



In 2020 a group of young men created a volunteering team named 'Domiz peace volunteer team'. Their objective was to support their community, as they felt it was their responsibility as the youth of Zumar to do so.

When Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) started engaging with this group in 2021, they were already working with public schools, including spreading messages for peace with graffiti art. Yet, they felt that their services and capacity could be further improved. After initial discussions about the group's objectives, NP provided the Domiz Peace Team with trainings on Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP), a toolbox of methods to prevent violence and enhance the communities' capacity for nonviolent self-protection and inclusion in decision-making processes. Looking back at the trainings now, in 2023, the youth see the collaboration with NP as a turning point, strengthening their confidence, capacity and influence in the community for violence prevention:

*"We were extremely grateful and happy about the way NP approached us. It was completely different from any other organization. They acknowledged our work and our potential and never treated us like we were nescient. On the contrary, they appreciated what we were doing, believed in us and wanted to support us. This is exactly what we needed, capacity building, but we never knew how or where we should get this knowledge," [ said one of the young men].*



YPT attending one of our trainings on UCP (February 2023)

The group of 30 started attending UCP sessions with NP at the beginning of 2022, focusing on preventing physical violence, social cohesion and advocacy. When NP temporarily left Zumar between projects in July 2022, the youth continued to apply UCP within the community, now functioning as an NP-trained Youth Peace Team (YPT).

In September 2022, a horrific incident shocked the community. A 5-year-old boy was killed after being raped, and his body was found in the street. The community was in agony, sadness and rage. No one knew who the perpetrators were, but everyone wanted to avenge the child's brutal murder. After three days, the police identified the perpetrator and arrested him. Applying what they had learned during NP's trainings, the YPT analyzed the tensions and risks associated with the case and the tensions within the community. Fearing that a new bloodbath would occur within their community due to the child's family's focus on revenge and the perpetrator's family getting ready to defend themselves, the YPT saw the need to interrupt the emerging cycle of violence. Following NP's principle of direct action, the YPT proactively engaged with both families. By dividing themselves into two groups and using shuttle diplomacy, the YPT could mediate between the families. They started with the child's family and informed them that the community supported them while emphasising the need for a nonviolent approach.

*"They can't go and harm other people just because they happened to be related to the perpetrator; such actions will cause extra damage, more innocent people will die, and people will be displaced again," [ said one of the young men].*

The other half of the YPT met the perpetrator's family, similarly discussing the need for nonviolence, as well as assessing the risks to their safety and taking mitigation measures, including the protective presence of the YPT.

The YPT was successful and managed to prevent further violence from occurring in the community. The available criminal justice mechanisms referred to and handled the case while the YPT continued to follow up with the families. At the same time, the YPT continued to conduct

awareness-raising sessions with the community on the need for nonviolence and connect duty bearers and the community to build trust and confidence between them.

*“This success was because of what we have learned from NP. Although they were not there at the time of the incident, the knowledge they passed to us helped in this situation. To the extent that we all remembered during the training having a case scenario that happened in South Sudan that was very similar to what we were experiencing. Therefore, we managed to apply exactly what we have learned but in reality,” [said one of the young men].*

*“If we never took the UCP sessions with NP, we would feel afraid to get involved, or we would have interfered in an unprofessional way that might have caused more harm. We are very happy that NP is back, and we can't wait to start reattending sessions with them again, for I believe there is yet more to learn,” [said one of the young men].*

In the upcoming year, NP will continue to support the YPT and others to strengthen their capacities for violence prevention and enhance trust and social cohesion within and between communities. New YPTs will be established in additional geographical areas. They then are linked with each other to increase the effective influence of these young peacemakers on decision-making and increasingly stable mechanisms for conflict resolution.

