

3.4

Capacity enhancement

The training, advisory and financing roles of international NGOs, combined with the local knowledge and reach of local NGOs and other grassroots actors to mobilise and support citizens, were clearly a hallmark of the Bantay Ceasefire's success.

Nat. J., Colletta (2006, p. 30).

In many situations of violent conflict there is a lack of formal and even informal education. If schools are functioning at all, classes are frequently interrupted and many students, as well as teachers, have been displaced, injured, or killed. Students may have been pulled out from school for safety reasons, to support their families, or to join armed forces. Survival will have become the priority for many civilians. Many communities are cut off from most of the wider world, and may not have heard about ways people can protect themselves. As a result, there is often limited capacity and/or confidence among communities in areas of violent conflict to engage in peace and security efforts. However informal though, every community has its knowledge, skills and traditions related to conflict causes and conditions and are therefore often best positioned to identify potential opportunities for prevention and protection. The presence of UCP personnel or other actors may have increased the space for local peace work to operate and grow, but the lack of opportunities and tools for shared reflection and learning may hinder that growth. Capacity enhancement can provide local actors in situations of violent conflict with opportunities to come together, reflect on their own efforts and that of others, and build on what they already know. It can also provide tools for learning and increase confidence in people's ability to transform conflicts. Capacity enhancement is always a shared process: people learning from each other.

Capacity enhancement in the context of UCP is understood as the strengthening of knowledge, skills, and abilities for the purpose of violence prevention and civilian protection. Capacity enhancement includes training courses or workshops on topics such as UCP and human rights. It also includes the coaching and supporting of key individuals and/or existing or newly established local protection mechanisms.

Capacity enhancement can also be understood as a form of supporting community resilience. There has been a recent focus on community resilience in many fields, including peacekeeping and peacebuilding (Juncos and Joseph 2020). Given the setbacks and failures of many international and national interventions that attempt to support sustainable peace, there is a renewed focus on community owned, grassroots efforts that recognize and build on existing local capacities. These efforts are intended to be community owned and led, reflecting the priorities of a local community, rather than an agenda imposed from afar. They are based on specific context analysis which is systemic, considering the complex array of factors that contribute to violence and peace. Capacity enhancement in UCP has always shared these elements, particularly when supporting and building local protection infrastructures. UCP can thus be understood

as contributing to community resilience.

This section first describes UCP efforts to strengthen local self-protection and peacebuilding capacities, as this is the most widely used application of capacity development. The second part of the section describes the establishment of self-sustaining local protection infrastructures. These efforts include the strengthening of local civil society networks to apply UCP methods, but also formal peace or ceasefire mechanisms and protection policies.

3.4.1

Enhancing self-protection capacities

Countries emerging from conflict are not blank pages, and their people are not projects...Internal actors at all levels of society are the main agents of peace... Our efforts to help sustain peace should be motivated by the humility to learn from what still works in countries emerging from conflict and to respect that every society, however broken it may appear, has capacities and assets, not just needs and vulnerabilities.

Youssef Mahmoud, member of HIPPO Panel and 1325 Review briefing the UN Security Council, 29 Aug. 2017

WHAT IS ENHANCING SELF-PROTECTION CAPACITIES?

Enhancing self-protection capacities is an organized activity for the sharing, exploring, and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies that local actors can apply to increase their own protection and that of others around them. In this section it refers to activities of training, mentoring, or the development of resources that aim to enhance capability, capacity, productivity, and performance. Self-protection takes a central place among other topics of capacity enhancement, because the immediate safety and security of threatened civilians lies at the heart of UCP. Besides, if local actors feel confident and able to protect themselves, UCP actors can direct their attention elsewhere. In the context of UCP, capacity enhancement means working together with people in a dynamic process of reflection, analysis, skill building, and action.

HOW DOES ENHANCING SELF-PROTECTION CAPACITIES WORK?

Enhancing self-protection capacities begins with “capacity recognition” of what already exists. Through deep listening UCP teams learn from the community about their current approaches to handling conflict. The listening includes seeking out those people, often women, who are not necessarily identified as official leaders but who carry out security

work on the ground. The goal is to help the community return to the place where it can protect itself without external support. In their study of 13 communities who opted out of war, Mary B. Anderson and Marshall Wallace found that the overarching key to success is “one of existing capacities” (Anderson et al., 2013, p.8).

Enhancing self-protection capacities is provided as a direct response to identified needs and interests of a specific group in a particular situation of violent conflict. Leaders of a refugee community may, for example, wish to increase their capacity to protect children, as a result of the recruitment of unaccompanied refugee children by armed militias. Before a specific training is conducted, UCP teams, together with the refugee leaders, will assess the specific protection needs of the unaccompanied children, and analyse the protection strategies that have been tried so far. Local leaders will be included as trainers as much as possible. The curriculum may include basic principles of child protection, as well as specific UCP protection methods and skills. These methods and skills will be practiced during the training to test their applicability. During or after the training, UCP personnel may support the participants in formulating and implementing specific protection strategies. A follow-up training may be conducted with the same group to reflect on and assess the effectiveness of the implementation process, identify challenges, and further increase the capacity of the participants to overcome these challenges.

UCP training is more effective when it is tailored to the context, needs, and interests of local actors, and when it is participatory in approach. Participants may have little or no formal education and be illiterate, but will have in-depth knowledge about the dynamics of security and violence in their community, though they may not be able to articulate and conceptualize that knowledge at first. By using participatory education techniques, an effective trainer draws out local wisdom from participants and uses this knowledge to explore with the participants the most effective protection strategies for a specific context. She may for example encourage participants to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of existing protection strategies in their own communities before introducing UCP methods. Instead of presenting UCP methods as superior, the trainer then encourages participants to explore how some UCP methods could address existing weaknesses and shows that ‘ordinary’ people in their own communities or elsewhere have already applied UCP methods in some name or form. The trainer works primarily as a catalyst, helping participants believe in themselves and encouraging them to take an active role in reducing violence and protecting others. Though the trainer introduces skills and methods, he or she draws out skills and experience that already exists within the local context.

UCP training and mentoring also tends to be more effective when it is part of a wider UCP strategy or mixed with other UCP methods. The case study in box 5 illustrates this point. Though in essence a capacity enhancement activity, a workshop is also a safe space for local actors to meet when it is held within a wider environment of fear and intimidation. While local actors discuss protection strategies inside the workshop, UCP personnel provide a protective presence to the workshop participants. Moreover, it is not just a transfer of skills from international UCP staff to local actors. Local actors design and facilitate their own sessions, share their experiences, and learn from each other. This clearly increases their confidence, as the following example from Papua, Indonesia shows through the conclusion of the local facilitator as well as the initiatives that were introduced after the workshop.



CASE STUDY: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, CONFIDENCE BUILDING, DIALOGUE, AND PROTECTION COMPLEMENTING AND REINFORCING EACH OTHER IN PAPUA

In 2007, Peace Brigades International conducted a workshop together with a local partner in Wamena, Papua, Indonesia, to build the capacity of civil society leaders in conflict transformation. The workshop brought together a number of community leaders as well as a human rights defender, who had barely started his activities in an isolated community with high levels of violence.

During the workshop, unidentified actors showed up trying to disturb the workshop process and intimidate the participants. While some of the PBI volunteers continued with the workshop, others went quickly outside to meet the unidentified actors, engaged with them, and persuaded them to leave.

For some of the participants the workshop was the first time ever they were asked to share their views, to talk freely about conflict, and to learn about nonviolence. For the starting human rights defender it was an opportunity to connect to other local defenders and learn from their experiences—a very active local human rights defender, frequently accompanied by PBI, was invited to the workshop as a guest speaker. One of the local facilitators, who designed his own session about the use of traditional culture in conflict transformation, using PBI's participatory training models, concluded the workshop by saying that the activity had made him realize that the Papuans would not need external actors like PBI to build peace. It was something they were able to do themselves.

While the starting human rights defender established a dialogue forum in his own village soon after the workshop (inviting PBI to attend and provide a protective presence), PBI together with the local partners and workshop participants organized a public event in Wamena town to celebrate the International Day of Peace. A year later, these same actors repeated the event without active engagement of PBI. Local human rights defenders copied the model and launched their own public event to celebrate the International Day of Human Rights.

SOURCE: Peace Brigades International

ENHANCING SELF-PROTECTION CAPACITY IN ACTION

UCP training and coaching varies in form, content, and approach, depending on the context, conflict, protection mechanisms already in place, mandate of the implementing organization, and the personal capacity of individual trainers and facilitators. In general, UCP training is not a one-off event, but part of a longer-term capacity enhancement strategy that may involve a series of trainings, or a workshop followed up with ongoing interaction and support.

Context: Training is most relevant in areas subject to protracted conflict, especially among disempowered and vulnerable communities or emerging civil society groups.

In a context of high-intensity violence, UCP teams may invite a target group to a safe location to participate in a training or workshop.

Participants: UCP training participants include, first of all, local actors who are already working for peace and security. Often these local actors have informal roles in the community. Training is an opportunity to further develop their capacity and allow them to exchange ideas, share their expertise, evaluate their work and refine their strategies together in a safer space. Peace Brigades International, for example, has trained many of the Human Rights Defenders it accompanies in strengthening their own security management systems. Second, participants include actors who are in a position of power and influence. These actors will be in the best position to reach out to more people, and their behaviour and actions may influence the people around them. Third, participants include representatives of high-risk groups (women, displaced people, minority groups) as well as local service providers. Providing a space for them to share their expertise with one another builds confidence and connections. Enhancing their capacity may have a direct impact on the vulnerable people with whom they are associated. Fourth, participants include actors who are difficult to reach. This could include representatives of conflicting parties, armed forces, or armed groups. UCP teams may occasionally include people in training activities that do not fit any of these categories if that fits their strategic objectives or creates opportunities to expand their networks or operations.

There was a group of soldiers in the area that a lot of people were afraid of. We decided to engage with them and they were very interested in our work to support peace in South Sudan. When we invited them for a training on civilian protection, they were very happy. No one had ever asked them to join any event and many of them never had had any opportunities to get educated. These soldiers were the best participants we have ever had. What's more they often came to our aid whenever we faced any troubles in the area.

Staff member of Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan (2016)

Research on peace trainings around the world shows that many participants particularly value the exposure to other participants' hands-on experiences as well as concrete examples from other places where they recognize familiar dynamics. Learning what others have done in different situations and cultures helps participants develop new strategies and ideas for their own contexts (Anderson et al. 2003, p.79).

Prominent activists from several countries, when asked about the most useful contribution from the outside to their protracted conflicts, pointed to training conducted by international NGOs many years earlier. They claim these were critical in giving them new ideas, new interactive methodologies for working with people, and fresh energy to undertake efforts.

Anderson, M. et al. (2003, p 77)



Recommended Resources for Further Study (Read)

- UNICEF. (2012). *Women Taking the Lead in South Sudan*. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/southsudan_65502.html
- Nonviolent Peaceforce. (2013). *Georgian Youth Negotiate Alternatives to Violence*. Brussels, Belgium: Nonviolent Peaceforce.

3.4.2 Supporting local protection infrastructures

Our men thought they were powerful. We prove to them that women have more power than guns.

Member of local Women Protection Team in South Sudan (2019)

WHAT ARE LOCAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURES?

Local protection infrastructures are understood as self-sustaining systems, processes, resources, and skills applied by unarmed local actors to prevent or reduce violence and protect civilians. These are processes quite separate from aid or other governance reform initiated by other international organizations. The words *local*, *self-sustaining*, and *infrastructure*, are key:

- **Local:** It is carried out, implemented and maintained by local actors;
- **Self-sustaining:** It can continue independent of resources or support from external actors;
- **Infrastructure:** It is not dependent on the personal efforts of one person, but has become part of the structure of the community and, where appropriate, includes local government participation (but not control).

Local protection infrastructures often must be created or strengthened to make possible ongoing productive peace processes at the local level. This is the level where ceasefires and peace agreements most commonly break down, leading to a resumption of hostilities and a relapse into violence. UCP plays its part in this empowerment process by focusing on enhancing the direct physical protection of people under threat (the local protection infrastructure). These protection infrastructures are designed, however, to fulfil the multiple purposes of making, keeping, and building peace as a self-sustaining process, ultimately without external UCP support. When people have sufficient safety, many will engage in more long-term peacebuilding activities and processes. This is in line with the new UN approach to enhance civilian capacities in the immediate aftermath of violent conflict.

In many places communities already have some self-protection strategies or mechanisms that existed long before UCP organizations established a presence in the area. Revitalizing or establishing local civilian peace infrastructures is the most obvious place for UCP practitioners to start, as well as finishing their work. It is perhaps the purest application of the primacy of local actors. UCP actors may also strengthen protection infrastructures led by state or non-state actors, training police in nonviolent methods, including crowd control, or supporting government officials in drafting appropriate protection policies or ceasefire provisions.

The existing capacity of local communities for self-protection should be respected, and at the same time there is increasing recognition that the physical presence and knowledge of international UCP staff can make a significant contribution to local protection infrastructures. Evaluations of UCP work have indicated appreciation and support for several different kinds of protection systems and structures. When military actors and armed groups in Myanmar initiated a ceasefire process in 2014, some civil society groups transformed existing human rights networks into ceasefire mechanisms. Nonviolent Peaceforce then assisted these groups by training and supporting their members in ceasefire monitoring and other applications of UCP. The organization simultaneously trained members of armed groups who were to become official ceasefire monitors and facilitated dialogue between the two groups about the protection of civilians. In the Philippines, as Colleta points out in the opening quote of section 3.4., a combination of training, advisory, and financial roles of international organizations on the one hand, and local knowledge and reach on the other, brought success to local ceasefire monitoring efforts.

WHY ARE LOCAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURES IMPORTANT?

Self-sustaining local UCP mechanisms are important for several reasons:

- Local actors know their cultural and social context better than outsiders can;
- Local ownership of community development activities highlights the capabilities of local actors and further increases their capacity and confidence;
- Local ownership avoids dependence on foreign aid/assistance;
- Local capacities are an overarching key to success;
- External actors will not be present forever. In fact, their presence is dependent on uncertain factors such as funding, visas, etc., but local protection infrastructures are one concrete system they plan to leave behind.

Acknowledging the importance of self-sustaining local structures, the UN recognized in 2010 the need for peacekeeping operations to understand the capacity of the local population to protect itself when implementing their protection mandates. (“Framework for Drafting Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Strategies in UN Peacekeeping Operations,” 2010, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support)

HOW DO LOCAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURES WORK?

Some form of local capacity or initiative by local actors is a prerequisite for the

establishment of local protection infrastructures. In highly disempowered and isolated communities it can be difficult to do this. Without intensive support and coaching, premature establishment of locally-driven mechanisms risks further disempowerment. Donors often push humanitarian agencies to establish such mechanisms as soon as possible, and under all circumstances. However, sometimes it is more appropriate to find alternative ways or extend preparatory efforts. UCP may, for example, provide a series of capacity development activities, followed by the inclusion of promising individuals into various UCP activities, before considering the establishment of locally-driven mechanisms. In any case, the objective is to stimulate a successful, independent, local infrastructure.

Trust building, participation, confidence building, and capacity enhancement are important contributors towards strengthening or building self-sustaining local protection infrastructures.

- **Trust building:** When there is trust, people are willing to engage, share, listen, participate, and learn. Trust is built through authentic presence (‘being with’ instead of ‘being for’), active listening, dialogue, transparency, consistency, respect, nonpartisanship, cultural sensitivity, kindness, fairness, patience, and persistence, among others.
- **Participation:** When people are participating and their expertise is honoured, they learn by doing, feel included, and develop a sense of ownership.
- **Confidence building:** When people feel and believe in their own power to affect their circumstances, they are confident about their own capacity and capability, and are inspired to make a difference.
- **Capacity enhancement:** When people strengthen their capacity, they increase their knowledge and skills. It increases their ability and confidence to act independently and creatively.

Other important factors that contribute to success include: mobilizing people around an issue that is of importance to them, reflection and shared analysis, identifying practical steps and long-term objectives, connecting infrastructures to relevant people and processes, and creating learning opportunities.

SELF-SUSTAINING LOCAL PROTECTION INFRASTRUCTURES IN ACTION

The development of self-sustaining local protection infrastructures usually starts by analysing the ways local people protect themselves when international actors are not present (see box 6 for a typology of self-protection strategies). Jose and Medie (2015) theorize that civilians protect themselves through three kinds of strategies—non-engagement, nonviolent engagement, and violent engagement. UCP strategies and actions clearly fall within nonviolent engagement, as well as occasionally falling within non-engagement, such as when preparing to flee or connecting displaced people to humanitarian services. The ways communities choose to protect themselves may be violent or otherwise not correspond with the humanitarian principles and values in which UCP is grounded. A particular community in a situation of violent conflict may consider bribery to be the most effective protection strategy. An outright dismissal of such strategies may contribute to insecurity in the community.

BOX 2| OVERVIEW OF SELF-PROTECTION STRATEGIES TYPICALLY USED BY COMMUNITIES

- **Local defence groups and community patrols** (e.g., groups of local youth who perform citizen arrests; armed or unarmed local defence groups who patrol to deter or confront perpetrators)
- **Popular justice and vengeance** (e.g., disorganized or ad hoc acts of violence in retaliation against specific offenders)
- Assertive actions of local leaders (e.g., local leaders that mobilize and refuse to allow violence to take place in their communities, whether from outsiders, or from within)
- **Accompaniment and grouping** (e.g., men accompanying their wives to the fields, people traveling together in groups)
- **Community security meetings and information sharing** (e.g., regular security meetings with local officials to discuss security priorities and plan protection strategies; sharing information on threats within the community; exchanging security information with other communities)
- **Denunciation and testifying** (e.g., ensuring that specific offenders are brought to the attention of the police; publicly accusing and shaming specific offenders; testifying against perpetrators in a criminal trial)
- **Advocacy and protests** (e.g., civil society organizations writing and sending reports to political authorities; refusing to open shops in protest against violence)
- **Conflict resolution and reconciliation** (e.g., dialogue between armed actors and civilians to reduce aggression; mediation of conflicts between civilians)
- **Fleeing and resettlement** (e.g., fleeing a village during an attack; resettling in another town for the long term; moving from the outskirts to the centre of a town)
- **Alert system** (e.g., blowing whistles to warn of imminent attack)
- **Avoidance and hiding** (e.g., sleeping outdoors at night; avoiding areas where threats are commonly perpetrated; hiding in the bush during a raid)
- **Submission and cooperation** (e.g., providing an armed group with food or paying illegal “taxes” so as not to incur violence)
- **Prayer & faith** (e.g., praying for protection)

SOURCE: Gorur, A. (2013). Community Self Protection Strategies: How Peacekeepers Can Help or Harm. p.4

Another challenge in strengthening local self-protection strategies, and especially in transforming strategies into systems, lies in the multiple roles that people in situations of violent conflict may play: as victims, as perpetrators, as witnesses, as enablers, and as protectors. Systems need to be flexible enough to deal with these multiple roles. Moreover, as conflict dynamics change over time, strategies and systems intended to protect may eventually create threats. Non-state armed groups, for example, may originate as a way for community members to combat abuses, but may over time become a significant perpetrator of abuses against civilians (Gorur, 2013, p.4). Without local ownership of self-protection strategies and systems, as well as ongoing monitoring and analysis, UCP practitioners may find themselves responsible for the creation and support of abusive

strategies or structures.

There are many shapes and forms of local self-protection efforts including community-based early warning systems, protection desks, security manuals, peace villages, and weapon-free zones. The outlook and application of these infrastructures are different from place to place. At times these self-protectors have protected external UCP teams thus contributing to a sense of mutuality. What works well in one context may not be useful or appropriate in another. Two examples are presented in this section: community security meetings and protection teams.

COMMUNITY SECURITY MEETINGS

In isolated areas of armed conflict, communities often lack information about security issues. Armed clashes in the area or rumours of an imminent attack on the community easily cause panic and displacement. At the same time the protection needs of civilians are many. However, official and informal contact between civilians and protection actors (government, police, military, UN peacekeepers, INGO security officers) is often limited. Under these circumstances, UCP teams can organize community security meetings to bring protection actors and the community together in a safe space to exchange information and address concerns. Though these meetings may be initiated by UCP personnel, ownership of the meetings is gradually moved towards local actors.

For civilians, community security meetings can be an opportunity to obtain information about the security situation from various security actors, express security concerns, and find solutions to issues related to safety and security. For protection actors it is an opportunity to engage in rumour control, increase community awareness of specific issues, and assess the perceptions of the community about security. For UCP practitioners it is also an opportunity to strengthen the relationships between civilians and protection actors, giving civilians the confidence and knowledge necessary to approach the military, police, government officials, and UN peacekeepers when future threats arise. Conversely, such relationships also have the potential to increase duty bearers' understanding of needs and the impetus to fulfil their responsibilities. Since international UCP personnel will eventually leave, the relationships among those who will remain are ultimately the most important ones.

In certain areas UCP teams have organized separate security meetings for women only. Women are often not included when it comes to security matters. And even if they are, they often will not voice specific security concerns (or raise their voice at all). UCP practitioners in Pibor, South Sudan, for example were told that in a previous attack on the community many women and children ran into a river and drowned. UCP team members then noticed that husbands told their wives to stay at home to watch their children during the community security meeting that was organized, so that the men could attend the meeting. The UCP teams responded by organizing separate security meetings at different times to give the women an opportunity to engage directly and more freely with security actors. For that particular group of women, it was the first time anyone had ever engaged them in such a way.

PROTECTION TEAMS

When a group of military came to one village to get info about an armed splinter group, they wanted to stay at the local school, but we told them not to stay there or at the monastery because the community would be uncomfortable and it is a violation of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. We didn't know where to put the soldiers and the community put them in a training hall for the night. Then we went to collect firewood with the community for the soldiers because it was an area controlled by an armed group and we were afraid that the soldiers would go wandering around to find wood themselves.

Member of a community protection team in Myanmar, 2017

Communities often create some form of local protection teams (though they may not use that term), in times of armed conflict. It may involve community leaders who meet with armed groups and negotiate safe passage or a local militia group that patrols unsafe neighbourhoods (see box 6 above). Protection teams initiated by UCP projects often start out as a network formed by training participants, especially when this network has been implemented as a result of UCP action plans, created in or after the training. Protection teams are also established as a response to local initiatives to prevent violence. For example, a group of women may have successfully intervened in a community conflict. The success of the intervention has led them to believe there is more they can do to prevent violence and protect vulnerable groups. In another situation, rural and isolated local communities' land was on a de facto border, which led to erratic arrests and the need to get family members freed from the 'other side'. In response to a needs assessment, UCP teams worked with local community leaders to develop protection teams to both try to prevent these arrests and to respond quickly and effectively when they did occur.

UCP practitioners can support such protection teams in different ways. They may provide (further) capacity development on protection issues that are of particular relevance to the protection team. They may then connect the team to representatives of formal peace process bodies and service providers as well as other protection teams in different areas. UCP practitioners may also include the protection team in other UCP activities, support the team in its organization and management, coach them in report writing, and introduce them to funding agencies. Sometimes local protection teams simply need basic support to get access to transportation or using a phone.

The functioning of local protection teams can be very similar to the functioning of international UCP teams, though they are often less structured. They may focus on a particular issue such as gender-based violence or draw on a broader range of nonviolent tactics, such as boycotts or sit-ins to reduce violence, as is shown in the case study on the Women Protection Teams from South Sudan (see box 7). Teams may include community leaders such as religious leaders or village administrators. If they are not included, it is important that they know about the team's existence and goals. Protection teams may consist of women only. In traditional societies women are often a more constant presence within communities, where men frequently travel for livelihood reasons (for example, as cattle keepers or to larger cities to find employment). Men, especially younger men, also are at greater risk for forced recruitment and abduction. This too results in men working elsewhere and supporting their families from afar, visiting rarely. Women also experience the impact of violence and insecurity in communities, including in their own

homes. Sexual and gender-based violence is often not addressed appropriately by state mechanisms, especially in conflict or post-conflict areas.

The effectiveness of local protection teams is often enhanced when they consist of actors from different parts of society, especially across conflict divides. A protection team consisting of representatives from discriminated groups or conflicting parties can help the team in recognizing common humanity and in building relationships across ethnic or group lines. Subsequently, these cooperative relationships can be powerful engines for community and structural change. They build confidence and show the wider community that reconciliation and collaboration are possible.

CASE STUDY: WOMEN PROTECTION TEAMS IN SOUTH SUDAN STAGE NONVIOLENT BOYCOT TO PREVENT THEIR HUSBANDS AND SONS FROM FIGHTING



During the month of July 2019, Rumbek East county experienced a spike of violence between youths from Mathiang and Pa. When cattle raids increased in the area that summer, so did tension between the Gony and Thuyic leading to violence that spread quickly throughout bordering districts. The fierce clash between the two groups in the last two weeks of July 2019 resulted in the death of fifteen people and injury of nineteen more. When the youth of Mathiang heard about the fighting in Pa, they decided to intervene to support fellow Thuyic clan members. Alarmed by such intention of the youth, the Women's Protection Team (WPT) in Mathiang, established with the support of Nonviolent Peaceforce, were motivated to intervene to stop the violence or decrease the impact of violence in the community. Women Protection Team members promptly mobilized all women in their community to discuss how they can prevent their husbands and sons from joining the fighting. They agreed to temporarily leave their homes when the men would be getting ready for the battle. This collective move from the women's side was intended to discourage men from fighting, and it worked. Being left alone to run a household, the men felt overwhelmed and lost their enthusiasm to fight. Almost unanimously, the men of Mathiang decided the fighting was altogether unnecessary. One of the men said: "It was unbearable to stay home alone." Another man acknowledged that the women taught them a valuable lesson that if they intend to engage in fighting again, the women will leave them and consequently, they should begin listening more to their wives. One man stated: "It's been a rough couple of days without my wife at home." Finding strength as a collective force, the women felt proud to show their men that having power is not equal to violence.

SOURCE: Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan 2019

3.5

Advocacy

Advocacy is a form of persuasive communication and refers to efforts that use information, research, analysis, organizing and argument to work for change in a larger context or policy, to meet the interests of those doing the advocacy. There are many ways to engage in advocacy, and many reasons to do so. Most UCP organizations will advocate with local or national officials for actions such as humanitarian access or temporary ceasefires. Relationship building prior to the advocacy encounter is a key to success. Ideally, this local advocacy is carried out by local people, such as described above by Women's Protection Teams, sometimes with training or accompaniment by UCP organizations. When it is too dangerous for local people or when a show of international support is required, international civilian protectors will take on this role with the consent of their local partners. Some organizations, especially those working in Latin America, will provide accompaniment to large local groups when they organize and demonstrate for policy change.

Among UCP actors there are generally two main methods to implement advocacy and within each method, two main foci or targets. The two main methods are educating and organizing, and the targets are either to change specific policies and behaviour concerning an area experiencing violence, or to build the field and use of UCP more broadly. When advocating for changes to a specific policy or behaviour, efforts are made to augment and support the work of local actors, being careful not to set a different agenda or replace local work. The exact boundary between educating and organizing is not always clear. Educating requires organizing and good organizing requires educating.

3.5.1

Educating

WHAT IS EDUCATING?

Unlike training, education for the purpose of advocacy is provided to reach a specific audience, with a focus on providing information to change behaviour or policy rather than building skills. Education can be provided one-on-one, but generally is oriented toward wider dissemination, through presentations, published materials, websites, and social media. Its focus is to provide sufficient information and analysis to broaden people's perspectives or to motivate people to take action. Focused audiences vary from local government officials in the countries where UCP work is done to the UN and to multi-national corporations. Examples of ways to take action are sometimes included in education as well.

HOW DOES EDUCATING WORK?

Many UCP organizations focus significant effort on educating people about the contexts in which they work. There may be little to no media attention paid to the violence the organization tries to reduce. And even when there is, the media usually relies on the narratives of ‘experts’ who often are not even from the country in question, leading to an incomplete picture of the situation. Education helps to make local struggles for peace and its leadership more visible and to humanize them in a way that responsibly represents the situation through the eyes of local actors. It can help raise the profile of these local peace and human rights activists and protect the leaders while also raising awareness and concern about that violence. This is sometimes referred to as international political accompaniment. As a representative from one organization working in Palestine put the relationship between accompaniment and advocacy: "Accompaniment may deter violence at a school or help individuals to pass check-points. But we need a change of policy – that there is no military at the entrance of schools and no more checkpoints. For the second, advocacy is needed" (Schweitzer, 2018 p.24).

Many NGOs link their education work directly to their fundraising activities focusing on individual donors, potential donor nations and/or multi-laterals like the EU and UN. This has to be done with great care in order to not exploit the people the organization is purporting to protect. Several international organizations have developed standards and guidelines for these practices. InterAction, the largest alliance of international NGOs in the US, for example, requires that its members’ marketing and fundraising materials “respect the dignity, values, history, religion, and culture of its staff and the people served by the programmes. They shall neither minimize nor overstate the human and material needs of those whom it assists”.¹⁰

Another focus of education for a number of organizations is to increase the understanding and use of UCP by building the field of practice. The concept of unarmed civilian protection seems counterintuitive to many people, because they believe that some form of military or armed intervention is needed to counter violence, using violence to counter violence. Many people also want ‘proof’ that UCP works, though they may not ask for similar proof that violence or the use of force works (when, in fact, it often does not). There is a slowly emerging body of work (e.g. Julian and Gasser 2018, Furnari 2016) that explores how and where UCP works, what the challenges are in its application, and how it can be best implemented in different situations. This work has recently been linked with relatively new research on how people self-protect and specifically how outside interventions can augment and support, rather than undermine, local self-protection efforts (Hamilton 2019). Additionally, some organizations make their evaluations public, which is very useful for demonstrating the effectiveness and pitfalls of the practice. A few organizations devote their efforts to educating international organizations such as the UN, AU, ASEAN or EU, as well as potential donor governments about the impact and potential of UCP. This has led to UCP being recognized and recommended in numerous UN reports, policies and Security Council resolutions. Groups also use their websites and other materials as a public forum for educating about the places where they work and about UCP and its methods, such as accompaniment and protective presence. All

10 NGO Standards, p. 8 #5.2, InterAction, 2018 Washington DC

these efforts slowly add up to spreading the knowledge and understanding of UCP and its appropriate uses. Indeed, this course is part of such efforts.

EDUCATING IN ACTION

Organizations may ask their staff or volunteers to engage in education when they return to their home countries. For example, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Project of Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), a project of the World Council of Churches, asks all its volunteers to share their experiences with churches, policy makers, the media and business leaders in their region when they return home. The purpose of these educational efforts is not only to interest additional people in volunteering, but also to share information about the experiences and actual context of violence and oppression in Palestine and Israel. These educational presentations often include information about actions people in the audience can take to impact their own governments' policies, as well as the Israeli government's policies. Other UCP organizations undertake similar actions with regards to Mexico, Iraq, Guatemala, Kenya, the US-Mexico border, Colombia or Nepal. Some UCP organizations also sponsor international speaking tours by particular leaders of human rights, environmental, or Indigenous movements. These are often the very people the UCP organization is protecting in their own home countries. Other groups organize field visits for policy makers or donors. As the media do not provide any coverage of many of the world's struggles, or provide limited and biased coverage, this is an opportunity for local actors to reach people directly with information about the role of foreign governments and corporations in the violence their communities are experiencing.

3.5.2

Organizing

WHAT IS ORGANIZING?

Organizing often builds on educating. It is a more focused method of advocacy. While educating is often used to share information with suggestions for action, organizing involves mobilizing people to take strategic action in order to effect change. As with educating, the change may be focused on a specific situation, context, or place. It may also be related to building the field of UCP through recognition in specific documents, increased funding for UCP projects, or the practices within specific institutions. In their efforts to mobilize people, UCP advocates may use the materials developed for more general educational purposes, or develop materials for a very specific audience.

ORGANIZING IN ACTION

UCP organizations like Peace Brigades International have lists of people who agreed to participate in a rapid response network. In figure 7 you can see how the activation of this network is part of a multitude of strategies protecting the human rights defender in the field. When a person being accompanied is detained, or a corporation tries to evict people from their land, this network is mobilized with information on whom to contact to put pressure for the release of the person or the corporation to refrain from evictions. Other organizations might schedule small meetings with key legislators or other policy makers, or when a local leader is in a foreign country. This is a focused and strategic use of these leaders' time, and is planned to educate legislators and others so that their actions are supportive of rather than harmful to local struggles.

Some accompaniment groups join in solidarity with local partners to advocate against exploitation or human rights abuses by multi-national companies. In addition to providing protective accompaniment with local leaders working on these issues, they sometimes organize support networks, for example of labour and environmental groups in the global north. These networks can advocate directly at corporate headquarters or organize protests and boycotts. For example, a strategic coalition of trade union groups in Colombia and the U.S. worked to influence the GM automaker that had laid off workers in Colombia (Schweizer, 2020 p.62).

Nonviolent Peaceforce has focused a lot of its advocacy efforts on increasing the understanding of UCP and advancing policy and funding support for UCP work at the UN.¹¹ In this role NP staff meets with missions of the member states to advance policy

11 NP has a permanent presence at the UN in New York in order to conduct policy advocacy. Toward that end, it has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This Council, made up of 54 member states, elected by the General Assembly, is the central platform for fostering debate, innovative thinking, forging consensus, and advancing internationally agreed upon goals. They focus on the three dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals: economic, social and environmental. <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/about-us>

support. They especially aim to influence member states sitting on the Security Council (UNSC), who make decisions on matters of peace and security, including the formation, continuation and content of peacekeeping missions. As a member of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council, which holds regular meetings with ambassadors sitting on the Council, NP organizes policy forums on UCP.¹²

NP also advocates with member states who sit on the peacekeeping committee (C34), the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and other UN agencies and entities. This work has resulted in UCP being included in several influential UN reports and in UNSC resolutions renewing mandates of peace operations and special political missions. Finally, NP engages with various NGO networks and working groups at the UN on peacekeeping, protection of civilians (POC), and peacebuilding. This permits more outreach to and education of NGOs working at the UN in related fields, many of whom have different views on intervention and militarism. There is a growing recognition of the value and effectiveness of nonviolence and unarmed approaches in the UN arena, which is leading to more opportunities for joint advocacy and partnerships.

After years of advocating and educating, the breakthrough for UCP came in 2015 when the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) recommended that: “Unarmed strategies must be at the forefront of UN efforts to protect civilians”. The report went on to specifically reference UCP.¹³ The support was amplified when the Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 found that “Unarmed civilian protection (UCP) is a methodology for the direct protection of civilians and violence reduction that has grown in practice and recognition. In the last few years, it has especially proven its effectiveness to protect women and girls”.¹⁴

12 These forums are co-hosted by one or more of the members to share information on the UCP work in specific countries or related to specific themes (e.g. protection of civilians in transition settings)

13 *Uniting Our Strengths for Peace, Politics, Partnership and People*, Report of the High Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations, A/70/95-S/2015/446, p. 23, 2015, New York.

14 *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing Peace: Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325* (2015), pp. 153 & 157, UN Women, New York.



Figure 7: Connecting human rights defenders with the international community: The diagram, created by Peace Brigades International, shows how human rights defenders at the field level, positioned at the centre of the model, are supported and protected by networks of relationships both in-country and abroad. In-country UCP personnel provide engagement with local authorities, UN agencies, and foreign diplomats to generate support for the protection of threatened defenders. Abroad, UCP networks engage with parliamentarians, civil servants, and decision makers at international human rights forums to advocate for the protection of those defenders (PBI, 2012, p. 3)



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NP Photo / NP Staff along with community researchers meeting with local actors to conduct the research on resilience. Myanmar / 2019



EAPPI Photo / Hugh Golden / Border Police photographing passports of EAs. Old City, East Jerusalem / April 2018