



Friends Peace Teams  
**PeaceWays**

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*PeaceWays* replaces *Peace Teams News*

## Mission Statement

Friends Peace Teams (FPT) is a Spirit-led organization working around the world to develop long-term relationships with communities in conflict to create programs for peacebuilding, healing and reconciliation. FPT's programs build on extensive Quaker experience combining practical and spiritual aspects of conflict resolution.

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By Val Liveoak

## From the Editor

*This is the largest issue of PeaceWays (or Peace Teams News, its predecessor) we've ever published. In part that's because we didn't put one out in June, as we usually try to do. But mainly it is because this issue welcomes the Indonesian Initiative into Friends Peace Teams. It's exciting to see the work of Nadine Hoover and New York Yearly Meeting Friends (among others) come under FPT's care. Nadine has impressed me with her capacity to discern and articulate the leadings of the Spirit. By listening to these leadings and the needs of Indonesians with whom she has partnered, her work has gone beyond some of the areas that FPT has pioneered, such as working with pre-school education and disaster relief. At the same time, the Indonesian Initiative has mirrored FPT's peacebuilding through the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) and considers developing trauma/community healing programs an important new area of work.*

*A new area of work that is important to me personally is the beginning of a program in Central America. In 1986-90, I lived in El Salvador, working as a volunteer, supported by my Monthly and Yearly Meetings. That experience inspired my later efforts to help found FPT. It was exciting to begin to give back AVP's peacebuilding program and vision to the region and people that I had known years before. It is clear to me that they still need it (as do !!). A report from the Central America exploratory team is on page 13.*

*Another exciting new development is that Caroline Lanker has joined the PeaceWays editing team, doing the layout for this issue; this cuts my work in half, so I am very grateful. She's done excellent work on a folkdance group's newsletter that is published every month, and I am sure she can handle PeaceWays a few times a year.*

*Although my efforts on behalf of PeaceWays have decreased, I am clear that I need to concentrate on coordinating work in Latin America, so I do not plan to continue editing this newsletter. It's been ten years, and I've enjoyed it, so I hope the next editor will also have a great run.*

### Cover



*Facilitating their own AVP basic workshop at SHEEP office Dec 2006*

*(See A Young Adult Quaker's Adventure, page 10)*

*Just a reminder: it's fund-raising season. Each of FPT's programs, the African Great Lakes Initiative, the Latin American and Caribbean Program and the Indonesian Initiative, will send out descriptions of their current work and their plans for next year. While we have some sub-groups of the mailing list for each program, many readers may be on the list for several programs, and thus receive several fund-raising letters. We are grateful for the support you give to our work, and ask that you follow the guidance of the Spirit in your response.*

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By Nadine Hoover

## Working with Acehese Survivors of War and Natural Disasters

*“I see all the world’s resources brought to bear in disaster areas every day. Where we consistently fail is where you seem to succeed: healing trauma, re-establishing education and livelihoods, and reducing violence.”* Indonesian Director for Disaster Relief, 2007

The Indonesia Initiative works with survivors from thirty years of war, a tsunami of global proportions and massive flooding as a result of deforestation and palm oil plantations in East Aceh, Tamiang and North Sumatra. They are primarily human rights workers who refused to take sides in the war. We are mostly Quaker conscientious objectors to war living in the US.

Together we share a faith – across religion, class and culture – in the power of a Living Spirit that gives life, joy, peace, and prosperity through love, integrity and compassionate justice living in peace, simplicity and equality among people. The Indonesians call this our real work – seeking together how to live peacefully with clear consciences and how to connect communities of conscience. The Indonesia Initiative has developed under a travel minute from Alfred Friends Meeting and New York Yearly Meeting since 2005 and will come under the care of Friends Peace Teams in November 2007.

### Conscience Studio

When we meet friends in Aceh and North Sumatra, they are greatly interested in and reassured by our stories of how we in the US also struggle to understand and act based on our consciences. We share stories about how our dear Friend Shirley Way from Central Finger Lakes Friends Meeting crossed the line at the School of the Americas to be arrested and testify in court against US training in terrorism and torture.

We describe how we form circles of friends for discernment and support. We tell them how we take supplies to and play with the children at Vive la Casa in Buffalo, New York, the largest refugee center in the US; our efforts to free Leonard Peltier from federal prison; our struggles to recognize that the trans-Atlantic slave trade was a crime against humanity; and our work towards using more locally-produced household goods.

We share stories about Daniel Jenkins’ court case against the Commissioner of the IRS, to claim our right to the liberty of conscience. Dan argues the ninth amendment of the US constitution guarantees that we retain rights we formerly held and exercised and that at that time the New York State Constitution guaranteed the

rights of “scruples of conscience” against conscription and requisition of goods for war. We explain that our work in Indonesia is our attempt to seek conscientious service to build peace and security, since we know violence and war does not bring peace and security.

The Indonesians express their concerns for gaining access to the proceeds of natural resources extracted from their land; gaining respect and recognition for themselves as people – both the Acehese and the Javanese refugees; controlling expansive corporate logging and palm oil plantations in the Leuser Ecosystem; resenting how international charitable organizations sky-rocket rents, driving local organizations out of offices, and take and use data and ideas without involving or supporting the people who provided them.

### Practicing Nonviolence

Mislan and Amir are leaders from the main refugee barracks [camp], Barak Induk, where 700 Javanese farm families live. These families fled Aceh during the “reign of terror.” Their departure from Aceh was brutal, the land they work now is not nearly as fertile as the land they worked in Aceh and the trauma seems to never subside.

At their first basic workshop conducted outside their village, Amir approached me directly and said, “I just want you to know up front I’m here because Pak Pri said to, but I’m telling you, we are not the violent ones. You have the wrong people at this workshop.” And he walked away. Nevertheless, they threw themselves into the workshop and felt the healing effect of sharing, listening, and cooperating.

The role plays were the most moving. One role play about two poor farmers being run off the land by thugs hired by a wealthy landowner was replayed over and over. They kept looking for different forms of power the poor farmers had – or could have – and how that power could be used even in the most dangerous of circumstances.

They were amazed at themselves when Amir and his friends, Mislan and Sugiono, became facilitators and

*See Working, page 17*



# Devastation from Logging and Palm Oil Production

After massive floods on December 21, 2006, in the three districts where we worked, communication lines were cut off and the United Nations reported half a million displaced people, so I went alone to offer spiritual accompaniment to our friends there.

The driver from Medan to East Aceh said, "All this flooding is because of illegal logging and those palm oil plantations. It goes all the way into Leuser Mountain Ecosystem." The freedom with which he spoke was a bit startling and new in Aceh, which has newly emerged from thirty years of civil war.

The picture above shows one entrance to Leuser, a mountain chain in North Sumatra and Aceh, where corporate loggers have deforested the rainforest and palm oil plantations have moved in, along with their roads, electricity and workers. Palm plantations have encroached two to ten kilometers into the bioserve from every side over the past three decades of war, with major expansion since the Peace Accord of August 2005. Palm does not hold water or soil.

There were always floods, but flood depth has increased, along with silt. Floods of 1926, 1963 and 1973 brought about a foot of clear water. The floods of 1995/6 and 2005, in contrast, brought three feet of dirty, itchy water. The flood of 2006 brought 12-14 feet of dirty, itchy water and three to four feet of sediment, displacing over 500,000 people, taking lives, homes and livelihoods, impinging on all other activities.

We walked to the Tamiang River to see where the logs, which



*Leuser Ecosystem Territory: A preserve of space and medicines reserved for humanity*

had not been brought down from Trienggulun, three to eight hours up river, had caught on bridges and jammed the river. Some people reported twelve kilometers of logjam. "What happens next time it rains?" they asked.

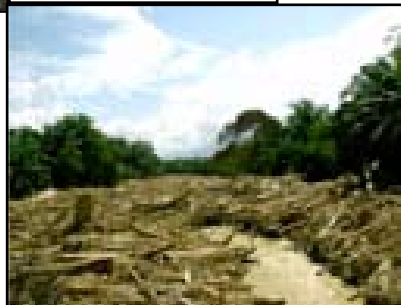
The logjam pressed the water out of the riverbed and through the palm trees, eroding massive amounts of soil. The logs and sediment created the primary damage. The logs hit houses and carried them away. I saw a child take a misstep and nearly disappear into the muck.



The sediment was at least three feet deep, covering homes, wells, and fields. Chocolate trees dried up. Durian and other fruit trees are dying.

*Tamiang River – clear (left) and jammed with logs (below)*

Fields have been impossible to work for months. And the logs are enormous, always threatening to dislodge again.



The villagers who had lost homes were already scavenging wood and tin and cutting scattered logs to rebuild with. Logging companies mark their logs, so it is no secret where the



*A home destroyed*

logs came from. People along the shore at the outlet were amazed at the size of the logs that came down with the flood. The pressure for wood to rebuild homes and boats after the tsunami is enormous.

Where the war was the worst, people were pressed off the land and social systems broke down. Commercial interests are systematically planting palm for oil on a scale that boggles the

*See Flood, page 18*

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## Sukardi Darmo, Adat Leader of Induk Refugee Barracks

*Interviewed by Nadine Hoover and Dwi Supriono, July 2006*

*Sukardi Darmo is the Adat leader of a camp of 700 families with a population of 3,502 people internally displaced in 2000 from Aceh because of armed conflict. Their encampments are known as Sei Minyak, Barak Induk, Sei Lapan and Air Hitam in Langkat, North Sumatra in the forest of Leuser Mountain National Park and Ecosystem.*

*These families are too afraid of ethnic prejudice to return to Aceh. Local government frequently threatens eviction on the grounds that the United Nations does not permit them to stay. They request formal permission to reside on and manage the land and be deputized to enforce law in the forest. This interview was conducted by Nadine Hoover, Friends Peace Teams, and Dwi Supriono, Village Enlightenment Foundation. Barak Induk, where Darmo lives, has three Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) facilitators and has conducted two basic workshops.*

*Darmo:* We are refugees from Aceh, from the County of Rantau the length of Peureulak. Most of us living here are from East Aceh and most of us are Javanese. We moved from Aceh because we were victims of violence, known as the conflict between the Government [of Indonesia] and GAM [Free Aceh Movement] and now we live on land claimed by the government. But according to us that's not so, because where we live is right next to PT Pana Mulia, a palm oil plantation owned by James Tarigan. If the government says where we live is part of the area of the National Park, then PT Pana Mulia is also within the National Park. Then why are we not allowed to live there when PT Pana Mulia has produced palm oil there for thirty years and been left alone?

As conflict victims, we feel irritated because we need to live too. We need to have a life. That's all. So our apologies to the international organizations or to the government, but if it is possible for us to live there that is our hope, because we don't want to always be refugees. For example, if we moved to another area, we would be new refugees and we wouldn't be guaranteed not to be refugees again.

*Nadine:* And how long have you been there?

*D:* Six years.

*N:* When you arrived, what was the land like?

*D:* It was all tall coarse grass. It was a forest of tall coarse grass. There were no large trees, none. [The area had been



*Javanese, North Sumatrans, Acehnese and Americans enjoying a late evening: (left to right) Muhadi, Dwi Supriono, Amir, Firdaus, Sabaruddin, Nadine Hoover, Sukardi Darmo, Sugiono*

deforested by commercial logging.]

*N:* And the land now, is it productive?

*D:* Now we have reforested by planting rubber.

*N:* How large an area?

*D:* The whole thing is roughly 250 hectares.

*Supriono:* So now what is needed there?

*D:* What we need first is recognition to become citizens of the District of Langkat and second, because we are children of this government, we also need care and governance, because for the six years we have lived there we have been as orphans with no care or attention. We need attention from the government because we have lived there for six years, and when we arrived there were no other people, and now there are 700 families total. They are all refugees from Aceh, all of them conflict

*See Sukardi Darmo, page 19*



By Nadine Hoover

## Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in Indonesia

In three-day basic AVP workshops we practice bringing out the positive in our selves and others, and we play games, laugh without putting others down, speak and listen, work cooperatively and seek inner strength to transform people and situations.

Each session begins with an opening followed by a review of the agenda and includes games, evaluation and closing. Main activities are: welcoming; introductions; affirmation; brainstorming such as, "What is violence? Nonviolence?"; listening in pairs; cooperative construction; the concept of transforming power – a power that comes from within that can change us and our situations; empathy; role plays and personal reflection. We found the workshops were compatible with Indonesian cultures and Islamic faith and in three days strangers, even enemies, became good friends.

Participants come from different backgrounds and learn different things. Among them are:

- Speaking, especially in a group (in the war years, this was illegal) – a great deal of confidence was gained by many
- Listening without debate, advice, or interruption
- Laughing, joking and playing without excluding or hurting
- Looking at situations from other people's perspective
- Being proud without being arrogant
- Changing old habits, even if they work, in order to help everyone work together
- Realizing even people who choose nonviolence have different ideas
- Dialoguing with people who choose nonviolent response to differences
- Imagining many more ways to change situations from violent to peaceful
- Realizing there is violence in our homes among loved ones as well as in our communities
- Doing the hard work to build relationships, communication, and cooperation for peace
- Realizing we can't have peace with weapons

By Pamela Haines

## Gifts of Time and Money

Many of us have come to Friends Peace Teams with a understanding of the forces of colonialism and globalization that have drained resources from the global south, and a common commitment to raising funds in the US that can be used to redress some of the inequity and be of real benefit to people in Latin American, Africa and Asia. As we do Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in those countries, it is easy to assume that it will be necessary to give money directly to those who are taking leadership, as an acknowledgment of the daily struggles to earn a living in poor countries and the value we place on their work. It may also seem necessary to offer money to participants to allow them to take the time to be in workshops. Although AVP has traditionally been seen as a volunteer activity, the argument is made that very different cultures and situations call for different approaches. One danger with this model, however, is that it perpetuates the structures of colonialism, offering the lure of making a good living by following the money that is flowing in from outside. Is it really necessary?

In our work in Indonesia, we are experimenting with how to keep the volunteer principle in AVP, while responding to the economic challenges of very poor leaders. In Indonesia, when local facilitators felt that nobody would come if they weren't paid, they started making plans to pool their very meager resources to offer something to participants. They felt that everybody could smell the money that had come in with the westerners. We went ahead on a volunteer basis, however, with a fallback plan to hold the training as a practice session just for the facilitators if nobody else showed up. Not only did the participants show up without being paid, several commented at the end that if the AVP facilitators ever came again, they would be happy to pay to come.

The facilitators ended up having long conversations about the different needs among them: those who worked in NGO offices were fine; those who were young needed to focus on setting up stable jobs and families, but at this time really just needed transportation money; and those refugees who often worked for two dollars a day couldn't afford to take time off. How could we use the money that we had available, not to pay people to lead AVP, but to increase the stability of people's lives so that all the volunteers could engage vigorously for social change? Just raising the question has gotten us all thinking. The Indonesia Initiative working group, with members from the US and Europe, continues to dialog with Indonesians on the best use of outside money to help free up time for emerging AVP leaders to develop and share their skills. ■

By Nadine Hoover

## Child Development: Key to Adult Development

In former war zones, one of the best ways to meet the developmental needs of adults is to train teachers and parents in the developmental needs of their children and watch them change dramatically in the process. The Indonesia Initiative relies on pledges from New York Yearly Meeting Friends to send seven preschool teachers for bachelor's degrees.

They say thank you in a thousand ways.

When I visited them earlier this year, the teachers were not using a sand table because they couldn't keep animals



*Wati, Director and religious education teacher*

and customers lingered and listened on. It was great fun and they learned a lot! We are not only able to give them an education, but able to help them translate what they learn into their own environment. This has made them more confident, out-spoken, powerful young women.

Wati is an elementary teacher. She does a great job as Director of the preschool and is going to school in Medan with weekend intensives. Ririn goes to school for psychology in an intensive weekend program in Medan. Nur Aida runs the Art Center and works on structured construction with the children. She is going to school at the University Budidaya in Binjai, closer than Medan, for language studies. For the first year, the teachers' families pooled funds to support a new teacher, Eli, to go to school with them. Now we cover her scholarship as well.



*Ratna, Dramatic Play and social development teacher*



*Imah, Messy Play and sensorimotor development teacher*



*Muna, Block Play and micro play teacher*

out of it. But they had a whole beach! I asked if they had sieves. They said no. So we went to shop for sieves. When we got to the store, the only "sieves" they had were tea strainers. But I saw many plastic baskets that could



*Nur Aida, Art teacher with her infant*

be used as sieves. I began asking them questions about how they might use various items from the store, how many they would need and why, what colors they might choose and why. It was like an impromptu exam.

We spent nearly four hours in a cramped, open-air store talking to the teachers about how to support stages of child development with the things they could find in their own environment, while the owners

They are clearly engaged and enthusiastic about their studies. They said they used to get very tired, but they didn't get so tired any more. I explained that the brain was a muscle and it was like learning to run a marathon, they had to work up to it. They laughed and said that was what it felt like. ■



*Eli, Kindergarten Readiness teacher*



*Ririn, Village Enlightenment Foundation (YSKD) psychology student*

## A Grandfather's Impressions

After 26 years of listening to my daughter's stories of service in Indonesia, I made my first trip there. When asked what surprised me most seeing the work firsthand, I replied, "It's the global nature of what you're doing. I had never quite realized that." [Editor's note: Dean Hoover is the father of Nadine Hoover, Indonesia Initiative Coordinator, and the grandfather of Sarah Mandolang, mentioned in "A Young Adult Quaker's Adventure," page 10.]

The Indonesian Initiative works with people who grew up in a war caused by a US-encouraged military coup, thirty years of US military aid, and one of the largest Exxon-Mobil plants in the world. Javanese, brought to Aceh generations ago by the Dutch to work plantations, are displaced by the war and driven onto an international bio-reserve overseen by the United Nations. The bio-reserve is being logged by rogue military for lumber sold to the US and Europe mostly through Malaysia, even though we know Malaysia has no lumber. Chinese and Indonesian businessmen plant palm on a scale that baffles the mind, to serve food fads in the US and Europe that destroy planetary eco-systems. The Javanese displaced into North Sumatra want to be AVP facilitators but have to work for two dollars a day. Or they go to Malaysia as day laborers, even though they know that won't make much more in the long run and many of them will not return. It seems that these poor, isolated people are as directly exposed to, as we wealthy, educated are insulated from, the raw realities of the world.

The first surprise was the traffic: 50% motor bikes, 20% cars, and the rest *becak* (rickshaws), motor *becak*, busses of all sizes, huge overloaded trucks, bicycles, push carts, and other things on wheels. The *becak* are either bicycles with a side cart or motorbikes with a side cart. *Becak* normally carry two passengers but if used as a school bus, they have as many as ten to twelve kids riding on top or hanging on the sides. *Becak* also haul large loads of water (twenty five-gallon containers), lumber (thirty two-by-fours of any length), pipe, potato chips or any thing else that I might carry in a pick-up truck.

The speed of vehicles varies from a walk to forty mph, squeezing into as many lanes as the road allows. If there is no oncoming traffic, lanes expand to fill the road and contract when something from the other direction appears. Passing requires at least three inches of clearance on the sides and a foot or so front to back. Our taxi met another car at fifty mph, each passing a *becak* and our rear view mirrors hit with a loud smack but no damage occurred.

Another time, cars were slowly squeezing past along the curb and our rear view mirrors made contact. The

other car backed up a little then came forward touching the brake at the right time so his mirror dropped to pass under ours. The motorbikes have one to five people as passengers. Nevertheless, I saw only two accidents in our month of travel. Both were on fast roads, not on city streets.

The Javanese countryside was amazingly productive. I saw a few hand tractors and water buffalos, but most of the hundreds of thousands of acres of terraced rice fields were tilled by hand, the fields flooded with water and leveled with six foot wide, hand-pulled rakes. Rice is started in seedbeds, transplanted to field in six by six inch grids.

When rice nears harvest, water is diverted and the soil dries out. The rice is cut by hand with a small sickle and stacked on a tarp spread under a grated box where grain is beat from the straw by hand. The grain is tossed in the air to remove the chaff, bagged, and carried from the field on the workers' backs and spread on tarps to dry in the sun. They place tarps under clotheslines as close to the train as possible so air movement from passing trains dries the rice faster. Just the hulling is done by machine.

Ducks wander old rice fields to pick up lost kernels, yet many of the people who produce rice cannot afford to eat it. Workers eat cassava grown on otherwise unproductive slopes. A piece of cassava tuber is placed in tilled soil and grows into a new plant. At maturity, cassava is six to eight feet tall. In the USA, most of us know it as tapioca, but much of the world's population prepares cassava in many forms. Any plot of land, even a few square feet, is planted.

Bananas are planted along any field edge. Papaya and mango are scattered about. Small plots of beans, corn and peppers join pineapple, durian, rambutan, cocoa, jackfruit, ginger, coconuts and endless fruits. Bamboo is grown to five inches in diameter and forty feet high in clumps for construction.

This rich variety of agriculture in Java contrasts with the mono-cash crops of Sumatra. The vast diversity of  
See **Grandfather**, page 20



## Peace as a Profession

I wish to try to build somewhat upon the wonderful contributions that Nadine Hoover has given in her tract “Peaceable Service from Friends’ Witness in Indonesia” (PeaceWays, Spring 2007).

Nadine has ably contrasted what she calls “Violent Service” from “Peaceable Service.” She has given multiple examples of both. I take no argument with anything she has said, but I thought I might offer another helpful perspective; perhaps come at the issue from a different angle.

Recently, Quakers and others in Canada met to discuss a new prospective initiative, a Canadian Civilian Peace Service. Distinguished professors from here and there were invited to a series of conferences – these are ongoing. One of the “great men” of peace research, Johann Galtung, was invited to give a keynote address. All of the “authorities” in the field were consulted, and the group strove to identify core competencies for people to be trained in, and standards for certifying and evaluating their performance.

The title of the latest conference was “Peace as a Profession in the 21st Century.” And indeed, at this point, it really looks as though a “professional” Civilian Peace Service may come into existence in Canada.

Then the Quakers rose, and each and every one of us spoke to a realization that the work we do is a vocation, as contrasted with “a profession.” What is the difference?

Well, from my perspective, Nadine’s “Violent Service” looks remarkably like the prospective “professional peace person”, someone with hifalutin’ credentials and lots of book-learning who is “deployed” (this was the word used at the conference) to the world’s hot-spots. Assigned, perhaps, to yet again elevate the lowly “great unwashed” to higher levels of humanity, perhaps even, if they are lucky, levels that might begin to approach our own.

And Nadine’s “Peaceable Service” looks a lot to me like the unassuming person who simply does what needs to be done, because that is the right and proper thing to do – who serves out of a sense of their own, and the other’s,

humanity. In other words, the person who knows that peace-building or peacemaking is their vocation – that they have a heart’s calling into the work.

Now I take no issue with the notion of “professing” per se. I have served in a number of professions myself. I’ve even been certified in a couple of them. However, when you “professionalize”, you run a definite risk of alienating the practitioner from those they serve, of having them begin to see themselves, or others see them, as “above the rest”, the “authority figure”, the “expert.” In other words, you lay the groundwork for hierarchical viewpoints and perspectives – even for “power over.”

And so I pose the question for further discussion ... should peace become a profession? Can professional “peace people” solve the problems of the world, bringing us away from war, building healthy, wholesome communities, making life better for all?

...the work we do is a vocation, as contrasted with “a profession.” What is the difference?

My own insight tells me that conflict is everywhere in life – it is how we respond to it that is the true measure of our humanity. And I think

that all valid responses are grounded in the sensibilities of the human heart. It is possible to achieve an intellectual understanding of how peacemaking and peace-building work – what they are and how they are done – but the real work in these areas comes from the heart.

And out of vocation arises discipline. Perhaps this is a uniquely Quaker perspective, but I feel that at the end of the day, the powers of intellect pale in comparison to those of heartfelt compassion. Once you “professionalize”, you will then see problems of “unprofessional” behavior. Yet the measure of “vocation,” while it is less cut-and-dried, seems to me to be a constant, an ultimate.

To conclude, I will surmise that people may find reasons to professionalize, and in so doing, perhaps many good works will come to be done. However, the ranks of the called peacemakers and peace builders will exist long after any similar “professions” have been laid to rest, the victims of the bureaucratized societies that created them. ■

## A Young Adult Quaker's Adventure

The sun was hot as we walked across the tarmac, the terminal floor plain cement. We paid for our single-entry visas at a counter staffed by people in uniforms. We headed straight to the customs desk and on to baggage claim, merely a hole in the wall with a slide for bags. After slipping through the crowd, we picked up eight large boxes of school supplies and the suitcases we'd checked from New York and headed down the hallway. Shortly, we emerged outdoors on a small cement landing surrounded by a throng of people peering around each other and asking to carry anything or offering rides. We connected with friends and headed off through the streets of Medan.

Chaos became commonplace. Two young adults from western New York, Molly Tornow and I; a video professor from Alfred University, Pamela Hawkins; and our fearless leader, Nadine Hoover, packed into a van with Nadine's daughter, Sarah Mandolang, who served as translator; Tengku Syarwani, an Acehese Muslim leader; and Bang Salamun, our driver and friend. They were accompanied by preschool teachers from Al-Munawwarah Preschool, set up last year in the North Sumatran fishing village of Jaring Halus, and teachers from Al-Falah School, which Nadine helped found in 1996 in Jakarta, capitol of Indonesia.

We headed out on our day-long drive through the hectic streets of Medan to the small rural village of Bagok, Aceh, the northernmost province of the island of Sumatra. Aceh has been in a war with the Indonesian military for thirty years; a peace accord was signed in the fall of 2005. The Acehese are still traumatized. Many slept with the lights on at night because of their overwhelming fear of the night. We brought the teachers to train teachers in Bagok, which went well. The three of us who weren't fluent in Indonesian sorted blocks and other school supplies to help set up the school.

One day we went to a Wartel, a small payphone shop. After we all called home and heard the voices of loved ones, we asked Nadine if we could see some of the tsunami damage. The driver spoke up and said that



*Stephen (in back) delivers school supplies from Abe's Paper and Pencils for All, Buffalo Friends Meeting, to teachers of Al-Munawwarah Preschool, (left to right) Wati, Nur Aida, Eli and friend, and Molly Tornow.*

his cousin did reconstruction work there. So off we went. It turned out Salamun's cousin was married to a woman who knew Nadine – a pleasant surprise with many greetings. Lunch was fresh fish caught not an hour before and roasted over a fire, as well as rice, of course, and various other Acehese dishes.

I was down sick in hours. They quickly diagnosed various illnesses – heatstroke or masuk angin literally “wind enters,” a sickness having to do with ionization in the air – and finally food poisoning from unclean ice our hosts had frantically sought to serve their honored guests, probably used by locals to keep fish.

Some remedies were more pleasant than others, like a wonderful cup of jasmine tea with honey provided by the incredibly generous Ibu Wismi, head of Al-Falah School, unlike an incredibly tasteless protein

drink I was unable to finish. The next morning Molly and Pamela were sick too.

The next day, we headed down to Langsa, a few hours south, to run two Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) trainings for facilitators at the Society for Health, Education, Environment and Peace (SHEEP) office. The English-speakers participated in the workshops, which added diversity and supported the Indonesian apprentice facilitators. Teambuilding took a while, so we got to rest. It's an understatement to say we appreciated it.

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Four Indonesian male apprentices were intimidated by facilitating a Training for Facilitators. Half the participants had been facilitators before and half were new. The idea was to strengthen Indonesian facilitators to run workshops without Nadine, so AVP could become self-sufficient in Indonesia. The workshop started that evening, and went for the next two days, finishing on the third morning. In the end there was a whole new crowd of facilitators, including our own Pamela and Sarah. The grueling schedule had just begun, however, as the first basic workshop began that night with only the afternoon to rest and prepare.

The team was ready, however, and the participants arrived promptly. Although Indonesian time is flexible, the workshop began on time and continued with pauses only to eat, drink and sleep. The participants were mostly from small non-governmental organizations. They were very dissatisfied with the first half of the workshop, which dragged on endlessly. The facilitating team had wanted to do it “on their own,” but asked Nadine for help. She talked for twenty minutes about how we need to practice nonviolence, and it was as if everything came together. The atmosphere changed completely. All of a sudden, there were smiles and laughter – a transformation I’ll never forget! The workshop ended on a very positive note, and though I was glad to not be surrounded by throngs of people constantly, it was sad to see everyone go.

We then packed equipment, video cameras and cables for the trip south to Langkat, North Sumatra, where the rest of the new apprentices conducted a final basic workshop. We managed to fit ourselves and all our bags in the vehicle and left waving goodbye to the SHEEP staff as we headed off to Jaring Halus, a rural, traditional fishing village off the northern coast of Sumatra. Built over the ocean, Jaring Halus is an entire village on stilts, with no sanitation. The people have very clean personal habits, yet are completely devoid of waste management or sewage systems other than the tide rolling in and out. This made visiting the village quite a cultural experience leaving a heavy impact on us all.

We visited the Al-Munawwarah Preschool. The tsunami decimated the fish population for months, causing economic disaster for the people. Nadine had helped set up cooperatives of fishermen, so we visited them also. After sleeping the night at the school, we

headed back to the mainland for team building. Sarah, Pamela and Nadine were facilitating, making it vital we return on time. The boat ride was an hour, followed by an hour car ride.

The workshop was held in a very long, thin room with barely enough room for the group of twenty-four. By some act of divine intervention, this workshop started on time also. The participants were almost entirely Javanese displaced from Aceh six years ago by armed conflict. They took immediately to the workshop and threw themselves into it entirely. Although they were strongly prejudiced against the four Acehnese facilitators and participants, still an amazing community developed by the end of the workshop.

One particularly memorable time took place over a break, when an Acehnese facilitator pulled out a guitar and began to play while two of the Javanese men sang and everyone clapped and danced together. The knowledge that this does not happen elsewhere made it pretty amazing. We had built a strong community! All in all, it was a wonderful and moving workshop.

After the workshop, we had a day or two to relax at the house and begin to organize forty-some hours of video. We also pitched in to write an AVP manual in Indonesian, finishing the first edition. Nadine went out to buy handbags that were beautifully sewn by local women’s sewing cooperatives and locally produced coffee, to bring back to the US. She gives them as gifts for donations and all of the donations come back to this area.

Before going home we went to Java to visit Al-Falah School and Sarah’s family. Her sister, Fenna, who was in Indonesia on a Fulbright Scholarship, met us there. Al-Falah includes preschool through high school. That evening we drove to Wismi’s house where we took a very welcomed shower and enjoyed a real mattress for the first time in weeks. Fenna, Pamela, and I took a train to Bandung to join Sarah and Molly and a few of Sarah and Fenna’s cousins. We spent the day sightseeing, shopping, eating and playing pool before collapsing at Sarah’s Aunt Rosa’s house for the night.

As we boarded our plane a feeling of sadness came over me – it felt as if I were leaving behind something huge. On the other hand, I looked forward to the comforts of home and the love of friends whom I could speak fluently with. ■

The atmosphere changed completely. All of a sudden, there were smiles and laughter – a transformation I’ll never forget!



## New FPT Work in Central America

In spring of 2007, Friends Peace Teams (FPT) sent a team of three people from the US to El Salvador and Guatemala to explore the possibilities for work in the region. The team offered Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops and met with groups and organizations with the potential to partner with Friends Peace Teams in peacebuilding work. The team members were: Paula Wilk (Tucson AZ), Roger Kluck of University Friends Meeting (Seattle WA), and Val Liveoak, Coordinator of FPT's Latin America and Caribbean Program. All are AVP facilitators with Spanish language skills.



*The Exploratory Team: Paula Wilk, Roger Kluck and Val Liveoak*

### Background

Although the civil wars that plagued the region ended in the mid-1990s, violence is a widespread concern, particularly *delinquencia*, which often refers to gang and other criminal activities. Many people believe gangs to have been brought to Central America by deportees from the US. Gang members engage in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, extortion, kidnapping and robbery. Violent “wars” between rival gangs over turf or continuing vendettas put innocent civilians at risk in the crossfire.

Sometimes the police are implicated in criminal activity. During our visit, three El Salvadoran representatives to the Central American Parliament, together with their driver, were brutally murdered in Guatemala. Six members of a special organized crime unit of the Guatemalan National Police were identified as responsible; following which, four of these, including the chief of the unit, were shot while detained in a high security section of a Guatemalan prison. A fifth member, who was subsequently taken into custody, has also been identified as a residential burglary suspect. Because of these events, Salvadoran and UN officials questioned Guatemala’s ability to respond to organized crime, safeguard prisoners, and observe basic procedural rights. Some Guatemalans dismiss the police as corrupt

and untrustworthy to prevent violence or investigate crimes.

One of the consequences of this is a rise in the vigilantism known as “social cleansing.” One friend witnessed a mob beat two rapists to death. When visiting a small agricultural program, we were told the town police accompanied us because “vigilantes had killed some young men nearby that day.”

Most disturbing to us was the passive approval of vigilantism that we heard when we were in Guatemala: “They haven’t killed any innocent people,” a Guatemalan lawyer told us. “People know they cannot get justice from the police, so they hire someone to kill the person who victimized them.” said another person with a shrug. One Friend said, “We hear it would be bad to elect a leader who killed people [a reference to former President Rios Montt] but we could walk on the streets during his presidency.”

### Workshops and Consultations

The team facilitated a one-day workshop with married couples, and an AVP Advanced workshop and facilitator meetings in Guatemala and an AVP Basic workshop in El



*Guatemalan AVP participants construct a consensus design.*



*Participants in the Basic AVP workshop in El Salvador.*

Salvador. In all, 67 people participated. We observed participants addressing difficult issues including divorce, child abuse and domestic and community violence. It was wonderful to see how AVP activities have been used to foster and reinforce personal strengths, and to build community. People want to learn about nonviolence and there was a strong desire for more opportunities to experience these workshops.

In Guatemala, the team met with an ecumenical Presbyterian program that has already begun to use AVP in its work with (mostly) women – we hope to work together with them to develop a core group of trained AVP facilitators. We also met with a group working with gang members in prison and on the streets. AVP's history as an effective prison program holds a lot of interest for them.

In a small indigenous town on the shore of Lake Atitlan, vigilantism has resulted in 15 victims over the past months, including one who was shot just before our arrival. We met with a group of concerned local citizens to discuss a wide range of social issues including the lack of opportunities for youth, crime, and violence in the community. In a meeting with members from an Evangelical Friends church, we discussed the possibility of AVP programs to help stem the tide of violence in their community. More than half of the families in the group had lost family members to violence and it was very powerful and moving to listen to these Friends urge us to bring AVP programs to help deal with the pervasive violence affecting themselves and their community.

To explore possible partnerships for AVP in El Salvador, we met with a wide variety of groups who are actively working with young people and gangs in various

towns. One group works with youths in prison, another in a Catholic parish to address local concerns about gang violence. One group works in an art center to give school children activities and to teach them peacemaking skills. We listened to university students share their concerns about their future and ask for peacemaking training. We met with Salvadorans who help victims of violence and psychological trauma in a number of different ways. We also talked with representatives of US Quaker programs to develop libraries and scholarships. All of these people, who work so hard to better their communities, were enthusiastic about the potential of AVP in El Salvador.

### **Recommendations and Follow-up**

Follow-up workshops and training sessions should be conducted where requested while interest is fresh and recent participants are available. FPT's goal is to train at least one group of fully certified facilitators in each country, who in turn will train others. Friends Peace Teams should explore ways to support and assist connections and friendships among Latin American AVP groups in addition to the Peace Team visits from the US. Financial assistance in the form of occasional gifts of supplemental materials, books, or helping to arrange speakers and guests to the different areas are just a few of the ways this could be done.

**Update:** The Coordinator of the Latin America program of FPT, an experienced AVP facilitator, will return to Central America this fall to begin implementing these recommendations. Plans include three or four workshops with previously-trained Central American facilitators. ■



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By Sam Estes and Shirley Way

## AVP in Colombia: Playful Moments and Hard Work

*This summer, two Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) facilitators, Shirley Way and Sam Estes, went to Colombia to work with the PAV-Colombia facilitators. (PAV is AVP in Spanish.) They spent six weeks doing an intensive series of eight workshops. Here are excerpts from their reports.*

### [Sam]

I am happy to report that the adventures of Shirley, Edith [a Colombian AVP facilitator], and I in Colombia were a success! We facilitated eight workshops collectively with Wilfredo and eight apprentices (six Basics: two in Barranquilla, one in Bogotá, in Sincelejo, in Buenavista, and in Montería; two Advanced: one in Barranquilla and in Corozal), of which I helped to facilitate seven. Judging by the evaluations, both oral and written, the participants enjoyed all facets of the workshops and felt that they learned a lot about conflict resolution and alternatives to violence.



*At an AVP workshop on the northern coast of Colombia*

[In one workshop,] we had an *acogida* (gathering), “Algo que nadie sabe de mí que me gustaría compartir con el grupo” (Something no one knows about me that I would like to share with the group), that the participants really got into. It lasted at least an hour-and-a-half and we had people sharing all sorts of things: being arrested for civil disobedience, teenage childbearing, being abused as a child, struggling in addictions, difficult divorces, being part of a mafia [criminal gang], experience of sexism, untapped insecticides in the Colombian Amazon, and

a story of forgiveness! As we say in Colombia, ¡Guau! [Wow!]

Each [workshop] group was different and there was a fair amount of diversity within each group as well. Our participants included university students, pastors, members of organizations working for peace and justice, members of women’s organizations, nuns, people closely associated with various non-Catholic churches (Mennonites, Presbyterians, and independent evangelical churches – a disproportionate number of non-Catholic Christians participated in the workshops), and various professionals (university professors, social workers, psychologists).

Our groups included people of all ages: teenagers, young adults, middle-aged adults, and elderly folks. Marital status varied: many were married, but others were unmarried (especially the teens and young adults), separated, or divorced. There were a fair number of single women with children. With respect to gender, there tended to be more women than men: 68 of 94 participants who received certificates (72.3%) were women; in the seven workshops I helped to facilitate, only one group of participants had more men than women. With respect to sexuality, none of our participants openly professed a non-heterosexual sexual orientation (although diversity in sexual orientation was a topic that three of the groups grappled with).

Among the apprentice [facilitators], one striking demographic was their close association with Protestant and evangelical churches. Only one apprentice was Catholic, in a predominantly Catholic country. Three apprentices were evangelical pastors, two were youth leaders in their respective churches, one was a pastor’s wife, and one was very involved in her church.

The participants were generally light-hearted: they tended to have more fun than participants in prison or community workshops in the United States do



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(if my limited experience of workshops in the US is representative). They enjoyed the process of choosing an adjective name; the Light and Livelies we did were some of the most enjoyable I've ever experienced; the graduation ceremonies always lively and cheerful; and there was usually a fair amount of good-spirited humor within the group. And, of course, one group during the Advanced in Barranquilla even made Shirley sing and dance!

Some groups of participants were more talkative than others. As a facilitation team, we usually tried to encourage groups to be as talkative as they wanted to be. We let the gatherings last over an hour on more than



*An AVP activity*

one occasion and often allowed for more processing time for some exercises by cutting other exercises, moving evaluations to the next session, or shortening the closings. Some of the apprentices were puzzled at first that Shirley and I were so lenient with respect to the time for each exercise. However, they understood our position once we explained the importance of taking advantage of moments in which participants feel strongly about a particular theme and want to share a lot. In fact, the greatest challenge for me in terms of time management occurred when the participants were not very talkative. We usually tried to plan the sessions so as to allow ample time for the participants to develop the exercises and for the group to process them. So when the participants were not as talkative as we expected, we sometimes finished a session with 30 minutes to an hour of extra time. One thing that surprised me, though, was that the evaluations of less talkative groups were just as positive of those of the more talkative groups.

PAV Colombia should encourage women facilitators who may be lacking in confidence to facilitate more and more challenging exercises, and at the same time encourage men to do their fair share in the preparation of materials and the logistical setup. Since sexism is a form of violence as serious as any other in Colombia, PAV Colombia should be especially aware of whether it is reproducing sexist gender roles among facilitators in subtle or overt ways or is transforming them.

I think PAV has a bright future in Colombia. Colombia is a beautiful country with generous, sincere, and cheerful people. I hope I will be able to return one day to help facilitate more workshops and to re-connect with all the people who called me their friend.

### **[Shirley]**

Colombia has experienced four decades of civil war, preceded by several decades of internal political violence called "La Violencia." As a result, very few in Colombia today have experienced peace. War and violence are the norm and are broadly accepted. Truth is denied. Horrendous acts are often not denounced. In basic workshops, we brainstorm "What is violence?" and "What is nonviolence?" Participants often placed "silence" on the "what is violence" list.

47 participants (of 104) and two apprentice facilitators were the age of 25 or under (we think). Young people are particularly targeted by the illegal armed groups. They are threatened and coerced into joining. In an environment of heavy unemployment, the easy money that paramilitary groups offer is often overwhelming. With the money comes a gun. If the young men accept and then refuse, they are often killed.

Workshop comments: "What I liked the most of this workshop was the exercise about what is violence and what is nonviolence – that everyone does not have to always live in violence."

[From a young person] "I liked the exercise Hassle Lines because it also gave me the understanding that for all of the problems that we have, the solution is not violence."

[In a comment to the facilitators] "I loved your charisma, your joy that you imprinted on this workshop and more than this, I give thanks to all of the facilitators because I changed the life of violence that I had to a pleasant life that is one of active nonviolence." ■

## Bringing Children on an African Work Camp

In the summer of 2004, God gave me a leading to challenge my unconscious racism by delivering myself to Africa. This is the nutshell version, of course, as both the leading and the ideas for following it were subtle and complex. Once I could verbalize the leading, I approached my husband about the idea. He amazed me by immediately agreeing to go, and that we should bring our children with us. By choosing to bring our daughters (ages 19, 11 and 8) on the journey to Africa, we entered uncharted territory.

We knew that we would work with African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI), that there had been youth work campers in the past, and that our children would be welcome. Stack this up against the tower of things we didn't know, having never traveled to Africa before!

The very first hurdle, in my mind, was the fundraising. I had never done it before, and it was definitely an uncomfortable prospect. I have a history of not asking for help, even from God, no matter how much I need it. I also have an emotionally charged relationship with money. So this was a huge hurdle for me. In fact, it was so intimidating that I couldn't even bring myself to start the process for two years. It took me that long for my leading and my enthusiasm for the project to balance my fears. I felt increasingly disobedient to God's will. By fall 2006, I finally decided that the only way I could go forward would be to write an appeal letter and send it to Friends and family; if it came down to asking for support face to face, I would never make the leap.

With twenty-twenty hindsight, I can say that asking for support got easier with practice. It also became easier after I had completed the project, because I had much more information and enthusiasm about how the funds would be used, so I was far more comfortable talking with donors about it. Becoming obedient to God's leading also gave me considerable relief. I learned that I wasn't asking people to pay for my world travels, instead that they would understand I was seeking support for a worthy project. Indeed, a number of people were grateful that our family was willing to make this goodwill journey – a greater leap than they could make at this point in their lives – and they welcomed the opportunity to contribute to it in spirit.

Having come to terms with the hurdle that was foremost in my mind, we started the clearness process. This part of the program is well developed and extremely effective. Not only is AGLI's application very thought provoking, the clearness process is, well, clear – easy for a group to follow. Later in our AGLI orientation, we

heard that the work campers who had not previously been exposed to Friends' clearness process found the detailed application and clearness procedure to be evidence that the work camp program itself was solid and supportive. Families of work campers felt that their loved ones would be cared for, since the application and clearness process were so deliberate.

The outcome of our clearness process was that we still had some concerns about our children, as there remained many unknowns. We utilized the personal references given by AGLI to explore these areas, and eventually had sufficient faith that all would probably be fine. Many times in prayer or worship I would hold up all my ignorance and anxieties to God, show my intent to be obedient, and ask for God to cover us. I also asked for openness and humility.

The AGLI staffer supporting us, Dawn Rubbert, was very responsive to our many questions in the months leading up to the work camp. I can only imagine how staccato her life must be each spring, when some thirty work campers are peppering her with questions like ours, yet she remained optimistic and graceful throughout. I think a lot of the campers felt saddened that after all that communication, they would not get to meet her at orientation.

There are aspects of the orientation that might have changed the way we packed, but by then our journey had already started. For one, we'd had inconsistent information about socially appropriate clothing, and we never fully absorbed that it would be cool in July at the equator. For another, when we shared and re-packed our suitcases of items to donate to the local African communities, we also packed some AGLI supplies, and had to relinquish some of the things we had worked hard to collect. We later suggested modifications to the work camper handbook that would assist with the art of packing for the trip.

*See Children, page 18*

Many times in prayer or worship I would hold up all my ignorance and anxieties to God, ...

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**Working**, *from page 3*

began to apprentice. Mislán and Amir invited us to run two basic Alternatives to Violence (AVP) workshops in their isolated community inside the Leuser International Ecosystem in North Sumatra. This community is not recognized by any government and typically does not accept outsiders. We agreed as long as our Acehese friends could come as facilitators. The prejudice toward the Acehese is extreme in this community. It took some time, but since they had met and spent time with Acehese in their basic workshops they understood the value of that. What experience did they want for their friends at home? The experience they had or a watered-down version? Just three weeks earlier a member of the community had tried to return to Aceh and had had a large sum of money stolen and was beaten. So the proposal was not accepted lightly.

To get to their village, we had to go into the mountains, to the end of the roads, and get on motorcycles and go into the forest. For the Acehese, the war has primarily been fought in the mountains, so to go into the mountains was terrifying to them, let alone to go to a community that hated them deeply. Later the first night some men walked by making very derogatory comments about the Acehese and they didn't sleep all night. They almost left the next morning, but Amir and Mislán assured them of their safety. Darmo, as the traditional leader, had invited us to stay in his home and the family members of the men the Acheniese facilitators had heard the night before had already come to Darmo's house to assure everyone that the comments of the night before would be handled as a family problem and should not be taken as an insult to Darmo's guests.

By the end of two simultaneous basic AVP workshops, the Acehese and the Javanese refugees had become so close they discovered common relatives and did not want to part ways. Amir said, "You will never, ever know how much I have changed since I met you. You will never be able to imagine that. I have to confess that before you came 100 percent of us thought of nothing but revenge. Now, it is so different. If anyone had told me it could be different, I would have looked them straight in the eye and said, 'You have no idea what you're talking about; you just don't understand.' I never would have believed we could have changed so much. Thank you."

New York Yearly Meeting World Ministries provided funds for this refugee camp to learn about compost and natural insecticides that will help them live in the rough terrain they now call home and hopefully create enough

family stability to be able to volunteer as AVP facilitators. The refugees appreciate our contributions towards resolving their land residence and forest management rights so that they will not be displaced again from the land that they have made productive after seven years of hard work.

### **Enlivening Development**

Play is the language of basic human development. Bringing teachers, parents and family members together to play with one another in order to learn how to support their own children does wonders for healing and development.

With pledges from New York Yearly Meeting Quakers, the Indonesia Initiative supports seven pre-school teachers to go to college. Paper and Pencils for All, established by Abe Kenmore, a 12-year-old Quaker in Buffalo Friends Meeting, provided school supplies for the whole year for two of the preschools. (Read more in **Child Development...** on page 7.)

I have spent over a decade as a volunteer supporting teachers at the Al-Falah School outside of Jakarta to integrate developmental learning, Indonesian culture and faith-based principles. These teachers are now donating their time providing training for teachers in Aceh and North Sumatra with transportation and material aid from the Indonesia Initiative. It is a wonderful experience to bring together Indonesians from diverse backgrounds to work together in poor, remote areas of their own country.

### **Connecting Communities of Conscience**

The Indonesians call work such as the schools and the training "entry points," excuses to get together. They are most grateful for the contact in remote areas the rest of the world seems to have forgotten and for our common quest for loving friendships, truth speaking, integrity without hidden agendas and compassionate justice.

Many places we go we hear, "No one comes here – not county officials, not other Indonesians, no one, except you. Thank you for caring so much!" One rural villager added "...no one, except you, and Al-Qaeda and I'm so glad you came first."

Investing in committed friendships with another part of the world helps us see the full picture of our own lives. I can't drive up to the Mobil gas station in town without seeing my friends living with leprosy in the villages around the Exxon-Mobil plant in Lhokseumawe, North Aceh. As we seek alternative energy sources before oil

*See Working &, page 19*



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**Flood, from page 4**

mind. I stood on one bluff where mountain after mountain after mountain as far as the eye could see was nothing but palm trees, no forest trees at all.

The Leuser Foundation uses elephants to patrol the edges of the ecosystem to keep villagers out, but not commercial loggers. Since a newspaper reporter turned up dead in the river after reporting illegal logging, local people are afraid to talk about it.

But the flooding and devastation can only get worse if powerful people in corporations and government collude in stealing this expansive preserve and if citizens in the US and Europe collude in purchasing wood from Malaysia, a country with no lumber, and in ignoring the devastating affects of extensive palm oil use.



*Huge logs brought down by the flood*

Dr. Syafriruddin, former Public Health Director in Langsa, Pak Darmo, the Adat leader of Barak Induk, and other local residents share the same vision of a way out of this disaster:

1. Prohibit tendering of any commercial contracts in the national forest and ecosystem.
2. Offer land use rights to villagers to reside in the ecosystem and manage forest lots.
3. Provide hardwood seedlings, training and permits to harvest wood at given sizes to villagers with land use rights.
4. Deputize traditional Adat village leaders in and around the ecosystem to arrest violators.

A large group of internally displaced people living in the ecosystem moved onto land that had been clear cut by loggers. Recently, after seven years of tilling and working the fields, they are regularly threatened with eviction.

Local officials report that the United Nations prohibits their living in the ecosystem, but they feel it is just a ploy to succumb to pressure from the palm plantation that wants to expand into their territory. They reply that as soon as the palm refinery is evicted, the

officials may talk to them about eviction, not before.

Currently, the six million people living in and around the ecosystem live in fear of being killed or displaced by severe floods and mudslides, the orangutan is threatened with extinction and the rainforest is disappearing.

We have contacted the Quaker United Nation's Office in Geneva, who referred us to Special Communications with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We have also contacted Global Response. With our limited time as volunteers, we are not able to follow through quickly, but we will persist. ■

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**Children, from page 16**

The orientation program was spirit-led, nicely paced, very interesting, and gave us crucial cultural information. One improvement we suggested was to have break-outs by country, because many of the tips were country-specific. To hear answers that applied to Rwanda, when I was headed to Kenya, was interesting but could be confusing.

In terms of taking children on an AGLI work camp, I can say that our family was given the best of the best. We had abundant food, household help, housing so comfortable that we quickly got used to the lack of electricity and running water, and always a local team member to help us with transportation or other support. We were completely freed up to put our effort and time into the building project each day. My 8-year-old did not find many suitable work tasks, and would have been bored, except that my 11-year-old was satisfied to play with her as well as join in the work for a few hours a day.

These girls were natural ambassadors to the Kakamega community. They adapted to Kenya more easily than I could have imagined. Bringing them with us made all the difference in our experiences. Their physical presence was evidence of our faith and trust, and this conveyed that openness and friendliness that I had prayed for. From what we could tell, the community had not seen white children in recent memory, if ever. We feel blessed that our girls showed constant kindness amid so much curious attention.

Our work camp team was energetic, comfortable and cooperative. Most of the local campers were Friends, and we enjoyed worship in several Friends churches. Coming from a northern-hemisphere unprogrammed tradition, we found Kenyan Friends' joyous Christianity to be heartwarming and inspiring.

*Continued on next page*

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I was very impressed by the local Kenyan partners in the AGLI project, who cared for the work campers, competently organized the building project, and who tirelessly promote peacemaking skills in Africa through AVP and Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) workshops. So far, since arriving back home we have not followed up very much with AGLI, but we do feel inspired in the coming seasons to talk up the program, solicit support to complete the building that our team half finished, and encourage prospective work campers to participate.

It was my eight-year-old who crystallized the broadest lesson of our trip. After we returned home, she was asked what it was like in Kenya, and she responded that it was pretty much the same as it is here at home. At first I was astounded. It showed how she had adapted to the different ways of doing things, but I think her witness was that life happens the same in both places – sleeping, eating, working, going to school, going to church, playing. She fundamentally, even blithely understood the common humanity of the Africans and ourselves – which is exactly what God sent me there to learn, and write on my heart. ■

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### **Working &**, *from page 17*

prices sky-rocket, I can't help but wonder if my friends supporting their families on \$200 a month will be able to make the conversion also.

As I talk to friends in the US about household security through local production, I think of the coastal fishing village in Aceh that wanted their "tsunami relief" to be used to purchase irrigation equipment for their friends in the mountain, because the mountain dwellers took them in after coastal storms. The way they talked of rice production in the mountains as their "food security" helped me pay attention to where the basic needs in my life come from.

I pray for a community where this is our nature and our joy, for there is nothing better than to look one's persecutor in the eye and say, "I am so sorry for you, I wish you could be in my place and know the peace and joy I have found." It is stressful to look the persecutor in the eye and see oneself. Stress comes from being in conflict with one's conscience. I can testify that the more I live in accord with my conscience the more joyful and liberated my life becomes. We need not lead lives of stress. We can lay down our strain and stress and experience the freedom and joy of living in integrity with the Love and Power of the Living Spirit when we are willing to see the whole of our world. ■

### **Sukardi Darmo**, *from page 5*

victims that live on the edge of Leuser Mountain, TNGL [Leuser Mountain National Park].

N: Do you want to go back to Aceh?

D: Basically no one wants to return to Aceh, because for us principally Aceh has never been safe. Yes, it is safe now, but that is just for now. In the future what could happen? There could be more violence. We don't have a problem with GAM. We have problems with the Acehese. If the Acehese people were brave and took responsibility for the safety of non-Acehese, we would gladly return to Aceh. What's happening now is there are no Acehese who say, "Let's rebuild Aceh. Non-Acehese, let's go! As Acehese we take responsibility for the safety of non-Acehese." This has not occurred. It's just the government that says the people who sought refuge elsewhere are now required to return to Aceh. It is the government that takes responsibility, not the Acehese. So if people want to create a team, then the Acehese need to be responsible for the return of non-Acehese, then okay, let's rebuild Aceh. Then we would be able to. But for the moment this does not exist.

S: What is the mood of the refugees now? Clearly the government is trying to force the Javanese refugees to return. What will you do?

D: We hope that the government doesn't choose to act with violence because we're not hooligans. We're victims of conflict that need care and governance. If we were a group that organized against the government, then they could use force. But we're nonviolent. We're victims of conflict, not a gang of separatists that can be terminated.

N: So, what you need is recognition and permission to stay and work your land there?

D: From the lowest village level to the highest level no one gives permission, but no one prohibits us either. So our status is unclear.

N: That makes things uncomfortable.

D: Yes, but even though we are not recognized, we live by the principle that we don't want to bother anyone. We know the government is in bad shape. That's why we don't ask for much. We know this. It's just that we hope to be citizens too. At least the people of Indonesia shouldn't crush us. ■

**Grandfather**, from page 8

the rain forests of Sumatra are being replaced by palm, except in the highest unreachable mountains and even that continues to be cut. Every two weeks this palm produces a seventy-five pound cluster of nuts with sharp barbs. These clusters sell for two to three hundred US dollars per tree per year. The large companies process these clusters into palm oil for worldwide distribution. Day laborers do the hard work in these fields for two dollars and twenty cents per day. Palm destroys ecological diversity and habitat for Sumatra's wildlife such as elephants, orangutans, monkeys and cobras. Their orangutans are near extinction. Palm dries out the soil and does not retain water, which leads to major flooding.

Rubber is another major product, which competes with palm for income generation, except it is more labor intensive. Each plant must be visited each day to renew the cut that releases the latex and to collect the latex for drying. Because of this, rubber is more apt to be grown by local farmers rather than corporations. Local people may, however, still have one or two palm trees in their yard to help supplement their income.



*Chili planted at Induk Barracks, one of their few successful crops on this rough land*

Bathrooms came as another surprise, even though I was forewarned. Toilets are ceramic units placed in the floor with places to put your feet and a hole in the center you must squat over with a tank of water and a dipper to flush with. For an old man like me, this is a precarious position. There is no toilet paper, just water, so I hoarded napkins. Sometimes toilets and bathrooms turned into outhouses of a few boards and tarp or disappeared altogether. People bathed in the river and used the woods. The river was inclined to flash flood, so it was recommended that you climb a tree first to see if it was safe. A few days earlier, a woman washing clothes was washed away. Fortunately, she was rescued downstream.

The ceramic bathrooms are considered wet rooms where you remove your clothes and pour dippers of cold water over yourself, soap up, and rinse off. At first, the cold water is shocking, but afterwards I felt refreshed. Getting dressed without getting your clothes wet was a challenge. Clothes were washed in the same room by squatting beside a basin on the floor. In more remote areas, dishes were also washed in the bath. While in Java we visited many large, beautiful homes with modern conveniences, these more rudimentary conditions are found everywhere in remote areas of Sumatra.

Electricity is for florescent lights with a few outlets for cell phones, computers, and fans. There are few other appliances. In Aceh, the electricity went off fairly often and candles were available for light. Electricity was more stable in Java. At the refugee camp, a local electric generator came on at dusk and went off at midnight.

In Sumatra, people sat on the floor. Beds were sometimes on a wood platform. More often, pads about one inch thick are simply spread on the floor. This means space in the house is quite open. There may be one or two storage cabinets or cupboards. These homes are made of siding boards on a simple frame covered by thatch or metal roofs (very hot).

Sometimes the only mode of travel was motorcycle or boat. It was a challenge to carry two suitcases while riding on the back of a motorcycle. We visited one remote village by wood canoe two feet wide and twenty feet long powered by an outboard motor. The people said that they were afraid of the river and could not use it any more. Since the expansion of logging and palm cultivation, flash flooding limits travel and threatens lives. ■

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