



Six-week Online Course: See: <https://worldbeyondwar.org/unarmed-civilian-defense-instead-of-war-an-online-course/>

The course consists of six core modules:

Module 1: Unarmed Civilian Defense: What is it?

Explore the foundations, features, and benefits of UCD, and question dominant assumptions about security — including the belief that militaries are essential for peace. Reflect on the nature of power and how to move from the traditional practices of “power over” towards more collaborative approaches of “power with” in building cooperative, people-centered defense.

Module 2: What Has UCD done thus far, and what potential does it have?

Examine the growing body of evidence showing how UCD has worked — from preventing coups in Asia to resisting occupation in Europe, achieving reforms in Latin America, and toppling dictatorships in Africa. Analyze what made these movements effective and what lessons can inform today’s conflicts, including in places such as Ukraine, Palestine, and beyond. Understand the conditions under which civilian resistance can protect lives, defend democracy, and transform societies.

Module 3: What can individuals and organizations do?

Reflect on your journey toward being and becoming a peacebuilder. Explore practical frameworks for planning, implementing, and evaluating UCD interventions. Gain tools for effective nonviolent strategy, from community organizing to monitoring and assessing impact, and consider how individuals and groups can act decisively in times of crisis.

Module 4: What can governments do?

Explore how some governments — including Costa Rica and Iceland, which maintain peace without militaries, and the Baltic states, which developed unarmed defense plans after Soviet occupation — have advanced UCD principles in practice. Examine how governments can enable, invest in, and collaborate on nonviolent strategies for national defense. For balance, analyze shifting neutrality in countries such as Sweden and Finland, and consider how public pressure and civic engagement can counter trends toward re-militarization.

Module 5: What is the role of communications and media in effective UCD?

Examine how communications and media shape public understanding of war and peace, exposing common myths such as the idea that military alliances or armed strength make us secure. Gain tools and strategies for effective storytelling, writing, digital engagement, and public advocacy. Learn how to counter propaganda, convey complex information clearly, and amplify peace-focused narratives that engage and inspire diverse audiences.

Module 6: Putting it all together

Review the ideas and insights from across the course and plan next steps for applying UCD principles in your context. Consider the future of nonviolent defense, and explore ways to sustain and strengthen your engagement in the global movement to end all wars, after the course finishes.