

ONLINE COURSE ON UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION IN SAHEL



8 WEEKS

OF ONLINE TRAINING

On Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP), organized by Nonviolent Peaceforce and financed by UNDP/PPA.

**81 WOMEN AND MEN
TRAINED**

FROM BURKINA FASO, MALI AND NIGER

By a mixed team of trainers and local mentors

**4 FOLLOW-UP LOCAL
PROJECTS DEVELOPPED**

BY PARTICIPANTS OF THE COURSE

Supported by a remote NP coach

This project consisted of two sessions of eight-week online courses on Unarmed Civilian Protection, organized between April and September 2021. This course was developed by Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) and funded by UNDP/PPA; it is the first of its kind offered in French by NP in a virtual, online format. NP trained a total of 81 participants consisting of women and men aged 35 or under, nationals of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. The pedagogic team was made up of an NP coordinator, a facilitator, three local UCP mentors, a local academic mentor and a remote coach. The involvement of mentors allowed to **contextualize** the content of the course, but also to **illustrate the practice of UCP** in a context that the participants know and share. The involvement of both an academic mentor (whose mission is to get trained on the pedagogy involved in teaching UCP in order to reproduce or re-envision the course within local training institutes) and a remote coach (whose mission is to support the participants in the development of local or regional UCP activities), promote the sustainability of the project and its anchoring in the field.

The course is organized around **5 Modules**, covering the objectives, principles and sources of guidance of UCP, its key methods, the key competencies of UCP practitioners, and how to enter and exit a community.

It contributed to increase the knowledge of women, men and young individuals on UCP practices as an alternative to use of violence. It resulted in the **development of new skills and new engagement** for both participants and mentors.

"This course allowed me to demystify the protection of civilians because I believed that it was the prerogative only of armed actors. Understanding that this protection must be provided by civilians strengthens my desire to contribute" - Mariam, Mali

This course also showed impact beyond the individual level, as it led to the **development of new networks and relationships** that have developed a cadre of practitioners that continue to multiply the impact of the individual skill building. Indeed, this training initiative has contributed to the establishment of new structures, or reform of existing ones, to deal effectively with conflict resolution at a larger scale:

"In my community, in the circle of Koro, the municipality of Dinangourou had been under embargo for more than two months. No one came out or returned, and the area was under the full control of armed (non-state) men. Thanks to UCP, we were able to create a negotiating team that was able to put in place an agreement with the armed groups to spare the civilians. Today the embargo is lifted and the civilian population is free to move around." - Djougal, Mali

The remote NP coach is currently supporting newly trained practitioners to develop their UCP projects in their own communities, including:

- Creation of the Nigerian association **ACPAD-Action for the Consolidation of Peace and Development**- currently is developing the project "LAKALKANEY" ("Peace" in Songhai). Its general objective is to contribute to the promotion of peace and the reduction of violence, through the following activities: creation of local youth networks, training projects for youth and community leaders, mapping of violence eruptions, sensibilisation / advocacy campaigns, creation of safe dialog spaces, a digital platform, and others.

Creation of the cross-border project **RAJEP SAHEL**: a group of six participants, all peacebuilding practitioners in their own communities from Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, have established a working group to develop a transborder UCP activities and training network. They are currently developing its first project around women's inclusion in the peacebuilding process (title: Femmes: victimes et solutions aux crises Sahéliennes).