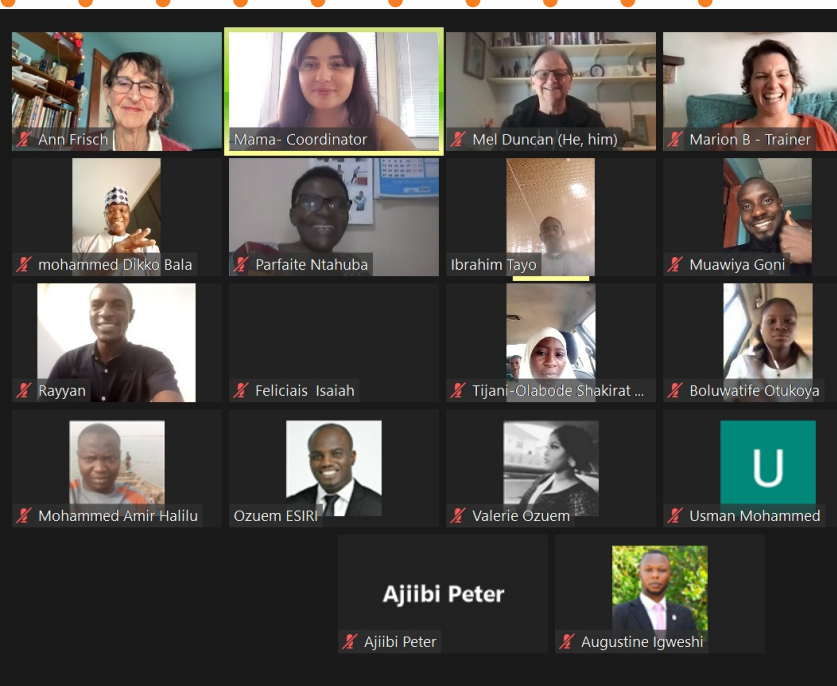


ONLINE COURSE ON UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION IN NIGERIA



10 WEEKS

OF ONLINE TRAINING

On Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP), organized by Nonviolent Peaceforce and financed by Rotary Clubs of White Bear lake, Lakeville, Minneapolis and District 9125- in partnership with the National Parks Service of Nigeria

42 WOMEN AND MEN TRAINED

PARKS RANGERS, ROTARIANS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

By a mixed team of trainers and local mentors



SO FAR, 3 FOLLOW-UP LOCAL PROJECTS DEVELOPPED

BY PARTICIPANTS OF THE COURSE, THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF THE UCP REMOTE COACH

These projects will develop training for local communities and provide adapted protection for vulnerable individuals and groups

This project consisted of ten-week online training on Unarmed Civilian Protection, organized between March and May 2022. This course was developed by Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) and funded by Rotary Clubs of White Bear lake, Lakeville, Minneapolis and District 9125- and in partnership with the National Parks Service of Nigeria. This training was developed in response to the escalation of conflicts and clashes between nomadic cattle herders, local farmers, and the National Park Service of Kamuku and Kainji Lake National Parks. This conflict, over land occupation and killing off of protected fauna and flora, have led to Increased kidnapping for ransom, attacks on villages, and common banditry and have added to the instability in the region. The funding for this project was raised in 2019, but due to COVID-19 restrictions and risks, the training intended as "in-person" was provided online.

NP trained a total of **42 participants** consisting of Nigerian women and men, Park Rangers, Rotarians and community members. The pedagogic team was made up of an NP coordinator, a facilitator, two local UCP mentors, and a remote coach. The involvement of mentors allowed to **contextualize** the content of the course, but also to **illustrate the practice of UCP** in a context that the participants **know and share**. The involvement of NP's UCP remote coach- whose mission is to support the participants in the development of local or regional UCP activities- promotes the sustainability of the project and its anchoring in the field.

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

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

"I have achieved a lot in this course, beyond my expectations. The impact of the course has given me much experience, which I believe I can reciprocate in my community by changing the mindset of people about violence and conflict"

The course has improved our understanding of how violence can be resolved without threats to civilian lives. Indeed, one can now use this knowledge in diverse areas to resolve abundant conflicts including family challenges. We really appreciate the opportunity given to us.

This course was entirely held online, which led some participants to face some difficulties when accessing a reliable source of internet. We were able to provide them with financial support to buy internet data or support the travel to an internet source (100\$ per participant):

"This great platform created the opportunity for one to study at the comfort of their offices and homes. It was easy to use, user-friendly and navigation was easy to get around. Great experience!"

"This experience was very interesting and exciting because it was my first ever online class. I had such an exciting class that I cannot express it in words"

This course also showed impact beyond the individual level, as it led to the **development of new networks and relationships** that have developed a cadre of practitioners that continue to multiply the impact of the individual skill-building. So far, two projects are being developed by participants for their local communities: one project by and for National Parks Officers (Gashaka-Gumti and Kainji Lake National Parks) to train their team for better protection; another for an IDP Camp in Abuja to provide tailored protection to vulnerable adults, women, and children.

While we observed a strong initial distrust among the group, most participants shared that they appreciated the high interactivity of the training:

"The course gave me the opportunity to learn new things but mostly to interact with people I've never met before"

NEXT STEPS

DEVELOPMENT OF AN IN-PERSON TRAINING IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

Against the backdrop of election violence in Nigeria in the past, **there is an urgent need to strengthen and build the capacity of youth that will promote peaceful elections in Nigeria by 2023** as peace ambassadors and champions of peaceful elections as well as build resilience of peace advocates in preventing pre-and post-electoral violence in Nigeria.

Contacted at the beginning of 2022 by the Center for Peace Advocacy and Sustainable Development (CEPASD) to collaborate on a project around Youth and Electoral Violence, Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP) started by inviting 5 representatives of the CEPASD to participate in their online training on Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) for Nigerian civilian. This 10-weeks online training financed by Rotary Clubs, guided by experienced facilitators and mentors, introduced participants to unarmed methods for civilian protection and violence prevention and supports them in strategizing how these methods might be applied to their home areas. In addition to this, NP also organized a webinar for the leadership team of CEPASD, by inviting actors from the Philippines and Burundi to share their experiences in preventing and responding to election-related violence.

The exchanges held during these events led up to the development of this in-person training project to be held in Abuja, Nigeria, aiming to continue the efforts already undertaken to support a peaceful 2023 election.

Building on these efforts, Nonviolent Peaceforce International and the Center for Peace Advocacy and Sustainable Development propose to provide an **onsite UCP training in Abuja, Nigeria for 45 Young Leaders to prevent violence eruptions in the upcoming Nigerian presidential elections in 2023**. CEPASD's local organization will select one or two young peace ambassadors per state (out of the 36 states and federal capital territory) to participate in this training, to come back to their home state, and train new ambassadors. This 6 days presential training, to be delivered by NP, will be developed in partnership with the CEPASD and offer accelerated training in Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP) with a practical objective to develop action plans for locally-driven UCP activities for the prevention of the 2023 elections. The training will be led by an experience UCP trainer and assisted by local mentors from CEPASD, who will have been trained in UCP via the online training by the time the on-site training starts in 2022.

Each session will unpack a different aspect of the project and relate theory to practice through skill-building exercises. The training will end with the organization of an intra-community meeting ("town hall meeting") between community members and authorities to discuss the impact of violence on their communities, approaches to realizing peace, and devise strategies for successful inter-communal dialogue in a time of election. By the end of the training, the various pieces will be put together into a timeline that takes CEPASD and its young peace ambassadors all the way to February 2023 with a practical toolkit of activities, with the support of a remote UCP coach.

Nonviolent Peaceforce and the CEPASD is currently seeking funding for this project.