



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

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

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## **Abstract**

This report summarizes the discussions, issues and findings of the Workshop entitled “Good Practices in Nonviolent, Unarmed, Civilian-to-Civilian Protection” organized by Nonviolent Peaceforce in Bogotá, Colombia, on the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of January 2020. The workshop convened practitioners of protective accompaniment (Unarmed Civilian Protection), field partners, and academics working in/on five countries of Latin America, to reflect on their work. The full documentation is available online under: <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/about-3/new-report-good-practices2>

Nonviolent Peaceforce  
Documentation of the Workshop in Bogotá, Colombia, 13-15 January 2020  
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## Good Practices in Unarmed Civilian Protection

The workshop took place in Bogotá/Colombia between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2020, barely one month before the Covid-19 pandemics hit the continent. Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP), sometimes also called civilian peacekeeping or protective accompaniment, is the practice of deploying specially trained unarmed civilians before, during, or after violent conflict in order to prevent or reduce violence, to provide direct physical protection to civilian populations under threat, and to strengthen or build resilient local peace infrastructures.

The workshop was one element in the second stage of a four-stage good practices process the INGO Nonviolent Peaceforce started in order to improve and expand UCP, and to influence policy for protecting civilians, preventing violence, supporting local initiatives and sustaining peace. After the publication of four case studies (“Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence”<sup>1</sup>, edited by Ellen Furnari, 2016), five to six<sup>2</sup> workshops organized on a regional basis are being held. They are made up of UCP practitioners, field partners, beneficiaries and academics who meet for three-day sessions to review their work, analyze findings of stage one and validate good practices and emerging themes as well as identify dilemmas or challenges raised but not answered by the cases. This then will be followed by an international conference and, as the last step, the publication and dissemination of the findings. Four workshops addressing work in S.E. Asia, the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa and North America (in Manila, Beirut, Nairobi and Paynesville) were held previous to this one.<sup>3</sup>

### The Workshop

The workshop in Bogotá that took place in January 2020 had in total 40 participants (though some were present only part-time) mostly doing accompaniment in five countries in Latin America: Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. In addition, there were a few people practicing unarmed self-protection. There were also some internationals from Ecuador, the U.S. and Europe who are working with NP or are researchers on UCP.

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

The workshop was carried out through a mixture of panel presentations, in-depth small group work, and plenary discussions of group findings, putting specific focus on good practices, but also on potential challenges and dilemmas of UCP work. The documentation was done on the basis of notes and recordings of the various workshops and plenary discussions.

In the following sections, some important findings will be described. The appendices contain a list of all good practices and a list of attendees.

### Accompaniment / UCP in Latin America

In the workshop, there were organizations that varied quite a lot in their practice. Perhaps three

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<sup>1</sup> Furnari, Ellen (2016): *Wielding Nonviolence in the Midst of Violence*, Institute for Peace Work and Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, Norderstedt: book on demand.

<sup>2</sup> In the first report, the number of five workshops was given but in the meantime it has been decided to separate Europe and North America, so the total is six: South-East Asia, Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Middle America, Europe and North America.

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/what-we-do/about-3/new-report-good-practices2>

categories could be distinguished. The first and largest category included those international organizations that focus on providing physical accompaniment to local groups and communities. The second, smaller, category were local organizations – sometimes with some international volunteers – that pursue a much broader field of activities. They were, for example, working with youth gangs and in prisons or doing different kinds of development and peacebuilding work. The third category were rural communities who focus on unarmed self-protection, represented in particular by the Colombian peace community of San José de Apartadó.

The following points of discussion were reflected in the workshop:

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

### Key Themes

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

- Combine the different forms of accompaniment -- physical, political, legal and psychosocial<sup>4</sup> - and consider the four to be intrinsically interlinked.
- Cooperate with other (I)NGOs for political accompaniment (advocacy) both inside the country and internationally. The idea here was that sometimes sharing the tasks is beneficial – one organization concentrating on physical accompaniment and leaving part of the advocacy to others. Sharing in this way avoids putting the work on the ground at risk.
- Provide accompaniment only when requested.
- Non-interference in internal decision-making of local communities or accompanied organizations was a principle held by most.
- Have clear agreements (contracts) for physical accompaniment with those accompanied.
- Establish clear protocols for action between governments, embassies and accompanying organizations.
- Accompaniment requires communication to state institutions about the presence of the accompanying organization and what it intends to do (letters of notice to authorities, meeting with representatives of state agencies).
- Careful and ongoing analysis was emphasized, similarly to other workshops, as essential.
- Gender policies both for internal functioning of the UCP organization and for accompaniment played an important role in the discussion.
- In order to counter colonial and racist stereotypes, some international organizations have started to work with nationally and ethnically mixed teams.

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<sup>4</sup> Sometimes people in the workshop spoke of only three forms of accompaniment, leaving out the “legal”.

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

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

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

John Lindsay-Poland and Michael Weintraub in their contribution to Furnari (ed., 2016) studied unarmed protection and accompaniment in Colombia. Much of what they found as good practices and challenges during their field work with different accompaniment organizations<sup>5</sup> in Colombia can be generalized for all the countries represented at the Bogotá workshop. This is their list of good practices that they had identified for Colombia<sup>6</sup>. All of them were repeated in this workshop:

- Identify and strengthen the dissuasive power of accompaniment.
- Combine physical presence with advocacy with entities that could affect security.
- Establish healthy relationships with those accompanied and with others.
- Be consistent with values and identities of the accompaniers.
- Maintain both institutional memory as well as the flexibility to adjust to new needs.
- Make the work of the projects internally efficient and sustainable
- Strengthen the collaboration between accompaniment organizations.

The regional workshop on Latin America has contributed to this project on good practices an approach to accompaniment that was not entirely absent in the other workshops, but was more fully expressed here. The two key phrases here are: Understanding of accompaniment as

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<sup>5</sup> CPT, FOR-PP, PBI, PPF, SweFor, Operation Dove and – as the only organization that was not represented at the workshop – the Red de Hermandad y Solidaridad con Colombia (<http://www.redcolombia.org/>).

<sup>6</sup> p64

something wider than UCP, and an underlying sense of solidarity with those accompanied while avoiding becoming fellow activists. Both will be discussed below.

Of course there were also many findings that have already been discussed in earlier workshops: The need for good analysis, the primacy of local actors and non-interference in their internal functioning, the need for training of those doing accompaniment, and having security protocols and gender policies in place, working with mixed teams, capacity-building or enhancement<sup>7</sup> with local actors and strengthening local capacities for self-protection were important findings in Bogotá falling under the category of having been identified in previous workshops.

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

Though it was not the topic of a small group, there were many references to the positive impact protective accompaniment has in Latin America. The general sense was that the presence of accompaniers often helps to prevent attacks by armed perpetrators, though not everywhere and in every situation.<sup>8</sup>

Unarmed Civilian Protection is a field of practice that has one of its main roots in Latin America, though not the only one. Organizations like Peace Brigades International or Witness for Peace (who did not come to this workshop) developed protective accompaniment on that continent, and the first theories (Mahony & Eguren 1997) about its working are based on the experience in countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, Haiti and Colombia.<sup>9</sup> Therefore it is not surprising that UCP in Latin America is to some degree different from the practices of the organizations that came to the other workshops, at least when considering those groups in Latin America that engage foremost in physical accompaniment. There are three main issues discussed below:

### Between Nonpartisanship and Solidarity

First, there is a special element of solidarity that underlies the work of the international accompaniment groups. Whether human rights activists, peace communities or work in Chiapas where the Zapatista movement found much international solidarity – the accompaniers seem to identify quite strongly and positively with the work and goals of those they accompany. Often, this was the reason why the groups originally made the decision to come to the countries where they work. However, unlike in Palestine where solidarity (and a rejection of nonpartisanship) was also a strong motivator for some international groups, at least some accompanying groups in Latin America speak of their work as being impartial or nonpartisan. And even those who think that they cannot use this label emphasize the principle of non-interference into the internal processes of those they accompany. In the World Café, participants phrased their approach as a good practice: “Not to lose the principle of solidarity when professionalizing protection work.”

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<sup>7</sup> Nonviolent Peaceforce prefers the term capacity enhancement, because, as it was argued in an earlier workshop, capacity “building” seems to suggest that participants do not have any capacities before attending the respective training.

<sup>8</sup> Lindsay-Poland and Weintraub (2016:33) mention some concrete cases where attacks were not deterred – one for example on the community of San José de Apartado in 2000, and the disappearance of two accompanied HRD in Medellín in the same year.

<sup>9</sup> Though they also refer to PBI’s experience in Sri Lanka.

## Strategy of Deterrence

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

## Accompaniment and UCP – Are These Concepts Identical?

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

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

When Nonviolent Peaceforce uses the term “accompaniment”, it means physical accompaniment – the nonviolent “bodyguarding”.<sup>10</sup> NP today understands UCP as “a combination of nonviolence and peacekeeping, but also peacebuilding, human rights protection and even humanitarian assistance”.<sup>11</sup> If such a broad definition is accepted, then the two terms and concepts are more or less identical, only the actual word is different. If UCP is understood as focusing on protection against violence, leaving dealing with root causes and consequences of violence to other actors - or at least if engaging in them, not considering them to be part of UCP, then especially psycho-social support may not be part of UCP. Though any particular organization may carry out both UCP and psycho-social support. Many organizations have mandates that allow them to engage in many different approaches and activities.

Another difference between Latin America and the understanding of UCP in some of the other regions may be the target groups – “beneficiaries” in the language of the humanitarian community. UCP as practiced, for example, by Nonviolent Peaceforce includes vast and not-well-defined target groups (“civilians”, “women”, “youth”) that only a few of those in Latin America would describe as those they accompany.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps it could be said that the framing of protection as accompaniment is different from its framing as UCP or civilian peacekeeping.

#### Questions and Recommendations for Future Workshops

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

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

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<sup>10</sup> See for example the UCP wheel presented in earlier workshops or the “Unarmed Civilian Protection Strengthening Civilian Capacities to Protect Civilians from Violence. An Introductory Course in 5 Modules”, July 2020 (second edition)

<sup>11</sup> Quote from Ellen Furnari in a communication to the author.

<sup>12</sup> With the exception of those who work with migrants or youth gangs and in prisons, but these were organizations with a broader portfolio of activities, not those for whom physical accompaniment is the primary or central activity.



# Appendices

## 1. Summary of Good Practices

### Outlining the Framework of UCP

#### *Principles*

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

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

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

- Engage in continuous dialogue.

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

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

### ***Protest, Justice and Governance***

- Accompaniment of HRDs who mobilize movements makes these movements stronger when accompaniment is requested by these organizations.
- Advocacy is done through third parties (for example, local Caritas) because the mandates of international NGOs are limited.
- Tackling issues related to impunity / human rights is carried out in a collegial way with international NGOs, regional

and university human rights mechanisms, visits by rapporteurs etc.

- In the case of public law enforcement, it is very important for the accompaniment to have/give clear information. In demonstrations, monitoring is conducted and the authorities present are made aware of it.
- Make sure to present yourself whenever there are new authorities in the prison system so that they know what the visitors are doing and so that the guards do not limit the intervention.

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

- Use gender techniques to strengthen intervention (like working in pairs).
- Address gender issues with organizations that are protectively accompanied.
- With partners agree on a non-negotiable gender protocol.
- Establish gender policies for the spaces of the shared team house and ensure the workplace is a safe space.
- Create protocol for a line of communication with the partner organization if there are accusations of harassment or abuse by the accompanied person.
- Identify macho (and homophobic) patterns that may arise internally. Create same-sex areas in the team house.
- Designate a team member to keep an eye on gender issues within the team.
- In formation of teams, try to keep them balanced (e.g. if only two on the team, one man and one woman).
- Work toward a culture of new (less violent) types of masculinity.
- Share a methodology and then replicate it (learning from each other).
- Hold workshops to “undo oppressions”.
- Dialogue with women organizations to get advice, build networks, find allies.
- Have clear policies regarding sexual issues (both within the organization and outside in the community).

- Record situations of harassment or aggression.
- Hold workshops on protection and self-protection with accompanied women.
- Dialogue with religious figures in the communities.
- Extend protective accompaniment to the fight against impunity in cases of GBV.
- Develop advocacy strategies with local organizations regarding gender.
- Have internal strategies that challenge local gender norms.
- Apply protective accompaniment to prevent violence and decrease uncomfortable situations for Trans people.  
Provide special training for the safety of women who are accompaniers working in prisons.
- Combine physical accompaniment with political and psychosocial accompaniment in order to broadly strengthen the means of self-protection.
- Accompaniment should complement mechanisms of self-protection in the community.
- Whenever it is acceptable to those being accompanied, nationally and ethnically mixed teams (not only white Europeans / North Americans) should be the norm.
- Generally it is recommended to use distinctive symbols – logos, shirts, caps etc., in order to be identified as foreigners. There are specific contexts when this is a problem.
- There need to be clear protocols of security, for individual HRDs and also for communities that are protected.
- Send or deliver warning letters (notifications to the high commands) before entering a territory.
- Clear communication to the outside regarding who the accompaniers are enhances security
- Assess vulnerabilities to decide whom to accompany and learn to recognize situations that are typically high risk.
- Engage in permanent ongoing analysis of the context – the actors, their powers and possible outcomes in order to enhance security and avoid unanticipated situations.
- Engage in periodic risk analysis including: clear indicators of vulnerability (for example distinguish between cities and countryside); timelines of events and context; actions of the accompanied organization: indicators for security.
- It is important to be clear in which cases deterrence stems from the accompanying organization and in which from the accompanied organization.
- Periodic evaluation meetings and ongoing dialogue with the communities / accompanied organizations are critical

### Tactics of Protection

#### ***Accompaniment of Human Rights***

##### ***Defenders***

- Accompaniers must receive training and other preparation before starting to work.
- HRDs need to be prepared to deal with security issues.
- It is critical to provide support and training that empowers HRDs so that they can develop methods of self-protection in cases when there is no accompaniment.
- Working to develop relationships and systems that provide early warning in cases of threats, is very important, especially when individuals are threatened.
- Security coordination among different people contributes to better protection and increased impact of protection activities.
- When entering problematic areas, travel in vehicles of the organizations, and in any case, in pairs and groups not solo.
- Travel with other organizations when trying to access problematic areas.

components of conflict and risk analysis practice.

- Policies and internal practices are needed to reflect on and respond to racism, sexism (internal or with the organization /community that is being accompanied).
- Legal accompaniment requires getting legal permission to attend court hearings.

### ***Accompaniment of Peace Communities***

- Local people initiate the work.
- Communities need to establish and be clear about their rules of organizing.
- Communities define the issues for which they want support and accompaniment, e.g. assassinations and land ownership.
- Communities establish themselves as a peace community, against all armed actors and forbid anyone armed to enter.
- Stay aware of the surrounding areas and place video cameras around the community.
- Schools can serve as centers for organizing a peace community.
- Peace communities need to broaden their function to become communities of resistance.
- In addition to, or in conjunction with peace communities, declare certain areas to be humanitarian and bio-diversity areas.
- Don't turn weapons over to the state. Destroy them, for example as a community ritual.
- It is good to have accompaniment because it is often better to have eyes from outside watching and reporting.
- Accessing INGOs for accompaniment and visibility compliments and strengthens self protection.
- When accompaniment organizations begin working in a peace community, it is important to form working groups and build relationships in the community.

- Accompaniment is easier when the communities are well organized.
- When you know something dangerous is about to happen and your analysis suggest attention will prevent this potential violence, make a lot of noise in the country and internationally.
- Defend life and the community's territory without weapons. Weapons kill people.
- Communities need to think about what to do if international groups are gone and not become dependent on internationals.
- Accompaniment organizations should provide an overall package of strategies supporting communities toward self-protection, visibility and action.

### ***Accompaniment of Indigenous Communities***

- Use competent translators.
- Recognize and respect the ancestral areas of the communities.
- Upon arrival in the territory, make contact with the authorities, be they boards or governors, and especially indigenous leadership and elders where relevant. This is important for being able to carry out the accompaniment.
- Build trust with the women and seek spaces to meet with them.
- Know the other organizations that work on protection issues or do related work in the area and contact them to form a network.
- Make decisions collectively, between the accompaniers and the accompanied; between the organization and the community.
- Decision-making regarding who to accompany should be based on analysis that weighs likely vulnerabilities against possible benefits.
- Find ways to participate and observe in support of the LGBTQI+ movement, and accompany these populations.
- Expand the networks to be sure to include Afro-American networks or communities.

- Acknowledge the expertise of local people to reinforce the fight against racism.
- Be clear about national or international allies and report cases of racism, to exert pressure to stop it.
- Encourage and support local communities to meet with authorities and express their needs first hand.
- Support visits and tours by diverse outsiders (especially from the global north) to the territories to make what happens there known and visible.

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

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

- As with all accompaniment/UCP work, continue regular context analysis and key stakeholder mapping.

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

- Survey migrants regarding their reasons to migrate, and publish the information.
- Make the courts aware that migrants are not protected.
- When providing physical accompaniment of caravans, a flexible mandate is needed
- Churches are important for their shelters and contacts on the routes, as well as for their global clout.
- Establish accompaniment networks abroad (USA) to accompany migrants.
- Assess the deterrence potential of accompaniment when the threats come from organized crime.
- Provide short / medium term accompaniment until threats diminish.
- Work inspired by a vision of “brothers visiting brothers” instead of a paternalistic vision.
- Offer protection to people accused of supporting / organizing caravans.
- Religious orders have accompanied caravans throughout their journey.
- Document cases of human rights violations of migrants.
- Work against xenophobia - ally with groups that work on the same issues.
- Provide accompaniment to prevent communities from being displaced from their territories.
- International NGO Commissions and communities can try to negotiate conditions of displacement or remaining in their own territories by working with authorities and / or private companies.
- Advocate with communities that have already been displaced or are in danger of displacement to not arm themselves because it will likely increase their risks.
- Strengthen capacities in shelters to protect migrants from persecutors.
- Shelters themselves can and should advocate for the protection of migrants.

- As part of dealing with the trauma of disappeared relatives, the Transnational Migrant Search Mechanism DNA bank is a valuable resource.
- Gain trust, and develop psycho-social-initiatives of support together with documentation of the harm for eventual judicial case (like Carlos Beristein in Honduras).
- Invoke and use as possible legal remedies against the concept of "third safe country".
- In the U.S., focus on policies of non-return to dangerous countries. Provide all forms of accompaniment to the struggles of migrants in the U.S. who have requested asylum, as an alternative to anti-migrant policies.
- In the current context of the United States, it may often be better to hide migrants than to become a public sanctuary, as was done before.
- Prepare for displacement with displacement planning. Be ready with eviction protocols, and to provide peaceful presence of legal representatives, security guarantees.
- Develop early warning systems at the community level (e.g. San José), involving guards, indigenous people, etc.
- It has been valuable to have a good risk analysis shared by several movement organizations and an emergency fund (developed in Honduras by churches, in Colombia by ACT).
- There are temporary protection programs for trade unionists and human rights defenders in Europe, the U.S. and Costa Rica.
- Use previous research and investigation on the companies so that there is information about them.
- Build relationships and network with organizations that work on the topics abroad for advocacy purposes.
- Take delegations from the U.S. to Latin American countries so that they see what is going on, and then can do better advocacy back home.
- Take into account the world vision of indigenous communities and the impact of exploitation on sacred territories.
- Projects need to develop long- term information gathering and protection plans.
- Use the publication of newsletters / communications as part of an advocacy strategy.
- Boycotts work when directed against enterprises that sell to the public.
- Cooperation between investigators and accompaniment organizations on the ground might help.
- Look for early warning signs before the companies arrive.
- Initiate and sustain dialogue between accompaniment organizations on these issues.
- Have and strengthen links with organizations in the countries of origin of these companies that can help to spread information.

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

- Create working groups to reflect upon human rights and private companies.
- Try to find volunteers from the countries the companies come from, for ex. China.

### Managing UCP Projects

#### ***Volunteers and Staff***

#### Recruitment and training

- Accompaniers need training.
- Training should be continuous, not only before service but during service.
- There needs to be a process to assess and evaluate applicants.
- Training should include eradicating forms of discrimination, how to work against oppression, self-care, and explanations of the internal politics of the organization.

- Good training includes a three-step process: classroom – theory – practice.
- Hold regular workshops on the overall context of international politics and how this impacts the local work.
- Use returning accompaniers as part of the training process for new volunteers in the home countries.

### Security

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

### Digital security

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

### Support

- Health insurance should be included in the plan and budget of the accompaniment program.
- Have a crisis care protocol in place before a crisis.
- Have a psychologist or person in charge who can be voluntarily contacted by the accompaniers (without the accompanier having to pay for it).
- Provide regular external supervision, for example once per month.
- Have a mental well-being subgroup.

- Have policies to prevent and to respond to crises.
- Have collective spaces or self-help groups where volunteers/staff can talk about fears etc.
- Team coordinators need to be clear about the symptoms and signs of stress and trauma.
- Have weekly rest days and regular holidays and be sure volunteers/staff take them.
- Engage in group activities that contribute to team members living together more agreeably.
- Hold regular retreats.
- Create safe spaces to address criticism and self-criticism.
- Team coordinators should support accompaniers, checking in regularly and providing feedback and evaluation.
- Find ways to articulate and respond to individual and collective needs.
- Organize online volunteer psychosocial support networks.
- Have a budget for health, mental well-being, recreational spaces, etc.
- Have protocols to respond to harassment.
- Have protocols for internal conflict resolution.

### ***Cooperation Between Different Accompaniment Groups***

- Identify when there are problems of competition and cooperation and attend to them
- Identify and know the context, visualize the accompanying situation.
- Work together to achieve spending money most effectively.
- Organize round tables of organizations for exchange and coordination.
- Refer people and issues to other organizations that are better equipped to deal with them.
- Finance project with multiple donors, don't be dependent on one source of financing.

- Create a platform for networks of organizations and rotate the accompaniment between them.
- Value organizations' capabilities and experiences.
- Develop mutual support for "technical assistance".
- Sometimes religion, and particularly the church, is a means of reaching communities.

### ***Exit Strategies***

- Help to open spaces for peace, which can generate independent organization spaces.
- Aiming for sustained presence and leaving slowly if necessary (as PBI did in San José de Apartadó).
- Accompanied organizations have their support networks and help themselves.
- When no longer in a community, provide political accompaniment from a distance when possible.
- Over time lower the accompaniment profile so that those who were accompanied are stronger.
- Do not start new accompaniment without having assessed the capacity to stay (for example to have adequate funding).
- Strengthen self-protection mechanisms in the communities.
- Create safe spaces so that communities can develop their own security mechanisms.
- To counter the threat of denial of visas, do advocacy work both within the country and outside/internationally, and work with mixed international-national teams.
- Have emergency plans ready, if, for example, there are coups d'état.
- Encourage and support HRDs to develop their own strategies of self-protection.
- Have security protocols.
- Establish priorities in case an organization needs to withdraw. Ask which organization could take over the role of looking after security.

- Learn from indigenous communities about self-protection.
- Support exchanges between communities, e.g. between indigenous and peasant communities.
- Learning is multi-directional. In some cases, accompaniment organizations learn from those they accompany about how to organize.
- Create systems and methods to maintain organizational memory.
- Grassroots processes have managed to make self protection efforts visible and thus increase their own space for protection of civilians. These efforts can be strengthened thanks to international presence.
- Support truth and reconciliation processes.

### ***Widening Accompaniment in the Region***

- Sharing needs maps including context, actors, source of information and resource management in network.
- Develop collective management between communities to defend their areas including specific spaces for protection, plus to increase the external visibility of their struggles.
- Strengthen visibility through support networks.
- Develop alliances with organizations that engage in small-scale economic projects.
- Develop / strengthen the organizational capacity in the community.
- Improve training opportunities.
- To strengthen the sustainability of the work after international organizations leave, it is useful to create / promote human rights committees within communities.
- Organize the transfer of capacities between organizations.
- Work through networks to provide some level of protection, when an organization cannot be present in the community.



- Take advantage of technology.
- Organize training of trainers to multiply capacity.
- Develop and maintain institutional memory systems.
- Collect individual donations for greater autonomy.
- Work toward developing institutional and permanent stability.
- Create funder mapping with other organizations in a network.
- Engage in direct work with ex-combatants.
- There is a need to do advocacy with funders to change the concept of "terrorists".
- Diversify funding sources.
- Look for safe spaces for people to stay if necessary outside of communities
- Remember that accompaniment is a mutual process and learn from communities how they implement accompaniment already.
- Work with the diaspora from specific areas.

***How to measure success***

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

<p>The full documentation of the workshop contains also a list of challenges that participants identified, and recommendations for future workshops.</p>
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## 2. Attendees

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

John Lindsay-Poland	FOR Peace Presence	USA	Colombia
Juan Ocoro	NP	Colombia	Organizer
Julietta Arboleda	Fundación Alvaralice	Colombia	Colombia
Kim Aumonier	Acoguate	France	Guatemala
Lea Krivchenia	Interaction	USA	n/a
Libertad Gercowski Ariza	International Action for Peace		Colombia
Luis Miguel Cerpa Cogollo	San Jose de Apartado Peace Community	Colombia	Colombia
Maria Eugenia Mosquera Riascos	FOR Peace Presence	Colombia	Colombia
Marion Brastel	NP	Switzerland	n/a
Marion Girard	NP	France	n/a
Mel Duncan	NP	U.S.	Organizer
Oliver Kaplan	Josef Korbel School of International Studies, Univ. Denver	USA	n/a
Paige McLain	Human Rights Lab	USA	n/a
Pedro Canales Torrez	Association for the Development of the Zacate Grande Peninsula - ADEPZA	Honduras	Honduras
Samatha Wherry	Acción Permanente por la Paz	USA	Colombia
Sara Akerlund	SweFOR	Sweden	Colombia
Silvia de Munari	Operation Dove	Italy	Colombia
Sina Marie Olfemann	Servicio Internacional para la Paz - Sipaz	Germany	Mexico
Teresia Carlgren	SweFOR	Sweden	Colombia
Yasmin Cristina Mosquera	Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective	Colombia	Colombia