was extended to protect several groups.

At the border between Mexico and the U.S., migrants and social leaders are protected.<sup>49</sup>

The level of threats against HRDs waxes and wanes over time, depending on various factors. Generally, the situation in the rural areas must be distinguished from the cities. In Colombia, the human rights situation has become worse since the peace agreement was signed and the number of political murders has again increased. In all countries, in times of elections<sup>50</sup>, but also in vacation times HRDs tend to

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<sup>47</sup> The "questions to discuss" were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop.

The working group A 3 was facilitated by Celia Medrano. Sources: Notes of Group A3, taken by Kim Aumonier; notes of plenary after Groups A, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

<sup>48</sup> The state often acts in support of the (foreign) enterprises that exploit the country, and police are implicated in political murders.

<sup>49</sup> See also the report of the workshop in North America regarding the work at that border ([https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/Good\\_Practices/Paynesville\\_2019-10\\_final.pdf](https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/Good_Practices/Paynesville_2019-10_final.pdf)).

<sup>50</sup> This seems to be a contradiction to the statements that violence is higher in such times, but that is how it was noted in the group. Probably what was meant is that HRDs get so active at such times that they tend to neglect the risk.

lower their mechanisms of self-protection. If HRDs go abroad and talk about the human rights situation in their country, they may face increased risks upon return. Public advocacy generally, and criticism of impunity particularly, raise the risks. This is also true when a CSO achieves a victory in regards to impunity or other human rights issues. In Guatemala, the economic crisis has had an impact on the security of HRDs, increasing risks to them, when human rights institutions and courts had to close because of financial shortfalls.

Two other scenarios of increased risks occur when an area becomes strategically important in an armed struggle or when there are economic gains to be had (exploitation by mining, for example).

Protective accompaniment organizations usually employ a careful process of analysis before accepting an invitation to enter a country. It has taken up to five years in some cases, though normally it takes three months to a year before such a decision is made. The analysis includes looking at all the actors, the situations in which risk increases and of course the capacity of the accompanying organization. A general indicator for increased risk is the presence of verbal or written threats. And as previously said, people or organizations who are armed or who rely on armed protection are excluded from accompaniment.

### *Racism*

The group thought that the question if and how racism affects the accompaniment of HRDs should be approached from the point of view of intersectionality, taking into account not only racism but other forms of discrimination (for example against LGBTQI+, women, migrants, etc.).

Racism, it was observed, does not stop at the organizations that are accompanied nor at the accompaniers but is a very general phenomenon. Often the state is the worst actor regarding racist discrimination. For Honduras, it was reported that the country is very segregated. When for example Swiss people accompany an HRD, the behavior of the judges becomes much more positive -- which is the other side of state-based racism. In El Salvador, the government denied, in front of an international delegation of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (CIDH), that there were any black people in the country. In Guatemala, indigenous HRDs face the worst discrimination.

PBI seeks to counter the racist structures by including Latin Americans among their accompaniers. Acoguate also tries to be inclusive. CPT and PPF reported that their partners, at least for their work at the U.S.-Mexican border, requested that they only send whites. (It was remarked that this causes a problem for their recruitment in the U.S.)

Another point mentioned was language. For practicability, all organizations use Spanish for their communication inside the countries and internationally, while being aware that many of the communities they accompany have their own, indigenous languages.

### Good Practices<sup>51</sup>

- Accompaniers must receive training and other preparation before starting to work.
- HRDs need to be prepared to deal with security issues.
- It is critical to provide support and training that empowers HRDs so that they can develop methods of self-protection in cases when there is no accompaniment.
- Working to develop relationships and systems that provide early warning in cases of threats, is very important, especially when individuals are threatened.

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<sup>51</sup> This list includes points that were mentioned in the discussion but not listed on the wallpaper afterwards.

- Security coordination among different people contributes to better protection and increased impact of protection activities.
- When entering problematic areas, travel in vehicles of the organizations, and in any case, in pairs and groups not solo.
- Travel with other organizations when trying to access problematic areas.
- Combine physical accompaniment with political and psychosocial accompaniment in order to broadly strengthen the means of self-protection.
- Accompaniment should complement mechanisms of self-protection in the community.
- Whenever it is acceptable to those being accompanied, nationally and ethnically mixed teams (not only white Europeans / North Americans) should be the norm.
- Generally it is recommended to use distinctive symbols – logos, shirts, caps etc., in order to be identified as foreigners. There are specific contexts when this is a problem.
- There need to be clear protocols of security, for individual HRDs and also for communities that are protected.
- Send or deliver warning letters (notifications to the high commands) before entering a territory.
- Clear communication to the outside regarding who the accompaniers are enhances security
- Assess vulnerabilities to decide whom to accompany and learn to recognize situations that are typically high risk.
- Engage in permanent ongoing analysis of the context – the actors, their powers and possible outcomes in order to enhance security and avoid unanticipated situations.
- Engage in periodic risk analysis including: clear indicators of vulnerability (for example distinguish between cities and countryside); timelines of events and context; actions of the accompanied organization: indicators for security.
- It is important to be clear in which cases deterrence stems from the accompanying organization and in which from the accompanied organization.
- Periodic evaluation meetings and ongoing dialogue with the communities / accompanied organizations are critical components of conflict and risk analysis practice.
- Policies and internal practices are needed to reflect on and respond to racism, sexism (internal or with the organization /community that is being accompanied).
- Legal accompaniment requires getting legal permission to attend court hearings.

### Challenges

- It is hard to interact with people who are not prepared to face risks, who do not show solidarity and who are not able, if necessary, to act independently.
- There is a dual need to eliminate the internal racism of the human rights organizations as well as general racism in society.
- It is difficult to respond to all the threats when accompanying communities.
- Teaching of the HRDs in academic and general themes.
- Multifaceted accompaniment using social, psychological and physical tactics is complex and presents many challenges.
- It is not always possible to visualize movements of the accompaniment organizations in the territory where they work.
- The justice system needs to be strengthened to limit the impunity with which leaders and HRDs are attacked. This would provide stronger protection.
- It is not always easy or possible to strengthen practices of “self-protection” / security.
- Sometimes there are not enough staff/volunteers to work in teams to accompany and protect leaders and HRDs.

- There is not always enough warning or time to send alerts out early.
- It takes time to understand a community well enough to learn how to identify a leader or an HRD.
- In Honduras, it is not clear how possible it will be to have permission to operate in the country.
- Rotation of volunteers is valuable but at the same time challenges the continuity of institutional memory.
- When volunteers only stay for a short time (4 weeks in one case), the accompanied people always need to adapt to a new person.
- There is an ever growing need to implement digital security and counter digital threats.

### Conclusions

Accompaniment of human rights defenders in Latin America is one of the main activities of the organizations attending this workshop. The region is historically the origin of protective accompaniment. Peace Brigades International started this kind of Unarmed Civilian Protection in Guatemala in 1983 when they accompanied GAM.<sup>52</sup> Today, though protective accompaniment of HRDs happens in many countries, it is most prevalent in Latin America. The accompaniment work here ranges from almost full-time, 24/7 protective presence to accompaniment at certain defined occasions like a court hearing, or to more extended events such as before, during and immediately after elections. The mechanisms for being effective have also changed a bit over time. Deterrence of potential perpetrators who are close to a national government by accompaniers visibly belonging to powerful third nations has been supplemented by additional strategies and by much more emphasis on strengthening mechanisms of self-protection to prevent dependence on the accompaniers. This will be discussed in depth in the conclusions of this report.

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.peacebrigades.org/en/about-pbi/pbi-history>. For the history of nonviolent intervention in general, see Moser-Puangsuwan, Yeshua & Weber, Thomas (ed.) (2000) *Nonviolent Intervention Across Borders. A Recurrent Vision*, Honolulu: Spark M. Matsunaga Institute for Peace

## 3.2 Accompaniment of Peace Communities and Other Self-Protected Communities

### Questions to Discuss<sup>53</sup>

- What are the good practices and specific challenges of protection /accompaniment by and with local peace communities and other communities that are self-protected?
- What is the history of the communities of peace and self-protection in the region?
- How do you explain the effectiveness of local peace communities? On which principles and practices are they based? What are the limits of community self-protection?
- What are the good practices and specific challenges when self-protection of groups or communities includes armed protection?
- What is the history of external protection organizations that work with peace / self-protected communities? How were the initial relationships built? Why did they go there?
- How does protection / accompaniment support or harm local self-protection?
- What is easier and what is more difficult when working with peace / self-protected communities compared to other communities?
- How is accompaniment of a community different compared to accompaniment of individuals?

### Discussion

The group looked both at peace communities and at communities created in the Colombian peace agreement for former members of the guerilla FARC.

There are several peace communities in Colombia. Not all of them use the term “peace community”, but they have in common that they all deny entry to armed actors. The internationally best known is San José de Apartadó in Urabá; one participant called it an “icon of resistance in Latin America”. This community was founded in 1997, and seeks to stay distant from paramilitaries, the Colombian army and guerilla groups alike. The area is also vulnerable due to the presence of water, minerals and coal in the neighborhood. The San José peace community effort created their own rules and organization, including mechanisms of protection. They maintain their unity through their daily work and constant dialogue with each other.

All the peace communities are self-protected though this does not mean armed protection. They have faced the threat of extermination by the state and different armed actors since their founding declarations. FOR Peace Presence summarizes San José in this way: “More than 180 members have been assassinated and members of the community suffered more than 900 human rights violations, including confiscation of farm animals, money and goods, forced displacement, rape, abduction, detention, threats and defamation. Two emblematic violations are the massacre of La Unión in 2000 where six leaders of the community were assassinated and the massacre of February 2005 in Mulatos and La Resbalosa, where eight people, including Community leader Luis Eduardo Guerra and three children, were massacred in a joint military and paramilitary operation.”<sup>54</sup> One example for self-protection was in 2017 when some armed militia entered the village seeking to kill the community’s legal representative. The community surrounded and disarmed them and handed them over to the authorities. They also use modern technology, having installed video cameras around the village.

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<sup>53</sup> The “questions to discuss” were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop. The working group C1 was facilitated by Carla Martinez. Sources: Notes of group C1 were taken by Silvia de Munari, list of good practices and challenges of group C1 by Mel Duncan, notes of plenary after group C, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

<sup>54</sup> <https://peacepresence.org/what-we-do/peace-community/>

The community has reached out to international people to help make visible what is happening in the area. There are several accompaniment organizations working with them: Operation Dove and PBI are currently with them. Until recently FOR-PP was as well. The community is internationally well-known with community representatives having gone on speaking tours. As a result the community has global allies which adds to their protection.

The group discussed if it was a problem that everybody focuses on San José rather than working with all peace communities. But it was pointed out that the organizations work on request, and the request came from San José. And they also help the communities to network among each other, and thereby the overall protective net is strengthened as well.

It was also mentioned that one strategy to protect a zone might be to declare certain areas to be humanitarian and bio-diversity areas.

In contrast to the peace communities, the ETCR (areas where former FARC members have been settled) are protected by the National Protection Unit, a state-run armed force set up to protect individuals and populations. The areas they work in are also called “peace zones”. Some accompaniment organizations pay attention to these areas but there is no permanent accompaniment with them.

In Mexico there are also areas which are self-governed. They do not call themselves “peace communities” but are similar in some ways to the Colombian ones, only that some chose armed defense in cases of attack. The same is true for the Zapatistas in the autonomous villages. (In addition, they are protected by their clandestine armed guerillas.) For them, even the building of a road by the Mexican government is a threat because so called “development” projects enable the extractive economy (mining) or more military movements, which endangers their communities, peace and autonomy. They do not accept any financial or other support from the Mexican government.

### *Accompaniment*

International accompaniment is one tactic in the overall picture of self-protection. The communities are aware that the internationals may have to leave, and that they need to have alternatives in place.

Most international accompaniment organizations are very hesitant to talk with armed actors that threaten the communities. In Colombia they said that they might talk to patrols of the NPU if they meet them on the way, but nothing more. With the non-state armed actors, there was never any kind of dialogue from the side of international UCP groups. One reason given is that it is illegal to talk to them and any attempt would lead to immediate expulsion of the accompaniers out of the country. Another reason is the assessment that the international accompaniers do not have leverage with the guerilla groups (see also 2.3.)

In Mexico, organizations avoid areas controlled by drug traffickers. In Chiapas, there are international organizations that work with the Zapatistas though they need to be careful. Mexican organizations do not need to be so careful and can act and publicize more freely. But they also are harassed or get or death threats for this kind of work with these groups.

In Guatemala, there are organizations that have built contact to all sides, including the guerillas.

### Good Practices

- Local people initiate the work.
- Communities need to establish and be clear about their rules of organizing.
- Communities define the issues for which they want support and accompaniment, e.g. assassinations and land ownership.

- Communities establish themselves as a peace community, against all armed actors and forbid anyone armed to enter.
- Stay aware of the surrounding areas and place video cameras around the community.
- Schools can serve as centers for organizing a peace community.
- Peace communities need to broaden their function to become communities of resistance.
- In addition to, or in conjunction with peace communities, declare certain areas to be humanitarian and bio-diversity areas.
- Don't turn weapons over to the state. Destroy them, for example as a community ritual.
- It is good to have accompaniment because it is often better to have eyes from outside watching and reporting.
- Accessing INGOs for accompaniment and visibility compliments and strengthens self protection.
- When accompaniment organizations begin working in a peace community, it is important to form working groups and build relationships in the community.
- Accompaniment is easier when the communities are well organized.
- When you know something dangerous is about to happen and your analysis suggest attention will prevent this potential violence, make a lot of noise in the country and internationally.
- Defend life and the community's territory without weapons. Weapons kill people.
- Communities need to think about what to do if international groups are gone and not become dependent on internationals.
- Accompaniment organizations should provide an overall package of strategies supporting communities toward self-protection, visibility and action.

### Challenges

- International accompaniers may only communicate with legal armed actors. If they talk with illegal (non-state) they would get kicked out of the country. That said, people in the peace communities themselves often talk with the guerillas. Thus there may be indirect communication which can be both useful and hard to manage.
- It is difficult to decide whether to accompany someone who is leaving the community, or to stay in the community to provide a protective presence there.

### Conclusions

The discussion focused very much on the Colombian peace communities, in particular on San José de Apartadó. For them, international accompaniment is one element in an overall unarmed protection strategy and is important because it increases the costs for any perpetrator to attack them. Unfortunately, there was not much discussion of the existence of peace communities in Mexico that understand themselves as peace communities and yet use weapons 'when needed' for self protection. It would have been useful to explore this apparent contradiction. While this workshop primarily discussed peace communities as a form of self protection, other workshops discussed others forms of self protection, such as local peace teams. It wasn't clear if any other forms of self protection are being used at the community level.

### 3.3 Accompaniment of Indigenous Communities and Other Communities with Specific Cultural Identities

#### Questions to Discuss<sup>55</sup>

- What are the good practices and specific protection / accompaniment challenges with different cultural communities?
- How do they use identity (for example, color, “race”, nationality, gender) to decide who protects and where?
- How does the use of a person's identity to protect (especially referring to "white privilege") affect this job in a positive and challenging way? How does this reinforce colonial patterns?
- How does racism affect protection / accompaniment work in Latin America, and what are the good practices and challenges to face it?
- What are the good practices and challenges related to supporting local leadership?
- What are the challenges related to the use of languages and respect for cultural values?

#### Discussion

The group on accompaniment of communities of different cultural identities discussed several points regarding the work with indigenous or Afro-American communities:

Regarding language and the need for translation, PBI Guatemala reported it was critical to work with indigenous language translators who belong to the same community. This achieves a link with people and translators.

Before entering the territory of such rural communities, the accompaniment organization usually informs the municipal authorities, to alert them about the purpose of the visit. It is important however to also simultaneously inform the indigenous authorities, to show respect to them and strengthen their authority.

Efforts should also be made to guarantee the widest possible representation of indigenous communities and organizations. The reason is that some organizations, because they represent a larger population or are better organized, sometimes do not guarantee representativeness of smaller or less organized communities, especially those that have been forced to move from their areas of origin to the cities. An example are Huitoto communities in the Amazon, a minority group in Colombia.

Indigenous communities are often rather patriarchal. Therefore, the accompaniment organization needs to also approach the women. It helps to have indigenous women translators.

When working with such rural communities, the very strict security guidelines of the accompaniment organizations sometimes create challenges. An example given was a community that went to visit another community and had to continue walking after nightfall to reach the destination, but the accompanier was bound by the rule not to move after nightfall.

Another challenge is conflicting values. As an example a community was described where a child with a cleft lip was born and the community, including the mother, wanted to let it die. Two other examples were marginalization of and violence against LGBTQI+ people and the same against young mothers without husbands.

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<sup>55</sup> The “questions to discuss” were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop. The working group B2 was facilitated by Luis Miguel Cerpa Cogollo. Sources: Notes of group B2, taken by Celia Medrano, notes of plenaries after groups B, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

Some groups pay special attention to situations where international influence plays a role in threatening local communities. As mentioned earlier, those groups aim to help communities strengthen themselves when they face destructive actions by U.S. or European multinationals. CPT advocates for change by sending short-term delegations to the area and asking that, upon return, they report what they saw at first-hand.

It was pointed out that there is also accompaniment of criminalized communities. One organization, for example, works with coca producers. Others also work with LGBTIQI+ communities that face persecution from unjust laws. Other groups work with youth who are at risk of being forced to join paramilitaries.

The working group also included non-territorial entities with special cultures in their discussion -- LGBTIQI+ populations and youth in particular. Their culture needs to be recognized and affirmed if providing protective accompaniment for them.

This working group also raised the issue of privilege and racism: Accompaniers who are foreigners and white are safer because of these identities. There have been situations in Colombia in which soldiers had instructions from higher up to “protect” white foreigners, but not members of the communities.

### Good Practices

- Use competent translators.
- Recognize and respect the ancestral areas of the communities.
- Upon arrival in the territory, make contact with the authorities, be they boards or governors, and especially indigenous leadership and elders where relevant. This is important for being able to carry out the accompaniment.
- Build trust with the women and seek spaces to meet with them.
- Know the other organizations that work on protection issues or do related work in the area and contact them to form a network.
- Make decisions collectively, between the accompaniers and the accompanied; between the organization and the community.
- Decision-making regarding who to accompany should be based on analysis that weighs likely vulnerabilities against possible benefits.
- Find ways to participate and observe in support of the LGBTIQI+ movement, and accompany these populations.
- Expand the networks to be sure to include Afro-American networks or communities.
- Acknowledge the expertise of local people to reinforce the fight against racism.
- Be clear about national or international allies and report cases of racism, to exert pressure to stop it.
- Encourage and support local communities to meet with authorities and express their needs first hand.
- Support visits and tours by diverse outsiders (especially from the global north) to the territories to make what happens there known and visible.

### Challenges

- Gender dynamics often limit the participation of women.
- Some local groups monopolize protection, making it harder for smaller, less well known groups to access accompaniment

- Linguistic barriers and cultural differences require attention in order to respectfully and effectively provide accompaniment and other forms of protection.
- Peasant communities may be overlooked and need heightened recognition.
- It can be tempting to impose an agenda on a community, but this can create all kinds of difficulties and needs to be resisted.
- Rigid security protocols are needed to protect those who provide accompaniment as well as those who are accompanied, but at times these protocols get in the way.
- Accompaniers feel the limits of tolerance for certain practices within the communities.
- It is tricky to figure out how to address injustices within a community, without imposing an agenda or otherwise disrespecting local people.
- The perspectives and needs of LGBTQI+ can be difficult to incorporate into accompaniment and analysis.
- There is a danger of reinforcing racism through accompaniment (by accepting, for instance, social status based on skin color).
- The short-term rotation of volunteers in organizations poses many challenges.

### Conclusions

Many indigenous and Afro-American communities are threatened by armed actors and by losing their territory to multinationals. (See also the section 3.6 on this.) When offering accompaniment, the accompanying organizations need to pay extra care to respect the traditional leaders and the culture. This sometimes brings special challenges with it when the values of the (mostly Western) accompaniers clash with those of the traditional communities, for example regarding gender roles (see also section 2.5 on this).

Other workshops also addressed the need to respect local cultures and some of the special care needed with indigenous communities such as Native Americans or First Nations peoples in N. America. In Manila there was a stress on respecting local efforts and local leadership. This workshop however, is the only one to include a working group specifically on protection in indigenous and other identity based communities.

### 3.4 Accompaniment in Cases of Gang Violence and Organized Crime

#### Questions to Discuss<sup>56</sup>

- What role do gang violence and organized crime play in the region, and how are they related to other forms of violence / conflict?
- What are the good practices and challenges of working with armed gangs?
- What are the good practices and challenges involved in protecting people from organized crime and other crimes?
- How is this similar to other protection / support jobs and what is specifically different?
- What kind of "success" do you have, if any?
- How do communities protect themselves from gang violence and organized crime?
- What are the good practices and challenges involved in protecting the population deprived of liberty (linked to gangs and organized crime) in prisons?
- Where you do not work directly with gangs and organized crime: How do they influence the work of protection / accompaniment as a context?

#### Discussion

The group discussed both gang violence and organized crime. It was stressed that these are different phenomena. Experiences in the work with gangs were shared by accompaniment groups that work in Colombia and El Salvador. The gangs are made up of youth in El Salvador from age 10 and up. Gangs control territories, especially in El Salvador, as well as being involved in the drug trade. In Colombia 80-90% of the gang members are themselves addicts. They use children for micro-trafficking and they use children and youth as fighters between and within the gangs (with the youth becoming thereby both perpetrators and victims). Police may be connected to gangs and their responses often contribute to high levels of violence in communities. Gangs are often blamed for everything. Extortion and fights between gangs and police are frequent, homicide numbers are high. Gang activities may even lead to displacement and migration. People seek to flee from extortion and they see no other way than to leave the country. And youth who do not want to participate in the gangs often see no other option than to leave.

Organized crime (OC) in El Salvador is understood to happen at higher levels involving elite sectors and corrupt government. It goes beyond what gangs do, as organized crime involves the highest levels of society. It is also responsible for more violence. OC has deeply co-opted the police. However, there is the same logic of taking control of an area.

In Mexico (Chiapas) OC is present in addition to paramilitaries and guerillas. Given the high number of armed actors, it is not surprising that the violence in Chiapas extreme. Chiapas has become a refuge for drug traffickers fleeing from other parts of Mexico. There are homicides among drug traffickers and territorial disputes. Police and army are known to have links to drug trafficking, as in El Salvador. The accompaniment organizations are usually not threatened, and are very careful to always analyze the interests of the different actors.

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<sup>56</sup> The "questions to discuss" were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop.

The working group B3 was facilitated by Anne Haas. Sources: Notes of Group B3, taken by Sina Marie Olfermann; notes of plenary after Groups B, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

In Colombia, there are OC groups that traffic with the Mexican cartels. They are often headed by Mexicans. As in Mexico, paramilitaries, guerilla (ELN) and some FARC dissident groups are also involved, and people are highly suspicious of the role of the Colombian army.

The objective of the accompaniment work by Fundación Alvarallice in Colombia is the transformation of young people in gangs. They work by recruiting the support of community leaders to disrupt violence and establish dialogue. In addition, they organize weekly activities to discuss the return to education and other ways of life, to find legal work and to motivate youth to quit consumption of drugs. Supporting them to stop abusive consumption is done in a health center that provides treatment.

Another objective of the Foundation is to lower the number of homicides so that there is less police presence and civil society can function more freely. The Foundation was inspired by the model of Cure Violence but adjusted it to their situation.<sup>57</sup> Their violence interrupters many times know from rumors about organized crime, but they have no power of advocacy, and cannot risk involving the police. To protect themselves and their work, they therefore do not report crimes. But what they may do is to mount a preventive presence. The Foundation sees a 50% probability of long-term change that is directly linked to the approach of legal employment and the creation of alternatives for young people.

CRS in El Salvador has been working with young people since 2015. They have a model called "youth builders" ("jóvenes constructores"). They do advocacy work and violence prevention by seeking to decrease the number of youth in the gangs. They classify this population as "nini" (neither work, nor studies), which is also the factor they seek to influence by creating employment and study opportunities. They have observed a very positive impact. The Ministry of Education took up and adapted the program because they realized that implementation involves less cost than having a young man in jail. In addition, there are collaborations for the implementation of the program in schools in various countries, and with other INGOs.

The work has been expanded to adult populations in prisons. There, CRS offers Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. The program exists in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. They have submitted the program to the Ministry of Justice as a program for prisons. It is a progressive process in stages that touches the control of aggression, works on self-esteem and self-knowledge and aims to focus first on the personal and then on the collective. The level of violence in prison and in the communities has decreased in consequence.

All organizations are careful regarding advocacy about specific crimes and regarding contacts with the police about crimes. However, their policies vary a bit. Very often such advocacy is done through other local organizations. CRS for example said that they would stop being tolerated in the area if they were working with the authorities.

Another tactic may be to do advocacy and media work regarding issues related to organized crime (OC), especially if state agents are suspected of being involved in it. Organizations that do such advocacy directly, as FrayBa sometimes does, need to increase their security measures. They explained that in Mexico, the state cares a lot about its international image, so it is afraid of denunciations that blame it for negligence in dealing with OC. It was noted that this kind of pressure works better in Mexico than in other countries with weaker interest in good international reputation or dependency on the U.S.. If NGOs locate corrupt structures and state involvement and denounce both, it can give them some security. It does not work 100%, but if the state is connected to OC and if this becomes known they may have to stop their activities.

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<sup>57</sup> See the report of the North America workshop for the work of Cure Violence.

### Good Practices

- It is important to analyze and address the role of gangs and organized crime in creating violence.
- It is possible to work with diverse groups that perpetrate violence.
- Violent behavior can be transformed through the intervention of community leaders who are listened to (violence disrupters).
- This work must use people who speak the local languages.
- Conflict mediation activities in the community need to be inclusive.
- Offer youth in gangs opportunities for new ways of life and returning to education, as part of risk-reduction plans.
- Refer people to institutions that can help them with drug addiction.
- Transforming gang members and other perpetrators of violence is a life project and interventions have to go slow, step by step.
- Work with local, regional and even national level government to implement programs and prevent violence, when appropriate entities are available.
- Aim for the social reintegration of criminalized youth.
- Publicize the impact of accompaniment programs and their successes in this work.
- As with all accompaniment/UCP work, continue regular context analysis and key stakeholder mapping.

### Challenges

- A growing challenge are the threats faced by accompaniers who intend to work in the areas controlled by organized crime. Many times, the decision is not to go to those areas.
- Organized crime exerts negative influence so that young people do not overcome the consumption of psychoactive substances.
- Young people who have been involved with gangs and prisons are stigmatized, which makes it hard for them to find employment. It is not easy to de-stigmatize them.
- There is a lack of ways to rehabilitate people who became criminals.
- The governments in most of these countries are resistant to advocacy.
- Participants shared the risk analysis of leaders in the face of the influence of organized crime. They proposed mapping of actors to understand where the interests of the criminal organizations may be influenced.
- It is difficult to build strategic relationship between programs, projects and the police or the state to support processes without affecting the safety of leaders.
- When reporting non-compliance of the state through the mass media, social networks, it is imperative to take care not to put the lives of the NGO's members and leaders at risk.

### Conclusions

Youth gangs are a wide-spread phenomena particularly in the cities of the countries where the accompaniment organizations work. Two of them have developed special programs to work with youth and to help them leave the gangs and reduce the violence committed by these gangs.

Work with youth groups or "gangs" also plays a role in the work in South Sudan that Nonviolent Peaceforce presented at the Nairobi workshop. While these youth groups mostly formed in the

precarious context of refugee camps, the approach seems comparable – developing meaningful alternative activities for youth and thereby encouraging them to leave the gang.

Organized crime seems to be considered more as part of a context in which the organizations work but not to be addressed head on. Since OC often has close linkages to certain state agencies (police, military), one approach some organizations have tried is to address the state's behavior through advocacy and international blaming. Most international accompaniment organizations however prefer that partner organizations do this kind of advocacy in order not to endanger their presence on the ground.

### 3.5 Accompaniment with Displaced People and Migrants

#### Questions to Discuss<sup>58</sup>

- What are the specific challenges and good practices in protection/ accompaniment with displaced persons and migrants (refugees, internally displaced persons; in cities and rural communities)?
- Who is being protected from what and how?
- What are the proactive and / or reactive methods used?
- How does the relationship between displaced people and "local" people pose particular problems for protection / accompaniment?
- What are the good practices and challenges in cooperation between work of protection / accompaniment and humanitarian aid agencies to protect the displaced people?
- How can protection / accompaniment organizations help communities to strategically plan and prepare for displacement?
- How do you incorporate the early warning-early response system (EWER)? If not, why not?

#### Discussion

The group looked at two different situations: The caravans of migrants from Central America moving towards the United States, and displacement in some countries due to armed fighting or multinational companies wanting to use areas for mining.

#### *Caravans*

NGOs conducting a survey in three countries of origin (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) found that, unlike in the 1980s and 90s, violence is the predominant cause for the migrant caravans today. People leave in search of a place where they can feel safe. IOM had recently also done a survey but was forbidden by the three countries to publish its results. Impunity makes it impossible to sue in cases of HR violations, so whole families have no other recourse than to leave. The situation is aggravated in many countries by xenophobia (hatred against migrants), and by an arms trade leading to a large influx of weapons into Central America. The caravans themselves can therefore be seen as a means of self-protection by the migrants in face of attacks by youth gangs, drug dealers or the local population of communities the migrants must pass through.

There are organizations (for example religious orders like the *Hermanas Misioneras Scalabrinianas*<sup>59</sup>) that accompany the migrants in their travel, and others that offer shelter. One organization made an agreement with human rights officials in El Salvador and Guatemala to have permission for this accompaniment. They are able to give almost instantaneous information about the situation of the caravan. In one country, peasants' organizations have created shelters for displaced persons. IAP accompanies these organizations. In Guatemala, villages that themselves have gone through displacement and return, are today receiving migrants.

PPF offers accompaniment to local organizations that accompany the migrants.

PPF and some other organizations try to address the xenophobia in Central America by linking the topic with the implementation of peace agreements. But they feel that working with migrants makes

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<sup>58</sup> The "questions to discuss" were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop.

The working group D1 was facilitated by Guido Eguigure. Sources: Notes of Group D1, taken by Eulalia Padró Giral; notes of plenary after Groups D, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

<sup>59</sup> <https://es.catholic.net/op/articulos/5885/cat/167/hermanas-misioneras-scalabrinianas.html#modal>

organizations and people almost automatically be seen as enemies of the state because the states strengthen xenophobia to deflect from the true problems of their countries.

Because the migrant caravans sometimes face threats of violence from the communities they pass through, some shelters have started to use armed guards.

Protection International has mounted a pilot capacity-building project with migrants.

The dangers migrants face are exemplified by the large number of people who go missing and often are found dead. There are transnational search mechanisms for missing migrants. They have started, with the collaboration of governments, to create a DNA bank to search for relatives among the bodies discovered in mass graves.

In Honduras, with the support of Carlos Beristain<sup>60</sup>, organizations seek to deal with the trauma of the relatives of the disappeared. Psychosocial surveys are carried out to support this work.

At the border between Mexico and the U.S., organizations protecting migrants are threatened by the criminal cartels. But these hesitate to threaten white North Americans. Therefore physical accompaniment by white people at the border is able to mitigate this threat. The same is true for the churches that travel with the migrants, who mainly use white North Americans.

Another problem regarding the U.S. is its concept of “safe third countries” and the deportation of people from the USA. Committees of relatives of migrants, the “Foundation for Freedom” and Mexico have filed an appeal against this decision to establish Central American countries as safe third countries.

#### *Colombia and other countries*

In some areas of Colombia, such as Urabá, there is a large problem of displacement. Some organizations, churches and communities negotiate with the authorities about conditions in case of displacement and the need to find settlement sites. Sometimes they make agreements with companies about sharing the territory or about alternative settlements. PPF has helped communities to buy land and start agricultural production. The problem is that agreements are not kept by the state. In other areas the inhabitants try to find ways to stay. There is dialogue with the authorities to prevent militarization of the zones and to find a political solution. One organization that supports IDPs has received threats because of its work. It is accompanied by PPF.

Early warning systems involving a state response do not work well in Colombia. Black and indigenous communities in Colombia have set up their own EWER systems with the help of local community guards.

In Honduras there is a national mechanism for addressing displacement. NGOs have created an individual emergency fund that works in cases for human rights defenders who are at serious risk and must move. But for large groups it does not work. When there is no other choice but to move the population temporarily due to political violence and environmental catastrophes, Action by Churches Together (ACT) can move funds and provide immediate humanitarian support to communities.

Another tool of local organizations is temporary relocation through protection programs for HRDs and other activists, both in Europe and the USA. People are supported to apply for these programs. Typically, the protection program lasts six months and includes awareness-raising, advocacy and training components.

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<sup>60</sup> Carlos Martín Beristain is a medical doctor and psychologist specialized on treating victims of torture. He has worked *inter alia* in Colombia and Guatemala.

## Good Practices

- Survey migrants regarding their reasons to migrate, and publish the information.
- Make the courts aware that migrants are not protected.
- When providing physical accompaniment of caravans, a flexible mandate is needed
- Churches are important for their shelters and contacts on the routes, as well as for their global clout.
- Establish accompaniment networks abroad (USA) to accompany migrants.
- Assess the deterrence potential of accompaniment when the threats come from organized crime.
- Provide short / medium term accompaniment until threats diminish.
- Work inspired by a vision of "brothers visiting brothers" instead of a paternalistic vision.
- Offer protection to people accused of supporting / organizing caravans.
- Religious orders have accompanied caravans throughout their journey.
- Document cases of human rights violations of migrants.
- Work against xenophobia - ally with groups that work on the same issues.
- Provide accompaniment to prevent communities from being displaced from their territories.
- International NGO Commissions and communities can try to negotiate conditions of displacement or remaining in their own territories by working with authorities and / or private companies.
- Advocate with communities that have already been displaced or are in danger of displacement to not arm themselves because it will likely increase their risks.
- Strengthen capacities in shelters to protect migrants from persecutors.
- Shelters themselves can and should advocate for the protection of migrants.
- As part of dealing with the trauma of disappeared relatives, the Transnational Migrant Search Mechanism DNA bank is a valuable resource.
- Gain trust, and develop psycho-social-initiatives of support together with documentation of the harm for eventual judicial case (like Carlos Beristein in Honduras).
- Invoke and use as possible legal remedies against the concept of "third safe country".
- In the U.S., focus on policies of non-return to dangerous countries. Provide all forms of accompaniment to the struggles of migrants in the U.S. who have requested asylum, as an alternative to anti-migrant policies.
- In the current context of the United States, it may often be better to hide migrants than to become a public sanctuary, as was done before.
- Prepare for displacement with displacement planning. Be ready with eviction protocols, and to provide peaceful presence of legal representatives, security guarantees.
- Develop early warning systems at the community level (e.g. San José), involving guards, indigenous people, etc.
- It has been valuable to have a good risk analysis shared by several movement organizations and an emergency fund (developed in Honduras by churches, in Colombia by ACT).
- There are temporary protection programs for trade unionists and human rights defenders in Europe, the U.S. and Costa Rica.

## Challenges

- Using legal instruments to challenge displacement can lead to people having to leave due to fear of retaliation.

- Migrants, displaced persons and refugees travel in precarious situations and it is hard to decrease their risks.
- It is not always possible to provide international accompaniment for rural farmers displaced by armed confrontations when needed.
- There are complex structural causes of migration and displacement because of violence, and it is difficult to tackle these underlying causes in addition to providing accompaniment. More specifically it is hard to address causes that emanate from the US.
- It is challenging to document the scale of the human rights violations against migrants.
- Political solutions for the confrontations that generate displacement are elusive.
- It is often difficult or not possible to provide psycho-social accompaniment to the families of disappeared migrants.
- It is often not possible to ensure that migrant application for refugee status processes take place in the country where asylum is sought and not in "safe" countries.
- States do not take responsibility to protect or help people who do not want to be displaced.
- Negotiating with the statutory officials for acceptable living conditions for the displaced migrants is often not successful.

### Conclusions

Displacement and migration are two phenomena that are very much related, unlike the public perception in the North that one has political and the other economic reasons. Both are caused by the threat of violence, be it from the state enforcing displacements so that a company can exploit a territory, or from paramilitaries or from criminal gangs. Another main learning from this discussion was how different protection mechanisms need to go hand in hand – physical accompaniment being only one element in a whole picture of different efforts that also include dialogue and negotiations, appeal to juridical mechanisms, humanitarian and psycho-social aid, capacity-building and international advocacy.

### **3.6 Accompaniment in the Context of Multinational Companies, Exploitation of Resources and the Defense of Rural Areas**

#### Questions to Discuss<sup>61</sup>

- What are the violences and threats related to multinational companies and other economic interests in the region, and who is affected / needs protection from what?
- What are the specific challenges and good practices of protection / accompaniment and community self-protection in areas with a strong presence of multinationals and / or other economic interests?
- Who do you communicate with? Local authorities, company leaders, private militias, national army?
- How do you activate people outside the country to support this work?
- Can solidarity and protection / accompaniment be combined?
- How does protection / accompaniment address structural violence?

#### Discussion

In many places where accompaniment takes place, private companies, national or multinational, are present. Mining for coal or minerals, including those rare minerals needed for electronics is not really a new phenomenon, but in some places the influx of such companies has increased. This has contributed to accompaniers recognizing this as a new issue they need to deal with. They often accompany social leaders who are working on these issues. PBI has created a working group “Enterprises and human rights” e because they are faced with this problem in two areas in Colombia as well as in Mexico. Operation Dove has an internal assessment process underway, and other organizations reported that they are working on the issue.

It would be wrong to assume that the local communities are all unanimously against the entrance of private companies (national or international) to their areas. In some places they welcome them as new sources of income. In Mexico sometimes companies such as brewers are welcome, but hydroelectric companies are not. In Colombia some syndicates support fracking. In other areas the communities are divided, especially if the companies promise all kinds of benefits like free electric power, free transportation, improved roads etc. At least one of the accompaniment organizations reported that they have mediated in a divided community.

In still other cases, the communities ask for support in their struggle against companies which cause displacement and pollution. Those most affected by extraction and other projects are indigenous communities when the land that the companies want to use has a traditional religious value and is part of their worldview.

In Colombia, the relationship between multinational companies and paramilitary violence is obvious. And since the peace agreement, more companies – esp. Chinese and North Korean – have entered the countryside, including those where peace communities are established.

In Honduras the influx of foreign companies has been especially vast. A major part of the country has been leased (through concessions) to private firms. This has led to major pollution of rivers, other health risks and displacement. In the North, whole mountains have been dug up by a Chinese company and

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<sup>61</sup> The “questions to discuss” were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop.

The working group D2 was facilitated by Enrique Chimonja Coy. Sources: Notes of Group D2, taken by Diana Carolina Cabra Delgado; notes of plenary after Groups D, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

shipped to China where they isolate rare soils. There is also a link to drug trafficking – enterprises are being used for money laundering.

In Guatemala, there have been referenda about economic projects – like hydroelectric projects – which were rejected by 95% of the people affected, but this had no influence on government politics. As in other countries, the presence of these companies – including national ones – leads to intracommunal conflicts because money is promised and subsequent defamation campaigns against leaders are started and/or land titles are disputed. PBI is running an international advocacy campaign around these issues. The role of accompaniment on the ground in these cases is to protect the registration of security incidents -- which is documentation that then can be used in advocacy.

In Guatemala there has been one case where such advocacy was successful. A company (producing palm oil for Nestlé) had to close down. It is now suing the Guatemalan state for compensation. A strategic coalition of trade union groups in Colombia and the U.S. has worked to influence the GM automaker that had laid off workers in Colombia.

Some accompaniment organizations are doing advocacy work regarding U.S. enterprises in Colombia or other countries. Some do this directly, others make use of networks and rely on other NGOs – for example environmental or labor organizations. Similarly, European companies can be approached, usually through networking with NGOs in the countries where these companies are based.

Such advocacy work may also include boycotts of companies. Examples include boycotts related to buying palm oil against the Body Shop in the U.S. and Canada; and a boycott against Coca Cola when the company started outsourcing work and reducing their labor force. Coca Cola responded by promising to hire more people locally. Such protests and boycotts work because the companies are interested in maintaining a good name.

Companies from countries like China – countries with a questionable approach to human rights - are a particular challenge because they are even less open to advocacy work than companies from North America or Europe. In regard to Chinese enterprises, one organization looks at the contracts they have with European countries, a very indirect way to wield influence.

There is also advocacy work within the country where the accompaniment takes place. However, most organizations found it not very effective to approach governmental regulatory structures because these structures either do not have any power or are corrupted by the companies.

Another way to have influence upon these companies would be to work with the companies themselves. Most members of the working group agreed that they have yet to figure out how to approach them. One person said, “we should have a volunteer from China, then it would be easier”.

### Good Practices<sup>62</sup>

- Create working groups to reflect upon human rights and private companies.
- Try to find volunteers from the countries the companies come from, for ex. China.
- Use previous research and investigation on the companies so that there is information about them.
- Build relationships and network with organizations that work on the topics abroad for advocacy purposes.
- Take delegations from the U.S. to Latin American countries so that they see what is going on, and then they can do better advocacy back home.

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<sup>62</sup> In the case of this working group, the rapporteur has moved a couple of points that were listed under “challenges” to good practices because they seemed to better fit in there, for example looking for early warning signs.

- Take into account the world vision of indigenous communities and the impact of exploitation on sacred territories.
- Projects need to develop long- term information gathering and protection plans.
- Use the publication of newsletters / communications as part of an advocacy strategy.
- Boycotts work when directed against enterprises that sell to the public.
- Cooperation between investigators and accompaniment organizations on the ground might help.
- Look for early warning signs before the companies arrive.
- Initiate and sustain dialogue between accompaniment organizations on these issues.
- Have and strengthen links with organizations in the countries of origin of these companies that can help to spread information.

### Challenges

- It is difficult to know how to advocate with this new actor -- international foreign companies.
- Paramilitary groups are protecting companies in collaboration with the state.
- It is not easy to find out who the owners of the company are, or to do research on them in general.
- Fracking is a challenge because communities partly support it.
- In Honduras many companies have licenses to use the land. This results in pollution, sickness, damage to the environment, and transportation of ore to foreign countries (e.g., China) to extract the valuable rare earth minerals there.
- Companies do not respect consultations with the population before concessions are signed. In Mexico there is disinformation and bad consultation from the side of the companies.
- Organized crime is involved in economic projects. There is corruption in the government and/or authorities that give licenses to private companies.
- Peasants or indigenous populations do not always have documented and written land titles
- There are threats of harm to leaders that fight against the companies.
- Companies do not sign human rights treaties, only states do. Do we work with the company, or with the state that is giving license to the company?
- There is terrible psychosocial impact on indigenous communities because their whole world vision gets destroyed.
- It is difficult to enter into direct dialogue with the companies.
- Companies work to divide the consultation processes, so as to prevent organized resistance.
- It is not always possible to have information on the long term damage / consequences when a company starts working.
- Some companies sue the state and demand huge fines. Resistance to this needs to be organized.
- Because companies have foreign registration, it is difficult to sue them.
- Accompaniment with divided communities is especially difficult as some want the companies, and some do not.

### Conclusions

The influx of foreign private companies into areas that hitherto had been dominated by agriculture (commercial or subsistence) is leading to numerous conflicts. There are conflicts between these companies and the local population, between the local population and the state structures that usually support these companies, and sometimes also among the local population that may be divided on

whether to welcome or reject the presence of these companies. For the accompaniment organizations, the challenges resulting from such companies seem to be new. 'Traditionally' they have dealt with violence by militias / paramilitaries or soldiers, OC, with the state (and, sometimes, guerilla organizations) as the agency causing the violence. Private companies that threaten or execute direct violence through private security firms or paramilitaries -- and that are targets themselves of social movements protesting against them -- are, it seems, a relatively new issue and field of activity for those engaged in protective accompaniment today. (Though, historically, the issue of the negative role large multinationals play in Latin America is nothing new.) Several international organizations said that they were in a process to reflect how to respond to the challenges posed by the influx of multinationals.

It also became clear that at least the internationals among the accompaniment organizations are quite unanimous in their opinion about these companies. They reject fracking, the extraction of natural resources, the destruction of forests, etc. This can strengthen local movements that try to fight these issues, but there may be also a risk involved regarding agenda-setting and the principle of primacy of local actors in cases where local actors are not as clear in their rejection.

Some organizations use international networks for advocacy in the countries of origin of the companies. This is, however, not working thus far with countries like China or North Korea.

## 4. Managing UCP Projects



## 4.1 Volunteers and Staff

### Questions to Discuss<sup>63</sup>

These are the questions to group A2:

#### *Staff, training, length of service:*

- What qualifications or experiences are required / desired when selecting staff /volunteers? How is staff / volunteer competence developed and assessed?
- When, where and by whom is the training offered? How much training, and in what topics, is it appropriate before working in the field?
- How do you deal with colonialism, racism, sexism, discrimination against disabled and other forms of oppression in your training?
- What are the strengths and challenges of employing short-term volunteers / staff and of long-term service?

#### *Security:*

- How is the safety of personnel guaranteed?
- What should be established in terms of standard operating procedures (if applicable) before starting a project and while the project is ongoing?
- Whose knowledge is included in management and security decisions?
- How is digital security addressed, if at all?
- If the projects are expanded, with more staff, what does all this mean for security?

#### *Support, post-implementation service:*

- How are staff / volunteers supported in response to stress, trauma, and anxiety about experiences at work?
- How do organizations support current and former staff / volunteers with ongoing adjustment / mental health problems?
- When staff / volunteers are expected to help with advocacy after the end of their service, how is it supported, encouraged and what are the effects of this advocacy?

### Discussion

#### *Staff, training, length of service*<sup>64</sup>

IAP is a small Spanish organization; the majority of their volunteers are from the state of Spain. They do not have a preference regarding gender or age; experience is not required; some knowledge of human rights is preferred. Their recruitment and training process includes several steps: a first interview, then a five-month online course on Colombia, the organizations working there etc. Then there is a training

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<sup>63</sup> The “questions to discuss” were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop. This section includes findings from one working group and two tables of the final World Café. The working group A 2 was facilitated by Alejandra Vidal; the table E1 by Marion Girard; the table E2 by David Vladimir Solis. Sources: Notes of Group A2, taken by Diana Cabra; notes of E1 by Marion Girard; notes of plenary after Groups A and Tables E1 and E4, taken by Christine Schweitzer; also some information from World Café included.

<sup>64</sup> See also the article by Lindsay-Poland and Weintraub in Furnari (ed.) 2016. On pp 34 they describe recruitment, requirements and training of volunteers from those organizations in Colombia they researched: CPT, FOR-PP, PBI, PPF, SweFOR, Operation Dove and the Red de Hermandad (which was not at the workshop). The information here was mostly collected from the websites of the organizations.

workshop which includes ex-volunteers and HRD. At the end there is a personal interview after which both sides decide if someone would go to the field.

CPT requires future long-term volunteers to first participate in a 10-day delegation. The leader of the delegation assesses the work of the volunteer candidate during that time. An interview in Chicago and a 30-day training on various issues follow. Among the topics are “undoing racism” and other –isms and self-care. It is no longer required that a person is religious. The training is independent of particular placements. Long-term volunteers have to commit for three years. They receive a stipend. In the field they live in joint housing. Twice a year there are evaluations, and people go on trips twice: once for holidays and once to give talks and raise money. The majority of its volunteers are from North America but CPT has also involved Latin Americans as volunteers.

FrayBa does not conduct recruitment and training itself but receives volunteers through partner organizations in Europe and North America. These organizations also take care of the training which may be between one day and two weeks. On arrival, volunteers attend a workshop updating them on the situation, and then stay between two weeks and three months. In addition, FrayBa itself has also started to recruit and train volunteers for longer-term work. These volunteers are split up into teams of two persons and they stay for six months.

Witness for Peace (APP) only accepts U.S. citizens as volunteers. They need to fill in a form and then are interviewed and attend a two-week training on the work in the field, the politics of the U.S. in Latin America, etc. People need to commit for two years; the first year they stay in joint accommodation, the second year they may move out. They receive a stipend.

FOR-PP had three people in their team in Colombia. They were recruited through applications; some had participated in delegations beforehand. The training took place in the U.S. Topics included understanding Colombia and living in a team. The new volunteers started by staying for six months in the Community of San José de Apartadó, thereby gaining first-hand experience in the field, and then moving to Bogotá for advocacy work. They have had some Latin volunteers who are citizens of the US, who migrated, or whose families migrated previously to the US from Latin America.

PPF recruits U.S. citizens through the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. Its branches in Colombia and Mexico receive the volunteers who stay on average one month, and may come back for 2-3 visits per year.

PBI has a minimum age of 25 for its volunteers. The recruitment process begins with an information day and a subsequent phone interview. After that, an online self-learning course must be taken which may last for about six months. The success of attending the course is certified. After that, an international training of one week follows for a specified particular field project. People chosen then undergo a pre-departure course of several days and they receive additional induction upon arrival in the field. PBI has, for many years now, employed Latin Americans to work side by side with North Americans and Europeans. It uses both volunteers who go to the field for a minimum of one year and peace consultants paid by a German development scheme who receive a salary and commit for at least two years.

All organizations require fluency in Spanish.

Some organizations have started to use national staff (FOR-PP) or other people from the global South, e.g. other Latin American countries (PBI). Others – for example SIPAZ – said that they prefer not to integrate nationals into their teams in order to protect their independence and nonpartisanship.

#### *Support during and after service*

IAP has access to a support program in Barcelona and a team of an external agency available for support. Sometimes ex-volunteers also help. They have created commissions to look after the issue of

self-care. In the field, they make sure that people take holidays and days off. Every six months, they conduct reviews with the volunteers.

CPT has a self-care coordinator, psychologists, and priests, and conducts circles of self-care for stress issues or other concerns. In case of heavy traumatization, there is a mental health medical leave for 1 to 6 months, during which the volunteer receives a stipend. They try to prioritize the health of the volunteers over other issues. There are rest policies, trips, vacations, weekend free days, and regular retreats to stay in good collective mental health as an institutional practice. At the beginning of the year they schedule vacations and the coordinator ensures these are taken by the team.

Witness for Peace and FOR-PP said that for them the psycho-social support was a challenge, also due to lack of money in the case of FOR-PP, and that they do/did not have provisions for mental health.

PBI conducts mental health sessions once a month with a facilitator to share how the team is doing. They have a leave policy which requires volunteers to take two mini retreats or vacations to wherever they chose. If any person is more affected, they will have individual face-to-face or skype sessions making use of a network of psychologists. There are self-evaluations and feedback from the team with reflection on how they feel and are working together and it is shared in writing with the committee, thus preventing conflicts. There are 30 vacation days a year and days off on Saturdays. There is good health insurance and in Colombia there is a health committee for physical or mental discomfort, composed partly from the team and partly by contracted outsiders.

One organization also mentioned the need to have legal support in the country on stand-by.

#### *Post-implementation service*

This topic was not discussed much in the working groups dealing with volunteers. PBI makes use of its returnees for educational programs back home (for example, speaking in schools). Some organizations ask their returnees to help with advocacy, and/or with preparing the next generation of volunteers.

#### *Security*

Most organizations carry out risk analysis and enter an area together with the organizations they accompany, ask the local communities for advice and regularly exchange information with other international organizations. IAP and PBI have coordinators who are responsible for security. In the field all organizations expect their volunteers to communicate regularly, following certain standard operating procedures. CPT has an evacuation protocol. Witness for Peace also informs the U.S. Embassy and local military about their movements. FOR-PP had the rule that any team member could veto an activity if it was considered risky. PPF has a person in charge of security in each community. PBI in addition sends letters ahead to the authorities before going to a community. And it has an international alert network in case there are incidents or threats. Most organizations make sure that there are always two people working together in a team, never one person alone.

#### *Digital security*

Digital security plays a role in many activities and tasks: Informing each other what the community does, advocacy, general information exchange, invitations to events, asking for help, sending alerts, real-life monitoring and reporting, and staying in contact with activist networks. Some organizations reported that they did nothing about digital security or are not sure about it, for example if their internet, for example, was safe. Some organizations use encryption for their emails, and have the rule to talk about nothing sensitive on the phone. PBI has an expert on digital security.

It was recommended to work on improving digital security because not only the security of the accompaniment organization, but also the security of the partners, depends on it. This goes also for sharing photos.

## Good Practices

### *Recruitment and training*

- Accompaniers need training.
- Training should be continuous, not only before service but during service.
- There needs to be a process to assess and evaluate applicants.
- Training should include eradicating forms of discrimination, how to work against oppression, self-care, and explanations of the internal politics of the organization.
- Good training includes a three-step process: classroom – theory – practice.
- Hold regular workshops on the overall context of international politics and how this impacts the local work.
- Use returning accompaniers as part of the training process for new volunteers in the home countries.

### *Security*

- There needs to be clear personal safety protocols – for example knowledge of first aid.
- Have an up to date risk analysis of regions where accompaniment is taking place..
- Know how to directly contact safety and security personnel from the field.
- Know what the community alarms and alarm systems are.
- Include socio-cultural facts analysis when doing regular context analysis.
- Have clear communication protocols.

### *Digital security*

The table E2 discussed and listed good practices regarding digital security:

- Hold workshops on digital security.
- Do not use Telegram, WhatsApp, etc. but other, safer messaging apps such as Signal. Also remember that Facebook and emails can be read by the government and that Skype is not safe, either.
- It is important to encrypt sensitive information and using codes or foreign languages may also help protect communications.

### *Support*

The table E1 listed:

- Health insurance should be included in the plan and budget of the accompaniment program.
- Have a crisis care protocol in place before a crisis.
- Have a psychologist or person in charge who can be voluntarily contacted by the accompaniers (without the accompanier having to pay for it).
- Provide regular external supervision, for example once per month.
- Have a mental well-being subgroup.
- Have policies to prevent and to respond to crises.
- Have collective spaces or self-help groups where volunteers/staff can talk about fears etc.
- Team coordinators need to be clear about the symptoms and signs of stress and trauma.
- Have weekly rest days and regular holidays and be sure volunteers/staff take them.
- Engage in group activities that contribute to team members living together more agreeably.
- Hold regular retreats.
- Create safe spaces to address criticism and self-criticism.

- Team coordinators should support accompaniers, checking in regularly and providing feedback and evaluation.
- Find ways to articulate and respond to individual and collective needs.
- Organize online volunteer psychosocial support networks.
- Have a budget for health, mental well-being, recreational spaces, etc.
- Have protocols to respond to harassment.
- Have protocols for internal conflict resolution.

### Challenges

- Training resources are limited when you are a small NGO.
- Sufficient Financing is always a challenge.
- Some organizations do not provide enough training.
- There are large differences in the training that volunteers receive with partners.
- It can be challenging to find volunteers who are fluent Spanish speakers.
- Coordination is lacking for training for deployment in different organizations.
- There is not enough mental health care provided and people get burned out.
- Living in the countryside is hard for many volunteers.
- People are often different in the interview then when they are working in the field
- Security is generally a challenge.
- Some situations are unanticipated and there are no protocols to guide action.

The Table E1 listed:

- The costs of psychological treatment can be too high for some organizations to support.
- It can be risky to turn to others for psychological aid.
- It is not always clear what to do when there are direct attacks against people in the organization.
- Burn-out often happens because of internal problems rather than because of the work itself.
- There are people who are very willing to work on their emotions, others are not. It is difficult to find a balance.
- A very deep commitment is needed for this type of work.

### Conclusions

As was already found in the earlier workshops, the policies of the organizations regarding recruitment, training, length of service, working with volunteers or with paid staff etc. vary a lot. In Latin America the international organizations all provide some sort of training, either by the organization themselves or by partner organizations.

As to security on the ground, the policies and procedures of the organizations seem to be very similar. They all do assessments, have communication protocols to stay in contact with their volunteers, and do some liaising with partners, other NGOs and some also with authorities when working in a certain area. Digital security, as elsewhere, is a challenge for the groups in Latin America.

Staff well-being and mental health are an issue that all recognize, however it seems that for some of the smaller organizations the lack of funds to provide adequate support is a serious challenge.

## 4.2 Cooperation Between Different Accompaniment Groups

### Questions to Discuss<sup>65</sup>

- What role do existing protection / accompaniment networks play?
- When or under what circumstances is cooperation beneficial or necessary?
- Which are possible setbacks of cooperation?
- When are local or international protection organizations most effective in accompaniment?
- What are the benefits and challenges of collaboration between different organizations of protection / accompaniment and self-protected communities?
- How to deal with imbalances (of power, size, resources, etc.) between the different organizations?
- When is it beneficial to join forces regarding financing and / or other resources (for example, trained volunteers)?
- How beneficial / challenging is the religious background of some groups in collaborations and protection / accompaniment work?
- What is the relationship between protection / accompaniment and the consolidation of peace? How can the two be merged in practice?
- What is the relationship between protection / accompaniment and human rights protection? How can the two be merged in practice?

### Discussion

The group focused on the question of how to improve cooperation and solidarity because, everybody agreed, only networks can survive in the long-term.

There is a network specifically of accompaniment organizations: “Red de Organizaciones de Acompañamiento y Observación Internacional” (International Network of Accompaniment and Monitoring Organizations). It is formed of organizations that accompany HRDs, communities and organizations in their work to defend the land and environment in Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. They meet once a year, and join forces for statements and other advocacy.

In El Salvador, there is a round table of human rights defenders. They are using various different tactics; not necessarily physical accompaniment. In other countries there are also networks that focus on certain issues. Accompaniment organizations often are part of these networks for purposes of advocacy. For example, in Colombia some have an office in Bogotá where the staff is doing this kind of networking. These platforms also help in raising funds, and share capacity building measures.

In addition to the national networking, there are also examples of coordination and cooperation between organizations that do physical accompaniment in certain areas. In the Magdalena Medio region of Colombia, several accompaniment organizations (CPT, PBI, IAP and Peacewatch) are active and meet regularly to exchange experiences and coordinate work. In Buenaventura, PBI, Witness for Peace and SweFOR cooperate closely, taking weekly shifts in accompaniment. In another area, they share work by leaving certain tasks (for example security coordination) to one of the organizations.

In spite of these examples of cooperation, there is sometimes also competition. Organizations tend to get “territorial” about an area they work in and do not want others to come in. One participant stated that the local organizations also feel this competition. For them it is a challenge to decide with whom to

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<sup>65</sup> The “questions to discuss” were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop. The working group C2 was facilitated by Jhon Henry Camargo Varela. Sources: Notes of Group C2, taken by Ana Solano Codina; notes of plenary after Groups C and Report on World Café Table E4, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

work, and there have been cases when one partner organization resented that the local organization or community also sought support from a second organization. For local organizations it is often hard to understand the differences between the organizations. One accompaniment organization said that when they receive a request for accompaniment, and they know that there is already another accompanier, they would probably turn down the invitation. But it is a dilemma for them because they operate on the principle of invitation, and are aware that they make the local partner choose.

A special issue is cooperation with the different churches, both Catholic and Protestant. They wield a lot of influence in the local communities. Sometimes there are priests that tell the people not to defend themselves against infringements on their rights -- for example against land grabbing. Also very traditional attitudes of some believers (including homophobia) sometimes makes cooperation a challenge. Some accompaniment organizations nevertheless seek to work with the churches, others do not.

Another special issue in Colombia is the question of cooperation with the UNP. UNP is an armed body formed by the government in 2011 to provide security for individuals, HRDs, political and social leaders, unionists, journalists.<sup>66</sup> After the peace agreement, some members of FARC have been included in their ranks, and high-ranking former FARC members are also protected by them. Sometimes their work may be beneficial, it was said, but because they carry weapons most accompaniment organizations hesitate to cooperate fully with them. Local communities also do not trust the UNP.

Another challenge identified were different policies of organizations regarding the offer of workshops etc. Some larger NGOs (not the accompaniment organizations) pay their participants which creates an expectation among potential participants, and makes it difficult for smaller organizations that do not want to pay participants.

### *Funding*

Scarce resources and competition for donor grants are other barriers to cooperation. On the topic of funding, in the last round of workshops, a table on "financing" was created. This table discussed the challenges that arise from the shortage of funds that are available, and that forces organizations to compete with each other for these funds. Cooperation and joint applications were judged to be useful but it seems that they are rarely put into practice.

The organizations have different strategies for funding. Some are based on the collection of individual donations (mostly from donors in the U.S.) or from Churches (PPF, CPT). Some organizations even expect their volunteers to partly finance their service. Others – like NP, SweFor and PBI – finance their field projects mostly through international grants, for example from the UN, the EU, the African Union and some individual governments like Switzerland, Spain, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands.

The costs for the field projects vary depending on the number of people who are in the field at the same time, and what benefits they receive. The concern was raised that working with volunteers and not paying people mostly excludes people from the global South (and can only draw people from the global North who can afford to volunteer).

### Good Practices<sup>67</sup>

- Identify when there are problems of competition and cooperation and attend to them

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<sup>66</sup> See <https://www.unp.gov.co/la-unp/que-hacemos/>

<sup>67</sup> On the flipchart used for reporting in the plenary, the group had listed a few other key words, but the rapporteur was not able to reconstruct what was meant by them, and therefore left them out, and also it seems that some good practices and challenges were confused (challenges listed under good practices and vice versa).

- Identify and know the context, visualize the accompanying situation.
- Work together to achieve spending money most effectively.
- Organize round tables of organizations for exchange and coordination.
- Refer people and issues to other organizations that are better equipped to deal with them.
- Finance project with multiple donors, don't be dependent on one source of financing.
- Create a platform for networks of organizations and rotate the accompaniment between them.
- Value organizations' capabilities and experiences.
- Develop mutual support for "technical assistance".
- Sometimes religion, and particularly the church, is a means of reaching communities.

### Challenges

- There is a confusing multitude of institutions.
- Round tables are not always effective.
- There are conflicts within networks.
- For U.S. organizations, it is a challenge to cooperate on advocacy with European organizations that focus on the European Union, and vice versa.
- The strict policies of financing of some organizations creates barriers to cooperation sometimes. Some organizations exclude certain donors (for example, government sources from the U.S.) and cannot cooperate with others that do not exclude them.
- Clear and defined purposes to do good accompaniment are missing sometimes.
- Organizations can take over an area and do not allow other organizations to work there.
- There are many challenges to effective coordination and communication.
- It takes time and energy to create effective, collective, and constructive spaces that strengthen the work of institutions.
- It is not easy to convince donors that the support network is a necessary part of the work and shows immediate results.
- Some organizations manage their resources poorly.
- When other organizations pay workshop participants, it creates expectations that need to be overcome.
- Grassroots processes can be manipulated.
- There are religious barriers that can affect reality. Priests take positions on social struggles, and wield much influence in favor or against a struggle, for example whether to defend against land grabbing.

### Conclusions

The group looked at the different countries and regions, and collected experiences regarding coordination and cooperation. The central question was how to make the work more effective. Some organizations have more resources or more skills than others, and therefore it makes sense to seek ways to orchestrate the various efforts for maximum efficiency. Networks are needed to survive, everybody agreed. However, it became clear that the lack of resources is a main reason why organizations feel forced to compete with each other – for grants and for donations. Having larger and easily accessible funding for accompaniment would help increase the efficiency and efficacy of the accompaniment work enormously.

## 4.3 Exit Strategies

### Questions to Discuss<sup>68</sup>

- What circumstances cause protection / accompaniment organizations to end a project?
- In case of reduced financial funds, how to decide the priorities of the work?
- How does protection / accompaniment support or harm long-term local self-protection mechanisms in general?
- What are the implications of not retiring, that is, being in a country for a long time? To what extent does long-term commitment develop dependency? Does it affect the perception of the effectiveness of the accompaniment?
- How can an external protection / accompaniment organization help the partners and the communities you have worked with to prepare for your exit and after the exit?
- If "training" is a way to support community self-protection, who owns the essential knowledge for civil self-protection? How can community self-protection efforts be sustained and replicated?
- How can protection / accompaniment organizations that have withdrawn continue to help local partners and communities from a distance? For example, do you discuss funding questions with communities / individuals protected?

### Discussion

PBI stopped working in Guatemala after some years, as after elections there were no new requests for accompaniment. In Colombia, PBI and some other organizations are carrying out a gradual withdrawal partly due to lack of funding and partly because they observed that local capacities have become much stronger. But they try to conduct visits and do some political accompaniment from the capital. Other organizations have also had to reduce their presence due to lack of funds and personnel. FOR-PP has for the time being, ended its presence altogether.<sup>69</sup>

PBI, APP and FOR have done accompaniment with peasant communities in Colombia for 25 (PBI), 20 (APP), and 10 (FOR) years. The type of violence has changed during that period but overall there is still a threat. The situation is different in indigenous communities because they have strong mechanisms of self-protection.

Main causes for ending a project that were listed include:

- lack of money
- no more requests / need
- lack of team members
- lack of permit to enter a certain zone
- visa problems.

To prepare for leaving, most organizations seek to enhance the capacities for self-protection of the accompanied through training or the development of individual security plans. Where there is more than one accompaniment organization on the ground, as in Colombia, some tasks have been taken over by other organizations when one had to reduce its work.

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<sup>68</sup> The "questions to discuss" were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop.

The working group C4 was facilitated by Eulalia Padró Giral. Sources: Notes of Group C4, taken by Marion Brastel; notes of plenary after Groups C and of World Café table E7 taken by Christine Schweitzer.

<sup>69</sup> FOR Austria said in a conversation the rapporteur had with them, that they hope to send new volunteers later in 2020, though this was before the COVID-19 crisis hit.

Usually the organizations try to maintain some relationship with the community or organization after leaving, for example, doing some “political accompaniment” (advocacy). Sometimes, if they close a field site but do not leave the country altogether, they try to organize visits to the place. Alert networks that can be activated in case something happens are also useful where they exist.

Before leaving, the organizations aim to strengthen the mechanisms of self-protection through networking and capacity-building.

### Good Practices

- Help to open spaces for peace, which can generate independent organization spaces.
- Aiming for sustained presence and leaving slowly if necessary (as PBI did in San José de Apartadó).
- Accompanied organizations have their support networks and help themselves.
- When no longer in a community, provide political accompaniment from a distance when possible.
- Over time lower the accompaniment profile so that those who were accompanied are stronger.
- Do not start new accompaniment without having assessed the capacity to stay (for example to have adequate funding).
- Strengthen self-protection mechanisms in the communities.
- Create safe spaces so that communities can develop their own security mechanisms.
- To counter the threat of denial of visas, do advocacy work both within the country and outside/internationally, and work with mixed international-national teams.
- Have emergency plans ready if, for example, there are coups d'état.
- Encourage and support HRDs to develop their own strategies of self-protection.
- Have security protocols.
- Establish priorities in case an organization needs to withdraw. Ask which organization could take over the role of looking after security.
- Learn from indigenous communities about self-protection.
- Support exchanges between communities, e.g. between indigenous and peasant communities.
- Learning is multi-directional. In some cases, accompaniment organizations learn from those they accompany about how to organize.
- Create systems and methods to maintain organizational memory.
- Grassroots processes have managed to make self protection efforts visible and thus increase their own space for protection of civilians. These efforts can be strengthened thanks to international presence.
- Support truth and reconciliation processes.

### Challenges

- Long-term presence creates dependence on the accompaniment. People get used to it.
- Governments may decide any time that an organization is no longer welcome and not needed and deny visas.
- Communities always give reasons for people to stay. First armed conflict, now post-conflict. This leads to long term presence and difficulty imagining leaving. When will the need go away?
- Generations of communities believe they inherited international accompaniment.
- Communities have their own mechanisms of self-protection but working with internationals wakes the hope for financial support. It is necessary to discuss this with the communities.
- It is critical to have clear protocols for communities in case internationals have to leave suddenly.

- The exit of one organization may also impact other accompaniment organizations that are still working in the community.
- Sometimes it is difficult for international accompaniment organizations to help connect communities that are in resistance.

### Conclusions

This workshop had the same findings as the previous ones regarding exit strategies, though perhaps the practical experience in having to exit was more common in Latin America than in the other regions. Exiting is always a challenge unless it happens because the need has diminished and requests stop coming in. The presence of international organizations is always precarious due to insecurity of funding and the need to be officially allowed to work in the country. Strengthening mechanisms of self-protection and maintaining some security net without doing physical accompaniment are the two common strategies employed.

## 4.4 Widening Accompaniment in the Region

### Questions to Discuss<sup>70</sup>

- Is it desirable and possible to widen protection / accompaniment in the region?
- How should the size of existing projects / organizations, the scope of activities and / or range of actors using protection strategies /accompaniment grow?
- What good practices could be expanded? What are the challenges of such growth?
- What role does funding play in expanding protection / accompaniment? Which are the advantages and disadvantages of different types and sources of funding?
- What is the relationship between decisions to extend, stabilize or reduce protection / accompaniment in the region? Are there possible negative effects of efforts to expand the work?

### Discussion

“Expanding the work” may have two different meanings that were discussed in the group. One was to increase the number of accompaniments in one country or area, the other was to expand accompaniment to other Latin American countries. Regarding the first, there were slightly different opinions. On the one hand, there are a lot of unmet needs and the worsening of human rights in many countries. On the other hand, accompaniment creates dependency of local organizations or communities on international NGOs, and those NGOs work under precarious circumstances, as described in 4.3.

An expansion to other Latin American countries was noted as possible and needed because they almost all, with the exception of Uruguay and Costa Rica, suffer from violence and HR violations. But such expansion faces the same barrier of lack of funding. The participants at the workshop named three possible priority countries for new accompaniment projects: Venezuela, Nicaragua and the Amazonian area of Brazil. Also the situation in Bolivia after the upcoming elections would have to be monitored.

It was suggested that a network would be useful to exchange information about the different regions and countries. Such a network could also help with distributing funds or at least avoiding competition regarding the same funding sources, and to assess where the most urgent needs are.

Funding is a main, if not the major challenge for all the organizations. There are not that many funding sources. Some have strict conditions – for example, one organization lost funding when it started working with ex-guerrilla who were rated “terrorists” by the funder. Some other organizations are not acceptable to some partners because of U.S. government funding, in particular. Some also lack the personnel and resources needed to do fundraising.

To extend the outreach of the projects, it was suggested to create human rights committees in communities, to network with other organizations that work in the same area but on other tasks, and to increase capacity-building measures.

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<sup>70</sup> The “questions to discuss” were given to the facilitators and participants with the agenda of the workshop. The working group D3 was facilitated by Evan King. Sources: Notes of Group D3, taken by Sina Marie Olfemann; notes of plenary after Groups D, taken by Christine Schweitzer.

## Good Practices

- Sharing needs maps including context, actors, source of information and resource management in network.
- Develop collective management between communities to defend their areas including specific spaces for protection, plus to increase the external visibility of their struggles.
- Strengthen visibility through support networks.
- Develop alliances with organizations that engage in small-scale economic projects.
- Develop / strengthen the organizational capacity in the community.
- Improve training opportunities.
- To strengthen the sustainability of the work after international organizations leave, it is useful to create / promote human rights committees within communities.
- Organize the transfer of capacities between organizations.
- Work through networks to provide some level of protection, when an organization cannot be present in the community.
- Take advantage of technology.
- Organize training of trainers to multiply capacity.
- Develop and maintain institutional memory systems.
- Collect individual donations for greater autonomy.
- Work toward developing institutional and permanent stability.
- Create funder mapping with other organizations in a network.
- Engage in direct work with ex-combatants.
- There is a need to do advocacy with funders to change the concept of "terrorists".
- Diversify funding sources.
- Look for safe spaces for people to stay if necessary, outside of communities
- Remember that accompaniment is a mutual process and learn from communities how they implement accompaniment already.
- Work with the diaspora from specific areas.

## Challenges

- It is time consuming and difficult to find funds, resources, and international funding (for example money from the U.S.).
- It is often hard to gather enough information in order to do adequate analysis and understand contexts.
- Continuing the work is dependent on support and this impacts the ability to be autonomous.
- While there are benefits to sharing information, there are also obstacles to doing so.
- Processes to receive or establish funds are complex.
- Sometimes there is competition for funding.
- Working with marginalized population (ex: gangs, ex-guerrillas) presents major challenges and is more difficult.
- Foreign interference in communities where accompaniment occurs is increasing and presents new challenges.
- It is often unclear for internationals to know where, when and how to enter a country without doing harm, and how to leave.

## Conclusions

Growing larger in scale is a particular challenge for the accompaniment organizations in Latin America because of two main issues. One is the question if more accompaniment might also mean more dependence on foreign actors which is not necessarily desirable. The other is the scarcity of funding, the same issue also discussed in the group on exiting. There is no doubt that there is need for accompaniment in more countries of Latin America than there is current capacity to provide. But neither the size of the accompaniment organizations nor the resources available would permit a quick extension of accompaniment to other countries.

## 4.5 How to Measure Success?

### Discussion

A table at the second World Café, held toward the end of the workshop, discussed how to measure success.<sup>71</sup>

The focus question posed was: If you don't know what the effects are - longer term or negative - how do you know you are putting your resources into the right places? This is relevant for ongoing work and for exit strategies. Often baselines are missing that would help judge the changes achieved. And evidence of positive effects is important when convincing funders that the work is valuable and should be supported, as well as for finding volunteers.

The group discussed quantitative and qualitative evaluations, as well as story-telling, as methods to capture outcomes and impact.

It was agreed that academic perspectives are only partly useful. They tend more and probably too much towards measurement and evaluation, and their methods are, it was thought, too strict for practitioners. Sometimes projects want an academic involved, but for an academic you need a certain level of rigor and more structure. If such methods are not feasible, academics may feel they cannot add value. The experience also shows that a lot of academics do not understand the accompaniment work. They might have a hard time understanding the division between being impartial and being an advocate. But an external review can give the organizations more credibility.

Activists and the accompaniment organizations themselves, on the other hand, may have an implicit theory of change but that may not always be so methodical. They understand that an action will lead to a certain result but not what the preconditions are.

It was suggested to form or improve a community of practice – sharing evaluations and data and inviting academics to do meta-analyses of existing studies.

### Good Practices<sup>72</sup>

- Teach academics about protective accompaniment /UCP so that they understand the field.
- Value story-telling as a method to capture impact.
- Former volunteers / UCP staff can, and do, become academics and start writing about the work.

### Challenges

- It is not easy to maintain impartiality as a researcher while being committed to the work.
- Academic methods and requirements are too strict and often do not work for practitioners.
- Base-line surveys are rarely done.

### Conclusions

The World Café method did not allow for an in-depth discussion but the challenges described are probably rather universal, and were also reflected in earlier workshops.

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<sup>71</sup> Source: Notes of World Café E, Table 7, taken by Emily Brewer, and notes of Plenary after World Café E, taken by Christine Schweitzer

<sup>72</sup> This has been deducted from the notes by the rapporteur.

## 5. Conclusions



## 5.1 Plenary on Good Practices

### Discussion

The plenary began, as in the earlier workshops, with an exercise. First, all participants were asked to name one good practice that they considered of particular importance. These were listed in key words on the board. Afterwards, all were asked to weigh them by marking three they thought were most important. Nobody was allowed to give more than three points, though a few felt this was difficult. Everybody was also asked at the same time to mark those practices which they felt deserved more discussion as they had doubts or concerns about them or they felt that more nuance was needed. There was no limit to how many of these could be marked.

On the next page there is a chart of the outcome of the exercise. The good practices that were ranked high in all five good practices workshops<sup>73</sup> are on top of the columns for each workshop.

The color code for numbers in the table:

**Blue:** the number of people indicating this practice is one of the three most important

**Red:** the number of people who indicated the practice needed more discussion or people had doubts about it.

There were three most important good practices identified in Bogotá: Permanent analysis of context, followed by community self-protection and third, care for accompanier and accompanied.

As to questions and doubts, that list was headed by advocacy with companies, followed by creative ways of boycott, training and certification of communities to widen coverage, quantitative evaluation, and independence from donors. Most of these issues had played a role in the small groups in the days before. Regarding the doubts, the presence of (often international) companies and their exploitation of natural resources had already been identified as a major challenge in Latin America. Those who had raised concerns did not mean that the issue was not important, but that they questioned if it was the role of accompaniment organizations to deal with it, and what the risks might be for the other work and for the local communities if the accompaniers engaged in this issue.

Training and certification was explained as having been a good practice in Honduras. Certification meant that people were encouraged to work as multipliers and were giving trainings on their own to other communities. Other participants questioned the need for certificates.

Quantitative evaluation which had been discussed in the second World Café in round E, also received a number of doubts. While it was recognized that donors like to see quantitative analysis, there were different views about whether such data could help the accompanying organizations, and if it is possible to define quantitative variables beyond counting numbers of accompaniments or trainings done.

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<sup>73</sup> For reports from earlier workshops see <https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/about-3/new-report-good-practices2>

<b>Bogotá Workshop</b>			<b>Paynesville workshop</b>			<b>Nairobi Workshop</b>			<b>Beirut Workshop</b>			<b>Manila Workshop</b>	
Permanent analysis	16	3	Primacy of those most affected	11	0	Relationship building	15	0	Relationship building	10	1	Primacy of local groups	15
Strengthen Community self-protection	12	1	Take the risk of bringing adversaries together	10	6	Empowering communities	13	2	Well-trained teams	9	0	Multi-level relationship-building	14
Care of companions / accompanied	10	0	Use whatever identity might protect but coupled with deep anticolonialism work	8	9	Identify and strengthen local coping mechanisms	11	2	Primacy of local actors	8	1	Capacity enhancement for all – local actors and all of us	9
Share policies and evaluations	7	0	Systematic analysis, critical and contextual analysis	7	1	Context analysis	10	1	Learning from local communities / experiences of others	8	0	Ongoing context analysis	7
Solidarity networkd	5	0	Relationship-building	6	1	Continuous process of actor mapping specific to interventions	7	0	Be proactive in our monitoring and evaluation and learning	8	0	Co-Creation (instead of implementation)	5
Open your mind without holding onto the mandate	5	0	Self-care	5	0	Active learning of existing local practices of self-protection	7	0	Analysis	4	1	Seeking the humanity in the other	5
Mutual support of accompanying organizations	5	0	Cultural and contextual appropriateness	4	1	Staff security	6	5	Non-partisanship	3	5	Creativity	3

Inclusion of Latin American into international organizations	5	0	Acknowledge that there are many other expressions of this work and acknowledgment that there are many great expressions of this work	4	0	Youth engagement which is gender sensitive	6	1	Self-care and mandatory breaks	3	2	Adhere to principles	2
Exchange of experiences, free and with confidence	5	0	Self-healing	3	5	Trauma healing	6	1	Focus on prevention	3	2	Flexibility	2
Analysis of the risk of the processes of resistance	5	0	Be informed by how your actions affect systemic change	3	5	Being proactive	6	1	Adaptability	3	0	Trust-building	2
Primacy of local actors	4	1	Empower our diverse community	3	2	Develop strategies to link UCP tracks	4	0	Outcomes oriented approach	2	3	Good listening	2
Creative forms of consumers' boycott to put pressure on enterprises	3	8	Mainstreaming awareness of power imbalances	2	3	Community engagement / participation	4	0	Donor education	2	3	Sustainability	1
Independence in the process of struggle	3	3	Assume nothing, open mind	1	2	Self care	2	9	Sharing diversity	2	2	Innovation	1
Gender plan / harassment plan	3	3	Vision is community transformation	1	1	Openness to scaling up	2	8	Planning strategic engagements	2	1	Adaptability	1
Training in digital security	3	0	Trust as pillar to make communities safer	1	1	Shuttle diplomacy	2	7	Having hope	2	1	Team work	1

Making human rights violations visible internationally	3	0	Power of story sharing	1	1	Regional approaches to security	2	5	Solidarity	2	0	Interdependency of protection work	1
Key allies in the community	3	0	Be mindful of the common good	1	1	Institutional learning and memory	2	5	Ongoing training	2	0	Different role of local, national and international in different phases	1
Accompaniment of migrants from departure to arrival	3	0	Network building	1	0	Youth economic empowerment	2	4	Forming local peace committees	2	0	Acceptance (in the community)	1
Independence from donors	2	5	Information and resource-sharing and building	1	0	Focus on positive change makers (	2	3	Empathy:	2	0	Concrete action	0
Be the voice of others	2	3				Deep community work	2	3	Commitment	2	0	Constant learning	0
Advocacy of local actors	2	1				Bringing men and women to further common goals in terms of gender	2	2	Protecting all life	1	5	Unity	0
Accompaniment of Latin Americans for Latin Americans	2	0				Cooperation between stakeholders	2	1	Networks and local relations	1	1	Remember the greater vision you are part of	0
Advocacy regarding enterprises	1	8				Listening	2	0	Disaggregation of threats	1	1	Persistence to nonviolence	0

Training and certification of community to expand coverage	1	6			Digital security	1	14	Sharing	1	0		
Quantitative evaluation of accompaniment	1	5			Inclusivity	1	5	Diversity in our teams	1	0		
Peace Communities	1	3			Healing and rebuilding communities	1	3	Credible interrupters:	1	0		
To work for a new world	1	1			Using coalition power for protection)	1	2	Maximizing different roles and skills	1			
Joint accompaniment organizations	1	1			Referral pathways	1	2	Relevance of UCP wheel	0	5		
“Net” of ex-combatants	0	5			Do no harm	0	2	De-escalation	0	3		
					Managing expectations / transparency	0	1	Relationships of all stakeholders and unexpected actors:	0	2		
					Dialogue	0	1	Ongoing reflection and sharing:	0	0		
					Willing to work in challenging setting	0	0	Beauty of faces and stories I listened to	0	0		

						Interrupting cycles of violence	0	0	Sharing successes and challenges with broader community		3	
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*Figure 1 Main good practices identified by participants in the final plenary.*

When comparing the results of the exercise to those of earlier workshops, a few commonalities and differences can be noticed:

Analysis of the situation and the context have ranked rather high in all workshops. Primacy of local actors and related points came up in Bogotá, but were probably more emphasized in earlier workshops. Fully missing (not even listed) was to build relationships with all stakeholders which was an important point in other workshops. This will be discussed below in 5.2.



## 5.2 Summary and Conclusions

### Accompaniment / UCP in Latin America

In the workshop, there were organizations that varied quite a lot in their practice. Perhaps three categories could be distinguished. The first and largest category included those international organizations that focus on providing physical accompaniment to local groups and communities. The second, smaller, category were local organizations – sometimes with some international volunteers – that pursue a much broader field of activities, not limited to protection. They were, for example, working with youth gangs and in prisons or doing different kinds of development and peacebuilding work. The third category were rural communities who focus on unarmed self-protection, represented in particular by the Colombian peace community of San José de Apartadó.

The following points of discussion were reflected in the workshop:

- Human rights and other civil society organizations threatened by armed political actors;
- Peace communities establishing weapons-free zones and distancing themselves from guerilla and government forces alike;
- Challenges of working with youth gangs and youth in prison;
- Dealing with the threat of organized crime and multinational companies entering the territories of peasant or indigenous communities.
- Addressing the structural violence that creates or contributes to the local violence.

### Key Themes

The workshop participants formulated a number of lessons, good practices and challenges which can be read in the appendix (1). There were many good practices listed by the small groups. Some were identical to those already stated in earlier workshops – like the requirement of training for volunteers or the necessity of security protocols. Outstanding practices that were repeated in more than one of the working groups include:

- Combine the different forms of accompaniment -- physical, political, legal and psychosocial<sup>74</sup> -- and consider the four to be intrinsically interlinked.
- Cooperate with other (I)NGOs for political accompaniment (advocacy) both inside the country and internationally. The idea here was that sometimes sharing the tasks is beneficial – one organization concentrating on physical accompaniment and leaving part of the advocacy to others. Sharing in this way avoids putting the work on the ground at risk.
- Provide accompaniment only when requested.
- Non-interference in internal decision-making of local communities or accompanied organizations was a principle held by most.
- Have clear agreements (contracts) for physical accompaniment with those accompanied.
- Establish clear protocols for action between governments, embassies and accompanying organizations.
- Accompaniment requires communication to state institutions about the presence of the accompanying organization and what it intends to do (letters of notice to authorities, meeting with

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<sup>74</sup> Sometimes people in the workshop spoke of only three forms of accompaniment, leaving out the “legal”.

representatives of state agencies).

- Careful and ongoing analysis was emphasized, similarly to other workshops, as essential.
- Gender policies both for internal functioning of the UCP organization and for accompaniment played an important role in the discussion.
- In order to counter colonial and racist stereotypes, some international organizations have started to work with nationally and ethnically mixed teams.

Also some challenges that were repeated in more than one small group include:

- How to deal with threats that cannot be tracked back to the government (organized crime, multinationals, armed nonstate actors).
- Dependency may be created when there is long-term accompaniment: When organizations or communities are accompanied for a long period, they might get used to it and stop building resources of their own for self-protection. This is politically problematic and also risky, given the precarious financial basis of most accompanying organizations.
- Divided communities and handling of intra-communal conflicts are a challenge for the accompaniers who sometimes try to mediate and sometimes must stick strictly to the principle of non-interference.
- Accompaniers sometimes hold some different values than those accompanied. How to address such issues while respecting the autonomy of the local community and its values? This refers *inter alia* to gender norms, but also to the degree to which violence is an accepted behavior that can be chosen in certain situations.
- The issue of racism as a source for leverage – white people granted higher status and therefore wielding protective power.
- Holding the state accountable without increasing risks to those accompanied.
- Scarce financial means and competition for funds is one of the biggest challenges all organizations face.
- Finding enough good Spanish speaking international volunteers is a challenge for the international organizations.
- Rotation of volunteers and maintaining an institutional memory was listed as a challenge as well.

#### Comparison to Earlier Workshops and Studies and Work in Other Parts of the World

John Lindsay-Poland and Michael Weintraub in their contribution to Furnari (ed., 2016) studied unarmed protection and accompaniment in Colombia. Much of what they found as good practices and challenges during their field work with different accompaniment organizations<sup>75</sup> in Colombia can be generalized for all the countries represented at the Bogotá workshop. This is their list of good practices that they had identified for Colombia<sup>76</sup>. All of them were repeated in this workshop:

- Identify and strengthen the dissuasive power of accompaniment.
- Combine physical presence with advocacy with entities that could affect security.
- Establish healthy relationships with those accompanied and with others.
- Be consistent with values and identities of the accompaniers.

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<sup>75</sup> CPT, FOR-PP, PBI, PPF, SweFor, Operation Dove and – as the only organization that was not represented at the workshop – the Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia (<http://www.redcolombia.org/>).

<sup>76</sup> p64

- Maintain both institutional memory as well as the flexibility to adjust to new needs.
- Make the work of the projects internally efficient and sustainable
- Strengthen the collaboration between accompaniment organizations.

The regional workshop on Latin America has contributed to this project on good practices an approach to accompaniment that was not entirely absent in the other workshops, but was more fully expressed here. The two key phrases here are: Understanding of accompaniment as something wider than UCP, and an underlying sense of solidarity with those accompanied while avoiding becoming fellow activists. Both will be discussed below.

Of course there were also many findings that have already been discussed in earlier workshops: The need for good analysis, the primacy of local actors and non-interference in their internal functioning, the need for training of those doing accompaniment, and having security protocols and gender policies in place, working with mixed teams, capacity-building or enhancement<sup>77</sup> with local actors and strengthening local capacities for self-protection were important findings in Bogotá falling under the category of having been identified in previous workshops.

In the North America workshop, the issue of racism and the factor of “white privilege” played an important role in almost all discussions. In Bogotá, it also came up, and it was clear that international groups have found different ways to work with it. Some have changed their earlier practice and now include people from other continents or regions (including Latin America) in their teams. Others continue to recruit only (white) North Americans as this is what their partners want them to do, but seek other ways (mostly through training) to raise awareness about racism and overcome racist attitudes.

Though it was not the topic of a small group, there were many references to the positive impact protective accompaniment has in Latin America. The general sense was that the presence of accompaniers often helps to prevent attacks by armed perpetrators, though not everywhere and in every situation.<sup>78</sup>

Unarmed Civilian Protection is a field of practice that has one of its main roots in Latin America, though not the only one. Organizations like Peace Brigades International or Witness for Peace (who did not come to this workshop) developed protective accompaniment on that continent, and the first theories (Mahony & Eguren 1997) about its working are based on the experience in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti and Colombia.<sup>79</sup> Therefore it is not surprising that UCP in Latin America is to some degree different from the practices of the organizations that came to the other workshops, at least when considering those groups in Latin America that engage foremost in physical accompaniment. There are three main issues discussed below:

#### Between Nonpartisanship and Solidarity

First, there is a special element of solidarity that underlies the work of the international accompaniment groups. Whether human rights activists, peace communities or work in Chiapas where the Zapatista movement found much international solidarity – the accompaniers seem to identify quite strongly and positively with the work and goals of those they accompany. Often, this was the reason why the groups

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<sup>77</sup> Nonviolent Peaceforce prefers the term capacity enhancement, because, as it was argued in an earlier workshop, capacity “building” seems to suggest that participants do not have any capacities before attending the respective training.

<sup>78</sup> Lindsay-Poland and Weintraub (2016:33) mention some concrete cases where attacks were not deterred – one for example on the community of San José de Apartado in 2000, and the disappearance of two accompanied HRD in Medellín in the same year.

<sup>79</sup> Though they also refer to PBI’s experience in Sri Lanka.

originally made the decision to come to the countries where they work. However, unlike in Palestine where solidarity (and a rejection of nonpartisanship) was also a strong motivator for some international groups, at least some accompanying groups in Latin America speak of their work as being impartial or nonpartisan. And even those who think that they cannot use this label emphasize the principle of non-interference into the internal processes of those they accompany. In the World Café, participants phrased their approach as a good practice: “Not to lose the principle of solidarity when professionalizing protection work.”

### Strategy of Deterrence

The second difference is the emphasis on the strategy of deterrence, at least by the international accompaniment groups. Relationship-building does play a role but is limited to certain actors, and even there it is mostly done in the context of deterrence – warning actors to behave (or not behave) in certain ways. The theory of accompaniment and deterrence was laid out, as mentioned above, by the mentioned Mahony and Eguren in 1997. It stands to some degree in contrast to the practice of many of those organizations that attended the other workshops. Especially Nonviolent Peaceforce considers relationship-building with as many parties as appropriate and possible to be crucial, including potential and actual perpetrators. Of course, as it was stated also in earlier workshops, there is always an element of deterrence even when emphasizing relationship-building, and that the two cannot be clearly separated. Also, sometimes there are barriers to relationship-building when direct contact with some groups is difficult or impossible (for instance, some organizations in the Philippines are branded ‘terrorists’ by the government and by the international community and are therefore illegal to contact.) But the difference is that most accompaniment groups in Latin America have made the conscious decision not to try to approach certain armed actors – guerilla or organized crime. The reason, as briefly sketched in 2.3, is that it is assumed that there would be no leverage over these groups and that any contact with them could be used by the government as an excuse to kick the accompanying organization out of the country. It is the government the international accompaniers hope to influence by building up an international shield. The leverage is the threat of repercussions from other countries or international media in case anything happens to the accompanied or the accompaniers who act as “unarmed bodyguards”. However, it needs to be noticed that the mechanisms used to be effective have also changed over time. Today there is probably much more emphasis on strengthening mechanisms of self-protection than at the time Mahony and Eguren studied the practice of PBI. There is also more awareness of the danger of dependency on the accompaniers.

### Accompaniment and UCP – Are These Concepts Identical?

In the introduction, it was already mentioned that the organizations working in Latin America use the term “accompaniment” when speaking of Unarmed Civilian Protection. The question is if these terms are identical or if there are differences. This question is not easy to answer, especially since the term UCP itself is still taking shape. Nonviolent Peaceforce, which first used the term UCP, has itself undergone quite a development. NP started with a very narrow understanding of what UCP is in the first decade of its existence, where even trainings on human rights or dealing with GBV were frowned upon. Current practice, though based in physical presence and protection, tends to spread out wide into fields that other organizations would consider humanitarian or peacebuilding activities. This documentation is not the place to indulge in this discussion about the definition of UCP. However, a few comments about the understanding of “accompaniment” in the Latin American context will be made which may shed light on this discussion which will have to take place in another context.

Accompaniment as the term is used in Latin America, all organizations present agreed, is broader than just physical accompaniment because it includes other forms of support (advocacy, legal, psycho-social). It has an underlying connotation of “being with someone” – which refers to the element of solidarity noted above.

When Nonviolent Peaceforce uses the term “accompaniment”, it means physical accompaniment – the nonviolent “bodyguarding”.<sup>80</sup> NP today understands UCP as “a combination of nonviolence and peacekeeping, but also peacebuilding, human rights protection and even humanitarian assistance”.<sup>81</sup> If such a broad definition is accepted, then the two terms and concepts are more or less identical, only the actual term is different. If UCP is understood as focusing on protection against violence, leaving dealing with root causes and consequences of violence to other actors - or at least if engaging in them, not considering them to be part of UCP, then especially psycho-social support may not be part of UCP. Though any particular organization may carry out both UCP and psycho-social support. Many organizations have mandates that allow them to engage in many different approaches and activities.

Another difference between Latin America and the understanding of UCP in some of the other regions may be the target groups – “beneficiaries” in the language of the humanitarian community. UCP as practiced, for example, by Nonviolent Peaceforce includes vast and not-well-defined target groups (“civilians”, “women”, “youth”) that only a few of those in Latin America would describe as those they accompany.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps it could be said that the framing of protection as accompaniment is different from its framing as UCP or civilian peacekeeping.

#### Questions and Recommendations for Future Workshops

The last workshop of this series of Good Practice Workshops was tentatively planned for October 2020, but then the Corona pandemic arrived. Currently, the plan is to capture the experiences on the European continent through interviews, a literature review and a series of short online meetings. The following questions might be interesting to pursue:

- What role do privilege and racism play in the perception of groups in Europe?
- What roles do deterrence and relationship-building play? And what gives leverage to UCP practitioners from Europe and working in Europe?
- What role does relationship-building with all actors play?
- What approaches and instruments are there to protect refugees?

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<sup>80</sup> See for example the UCP wheel presented in earlier workshops or the “Unarmed Civilian Protection Strengthening Civilian Capacities to Protect Civilians from Violence. An Introductory Course in 5 Modules”, July 2020 (second edition)

<sup>81</sup> Quote from Ellen Furnari in a communication to the author.

<sup>82</sup> With the exception of those who work with migrants or youth gangs and in prisons, but these were organizations with a broader portfolio of activities, not those for whom physical accompaniment is the primary or central activity.

## 6. Documentation



## 6.1 Summary of Good Practices

### Outlining the Framework of UCP

#### *Principles*

- Understand nonviolence as a strategy to overcome a culture of violence.
- Practice nonviolence within one's own organization.
- Observe the principle of non-interference into internal decision-making of local communities or accompanied organizations.
- Work only on invitation by local actors.
- Never speak for local actors when meeting with third parties (e.g. authorities or media).
- For sustainability, offer trainings to enhance capacities so that communities can better self-protect.
- Strengthen the local leadership of communities and leaders to support and maintain independence.
- A clear line must be established between the local organizations and local leaders and the accompanying organizations.
- Establish clear protocols for action between governments, embassies and the protective accompaniment organizations
- Local organizations and leaders must have clear and defined objectives that guarantee the independence and sustainability of the active projects including for when the internationals leave.
- It is necessary to be clear about the concept of independence and understand the relationship between being independent while simultaneously respecting the primacy of local actors.
- Engage in careful, ongoing analysis.
- Trustworthy communications should be maintained with the local communities with the goal of establishing long-term and diverse relationships.
- If there is financial support, organizations should ensure that the whole community, not solely one group, benefits from it. It is better to refrain altogether from providing material aid because it easily creates conflicts.
- Protocols for accompaniment tasks and roles are essential contributors to security.
- Good training of the accompaniers, space for reflection on past actions, and self-care to avoid burn-out are good practices.
- Do not lose the principle of solidarity when professionalizing protection work.

#### *Protective Accompaniment and the Different Forms of Violence*

- Select high-risk and vulnerable communities and have criteria to determine this.
- Commit longer-term, if needed.
- Work only on request.
- Continue accompaniment though there are threatening conditions.
- Try not to exclude anyone who needs accompaniment, but exclude all armed players.
- Accompany the victims of violence.
- Promote a culture of peace in high-risk communities.
- Seek to prevent micro-trafficking of drugs.
- Seek dialogue with companies.
- Try to activate state institutions to fulfill their protection responsibilities.
- Engage in dissuasion through international accompaniment.

- Legitimize self-government and security.
- Engage in continuous dialogue.

#### *Basic Strategies for Protection of Civilians*

- Political advocacy abroad creates pressure on the local government.
- Activities that help reconstruct the social fabric of communities is valuable as it strengthens their capacity to prevent and resist violence.
- Use deterrence stemming from the religious identification of the accompanier when relevant.
- Deterrence by physical presence in a specific area is often effective.
- Use mixed teams of both nationals and internationals when possible and appropriate.
- Visible identification (vests, hats, t-shirts) contribute to protection when appropriate.
- Regular dialogue with the armed forces (in Colombia) at local level has been effective.
- Use the image of a relationship with the U.S. to have deterrence.
- Send warning letters ahead of time.
- Have an activation network for emergencies.
- For a church organization: When entering indigenous land do not necessarily identify as being from the church, as it may undermine connections.<sup>83</sup>
- Learn some words of the indigenous language.
- Accompaniment in judicial hearings.

#### *Protest, Justice and Governance*

- Accompaniment of HRDs who mobilize movements makes these movements stronger when accompaniment is requested by these organizations.
- Advocacy is done through third parties (for example, local Caritas) because the mandates of international NGOs are limited.
- Tackling issues related to impunity / human rights is carried out in a collegial way with international NGOs, regional and university human rights mechanisms, visits by rapporteurs etc.
- In the case of public law enforcement, it is very important for the accompaniment to have/give clear information. In demonstrations, monitoring is conducted and the authorities present are made aware of it.
- Make sure to present yourself whenever there are new authorities in the prison system so that they know what the visitors are doing and so that the guards do not limit the intervention.

#### *The Role of Gender and Sexual Identity*

- Use gender techniques to strengthen intervention (like working in pairs).
- Address gender issues with organizations that are protectively accompanied.
- With partners agree on a non-negotiable gender protocol.
- Establish gender policies for the spaces of the shared team house and ensure the workplace is a safe space.
- Create protocol for a line of communication with the partner organization if there are accusations of harassment or abuse by the accompanied person.
- Identify macho (and homophobic) patterns that may arise internally.  
Create same-sex areas in the team house.
- Designate a team member to keep an eye on gender issues within the team.

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<sup>83</sup> This 'good practice' would seem very easily to be a problematic practice. Entering without full disclosure is ethically problematic and may have repercussions when found out.

- In formation of teams, try to keep them balanced (e.g. if only two on the team, one man and one woman).
  - Work toward a culture of new (less violent) types of masculinity.
  - Share a methodology and then replicate it (learning from each other).
  - Hold workshops to “undo oppressions”.
  - Dialogue with women organizations to get advice, build networks, find allies.
  - Have clear policies regarding sexual issues (both within the organization and outside in the community).
  - Record situations of harassment or aggression.
  - Hold workshops on protection and self-protection with accompanied women.
  - Dialogue with religious figures in the communities.
  - Extend protective accompaniment to the fight against impunity in cases of GBV.
  - Develop advocacy strategies with local organizations regarding gender.
  - Have internal strategies that challenge local gender norms.
  - Apply protective accompaniment to prevent violence and decrease uncomfortable situations for Trans people.
- Provide special training for the safety of women who are companions working in prisons.

### Tactics of Protection

#### *Accompaniment of Human Rights Defenders*

- Companions must receive training and other preparation before starting to work.
- HRDs need to be prepared to deal with security issues.
- It is critical to provide support and training that empowers HRDs so that they can develop methods of self-protection in cases when there is no accompaniment.
- Working to develop relationships and systems that provide early warning in cases of threats, is very important, especially when individuals are threatened.
- Security coordination among different people contributes to better protection and increased impact of protection activities.
- When entering problematic areas, travel in vehicles of the organizations, and in any case, in pairs and groups not solo.
- Travel with other organizations when trying to access problematic areas.
- Combine physical accompaniment with political and psychosocial accompaniment in order to broadly strengthen the means of self-protection.
- Accompaniment should complement mechanisms of self-protection in the community.
- Whenever it is acceptable to those being accompanied, nationally and ethnically mixed teams (not only white Europeans / North Americans) should be the norm.
- Generally it is recommended to use distinctive symbols – logos, shirts, caps etc., in order to be identified as foreigners. There are specific contexts when this is a problem.
- There need to be clear protocols of security, for individual HRDs and also for communities that are protected.
- Send or deliver warning letters (notifications to the high commands) before entering a territory.
- Clear communication to the outside regarding who the companions are enhances security
- Assess vulnerabilities to decide whom to accompany and learn to recognize situations that are typically high risk.
- Engage in permanent ongoing analysis of the context – the actors, their powers and possible outcomes in order to enhance security and avoid unanticipated situations.

- Engage in periodic risk analysis including: clear indicators of vulnerability (for example distinguish between cities and countryside); timelines of events and context; actions of the accompanied organization: indicators for security.
- It is important to be clear in which cases deterrence stems from the accompanying organization and in which from the accompanied organization.
- Periodic evaluation meetings and ongoing dialogue with the communities / accompanied organizations are critical components of conflict and risk analysis practice.
- Policies and internal practices are needed to reflect on and respond to racism, sexism (internal or with the organization /community that is being accompanied).
- Legal accompaniment requires getting legal permission to attend court hearings.

#### *Accompaniment of Peace Communities*

- Local people initiate the work.
- Communities need to establish and be clear about their rules of organizing.
- Communities define the issues for which they want support and accompaniment, e.g. assassinations and land ownership.
- Communities establish themselves as a peace community, against all armed actors and forbid anyone armed to enter.
- Stay aware of the surrounding areas and place video cameras around the community.
- Schools can serve as centers for organizing a peace community.
- Peace communities need to broaden their function to become communities of resistance.
- In addition to, or in conjunction with peace communities, declare certain areas to be humanitarian and bio-diversity areas.
- Don't turn weapons over to the state. Destroy them, for example as a community ritual.
- It is good to have accompaniment because it is often better to have eyes from outside watching and reporting.
- Accessing INGOs for accompaniment and visibility compliments and strengthens self protection.
- When accompaniment organizations begin working in a peace community, it is important to form working groups and build relationships in the community.
- Accompaniment is easier when the communities are well organized.
- When you know something dangerous is about to happen and your analysis suggest attention will prevent this potential violence, make a lot of noise in the country and internationally.
- Defend life and the community's territory without weapons. Weapons kill people.
- Communities need to think about what to do if international groups are gone and not become dependent on internationals.
- Accompaniment organizations should provide an overall package of strategies supporting communities toward self-protection, visibility and action.

#### *Accompaniment of Indigenous Communities*

- Use competent translators.
- Recognize and respect the ancestral areas of the communities.
- Upon arrival in the territory, make contact with the authorities, be they boards or governors, and especially indigenous leadership and elders where relevant. This is important for being able to carry out the accompaniment.
- Build trust with the women and seek spaces to meet with them.
- Know the other organizations that work on protection issues or do related work in the area and contact them to form a network.

- Make decisions collectively, between the accompaniers and the accompanied; between the organization and the community.
- Decision-making regarding who to accompany should be based on analysis that weighs likely vulnerabilities against possible benefits.
- Find ways to participate and observe in support of the LGBTQI+ movement, and accompany these populations.
- Expand the networks to be sure to include Afro-American networks or communities.
- Acknowledge the expertise of local people to reinforce the fight against racism.
- Be clear about national or international allies and report cases of racism, to exert pressure to stop it.
- Encourage and support local communities to meet with authorities and express their needs first hand.
- Support visits and tours by diverse outsiders (especially from the global north) to the territories to make what happens there known and visible.

#### *Accompaniment in Cases of Gang Violence and Organized Crime*

- It is important to analyze and address the role of gangs and organized crime in creating violence.
- It is possible to work with diverse groups that perpetrate violence.
- Violent behavior can be transformed through the intervention of community leaders who are listened to (violence disrupters).
- This work must use people who speak the local languages.
- Conflict mediation activities in the community need to be inclusive.
- Offer youth in gangs opportunities for new ways of life and returning to education, as part of risk-reduction plans.
- Refer people to institutions that can help them with drug addiction.
- Transforming gang members and other perpetrators of violence is a life project and interventions have to go slow, step by step.
- Work with local, regional and even national level government to implement programs and prevent violence, when appropriate entities are available..
- Aim for the social reintegration of criminalized youth.
- Publicize the impact of accompaniment programs and their successes in this work.
- As with all accompaniment/UCP work, continue regular context analysis and key stakeholder mapping.

#### *Accompaniment with Displaced People and Migrants*

- Survey migrants regarding their reasons to migrate, and publish the information.
- Make the courts aware that migrants are not protected.
- When providing physical accompaniment of caravans, a flexible mandate is needed
- Churches are important for their shelters and contacts on the routes, as well as for their global clout.
- Establish accompaniment networks abroad (USA) to accompany migrants.
- Assess the deterrence potential of accompaniment when the threats come from organized crime.
- Provide short / medium term accompaniment until threats diminish.
- Work inspired by a vision of "brothers visiting brothers" instead of a paternalistic vision.
- Offer protection to people accused of supporting / organizing caravans.
- Religious orders have accompanied caravans throughout their journey.
- Document cases of human rights violations of migrants.
- Work against xenophobia - ally with groups that work on the same issues.

- Provide accompaniment to prevent communities from being displaced from their territories.
- International NGO Commissions and communities can try to negotiate conditions of displacement or remaining in their own territories by working with authorities and / or private companies.
- Advocate with communities that have already been displaced or are in danger of displacement to not arm themselves because it will likely increase their risks.
- Strengthen capacities in shelters to protect migrants from persecutors.
- Shelters themselves can and should advocate for the protection of migrants.
- As part of dealing with the trauma of disappeared relatives, the Transnational Migrant Search Mechanism DNA bank is a valuable resource.
- Gain trust, and develop psycho-social-initiatives of support together with documentation of the harm for eventual judicial case (like Carlos Beristein in Honduras).
- Invoke and use as possible legal remedies against the concept of "third safe country".
- In the U.S., focus on policies of non-return to dangerous countries. Provide all forms of accompaniment to the struggles of migrants in the U.S. who have requested asylum, as an alternative to anti-migrant policies.
- In the current context of the United States, it may often be better to hide migrants than to become a public sanctuary, as was done before.
- Prepare for displacement with displacement planning. Be ready with eviction protocols, and to provide peaceful presence of legal representatives, security guarantees.
- Develop early warning systems at the community level (e.g. San José), involving guards, indigenous people, etc.
- It has been valuable to have a good risk analysis shared by several movement organizations and an emergency fund (developed in Honduras by churches, in Colombia by ACT).
- There are temporary protection programs for trade unionists and human rights defenders in Europe, the U.S. and Costa Rica.

#### *Accompaniment in the Context of Multinational Companies*

- Create working groups to reflect upon human rights and private companies.
- Try to find volunteers from the countries the companies come from, for ex. China.
- Use previous research and investigation on the companies so that there is information about them.
- Build relationships and network with organizations that work on the topics abroad for advocacy purposes.
- Take delegations from the U.S. to Latin American countries so that they see what is going on, and then can do better advocacy back home.
- Take into account the world vision of indigenous communities and the impact of exploitation on sacred territories.
- Projects need to develop long- term information gathering and protection plans.
- Use the publication of newsletters / communications as part of an advocacy strategy.
- Boycotts work when directed against enterprises that sell to the public.
- Cooperation between investigators and accompaniment organizations on the ground might help.
- Look for early warning signs before the companies arrive.
- Initiate and sustain dialogue between accompaniment organizations on these issues.
- Have and strengthen links with organizations in the countries of origin of these companies that can help to spread information.

## Managing UCP Projects

### *Volunteers and Staff*

#### **Recruitment and training**

- Accompaniers need training.
- Training should be continuous, not only before service but during service.
- There needs to be a process to assess and evaluate applicants.
- Training should include eradicating forms of discrimination, how to work against oppression, self-care, and explanations of the internal politics of the organization.
- Good training includes a three-step process: classroom – theory – practice.
- Hold regular workshops on the overall context of international politics and how this impacts the local work.
- Use returning accompaniers as part of the training process for new volunteers in the home countries.

#### **Security**

- There needs to be clear personal safety protocols – for example knowledge of first aid.
- Have an up to date risk analysis of regions where accompaniment is taking place..
- Know how to directly contact safety and security personnel from the field.
- Know what the community alarms and alarm systems are.
- Include socio-cultural facts analysis when doing regular context analysis.
- Have clear communication protocols.

#### **Digital security**

- Hold workshops on digital security.
- Do not use Telegram, WhatsApp, etc. but other, safer messaging apps such as Signal. Also remember that Facebook and emails can be read by the government and that Skype is not safe, either.
- It is important to encrypt sensitive information and using codes or foreign languages may also help protect communications.

#### **Support**

- Health insurance should be included in the plan and budget of the accompaniment program.
- Have a crisis care protocol in place before a crisis.
- Have a psychologist or person in charge who can be voluntarily contacted by the accompaniers (without the accompanier having to pay for it).
- Provide regular external supervision, for example once per month.
- Have a mental well-being subgroup.
- Have policies to prevent and to respond to crises.
- Have collective spaces or self-help groups where volunteers/staff can talk about fears etc.
- Team coordinators need to be clear about the symptoms and signs of stress and trauma.
- Have weekly rest days and regular holidays and be sure volunteers/staff take them.
- Engage in group activities that contribute to team members living together more agreeably.
- Hold regular retreats.
- Create safe spaces to address criticism and self-criticism.

- Team coordinators should support accompaniers, checking in regularly and providing feedback and evaluation.
- Find ways to articulate and respond to individual and collective needs.
- Organize online volunteer psychosocial support networks.
- Have a budget for health, mental well-being, recreational spaces, etc.
- Have protocols to respond to harassment.
- Have protocols for internal conflict resolution.

#### *Cooperation Between Different Accompaniment Groups*

- Identify when there are problems of competition and cooperation and attend to them
- Identify and know the context, visualize the accompanying situation.
- Work together to achieve spending money most effectively.
- Organize round tables of organizations for exchange and coordination.
- Refer people and issues to other organizations that are better equipped to deal with them.
- Finance project with multiple donors, don't be dependent on one source of financing.
- Create a platform for networks of organizations and rotate the accompaniment between them.
- Value organizations' capabilities and experiences.
- Develop mutual support for "technical assistance".
- Sometimes religion, and particularly the church, is a means of reaching communities.

#### *Exit Strategies*

- Help to open spaces for peace, which can generate independent organization spaces.
- Aiming for sustained presence and leaving slowly if necessary (as PBI did in San José de Apartadó).
- Accompanied organizations have their support networks and help themselves.
- When no longer in a community, provide political accompaniment from a distance when possible.
- Over time lower the accompaniment profile so that those who were accompanied are stronger.
- Do not start new accompaniment without having assessed the capacity to stay (for example to have adequate funding).
- Strengthen self-protection mechanisms in the communities.
- Create safe spaces so that communities can develop their own security mechanisms.
- To counter the threat of denial of visas, do advocacy work both within the country and outside/internationally, and work with mixed international-national teams.
- Have emergency plans ready, if, for example, there are coups d'état.
- Encourage and support HRDs to develop their own strategies of self-protection.
- Have security protocols.
- Establish priorities in case an organization needs to withdraw. Ask which organization could take over the role of looking after security.
- Learn from indigenous communities about self-protection.
- Support exchanges between communities, e.g. between indigenous and peasant communities.
- Learning is multi-directional. In some cases, accompaniment organizations learn from those they accompany about how to organize.
- Create systems and methods to maintain organizational memory.
- Grassroots processes have managed to make self protection efforts visible and thus increase their own space for protection of civilians. These efforts can be strengthened thanks to international presence.
- Support truth and reconciliation processes.

### *Widening Accompaniment in the Region*

- Sharing needs maps including context, actors, source of information and resource management in network.
- Develop collective management between communities to defend their areas including specific spaces for protection, plus to increase the external visibility of their struggles.
- Strengthen visibility through support networks.
- Develop alliances with organizations that engage in small-scale economic projects.
- Develop / strengthen the organizational capacity in the community.
- Improve training opportunities.
- To strengthen the sustainability of the work after international organizations leave, it is useful to create / promote human rights committees within communities.
- Organize the transfer of capacities between organizations.
- Work through networks to provide some level of protection, when an organization cannot be present in the community.
- Take advantage of technology.
- Organize training of trainers to multiply capacity.
- Develop and maintain institutional memory systems.
- Collect individual donations for greater autonomy.
- Work toward developing institutional and permanent stability.
- Create funder mapping with other organizations in a network.
- Engage in direct work with ex-combatants.
- There is a need to do advocacy with funders to change the concept of "terrorists".
- Diversify funding sources.
- Look for safe spaces for people to stay if necessary outside of communities
- Remember that accompaniment is a mutual process and learn from communities how they implement accompaniment already.
- Work with the diaspora from specific areas.

### *How to measure success*

- Teach academics about protective accompaniment /UCP so that they understand the field.
- Value story-telling as a method to capture impact.
- Former volunteers / UCP staff can, and do, become academics and start writing about the work.

## 6.2 Summary of Challenges

### Outlining the Framework of UCP

#### *Principles*

- An issue that came up here, perhaps more distinctly than in other workshops, was the challenge of dealing with conflicts within local communities.
- It is often less clear how to deal with non-physical forms of nonviolence – verbal or psychological or structural violence.
- There are tensions between impartiality and supporting actors fighting for human rights or communal self-determination.
- There may be tensions between being asked for advice and opinions on strategy or history of the movement, while upholding primacy of local actors and non-interference.
- The realization that, in advocacy, the voices of internationals have more weight.
- Sometimes it is hard to respect the decisions made by the accompanied person or the community when they go against the judgment of the accompanying organization.
- Working with divided communities and handling of intra-communal conflicts poses particular challenges.
- Accompaniers may hold different values than those accompanied.
- Standard operating procedures for security conflict with the needs and practices of the community accompanied.
- Accessing funding for the projects (financial security) is always a challenge.
- Governments need to allow NGOs to work independently.
- When authorization or permissions are needed from officials, it can be hard to simultaneously get political independence accepted.
- There is frequent pressure to compromise political independence from national or local governments.
- It is impossible to completely avoid doing harm.
- The relationships and attitudes of “helping” (“*asistencialismo*”) generate mental and material dependencies.
- Influx of money especially if the source (the donor) is aligned with certain political interests can do harm. Money that comes from governments or certain companies can do a lot of harm.
- Singling out leaders for accompaniment or inviting them to advocacy trips abroad can lead to conflicts in their organizations / communities, isolate these leaders and lead eventually to their cooptation by the accompanying organization.

#### *Protective Accompaniment and the Different Forms of Violence*

- It is a challenge how to decide whom to accompany.
- Economic factors (e.g., entry or presence of multinationals) are presenting new challenges.
- It can be confusing to know how to deal with perpetrators who portray themselves as victims, when the mandate is not to exclude anyone.
- Possible Infiltration by paramilitaries must be watched for and avoided.
- Organized crime can terrorize communities and exert territorial control.

- It is difficult to gather sufficient information about drug trafficking groups who exercise violence against the community.
- Accompaniers can end up being victims.
- The state is often a major source of violence.
- The communities themselves have developed processes of self-protection, however the state does not support them.
- Traditional ethnic or indigenous leaders have been delegitimized.
- Changing contexts require constant rethinking of the work.
- When access to needed information is limited, context analysis may be compromised.
- Financial limits and lack of personnel resources for the accompaniment are frequent limitations.
- Given the many needs and threats it is not always easy to prioritize when or whom to accompany.
- How far can dialogue go when somebody is seen or presents themselves as a foreigner.
- Normalization of violence is a challenge.
- Political accompaniment requires contacts to embassies; psycho-social accompaniment needs special training. Often organizations do not have the capacity to do these two well.

#### *Basic Strategies for Protection of Civilians*

- Understand the world view of indigenous communities.
  - Understanding the self-protection actions of indigenous guards that people from the Western world and urban society may see as acts of violence, can be difficult.
  - It is critical and can be difficult to accurately analyze post-peace accord scenarios involving new (private) actors and new types of conflict that can occur.
  - Identifying post-agreement armed actors is very difficult.
- There is tension between the desire by communities for accompaniment and activism, and the need to respect the mandate in the face of state institutions.
- Paramilitaries wearing civilian clothes are the most difficult groups to influence – either to deter their actions or merely to engage in dialogue -- because their reactions are unpredictable.
  - Talking with the army is difficult when it enters communities of peace because they claim that they are there to protect, despite the fact that they are endangering protected individuals.
  - Journalists' visits to communities must be organized carefully to prevent putting people in the community at risk.
  - It is very important to understand the fine nuances of language and its meanings.
  - Mutual protection between accompaniers and residents is sometimes slow to develop which poses security challenges.
  - Observers must be aware of their position as internationals to protect the social fabric of the communities.
  - There are local actors who provide information to the state or extractive companies.

#### *Protest, Justice and Governance*

- Elections create more violence locally and nationally, they make “the other” an enemy.
- Candidates do not fulfill their promises (there is corruption, they do not represent everyone, there is little transparency).
- There are always the same families in government – sometimes since colonial times.
- This leads to diminishment of trust, participation in elections goes down and frustration goes up.

- There is no trust in the institutions (due to impunity, for example). This brings in more corruption and cooptation. No one gets fair treatment.
- The consequences of the election processes are often violence, displacement, increased tensions between communities, more violence against women.
- Challenges that have to do with weak government structures include:
  - Slow processes, slow investigations.
  - A big part of money goes to militarization.
- Work with prisoners: Working with political prisoners has psychosocial impact (sadness, injustice).

#### *The Role of Gender and Sexual Identity*

- The great majority of the people who participate in gender training are women. It is difficult to reach men.
- The social dynamics are unbalanced between the accompanying women and the men they accompany. Women feel at risk in their accompaniment, and they also fear the potential violence of becoming a victim in doing their job.
- Accompaniers may face very strong cultural dynamics in what may be very conservative organizations that they accompany.
- Accompaniers experience resistance or reluctance when explaining the rules of the organization in relation to gender.
- Accompaniers must work to recognize their own internalized sexism. recs?
- Approaching protection from a gender perspective is complicated.
- Organizations operate internally as a feminist organization, but to the outside need to moderate their language.
- Gender identity is not only about women, but about identity in general.
- Dealing with gender issues takes a lot of internal training.
- In some organizations there is resistance to the concept of "gender".
- The work with gender generates a lot of frustration.
- Accompaniment cases need to be suspended in cases of investigations of harassment or violence against volunteers and / or accompanied persons..
- It takes time and commitment to develop internal gender policies.
- Religious culture affects gender roles and violence. Machismo and homophobia are very deeply embedded in the communities in Latin America.
- There is a heavy impact of rapes and other violence on women.
- Women's economic dependence on men creates challenges.
- Advocacy strategies can generate harm to victims.
- The principle of non interference in relation to gender norms creates tensions.
- Transgender accompaniers may have suffered discrimination and experience challenges in the communities, and access to justice institutions.
- There are many dynamics that go beyond gender, there is a need to recognize- intersectional oppressions.
- It is hard to undo the learning incorporated in relation to gender roles.
- LGBTQI + suffer high levels of violence and that violence that is normalized.
- There can be tensions when workshops are facilitated by LGBTQI staff.
- Many organizations focus on their specific struggles and are not receptive to addressing gender issues.

## Tactics of Protection

### *Accompaniment of Human Rights Defenders*

- It is hard to interact with people who are not prepared to face risks, who do not show solidarity and who are not able, if necessary, to act independently.
- There is a dual need to eliminate the internal racism of the human rights organizations as well as general racism in society.
- It is difficult to respond to all the threats when accompanying communities.
- Teaching of the HRDs in academic and general themes.
- Multifaceted accompaniment using social, psychological and physical tactics is complex and presents many challenges.
- It is not always possible to visualize movements of the accompaniment organizations in the territory where they work.
- The justice system needs to be strengthened to limit the impunity with which leaders and HRDs are attacked. This would provide stronger protection.
- It is not always easy or possible to strengthen practices of “self-protection” / security.
- Sometimes there are not enough staff/volunteers to work in teams to accompany and protect leaders and HRDs.
- There is not always enough warning or time to send alerts out early.
- It takes time to understand a community well enough to learn how to identify a leader or an HRD.
- In Honduras, it is not clear how possible it will be to have permission to operate in the country.
- Rotation of volunteers is valuable but at the same time challenges the continuity of institutional memory.
- When volunteers only stay for a short time (4 weeks in one case), the accompanied people always need to adapt to a new person.
- There is an ever growing need to implement digital security and counter digital threats.

### *Accompaniment of Peace Communities*

- International accompaniers may only communicate with legal armed actors. If they talk with illegal (non-state) they would get kicked out of the country. That said, people in the peace communities themselves often talk with the guerillas. Thus there may be indirect communication which can be both useful and hard to manage.
- It is difficult to decide whether to accompany someone who is leaving the community, or to stay in the community to provide a protective presence there.

### *Accompaniment of Indigenous Communities*

- Gender dynamics often limit the participation of women.
- Some local groups monopolize protection, making it harder for smaller, less well known groups to access accompaniment
- Linguistic barriers and cultural differences require attention in order to respectfully and effectively provide accompaniment and other forms of protection.
- Peasant communities may be overlooked and need heightened recognition.
- It can be tempting to impose an agenda on a community, but this can create all kinds of difficulties and needs to be resisted.
- Rigid security protocols are needed to protect those who provide accompaniment as well as those who are accompanied, but at times these protocols get in the way.
- Accompaniers feel the limits of tolerance for certain practices within the communities.

- It is tricky to figure out how to address injustices within a community, without imposing an agenda or otherwise disrespecting local people.
- The perspectives and needs of LGBTQI+ can be difficult to incorporate into accompaniment and analysis.
- There is a danger of reinforcing racism through accompaniment (by accepting, for instance, social status based on skin color).
- The short-term rotation of volunteers in organizations poses many challenges.

#### *Accompaniment in Cases of Gang Violence and Organized Crime*

- A growing challenge are the threats faced by accompaniers who intend to work in the areas controlled by organized crime. Many times, the decision is not to go to those areas.
- Organized crime exerts negative influence so that young people do not overcome the consumption of psychoactive substances.
- Young people who have been involved with gangs and prisons are stigmatized, which makes it hard for them to find employment. It is not easy to de-stigmatize them.
- There is a lack of ways to rehabilitate people who became criminals.
- The governments in most of these countries are resistant to advocacy.
- Participants shared the risk analysis of leaders in the face of the influence of organized crime. They proposed mapping of actors to understand where the interests of the criminal organizations may be influenced.
- It is difficult to build strategic relationship between programs, projects and the police or the state to support processes without affecting the safety of leaders.
- When reporting non-compliance of the state through the mass media, social networks, it is imperative to take care not to put the lives of the NGO's members and leaders at risk.

#### *Accompaniment with Displaced People and Migrants*

- Using legal instruments to challenge displacement can lead to people having to leave due to fear of retaliation.
- Migrants, displaced persons and refugees travel in precarious situations and it is hard to decrease their risks.
- It is not always possible to provide international accompaniment for rural farmers displaced by armed confrontations when needed.
- There are complex structural causes of migration and displacement because of violence, and it is difficult to tackle these underlying causes in addition to providing accompaniment. More specifically it is hard to address causes that emanate from the US.
- It is challenging to document the scale of the human rights violations against migrants.
- Political solutions for the confrontations that generate displacement are elusive.
- It is often difficult or not possible to provide psycho-social accompaniment to the families of disappeared migrants.
- It is often not possible to ensure that migrant application for refugee status processes take place in the country where asylum is sought and not in "safe" countries.
- States do not take responsibility to protect or help people who do not want to be displaced.
- Negotiating with the statutory officials for acceptable living conditions for the displaced migrants is often not successful.

#### *Accompaniment in the Context of Multinational Companies*

- It is difficult to know how to advocate with this new actor -- international foreign companies.
- Paramilitary groups are protecting companies in collaboration with the state.

- It is not easy to find out who the owners of the company are, or to do research on them in general.
- Fracking is a challenge because communities partly support it.
- In Honduras many companies have licenses to use the land. This results in pollution, sickness, damage to the environment, and transportation of ore to foreign countries (e.g., China) to extract the valuable rare earth minerals there.
- Companies do not respect consultations with the population before concessions are signed. In Mexico there is disinformation and bad consultation from the side of the companies.
- Organized crime is involved in economic projects. There is corruption in the government and/or authorities that give licenses to private companies.
- Peasants or indigenous populations do not always have documented and written land titles
- There are threats of harm to leaders that fight against the companies.
- Companies do not sign human rights treaties, only states do. Do we work with the company, or with the state that is giving license to the company?
- There is terrible psychosocial impact on indigenous communities because their whole world vision gets destroyed.
- It is difficult to enter into direct dialogue with the companies.
- Companies work to divide the consultation processes, so as to prevent organized resistance.
- It is not always possible to have information on the long term damage / consequences when a company starts working.
- Some companies sue the state and demand huge fines. Resistance to this needs to be organized.
- Because companies have foreign registration, it is difficult to sue them.
- Accompaniment with divided communities is especially difficult as some want the companies, and some do not.

### Managing UCP Projects

#### *Volunteers and Staff*

- Training resources are limited when you are a small NGO.
- Sufficient Financing is always a challenge.
- Some organizations do not provide enough training.
- There are large differences in the training that volunteers receive with partners.
- It can be challenging to find volunteers who are fluent Spanish speakers.
- Coordination is lacking for training for deployment in different organizations.
- There is not enough mental health care provided and people get burned out.
- Living in the countryside is hard for many volunteers.
- People are often different in the interview then when they are working in the field
- Security is generally a challenge.
- Some situations are unanticipated and there are no protocols to guide action.
- The costs of psychological treatment can be too high for some organizations to support.
- It can be risky to turn to others for psychological aid.
- It is not always clear what to do when there are direct attacks against people in the organization.
- Burn-out often happens because of internal problems rather than because of the work itself.
- There are people who are very willing to work on their emotions, others are not. It is difficult to find a balance.
- A very deep commitment is needed for this type of work.

### *Cooperation Between Different Accompaniment Groups*

- There is a confusing multitude of institutions.
- Round tables are not always effective.
- There are conflicts within networks.
- For U.S. organizations, it is a challenge to cooperate on advocacy with European organizations that focus on the European Union, and vice versa.
- The strict policies of financing of some organizations creates barriers to cooperation sometimes. Some organizations exclude certain donors (for example, government sources from the U.S.) and cannot cooperate with others that do not exclude them.
- Clear and defined purposes to do good accompaniment are missing sometimes.
- Organizations can take over an area and do not allow other organizations to work there.
- There are many challenges to effective coordination and communication.
- It takes time and energy to create effective, collective, and constructive spaces that strengthen the work of institutions.
- It is not easy to convince donors that the support network is a necessary part of the work and shows immediate results.
- Some organizations manage their resources poorly.
- When other organizations pay workshop participants, it creates expectations that need to be overcome.
- Grassroots processes can be manipulated.
- There are religious barriers that can affect reality. Priests take positions on social struggles, and wield much influence in favor or against a struggle, for example whether to defend against land grabbing.

### *Exit Strategies*

- Long-term presence creates dependence on the accompaniment. People get used to it.
- Governments may decide any time that an organization is no longer welcome and not needed and deny visas.
- Communities always give reasons for people to stay. First armed conflict, now post-conflict. This leads to long term presence and difficulty imagining leaving. When will the need go away?
- Generations of communities believe they inherited international accompaniment.
- Communities have their own mechanisms of self-protection but working with internationals wakes the hope for financial support. It is necessary to discuss this with the communities.
- It is critical to have clear protocols for communities in case internationals have to leave suddenly.
- The exit of one organization may also impact other accompaniment organizations that are still working in the community.
- Sometimes it is difficult for international accompaniment organizations to help connect communities that are in resistance.

### *Widening Accompaniment in the Region*

- It is time consuming and difficult to find funds, resources, and international funding (for example money from the U.S.).
- It is often hard to gather enough information in order to do adequate analysis and understand contexts.
- Continuing the work is dependent on support and this impacts the ability to be autonomous.
- While there are benefits to sharing information, there are also obstacles to doing so.
- Processes to receive or establish funds are complex.

- Sometimes there is competition for funding.
- Working with marginalized population (ex: gangs, ex-guerrillas) presents major challenges and is more difficult.
- Foreign interference in communities where accompaniment occurs is increasing and presents new challenges.
- It is often unclear for internationals to know where, when and how to enter a country without doing harm, and how to leave.

*How to measure success*

- It is not easy to maintain impartiality as a researcher while being committed to the work.
- Academic methods and requirements are too strict and often do not work for practitioners.
- Base-line surveys are rarely done.

### 6.3 Agenda as Carried Out

**Workshop on Good Practice  
in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian-to-Civilian Protection  
Bogotá, Colombia**

**Taller sobre Buenas Prácticas en Protección / Acompañamiento Civil Desarmado, América Latina**

**del 13 al 15 de Enero de 2020, Bogotá Colombia**

<b>DIA 1, LUNES 13 DE ENERO</b>	<b>Day 1, Mondy 13 January</b>
8:00 Desayuno en el lugar	Breakfast
9:00 Plenario de bienvenida Saludos de Bienvenida de Fuerzas de Paz Noviolentas/Nonviolent Peaceforce; presentaciones de los participantes; introducción de el programa; pautas e información sobre el taller	Welcome Plenary Welcome Greetings from Nonviolent Peace Force; participants' presentations; introduction of the program; guidelines and information about the workshop
10:30 Pausa	Break
11:00 Aclarar nuestras expectativas	Clarify expectations
11:15 "Café Mundial" sobre los principios básicos Protección/Acompañamiento Civil Desarmado	World Café on principles of UCP / accompaniment
13:00 Almuerzo	Lunch
14:00 Plenario - ejercicio rompehielos	Icebreaker
14:15 Plenario - resultados del "café mundial", discusión plenaria; selección de pequeños grupos para las mesas de trabajo, fase A	Plenary - results of the "world café, plenary discussion; selection of small groups for the working groups, phase A
15:00 Mesas de trabajo en grupos pequeños, fase A, con los siguientes temas A1. Protección / acompañamiento y diferentes formas de violencia en el context latinoamericano. A2. Capacitación de personal / voluntarios, duración del servicio, seguridad, apoyo y post-implementación / servicio. A3. Acompañamiento de defensores de derechos humanos en América Latina.	Small working groups, phase A, with the following topics A1. Protection / accompaniment and different forms of violence in the Latin American context. A2. Staff / volunteer training, length of service, security, support and post-implementation / service. A3. Accompaniment of human rights defenders in Latin America.
16:30 Pausa	Break

17:00 Plenario - informes breves de mesas de trabajo y discusión general; feedback día 1	Plenary - brief reports of the working groups and discussion; feedback day 1
18:30 Cena	Dinner
20-22 h Intercambio informal sobre los diferentes contextos de trabajo de los grupos/países representados	Informal exchange on the different work contexts of the groups / countries represented
<b><u>DIA 2, MARTES 14 DE ENERO</u></b>	<b><u>Day 2, Tuesday, 14 January</u></b>
8:00 Desayuno	Breakfast
9:00 Plenario - ejercicio energizante; selección de pequeños grupos para las mesas de trabajo, fase B	Panel – energizer, selection of small groups for the working groups of phase B
9:30 Mesas de trabajo en grupos pequeños, fase B, con los siguientes temas B1. Estrategias de protección / acompañamiento para disuadir la violencia y fomentar el respeto por la seguridad y el bienestar de los y las civiles. B2. Protección / acompañamiento con comunidades de diferentes identidades culturales (comunidades indígenas, afrocolombianas, etc.). B3. Protección / acompañamiento civil desarmado, violencia de pandillas y crimen organizado. B4. El papel del género y la orientación sexual en el trabajo de protección / acompañamiento civil desarmado en la región.	Small working groups, phase B, with the following topics B1. Protection / accompaniment strategies to deter violence and promote respect for the safety and well-being of civilians. B2. Protection / accompaniment with communities of different cultural identities (indigenous, Afro-Colombian communities, etc.). B3. Protection / unarmed civilian accompaniment, gang violence and organized crime. B4. The role of gender and sexual orientation in unarmed civil protection / accompaniment work in the region.
11:00 Pausa	Break
11:30 Plenario - informes breves de mesas de trabajo y discusión general	Plenary - brief reports of the working groups and general discussion
13:00 Almuerzo	Lunch
14:00 Plenario - ejercicio energizante; selección de pequeños grupos para las mesas de trabajo, fase C	Plenary – icebreaker, selection of small groups for the working groups of phase C
14:30 Mesas de trabajo en grupos	Small working groups, phase C, with the

<p>pequeños, fase C, con los siguientes temas:</p> <p>C1. Protección / acompañamiento con comunidades de paz y otros grupos/ comunidades autoprotegidos.</p> <p>C2. Diferentes actores de protección / acompañamiento civil desarmado trabajando juntos.</p> <p>C3. Protección / acompañamiento, protesta, justicia y gobernanza en América Latina.</p> <p>C4. Salida estratégica de organizaciones de protección / acompañamiento civil desarmado.</p>	<p>following topics</p> <p>C1. Protection / accompaniment with peace communities and other groups / self-protected communities.</p> <p>C2. Different actors of unarmed civil protection / accompaniment working together.</p> <p>C3. Protection / accompaniment, protest, justice and governance in Latin America.</p> <p>C4. Strategic exit of unarmed civil protection / accompaniment organizations</p>
16:00 Pausa	Break
16:30 Plenario - informes breves de mesas de trabajo y discusión; feedback día 2	Plenary - brief reports of the working groups and discussion; feedback day 2
18:30 Cena	Dinner
20-22 h Intercambio informal sobre los diferentes contextos de trabajo de los grupos/países representados	Informal exchange on the different work contexts of the groups / countries represented
<b><u>DIA 3, MIERCOLES 15 DE ENERO 2020</u></b>	<b><u>Day 3, Wednesday 15 January 2020</u></b>
8:00 Desayuno	Breakfast
9:00 Plenario - ejercicio energizante; selección de pequeños grupos para las mesas de trabajo, fase D	Plenary – icebreaker, selection of small groups for the working groups of phase C
<p>9:30 Mesas de trabajo en grupos pequeños, fase C, con los siguientes temas</p> <p>D1. Protección / acompañamiento con personas desplazadas / migrantes.</p> <p>D2. Protección / acompañamiento, empresas multinacionales (MNC), explotación de recursos, y defensa de tierra y territorios en América Latina.</p> <p>D3. Ampliar protección / acompañamiento civil desarmado en la región</p>	<p>Small working groups, phase D, with the following topics</p> <p>D1. Protection / accompaniment with displaced persons / migrants.</p> <p>D2. Protection / accompaniment, multinational companies (MNC), exploitation of resources, and defense of land and territories in Latin America.</p> <p>D3. Expand protection / unarmed civilian accompaniment in the region</p>
11.00 Pausa	Break
11.30 Plenario - informes breves de mesas	Plenary - brief reports of the working groups

de trabajo y discusión	and general discussion
12:30 Almuerzo en el lugar	Lunch
<p>13:30 Discussion and selection of topics for open spaces (work tables, phase E): En lugar de pequeños grupos, se organizó un café del segundo mundo donde las personas rotaban de un tema a otro:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cuidado emocional</li> <li>2. Redes sociales y comunicacion digital</li> <li>3. Femicidos / violencia de genero</li> <li>4. Financiamiento / voluntarios con promiso</li> <li>5. Acompanamiento con ex-actores armados</li> <li>6. Narcotrafico</li> <li>7. Medicion del impacto /exito</li> </ol>	<p>Instead of small groups a second world café was organized where people rotated from subject to subject:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emotional care</li> <li>2. Social networks and digital communication</li> <li>3. Femicides / gender violence</li> <li>4. Funding / committed volunteers</li> <li>5. Accompaniment with ex-armed actors</li> <li>6. Drug trafficking</li> <li>7. Measurement of impact / success</li> </ol>
15:00 Plenario - informes breves de tavolas y discusión	Plenary - brief reports of the tables and general discussion
15:30 Pausa	Break
16:00 Plenario final - ejercicio energizante	Final plenary - energizer
16:15 Buenas prácticas en acompañamiento / UCP en America Latina: puntos clave	Good practices in accompaniment / UCP in Latin America: key points
17:45 Evaluación del taller, agradecimientos y comentarios finales	Evaluation of the workshop, thank yous and final comments
19:00 Cena de despedida	Final dinner

## 6.4 Attendees

Name	Organization(s)	Country	Country (countries) they work/ have worked in with a UCP organization
Alejandra Vidal	Cure Violence	Colombia	Honduras
Alvara Ramirez-Durini	NP	Ecuador	Organizer
Ana Julia Rodriguez Espinales	Catholic Relief Services	El Salvador	El Salvador
Ana Solano Codina	International Action for Peace	Spain	Colombia
Anne Haas	Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolome de las casas AC	Germany	Mexico (Chiapas)
Beatriz Elena Arias Lopez	Researcher	Colombia	Facilitator
Berit Bliesemann de Guevara	Aberystwyth University	Germany	Facilitator
Carla Martinez	PBI	Mexico	Colombia
Celia Medrano	Cristosal	El Salvador	Researcher
Christine Schweitzer	NP, IFGK, BSV	Germany	Documenter
David Vladimir Solis	Catholic Relief Services	El Salvador	El Salvador
Diana Carolina Cabra Delgado	PBI	Colombia	Guatemala
Emily Brewer	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship	USA	Colombia / Mexico
Enrique Chimonja Coy	FOR Peace Presence	Colombia	Colombia
Eulalia Padró Giral	PBI	Spain	Colombia
Evan King	Acción Permanente por la Paz / Witness for Peace	USA	Colombia
Germán Zarate	Presbyterian Peace Fellowship	Colombia	Colombia

Guido Eguigure	Peace Watch Switzerland	Honduras	Honduras
Jan Passion	NP	U.S.	Organizer, Sri Lanka
Jhon Henry Camargo Varela	CPT	Colombia	Colombia
John Lindsay-Poland	FOR Peace Presence	USA	Colombia
Juan Ocoro	NP	Colombia	Organizer
Julietta Arboleda	Fundación Alvaralice	Colombia	Colombia
Kim Aumonier	Acoguate	France	Guatemala
Lea Krivchenia	Interaction	USA	n/a
Libertad Gercowski Ariza	International Action for Peace		Colombia
Luis Miguel Cerpa Cogollo	San Jose de Apartado Peace Community	Colombia	Colombia
Maria Eugenia Mosquera Riascos	FOR Peace Presence	Colombia	Colombia
Marion Brastel	NP	Switzerland	n/a
Marion Girard	NP	France	n/a
Mel Duncan	NP	U.S.	Organizer
Oliver Kaplan	Josef Korbel School of International Studies, Univ. Denver	USA	n/a
Paige McLain	Human Rights Lab	USA	n/a
Pedro Canales Torrez	Association for the Development of the Zacate Grande Peninsula - ADEPZA	Honduras	Honduras
Samatha Wherry	Acción Permanente por la Paz	USA	Colombia
Sara Akerlund	SweFOR	Sweden	Colombia
Silvia de Munari	Operation Dove	Italy	Colombia

Sina Marie Olfemann	Servicio Internacional para la Paz - Sipaz	Germany	Mexico
Teresia Carlgren	SweFOR	Sweden	Colombia
Yasmin Cristina Mosquera	Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective	Colombia	Colombia