3.2
Monitoring

The decision to go to Bougainville unarmed caused some angst in the Australian Defence Force at the time, but it was the right one. At least two occasions I encountered may have gone differently if we had been armed. Perhaps more fundamentally, the Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) experience reaffirmed for me that the role of peacekeepers is to not only stand between the warring sides to prevent more suffering but also to encourage the coming together of divided people.

Rice, A. Australian Department of Defence (in Schweitzer 2010, p.7)

Monitoring is essentially the practice of observing compliance to a standard. The purpose of monitoring is to help all those involved to make appropriate and timely judgments and decisions that will improve the quality of the work, ensure accountability, and encourage implementation according to plan. Within the context of UCP there are three main applications of monitoring: ceasefire monitoring, rumour control, and early warning early response (EWER). This section describes these three different applications.

Besides ceasefire agreements, UCP teams may monitor many other events and proceedings, such as disarmament processes, political events (e.g. demonstrations, elections), local peace agreements between communities, legal proceedings (e.g. trials, tribunals) and social events (e.g. holidays, celebrations, parades). An example of such monitoring is the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal. At key moments of public unrest between 2005 and the April 2008 elections the OHCHR-Nepal office mobilized all its resources to have a prominent preventive presence at demonstrations. OHCHR officers would have advance discussions and trainings with the police about the use of force and would be visibly present at the demonstrations with jackets, radios, and maps, ready to feed information down the chain of command. Their monitoring presence is widely credited with reducing the risk of massive violence (Mahony et al. 2012, p.30). Meta Peace Teams and Christian Peace Teams have frequently monitored and provided presence at political demonstrations in their home countries and abroad to prevent violence.

As mentioned in module 1, the monitoring of events and proceedings such as demonstrations and tribunals often includes aspects of proactive engagement.

3.2.1
Ceasefire monitoring

NP's work as part of CPC [Civilian Protection Component] has served to strengthen the IMT [International Monitoring Team in Mindanao] mechanism overall, including its information gathering capacity, its field-level visibility, and by extension, its legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders.

Gunduz, C. & Torralba, R. (2014) p.47

WHAT IS CEASEFIRE MONITORING?

A ceasefire is understood as a period of truce between two or more parties, especially one that is temporary and is often a preliminary step to the establishment of a more permanent peace on agreed terms. Ceasefire monitoring is used to observe compliance with the terms of implementation of the ceasefire agreements by the ceasefire parties, verify alleged ceasefire violations, and raise awareness among communities (and sometimes the parties to the ceasefire[5]). Ceasefire monitoring is perhaps the most complex application of monitoring. Like peacekeeping, it is largely aimed at the cessation of hostilities, separation of forces, and the creation of a secure environment that is conducive to political dialogue. As civilians are frequently affected by ceasefire violations, caught in crossfires, or purposefully targeted during the hostilities, provisions for the protection of civilians from direct physical violence are increasingly included into ceasefire agreements. Monitoring that helps to sustain ceasefires or similar agreements, can be a critical contribution to protecting civilians. Ceasefire processes provide UCP actors with a unique opportunity to further strengthen their efforts to protect civilians, hold ceasefire parties accountable or support them in the implementation of their own agreements.

HOW DOES CEASEFIRE MONITORING WORK?

Once a ceasefire is declared, the parties to the ceasefire usually agree to establish a ceasefire monitoring mechanism to observe their mutual compliance to the ceasefire agreement. This mechanism may consist of representatives of the ceasefire parties and/or third-party monitors, who may be local actors or foreign nationals, civilian or military. The parties to the ceasefire will have to decide on the exact composition of the monitoring mechanism as well as its mandate. Through methodical observation and timely identification, verification, and reporting of violations, the monitoring mechanism plays an important role in building confidence of the parties in the peace process, so that negotiations for a comprehensive peace agreement continue. The process of ceasefire monitoring can also serve to create confidence among affected communities, because a protective presence is provided and this encourages the conflict parties to adhere to

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5   The soldiers on the ground themselves may not be aware about the agreements or their meaning as these may not have been formulated very clearly or detailed enough.

the agreements. Though monitors may play a role in facilitating dialogue between the ceasefire parties about violations and emerging disagreements, especially if those parties are part of the mechanism, ultimately it is the responsibility of the parties to address violations and resolve disputes.

Ceasefire monitoring is usually military-led. Civilians (often with military backgrounds or ties) may be included, but legitimacy and public support are rarely achieved by merely adding a few (hand-picked) representatives of civil society to a military driven mechanism. Military-led ceasefire monitoring also focuses predominantly on military-to-military matters and major breaches of the agreement by the ceasefire parties, less on their impact on communities. UCP practitioners are well positioned to address some of these concerns and play an official monitoring role. They are an independent, nonpartisan third party, usually unaffiliated with any specific government, political group, or ideology. This makes it easier for all parties, including non-state armed groups, to perceive them as non-threatening and objective. The fact that UCP practitioners are unarmed is crucial to their non-threatening stature. Finally UCP teams usually live within impacted communities and focus their protection efforts on civilians most at risk for being harmed. This helps them to gain trust among conflicting parties as well as within the wider community.

UCP actors have not merely participated in ceasefire mechanisms and processes, but actively modelled a unique approach to monitoring that is grounded in UCP methods and principles. This model is characterized first of all by a distinct focus on the impact of ceasefire violations on civilian populations, rather than on military matters. It puts communities at the centre of ceasefire processes. Secondly, it promotes a proactive approach to monitoring, proactively engaging with all parties in ceasefire territories to control rumours, de-escalate tensions, and prevent violence against civilians. Thirdly, it combines monitoring with direct protection efforts, using the physical presence of monitors to provide direct protection. Their ability to immediately address protection concerns helps monitors to gain trust among communities and allows them to gather more relevant information. Finally, it provides a peacebuilding approach to ceasefire monitoring, building trust, and facilitating dialogue between ceasefire parties and communities. In this way, UCP actors draw the voices of civil society, including women and youth, into discussions about peace and security in the early stages of peace processes.

> *This activity allows us to reflect on what is powerful about civilian protection monitors – while other agencies would still be asking for reports on what is going on, civilian protection monitors were able to go and negotiate for her release. Civilian protection monitors are on the ground they know the people who are involved in these activities, and this is where the power of civilian protection monitors comes from.*
>
> *Nan Mya Thida, founder and director of Research institute for Society and Ecology (RISE) in Myanmar (2015)*

UCP actors have contributed to ceasefire processes by participating in official ceasefire monitoring processes or by independently monitoring ceasefires. UCP teams have also trained local civil society groups in ceasefire monitoring and supported them in establishing civilian monitoring networks, which extend the reach of the monitoring

more widely, while at the same time building confidence in the ceasefire agreement at the local level.

The formal ceasefire monitoring mechanism may (initially) not include (appropriate) civilian representation and may not extend its coverage to the grassroots level, even though many ceasefire violations occur at the grassroots level and directly impact civilians. It may also be held back by a limited mandate or political deadlock in the peace process. Local civilian monitors are well positioned to respond quickly to a wide variety of incidents and can feed information about incidents and community concerns into the formal monitoring mechanism or broader peace process. Minor violations, committed by ill-informed foot soldiers that misinterpret ambiguous or confusing agreements, can easily escalate tensions and lead to retaliation or punishment of civilians.

Civilian-led ceasefire monitoring modelled on UCP methods and principles is easily misunderstood for the more widely known efforts of human rights advocacy groups that monitor ceasefire violations. While both are primarily concerned with violence against civilians, human rights groups usually focus more on holding ceasefire parties accountable and influencing public opinion and decision-makers. One approach is not better than the other. In fact, local ceasefire monitoring groups in Mindanao and Myanmar have shifted back and forth between a peacebuilding or UCP-based approach and a human rights approach to ceasefire monitoring as their peace processes progressed or regressed. Likewise monitors in Mindanao have moved back and forth between participating in a formal mechanism and acting independently (see figure 5 for an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to civilian participation in ceasefire monitoring). Ultimately these choices come down to the basic question: 'how can we make the biggest impact in reducing violence against civilians?'

> *Some local ceasefire monitors NP trained in Myanmar saw formal endorsement as the solution to all their problems and as a precondition for starting their monitoring efforts. They regarded the formal endorsement of civilian monitors in the Philippines as the example to follow, not realising that those monitors had operated independently for almost 10 years, before they were asked to join the formal system. In fact, they probably would never have been asked to join, had they not operated independently for all those years and proven themselves to the parties through their actions on the ground. Now we start to see the same thing in Myanmar.*
>
> *Staff member of Nonviolent Peaceforce in Myanmar (2017)*

- Ability to influence ceasefire parties and decision makers - direct and regular access
- Operates under supportive and secure umbrella of the ceasefire architecture

strength **weakness**

- Risk of being co-opted or silenced by the parties
- Bound by a restricted mandate - most pressing issues and high-risk areas may be outside of mandate

Civilian participation in mandated ceasefire monitoring mechanisms

Supporting ceasefire parties, building their confidence
Emphasis on quiet resolution rather than public reporting

Focus on accountability

aspects they share

aspects they share

Monitors may shift approach or adopt elements of other approaches

- Ability to build bridges between ceasefire parties and communities
- Ability to prevent imminent violence against civilians at the grassroots level

- Ability to put the finger where it hurts most - issues avoided by others
- Ability to influence public opinion world wide - exert pressure

Independent civilian ceasefire monitoring modelled on UCP methods and principles

Independent civilian ceasefire monitoring modelled on human rights advocacy methods

aspects they share

- Freedom to address issues and operate in areas of their own choosing
- Primary concern with violence against civilians

- Dependent on acceptance of ceasefire parties
- Limited leverage in dealing with violence that is tactical or politically motivated (or part of central command)

- Risk to exacerbate climate of mistrust and conflict
- Increased security risk to self or local informants

Figure 5 shows three different approaches to civilian participation in ceasefire monitoring that each have their own advantages and disadvantages. These are not fixed positions. Civil society groups may shift back and forth between these three approaches or fix their position somewhere in between the 3 extreme points of the triangle. The key message of the diagram is to make monitors aware that their positioning within the spectrum comes with a set of advantages and disadvantages.

CEASEFIRE MONITORING IN ACTION

When UCP teams assume an official role in monitoring a ceasefire, they will mainly monitor compliance and non-compliance to the civilian protection aspects of the ceasefire. Before actual ceasefire monitoring work can begin, it is important to understand the key principles of ceasefire monitoring.

Basic functions of a civilian ceasefire monitor that is part of an official mechanism are as follows:

- Perform tasks as may be directed by the ceasefire monitoring mechanism;
- Conduct regular area visits to the communities and troops on both or all sides of the ceasefire agreement;
- Coordinate monitoring activities with all sides;
- Conduct verification of any alleged ceasefire violation and submit a report on the result of verification;
- Provide regular updates of the developments on the ground; for example, during actual incidents of armed hostilities, or the occurrence of unusual or suspicious events that may affect the ceasefire (including specific criminal or illegal activities that both sides agreed to eradicate);
- Monitor and report about the situation of affected civilians and IDPs during and after actual incidents of armed hostilities; ensure that their rights are protected and proper assistance is provided;
- Develop or support capacities of local civil society to monitor;
- Raise awareness about and generate support for the peace process among affected communities.

Detailed verification of violent incidents is of great importance because a violation of the ceasefire agreement may have enormous consequences. It can trigger retaliation and counter-retaliation. This may derail the entire peace process and result in large-scale displacement, killings, and destruction of property.[6] Next to the verification of incidents, confidence building also plays an important role in the monitoring process. Most communities in conflict and post-conflict areas hold deep feelings of mistrust and suspicion. A simple rumour of resumed fighting can spark panic and displacement. The (protective) presence and visibility of a UCP monitoring team in areas where incidents have taken place can help to restore confidence in the functioning of the peace process.

Independent civilian ceasefire monitors may carry out some of the same functions as described above. As they do not have a formal mandate and may (initially) not be recognized by the ceasefire parties, it may be harder for them to document and report ceasefire violations. Moreover, they may have decided to monitor the ceasefire because

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6   A complicating feature in many situations is the existence of ordinary criminals and of armed groups deliberately undermining a peace process. Their actions may create the false impression that the parties to the ceasefire have breached their agreements, which, in turn, can lead to panic and displacement. A further complicating feature is that these criminals and armed groups outside the peace process may be affiliated to one of the parties to the ceasefire through complex networks of family, political and criminal alliances. In verifying an incident of violence it is therefore imperative for a monitoring team to determine the affiliations and alliances of the perpetrators.

official monitoring mechanisms are inexistent, dysfunctional, or not covering the areas most affected by armed conflict. In response they may de-prioritize reporting and focus primarily on direct protection efforts, including protective accompaniment, patrols or negotiating humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians from cross-fires. Efforts also may include raising awareness among communities and ground troops about civilian protection provisions of the ceasefire agreement, facilitating dialogue between ceasefire parties and communities, or encouraging official monitoring bodies to visit or patrol specific areas of tension. Independent civilian monitors may simply use the ceasefire agreement as a source of guidance or an entry point for engagement. They may strengthen the legitimacy of their efforts by focusing their direct protection efforts on incidents of violence that are prohibited under the ceasefire agreement.

Recommended resources for further study (Read)

- Nonviolent Peaceforce, Civilians protecting civilians through ceasefire monitoring. Civilian Ceasefire Monitoring in Myanmar: 2012-2016, *https://nonviolentpeaceforce. org/images/16.11.01._NP_Paper_on_Civilian_Ceasefire_Monitoring_.pdf*

CASE STUDY: MONITORING CEASEFIRE AGREEMENTS AND CULTIVATING CONFIDENCE IN WESTERN MINDANAO

In the Philippines, Nonviolent Peaceforce was part of the International Monitoring Team that monitors peace processes and ceasefire agreements between the national government and the Moro-Islamic Liberation Front.

On 7 April 2011, a sudden firefight erupted in one of the most isolated and disputed locations of western Mindanao. Some 400 armed men from law enforcement agencies surrounded an island with land troops and military boats in an operation aimed at securing the arrest of a criminal group. A firefight lasting four-and-a-half hours ensued, in which several loud explosions were heard, displacing about 4000 civilians (the entire population of the island). Thirteen houses were burned and nine suspected criminals were killed.

On the request of local stakeholders, Nonviolent Peaceforce's Quick Response Team, comprised of both international and national protection monitors, embarked upon a three-day verification mission. The prompt intervention of NP helped to ensure the immediate and safe return of the 4000 frightened civilians to their homes. Before NP's presence, they were reluctant to do so for fear of further attacks. NP's presence also helped to ensure the incident was dealt with immediately and was afforded proper attention by higher authorities, one result of which was compensation to the families whose houses had been burned.

As per the Civilian Protection Component's mandate, the resulting detailed report was sent to the International Monitoring Team who, in turn, shared the report with the both

the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front Peace Panels. The key parties to the peace process, on the basis of NP's verification, conducted an investigation of the incident. Further, the report was discussed at length during a subsequent round of exploratory talks on the peace process.

Local residents of the secluded island requested that NP establish an office there to help ensure their safety and security.
The two-year ceasefire has led to a peace framework agreement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

SOURCE: Nonviolent Peaceforce

3.2.2
Rumour control

One of the ingredients of civil disorders always … is that misinformation is going around. There's a lot of fear; there's a lot of people picking up bits and pieces of information and spreading it. Rumors come out, and most of the time they're very destructive.

Martin Walsh, Civil Rights Mediation Oral History Project (Conflict Management Initiatives, 2001)

WHAT IS RUMOUR CONTROL?

Rumour control refers to the verification of rumours about imminent threats. It includes the timely sharing of factual information with various parties within and across conflict lines in order to prevent escalation of conflict and displacement. Breaches of ceasefire agreements can be instigated by rumours, misinformation, or miscommunication. Helping to clarify what is actually happening (or has not happened) can be essential in preventing flare-ups of violence. Rumour control is always intended to de-escalate tensions. It is mainly used in situations of large-scale community attacks, for example by one group against another, or in areas where communities live amidst fighting between armed groups. It also addresses rumours of community violence that can lead to rioting, retaliation, and displacement.

HOW DOES RUMOUR CONTROL WORK?

Rumours cost lives in violent situations. A simple rumour of an imminent attack on a community has the potential to create panic among civilians. This panic may lead to

mass evacuation or to a counterattack even before the rumoured attack has happened. Verifying information and sharing factual information with conflicting parties or wider communities about threats and violent incidents in the area can help to ease tensions, de-escalate the conflict, and prevent unnecessary (and usually very costly) displacement. Clarifying the likelihood of violence, on the other hand, can help people displace in a safer, more timely and orderly manner or, at least, make more informed decisions about fleeing or staying.

Rumour control is a method that is most useful in protracted conflicts, where levels of mistrust have skyrocketed and previous channels of communication between groups have disintegrated or disappeared. For example, in various areas in Sub-Saharan Africa communities are locked into longstanding conflicts between tribes and clans. Cattle raiding, abductions of children, and community attacks are common. Clashes often come in waves, depending on the season. Modes of communication and infrastructure are limited. Suspicions and mistrust towards other tribes are fuelled by rounds of failed peace conferences and collapsed disarmament processes. In this type of environment, 'rumour control' can be an effective method to prevent or reduce violence and protect civilians.

UCP practitioners are in a good position to identify rumours and provide rumour control. They live together with vulnerable communities for long periods of time, have a deep understanding of the local context, and enjoy the trust of the people they work with. Third-party monitors or peacekeepers who suddenly arrive in threatened areas and engage with a number of high level actors for a limited amount of time may not get the same information as those who live within communities and (in some cases) speak the local language. Local authorities and army commanders in some places are reluctant to reveal detailed information about violent incidents in the area. They fear outside interference, decreased business activity, or damage to their reputation for not being able to manage the conflict. Even if they are willing to share information, they may only have one version of the story. In a climate of suspicion, prejudice, mistrust, and fear most rumours will have at least three or four different versions.

Another advantage of UCP practitioners in identifying rumours and providing rumour control is that they may be able to have access to areas where other actors cannot go. Their extensive networks of relations allow them, in some places, to move through areas controlled by paramilitaries. Furthermore, their relatively low security threshold simplifies the logistics of transportation, allowing them, for example, to walk in terrain where motorized transport is not possible or is temporarily suspended (e.g. during the rainy season).

RUMOUR CONTROL IN ACTION

Rumour control starts with extensive context and conflict analysis. A lack of understanding of context and conflict may lead to misinterpretation of developments and incidents. Very important rumours may not be identified if monitors find themselves in the wrong place or at the wrong time (in rural areas, patterns of violence often change with the seasons). Alternatively, UCP personnel may find themselves in the right place at the right time, but fail to understand the urgency of the threat that lies behind the rumours.

Efforts to de-escalate tensions in this situation may create a false sense of security among community members and increase security risks if they are not accompanied by Early Warning and Early Response efforts (see section 3.2.3). Whether UCP is provided by local community members, internationals, or a mix of international and local, information about rumours need to be presented in the clearest way. Moreover, it is up to local people to decide if and how they want to respond.

UCP practitioners engaged in rumour control often identify local observers in designated areas who regularly inform them about recent developments and incidents. Incoming rumours will be documented and verified with other observers in the area. UCP teams will also try to visit the place of a rumoured incident to get first-hand information. They will collect as many details as possible about the numbers, age, gender, and dress code (uniforms) of people involved in reported incidents, its exact time and place, the response of civilians and local authorities, etc. They will then analyse the rumours, discern patterns, assess the ratio of rumours to actual incidents, and share information with relevant actors. In some cases, UCP teams will use the information to engage in shuttle diplomacy and clarify perceptions and intentions of conflicting parties about (and to) each other in order to de-escalate tensions and avoid violent confrontation (see also section 3.3.1 on multi-track dialogue).

> *We have encouraged communities to tell us about any rumours or tensions and the communities now know that they should do that because it can lead to fighting. Recently there was a rumour that one of the armed groups and the military would fight, but we were able to confirm that it was not true. We shared this back to the community, who trusted our information and relaxed. In fact, people had already packed up and were ready to flee.*
>
> *Member of a local ceasefire monitoring network in Myanmar (Nonviolent Peaceforce 2017)*

Sometimes however it is important to act quickly on rumours. In a city with mixed ethnicity in Sri Lanka, a rumour circulated that a person of one ethnicity had been killed by someone from another. Quickly people began dragging riders from buses when not in their own area, and beating them up. UCP practitioners rapidly learned that this was a false rumour and mobilized community leaders to broadcast the truth and call for calm and reconciliation for the damage already done. Violence flared in a matter of hours, and calm took days to re-establish, while a number of people displaced to places of worship for safety. Rapid action prevented further violence.

Recommended resources for further study (Read)

- ICRC. (2012). *Enhancing protection for civilians in armed conflict and other situations of violence.* http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc-002-0956.pdf

3.2.3
Early Warning Early Response

WHAT IS EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE?

Early Warning Early Response (EWER) is a systematic application of monitoring for the sake of preventing violence, reducing the impact of violence, and increasing the safety and security of civilians in tense situations of violent conflict. It is based on the awareness that conflicts generally progress through well-recognized stages. By monitoring the progression of a conflict, it may be possible to predict the development of a crisis or at least be aware of signs of imminent violence. Timely awareness of an imminent crisis may help civilians to prepare themselves to face the crisis or to evacuate the area. A timely response may prevent the crisis from developing or at least reduce its impact.
Early Warning can be defined as the collection and communication of information about a crisis, the analysis of that information, and the initial consideration of potential response options to the crisis. Conflict Early Warning requires (near real-time) assessment of events that, in a high-risk environment, are likely to trigger the rapid escalation of violence.

Early Response (Action) is often used in conjunction with early warning. It refers to the actions that are taken to prevent violence or the escalation of violence and to resolve violent conflict. Early response can also include timely displacement or the implementation of contingency plans, based on identified early warning indicators. In addition to direct UCP intervention, actions to prevent or de-escalate violence can be diplomatic, military, humanitarian, and/or economic. They may be as simple as getting armed parties to agree to wait until all civilians are removed from the area before resuming fighting, or as complicated as organized civilian displacement to safe places. Response options need to reflect a combination of ground realities, response capacities, and scenarios. Ground realities describe a particular situation, marked by a specific emergency context. Response capacities refer to the (in)ability of certain actors to deliver a timely, inclusive, and targeted intervention. Scenarios refer to the potential outcomes of the respective interventions.

UCP personnel may only be involved in Early Warning and leave Early Response to other actors, or vice versa. In most cases, however, they will be involved in both Early Warning and Early Response. When it comes to Early Response following a crisis situation, UCP agencies may team up with other humanitarian agencies and focus specifically on the physical security concerns and protection issues of civilians in the crisis area. Other agencies typically provide, for example, food and medical aid.

Early Response actions are selected from UCP methods described separately in this module, according to what best suits the situation. This section will mainly focus on Early Warning and the process that leads from Early Warning to Early Response.

HOW DOES EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE WORK?

EWER as applied by UCP actors involves more than the activity of UCP teams monitoring the progression of a conflict and responding to a crisis situation. It is primarily a tool for local communities to more effectively protect themselves. It is not unlike EWER mechanisms focused on dealing with natural disasters that include earthquake drills in which people rehearse where to take cover or where to go. It involves the establishment or strengthening of community-based mechanisms of analysis, communication and response. These mechanisms need to ensure that information about incidents and developments in the area is correctly identified and shared in a timely way with relevant actors, especially those in a position to respond to an approaching crisis. In addition to information sharing, EWER mechanisms address the issue of coordination, preparation, and division of responsibilities. Preparation may include entire communities. Children need to know what to do or where to go in an emergency situation. They may be at school, on the road, or alone at home. Disabled or otherwise mentally or physically challenged persons may need the support of others in the case of a sudden evacuation. Families may need to have a 'go' bag ready or a plan for taking critical papers and supplies. Specific early warning alarm systems may be developed, but unless the entire community understands how to respond, they will not be effective.

EWER mechanisms are multi-layered, horizontally as well as vertically. They may connect actors at the grassroots level with actors at the middle range and top levels. They may also connect actors at the grassroots level on different sides of the conflict with each other. Women from one community may, for example, inform women from another community that tensions in their community are increasing. Proactive engagement, protective presence or rumour control may all be used as part of early response strategies.

Effective EWER requires input from a wide range of perspectives, including the perspectives of marginalized groups, women, and the elderly, who are often excluded from official peace processes. Mechanisms need to include actors who are able to recognize and categorize early indicators or signs of imminent violence. Mechanisms also need to include actors who are able to respond to these indicators to prevent the violence from occurring or prevent its escalation. Those who live in communities affected by violence are usually in the best position to recognize such indicators. These could be typical community members, members of grassroots organizations, or community leaders. Those able to facilitate a positive response to prevent violence are not necessarily top-level leaders, but they should have the necessary influence to stop violence or de-escalate tensions. They could be religious leaders, local politicians, representatives from the business sector, local military or police, as well as regional government officials or the leadership of armed groups.

For example, Jana Krause discusses the way in which a community in Jos, Nigeria was able to prevent attacks, burning and looting, through a combination of self-protection efforts. Respected male religious leaders and elders, as well as women's groups, were able to define 'being a respected man' (p. 18, Krause, 2019) as being nonviolent and taking leadership to protect the community nonviolently. Thus even when communities around them suffered significant violence, this particular community was able to prevent attackers from entering and prevent their own youth from participating in violence. While various NGOs were able to support this work after a period of violence, it was a

grassroots, community initiative that was credited with the initial prevention work.

The high security threshold and long-term grassroots presence of UCP actors often allows them to establish or strengthen EWER mechanisms in remote areas, where international access is limited. In areas where international access is blocked, UCP actors may bring local community leaders out of the area to build their capacity and assist them remotely in the establishment of such mechanisms. EWER efforts have been particularly relevant for communities that have been displaced or those that for some other reason can no longer rely on customary EWER mechanisms that may exist in communities. In some places UCP actors have trained refugees that were likely to be sent back into areas of insecurity they had escaped. These self-protection strategies may not keep people safe from harm, but they may be able to prevent one more child from being killed, injured, or separated. They can also strengthen people's resilience, as it helps people to re-discover internal resources of ownership and creativity.

It is imperative that UCP teams do not establish new EWER mechanisms without assessing the existence and functioning of existing mechanisms. In some areas existing mechanisms are geared to natural disasters. UCP practitioners can play a role in refining these mechanisms to include a conflict prevention and response component.[7] Another concern is making sure that the EWER mechanisms stay purely non-political; otherwise this could create security risks for those involved.

EARLY WARNING EARLY RESPONSE IN ACTION

The establishment of EWER mechanisms starts with the identification of crisis areas. UCP teams will focus their assessment on areas with regular clashes, bases for hard-line politicians, mixed communities as well as areas rich in natural resources, close to forward defence lines, and base camps of armed forces. After identification of a particular crisis area, UCP personnel and community actors collect baseline information and identify indicators of potential conflict:

Conflict indicators may be:

- Political (e.g. legislation favouring one group over another or hate speech);
- Economic (e.g. disruption of food distribution or uneven economic development along group lines);
- Environmental (e.g. extended droughts or bad harvests);
- Socio-cultural (e.g. destruction or desecration of religious sites);
- Technological (provocations and hate speech on radio or in the social media);
- Migrations (e.g. people leaving certain areas or cattle arriving);
- Security-related (e.g. incidents of kidnapping or appearance of new armed groups, bombings and attacks).

Following the collection of baseline information and conflict indicators, UCP personnel

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7   Some of these systems are primarily focused on early warning of a disaster and then getting services to people afterwards. They are not focused on preventing the crisis per se, as it isn't possible to prevent a hurricane in the same way that people might prevent resumption of fighting.

and local actors jointly analyse data, put it into context and attach meaning to it. They will also formulate plausible scenarios and create action plans for each scenario. The entire process of information gathering and analysis may be undertaken within the framework of a community meeting or a workshop. This allows for capacity development about protection strategies and contingency plans.

In a context where communities suffer from aerial bombings, UCP teams may, for example, conduct a workshop with community leaders on EWER. The participants can describe and analyse what happened the last time the community was hit by aerial bombing; e.g. children lost their lives because they ran away in panic, instead of seeking cover in foxholes (holes in the ground used as shelter against enemy fire); physically challenged people had no foxholes as they did not have the strength to dig them. The community leaders may acknowledge that they cannot prevent aerial bombardments from happening, but that they can reduce their impact in a number of ways. Women and teachers could be tasked to instruct children on what to do next time there is a bombing. Youth could be tasked to dig foxholes for physically challenged people. Children could be asked to reflect on their own roles to support their communities and each other. Community leaders could identify specific warning signs to ensure rapid response. They could even establish a phone tree communication system that includes UCP personnel and other actors to ensure timely response from service providers following a bombing.

Recommended resources for further study (Read)

- *The Small Girl and the Big Men.* (Duncan n.d.). http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce. org/blog/small-girl-and-big-men

3.3
Relationship building

You need fluid channels of communication with your state counterparts. You have to know who to talk to. Maybe you can't resolve everything, but you should at least go to the right place, know who will pay attention and who is going to waste your time ... With a good relationship, you can call directly— "What's up with this case?" Without a relationship, you can't.

Head of sub-office, OHCHR, Colombia (Mahony, 2006, p.52)

Relationships are an important aspect of all UCP methods. Having credible relationships with people in local communities, key actors and other stakeholders helps to open up channels of communication between conflict parties. It also helps to address rumours and support interventions to prevent an escalating violent situation. Finally, it enhances safety and security of UCP personnel deployed in violent conflict areas. One significant factor in the effectiveness of UCP comes from establishing and improving relationships with government representatives, armed actors (state and non-state), local religious and community leaders, and others who may have the power to influence potential perpetrators of violence or parties in conflict. While establishing relationships inherently provides some protection, if and when threats do occur, these influential persons can be called upon to reduce the risk of violence. Knowing when to emphasize positive engagement and when to use pressure in these relationships is complex and depends on careful analysis.

In Module 2 deterrence and encouragement were presented as guiding tactics for UCP. While conceptually different tactics, in practice the interactions with government, armed actors, and others usually move back and forth between the two. They may even be applied both at the same time. This has significant implications for building relationships. It is a complex practice to build and maintain relationships with individuals in organizations that are both encouraged to respect the rights of civilians and pressured to refrain from violating those rights. At times, it will not be possible to build relationships directly with certain actors when governments make those interactions illegal or when the group itself rejects overtures for contact, for example, armed groups that have been labelled 'terrorists' or enemies of the state. In these cases it is important for UCP teams to consider how these groups can be made aware of their presence and activities and who may have direct lines of communication or relationships with these actors. In other contexts, trying to build a relationship with some people will undermine the trust of the community or people being protected. For instance, in many communities, police are viewed with suspicion and fear. Trying to build a relationship with the police, in that context, might undermine protection work. Nonetheless some form of communication is likely to be needed. As relationships are critical for all the other UCP methods, UCP actors regularly review the status of their relationships and constantly nurture them.

Though relationship building is an important component of all UCP methods and permeates all efforts of UCP actors, confidence building and multi-track dialogue are presented in this module as two specific applications of relationship building. Both applications will be described in this section.

> *I think one of the lessons I've learned from the Marawi response is that every relationship counts. Every relationship you build, whether a high ranking official or a normal civilian in the community, it counts. It really counts. ….. Some of the relationships we relied on were 10 years in the making. Continuously nurture relationships because you never know when or where you can use that relationship.*
>
> *Staff Member of Nonviolent Peaceforce in the Philippines, reflecting on the Marawi Siege of 2017.*

3.3.1
Confidence building

> *Some "consumers" of civilian accompaniment have noted that in hindsight they do not think the … accompaniment and presence saved their lives, because they realized later that they were not in as much danger as they had originally believed. However, they did note that the solidarity they felt allowed them to continue their work, regardless of whether or not they were truly at risk.*
>
> *Lisa Schirch, 2006, p.60*

WHAT IS CONFIDENCE BUILDING?

Protracted conflicts are usually marked by cycles of violence, killings, abuse, discrimination, and a lack of or unequal access to justice, education, and basic resources. The fabric of the community has often frayed, with traditional leaders and others with resources moving out, leaving behind those with fewer resources. Displaced people are often automatically suspected of being politically responsible for their misfortune, while human rights defenders are routinely labelled 'guerrillas' or 'terrorists'. While there are almost always some civilians still active, working for change, many other civilians will have become fearful, mistrustful, silenced, and disempowered. Some will have lost hope in a better future, others have run out of ideas about how to change their situation, or lost the will and the courage to try. Additionally, in many communities with prolonged violent conflict, those with the resources to do so move away, further draining resources from and disrupting the fabric of the community. In such a climate UCP practitioners can try to build or renew the confidence of civilians in themselves and in others, including state actors.

Building confidence is a matter of supporting inner strength rather than changing external conditions or increasing skills. It is part of most UCP methods. Ceasefire monitoring aims to build confidence and trust between armed actors. Protective presence may enhance the confidence of local actors to increase their engagements with local government officials or police officers. Developing early warning and early response plans often strengthen a community's belief in their own capacity for self-protection.

Confidence is an application of relationship building because increased confidence tends to take people out of their isolation. It leads to more engagement, initiatives, creativity, and confrontation. That confrontation may also lead to conflict and even violence is a dilemma that will be explored in module 5. This section focuses on the role of confidence in preventing or reducing violence, increasing safety and security, and strengthening local peace infrastructures.

HOW DOES CONFIDENCE BUILDING WORK?

Confidence building can contribute to UCP key objectives in different ways. With increased confidence, civilians are more likely to resist abuse or speak out against abuse. In isolated areas vulnerable populations may not be aware of their rights. They are also not connected to support networks nor have they access to support services. They may fear to approach community leaders, police officers, or international service providers. As a result they may continue to suffer from ongoing violence. Once they are aware of their rights, feel connected, and know how to access support services, they may feel sufficiently confident to interrupt the pattern of violence or ask assistance from others to do so. The same logic applies for human rights defenders or state duty bearers who feel compelled to address abuse on behalf of survivors. Although they do not suffer directly from the abuse themselves, they may lack the confidence to confront perpetrators. Once they feel protected and supported, they may find the confidence to address the issue.

Just as increased confidence can prevent violence or reduce violence, it can also increase the safety and security of civilians and strengthen local peace infrastructures. Increased confidence may, for example, encourage civilians to initiate their own activities for peace or protect high-risk people in their community. Lack of education or the use of top-down education systems often leads civilians to believe that they do not have enough qualifications or skills to contribute to peace and security. UCP practitioners can play a role in convincing them otherwise. The case study in Module 1 (box 2, page 17) showed that UCP team members encouraged women in providing protective presence and accompaniment to each other in order to protect themselves from sexual violence at water access points. These women realized there were actions that they themselves could undertake to make a difference, and in turn they encouraged other women.

Finally, increased confidence can increase the relationships between civilians and state actors or decision makers. In many situations of violent conflict, civilians are reluctant or fearful to approach state actors for a variety of reasons. Increased confidence can help to bridge the divide and support civilians in approaching state actors to report abuses and request for additional protection measures. UCP practitioners can lead by example, as they visibly engage with security forces, police officers, and government officials and build relations with supportive individuals. At the same time, they can support the

functioning of state institutions that provide protection services to civilians, such as local human rights commissions. This can help to increase the confidence of civilians in the protection capacity of the state.

CONFIDENCE BUILDING IN ACTION

Confidence can be built in many different ways. UCP practitioners may:

- Accompany survivors of violence to state duty bearers to report abuse or violations;
- Encourage local ownership of shared activities and increase the participation and leadership of local partners or stakeholders (confidence may be prioritized over efficiency);
- Promote horizontal learning by creating dialogue among local actors—local actors may perceive UCP personnel as experts and disregard the wisdom of 'uneducated' local actors;
- Encourage discussions where local people recognize their own expertise;
- Explore and appreciate local mechanisms or tools before introducing external mechanisms and tools;
- Seek consultation and dialogue with a wide range of local actors, including vulnerable groups, and publicly show appreciation for the knowledge and perspective they provide;
- Make connections between emerging local peacemakers and authorities or religious leaders if needed, perhaps initially lead, but gradually remove yourself from the spotlight and support direct relationships between the local actors.
- Use active listening skills and affirmation to show that the input of local actors is valuable;
- 'Speak' the local language—use examples and symbols that reflect and relate to the local context;
- Share case studies that show how people just like them have played important roles in protection;
- Offer skills-building support on security and protection, international law, or monitoring.

CASE STUDY: LOCAL VILLAGERS IN MYANMAR GAIN CONFIDENCE TO PUSH BACK AGAINST GOLD MINING

In Myanmar, unregulated gold mining activities led to the pollution of water sources. A group of women that received training about human rights, civilian protection, and ceasefire monitoring from different organizations decided to proactively engage with influential actors and mobilize community members to jointly respond to the issue. They engaged first with local armed group leaders in the area. This was a big risk for them, as in years past they would not have dared to confront anyone from an armed group. But with the training and support, they decided to speak up. They did not make much progress at first. When they became aware that the issue could not be resolved at the local level, they drafted complaint letters to government and armed group leaders at the

district level as well as the State-level ceasefire committee. When the issue was taken up by the ceasefire parties, armed group leaders became aware that their own people were involved in mining activities and decided to act. A month later the community received a letter, acknowledging their complaint. The letter also declared measures being taken to regulate mining activities in order to stop the pollution of the water sources. This was a big win for the community, and helped to build their confidence further.

SOURCE: Nonviolent Peaceforce Myanmar 2018

3.3.2
Multi-track dialogue and shuttle diplomacy

NP is seen to be able to influence the actions of the GPH (government of the Philippines) and the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) armed actors, including the capability to cause armed actions to cease and desist through direct access… Accounts cite mere minutes as the time elapsed between the reporting of the incident to NP, and the pull-out of armed actors or the cessation of armed action in a locality.

C. Gunduz and R. Torralba (Gunduz et.al. 2014, Evaluation of Nonviolent Peaceforce's Project with the Civilian Protection Component of the International Monitoring Team)

WHAT IS MULTI-TRACK DIALOGUE AND SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY?[8]

UCP teams engage in diplomatic intervention in daily situations and constantly interact with key actors at the grassroots, middle-range, and top levels of society. Each contact encourages a change in behaviour. The more long-term and constant the presence, and the more relationships that have been constructed with these actors, the more this is possible. The opportunities to influence key actors are everywhere, every day. When UCP personnel are out in public, travelling to remote rural areas, talking to the local mayor or priest or commander, everyone is paying attention and calculating the consequences. And that changes the situation (Mahony 2006, p.49). When representatives of civil society, especially women, are involved in dialogue, the results recognize a broader range of needs and are more sustainable than when only official parties and armed actors are involved.

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8   This section draws on the work of Liam Mahony, Proactive Presence: Field Strategies for Civilian Protection

Dialogue can be defined as deliberate, arranged conversations organized, and often facilitated by, organizations or individuals. Multi-track dialogue is a term for dialogue processes operating on several tracks simultaneously. This section explores three tracks. (Diamond and McDonald, 1993):

- Track 1 usually refers to official dialogue between high-level political and military leaders, focusing on ceasefires, treaties, and post-conflict political processes;
- Track 2 refers to unofficial dialogue and problem-solving activities aimed at building relationships and encouraging new thinking that can inform the official process. It typically involves influential academic, religious, and NGO leaders and other civil society actors who can interact more freely than high-ranking officials;
- Track 3 refers to people-to-people dialogue undertaken by individuals and private groups at the grass roots to encourage interaction and understanding among hostile communities. This involves awareness-raising and confidence building within these communities (United States Institute of Peace, 2011).

Shuttle diplomacy is the use of a third party to convey information back and forth between conflicting parties. The intermediary serves not only as a relay for questions and answers, but can also provide suggestions for moving the conflict toward resolution and does so in private (Brahm and Burgess 2003). Shuttle diplomacy can be considered as a separate UCP method and is particularly applied in horizontal conflicts between communities, clans or ceasefire parties. It is included here within the section on multi-track dialogue, which emphasizes both vertical as well as horizontal dialogue and bridge building efforts.
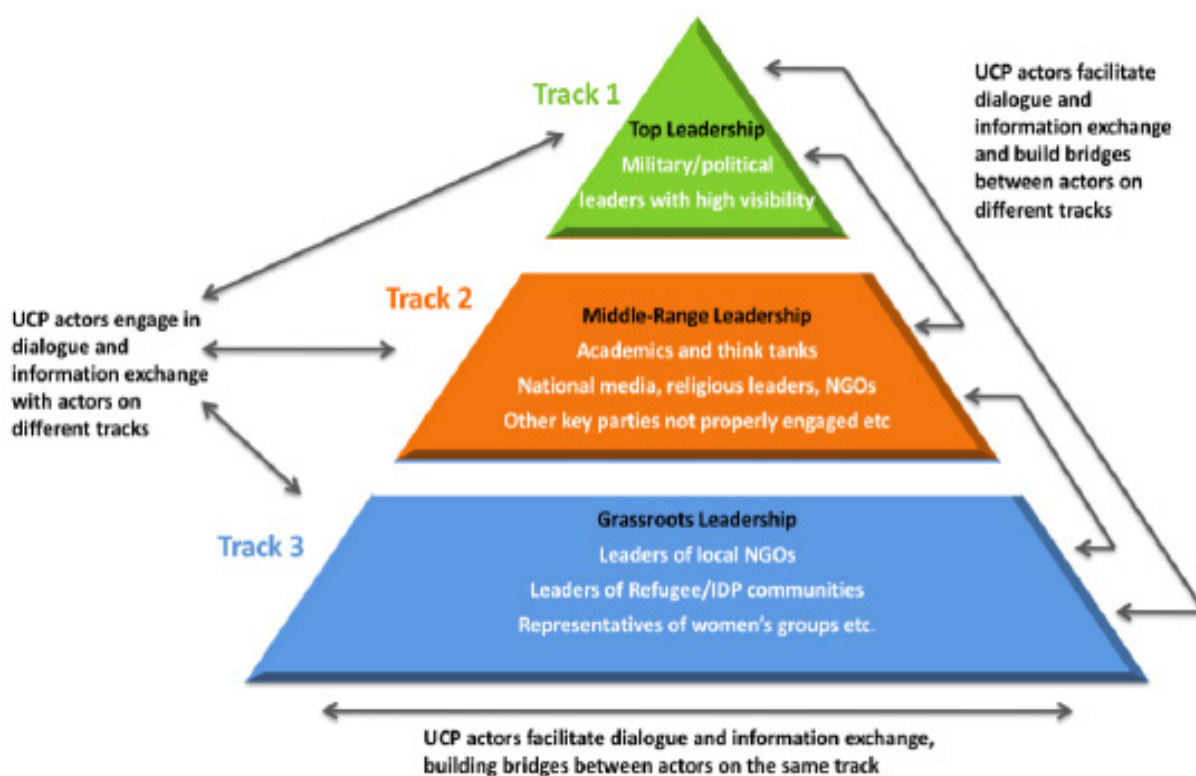

Figure 6: Multi-track dialogue (adapted from John Paul Lederach [Lederach, 1997, p.39])

HOW DOES MULTI-TRACK DIALOGUE AND SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY WORK?

UCP agencies may operate within all three tracks and aim to promote dialogue between actors from all three tracks. This will depend in large part on the particular focus of the UCP organization, the specific context, and the interests of local communities and partner organizations. Some will focus only on tracks three and two—in some cases, dealing with track one could create a perception of partisanship. Others focus significant efforts on all three. And some see it as their work to support grassroots people to connect with track 2 and 1, rather than do that work themselves. In some contexts, it is important for UCP practitioners to only talk with local people, and then only in a specific community. For instance, some of the organizations that work in Palestine have noted that they will lose community trust and connection if they are seen or known to talk with Israelis.[9] In contexts like this, UCP may focus on protection and not engage at all in larger dialogues.

In some contexts, where there are groups advocating for human rights, some UCP groups will cooperate in a division of tasks, with some more focused on protection itself and others on using the knowledge from the field to influence people in track 2 and 1. For example, by connecting women peacemakers at the grassroots level (Track 3) with NGO leaders or academics at the middle-range level (Track 2), UCP practitioners not only build relationships between the actors at the two levels, but also enhance the roles of both parties. These women peacemakers may feel supported by the more influential actors at the Track 2 level and have the possibility to learn from their expertise. At the same time, the NGO leaders and academics have received first-hand information about the situation at the field level from the perspective of women. This may have given them new insights, which they can use in their dialogues with political leaders at the top level (Track 1). Furthermore, both parties have received an additional perspective on the peace process. UCP team members may also introduce the same women peacemakers directly to actors at the Track 1 level—for example, high-level UN officials—and support their continued presence at Track 1 functions.

These relationships between actors from different tracks have the potential to increase the confidence of all actors involved. They are more fully aware of what is happening and how to respond to a certain situation. As UCP practitioners almost always have grassroots involvement, they often have access to important, verified information which most of the time does not reach the higher track 2 and 1 levels. UCPs that do connect with these other tracks can utilize that information in a skillful way to enhance levels of connectivity between all the three tracks and enhance grass roots participation in higher-level peace or ceasefire mechanisms. Many peace talks do not advance, because the interactions at the track 1 level are not connected efficiently to the track 2 and track 3 levels. UCP practitioners can play a role in bringing concerns up and down the chain and using their connections at higher levels to protect civilians. This is always done, however, with care to the specific context. As noted above in the example of Palestine, not all contexts or organizational mandates support this kind of work.

As state actors and non-state armed groups usually have the biggest influence on the

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9   See https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/images/Good_Practices/UCP-in-the-Middle-East-Documentation_Final.pdf

security situation, their involvement is key, especially when it comes to the protection of civilians. Therefore, UCP practitioners prioritize the building of relationships with these actors and try to connect them to key actors at the different track levels.

Where there is the political will within a state or armed group to listen, and workable relationships have been built, an important communication mechanism can be the use of confidential dialogue and cooperation towards reform. This can exert influence not only at higher policy-making levels but also further down the chain: at the low or middle level a commander may be afraid of being accountable to his hierarchy, and may prefer to resolve an issue quietly at his own level (Mahony 2006, p.50). Even in situations where the state may be the chief obstacle to protection, and perhaps the primary perpetrator of abuse, UCP teams will still benefit from close local and diplomatic relationships with governmental and military decision makers at national and local levels, if this is possible and does not undermine relationships at the grassroots. These relationships must be developed carefully to assure maximum access and influence, and yet not allow the host state to manipulate or curtail the organization's independence (ibid. p.52), or even create a perception of partisanship.

Communication with armed groups can be a very delicate matter in the eyes of the dominant state and its military, and security concerns must therefore be considered in such contacts. However, concern for security should not categorically rule out such communication. Security must be dealt with strategically at the operational level, considering also that lack of contact with an armed group may also pose a security risk to UCP personnel (ibid. p.53). At the same time, as previously mentioned, the fact that some groups have been labelled illegal actors or terrorists means direct communication may not be possible. Nonetheless indirect communication may be possible through supporters or family members of these groups or through leadership in exile or among the diaspora of that particular group.

UCP practitioners also facilitate relationship building and dialogue between threatened civilians and international peace and security networks. They may, for example, collect and share the stories of threatened civilians to raise awareness about their conditions and protection needs. They may facilitate meetings between local CSOs such as the culture and literature groups in Myanmar, or groups of Sri Lankan women from isolated areas of violent conflict and representatives of the diplomatic community at the capital city, or invite human rights defenders to speak at international conferences or meetings in places like New York or Geneva. These exchanges often build the confidence of affected civilians, raise their profile, and strengthen their support networks. At the same time, it allows members of international support networks to engage directly with the affected civilians and get first-hand information, which often inspires them to intensify their advocacy and response efforts (see figure 6).

> *When we asked what had contributed to women's increased willingness and ability to engage in peace activism, especially during the second war, we received several variations on the response that they had become connected to broader peace networks and sources of information.*
>
> *Levine, D. (2012 p 12), speaking about women in Liberia*

Shuttle diplomacy is applied primarily within a specific track, for UCP actors, primarily within track 3. They may move back and forth between field commanders or community leaders of conflicting parties to control rumours of imminent attacks or negotiate humanitarian corridors for civilians caught in cross fires, as has been explained in previous sections. Shuttle diplomacy has proven to be a valuable tool for many local communities that wish to engage with conflicts nonviolently, but feel they lack the 'necessary' mediation skills or are reluctant to interfere. It has showed them that they do not need these skills and that as 'mere messengers', acting on behalf of frightened communities, they have an opportunity to de-escalate tensions and prevent violence.

MULTI-TRACK DIALOGUE AND SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY IN ACTION

Effective dialogue requires analytical, political, and diplomatic skills. Diplomacy can involve a wide variety of techniques, including direct pressure, indirect pressure ('hinting'), humour, politeness, subordination or humility, praise, stressing mutual objectives, and developing solutions together. For effective dialogue, individual UCP practitioners must be able to:

- Engage and build trust with a wide range of actors, including abusers, survivors of violence, national and local governments, security forces, non-state armed actors, local community leaders, women, and children;
- Develop clear messages for each of these actors that relate to their situation and trigger their interest;
- Create parallel dialogue processes with vulnerable or threatened groups where appropriate. Women may not want to speak out in front of men, especially when it concerns sexual and gender based violence;
- Create a culture of respect, transparency (while protecting confidentiality), mutual consultation, and open handling of accusations—avoid making promises that cannot be kept;
- Respect existing hierarchy and traditional structures, be aware of internal divisions;
- Maintain accuracy in communicating information about incidents;
- Keep in mind the safety of conversation partners—especially when exchanging sensitive information;
- Be persistent and patient. Some actors may be ready to share information in a third or fourth meeting after their trust has been gained.