



Friends Peace Teams Peace Ways

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By Anna Crumley-Effinger

Preparing for Peaceful Elections

Elections: As a young American, the word “election” excites me. I easily conjure the incredible thrill I felt in November 2008 as U.S. election results were announced and I watched YouTube videos of dance parties erupting on the streets in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Elections: Death. Fear. Trauma. Violence. These were some of the words a group of 30 Burundians shared as Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities-Burundi (HROC-Burundi) began a seminar this July on the upcoming 2010 Burundi national elections. Much of the violence that began in Burundi in 1993 followed an election and the subsequent assassination of the winning candidate. Many Burundians associate the violence with the election, whether or not the election was a major trigger for the violence. Also, the eruption of violence following Kenya’s 2007 election does not inspire confidence in Burundians who have experienced years of violence and instability.

How to rebuild confidence and prevent violence? Participants were assigned to competing teams. Opposing pairs of people attempted to keep their team’s side of a bi-colored basketball facing up. By the end no one was winning; the room was in chaos.

Next, the same groups were told that to win this time the basketball had to get to a marked goal at the end of the room. The teams that had been at odds were now working together to

move toward the goal. The lesson of this activity: setting people’s sights on goals. Elections should not be solely a fight about which ethnic group can dominate but instead should focus society on what it wants to achieve and how

elected officials can help create paths toward those goals. Other games and activities that seek to present the ideals of free, fair and peaceful elections form the basis of this community training.

HROC-Burundi, through the African Great Lakes Initiative, received a United States Institute of Peace grant intended to empower community members to prevent violence around the 2010 elections. Beginning by focusing on community trauma healing, citizens will then set up local peace and democracy committees to monitor what is happening in their communities throughout the election period. The initial meeting trained 30 HROC facilitators who have started peace and healing work throughout Burundi. ■



Participants working together to push a ball into a goal

Anna Crumley-Effinger, AGLI working group co-clerk, participated in the training along with the input of a human rights expert, the lessons-learned of three Kenyans (Malesi Kinaro, Hezron Masitsa and Joseph Mamai) involved in the post-election violence work in Kenya, an election monitor (Pastor Levy Ndikumana), under the direction of the HROC-Burundi staff (Adrien Niyongabo, Florence Ntakarutimana and Andrew Peterson).

By Nadine Hoover

Triumph for Thousands in North Sumatra, Indonesia

Stabilizing life for thousands of people displaced into the mountains by the war in Aceh was an unexpected triumph this year. Refugees living in Sei Lengan were purported to be occupying a United Nations-protected bio-system. However, Rachel Brett at the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva informed Friends Peace Teams that the UN had not requested eviction of the refugees, as local officials claimed. FPT's Nadine Hoover informed Pak Darmo, head of the refugee camp, and offered, if local officials ever tried eviction again, to verify whether or not the United Nations was involved. This power of communication amazed him.

In December 2008, the Indonesian government closed its office for eviction of refugees from Sei Lengan. This, however, only increased the risk of palm-oil interests showing up at night with bulldozers. Nadine



Building a multi-use house in the Barak Induk refugee camp

the pretense of the forest's being a protected area.

As a result of their new sense of security, the refugees, who had formerly closed themselves off from outsiders, agreed to receive assistance from Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting (New York Yearly Meeting) and other Friends to build a multi-use house to serve as a guest house, a site for workshops in nonviolence and trauma healing and a play center for young children. Five women in the camp were trained in developmental play and now volunteer at the play center. In addition, a micro-loan was given to four farmers to upgrade from green bean to chili farming.

moved to Barak Induk from January to March 2009 to be an international presence, greatly reducing chances of forced relocation. She assisted the refugees in Barak Induk to write a statement of their history and position. It was healing for them to find their voice and create a succinct and easily translatable statement.

Janet Hough, New York Yearly Meeting, directed Nadine and the refugees to the World Database on Protected Areas (www.wdpa.org), a website of satellite maps showing UN protected areas. The refugees are not in a protected forest; they are tucked into a corner of a couple hundred thousand hectares where officials have allowed logging and palm oil production while evicting local people under

The refugees' growing sense of security and optimism is wonderful to see. They are grateful for the practice of peaceful living they discovered through Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops. At first, they said that they were not the violent ones. Now they recognize the violence they perpetuate in their own homes and in interactions with others, and they have learned how to de-escalate and change course. One security guard said he no longer recognized himself. Instead of being the first to begin a fight, he can stop fights and help people work out their issues.

Anger has given way to grief, and last fall these people were instrumental in shaping the AVP Advanced Workshop on trauma healing. ■

Friends Peace Teams

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

I always think of autumn as the true "New Year": a hold-over from too many years going to school, I guess. This fall I think of Friends Peace Teams projects, now in three areas of the world. Those projects grow, change, adapt to multi-cultural environments and give rise to new growth in the landscape of peacemaking.

People give life to ideas. Although funding ideas is a challenge, particularly in difficult times, Friends Peace Teams is rich in dedication. From our Initiative leaders, who spend an enormous amount of time living their vision, to our hardworking workcampers, extended-stay volunteers and faithful council members, we are able to "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk".

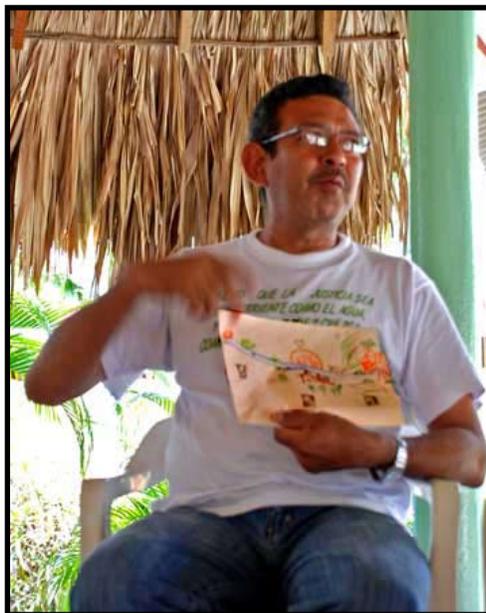
As you read the articles describing progress in each of our Initiatives, notice the variety of work from place to place. All those activities began as ideas about how to respond to a need expressed by people living under duress – ideas from people like you with a desire to make the world a better place. What ideas do you have? What skills do you have that can be utilized by Friends Peace Teams? Along with your financial support, please consider a "New Year's" resolution that you will become involved in living out your commitment to peace either in the U.S. or abroad with Friends Peace Teams.

In gratitude,

Ann Dusseau

PLA Launches Community-based Trauma Healing in Colombia

FPT's Peacebuilding *en las Américas* Initiative (PLA) completed training of six Colombians as facilitators of Community-based Trauma Healing Workshops. The workshops are intended to be Advanced Level Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops, and the newly trained facilitators were already



Workshop participant Luis Felipe explaining his drawing of the "River of Life," an important concept in the trauma healing workshops

AVP facilitators. The workshops are based on the Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) workshops developed in Burundi and Rwanda. Psychologist Cecilia Yocum helped develop both.

Following the facilitator training, two community workshops were held in the Department (State) of Cordoba, part of the Northern

(Caribbean) coastal region. That area has been particularly hard hit by violence related to both narcotics trafficking and the civil war (Colombia has the longest running civil war in the hemisphere at around 50 years). Outright battles for control of strategic territory, between armed groups, including paramilitaries, guerrillas, the army, police, and drug and youth gangs, have violently displaced hundreds of thousands of residents and currently account for deaths averaging more than one a day in the capital, Montería.

Of the 21 people who attended the workshops, three were family members of "false positives," young men lured by promises of a good paying job who are taken away and killed, then dressed to appear to be dead guerrillas, and counted as casualties of war by the army. Others were victims of displacement, family violence and former combatants from guerrilla and military groups. Most participants had lost family members to violence. Several social workers, teachers and psychologists working with vulnerable populations also attended. All said the workshops helped them heal from the trauma they had suffered. They expressed hopes for further workshops to be made available in their communities. It was exciting that twelve participants were young people anxious to build a peaceful future. ■

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“Grains of Gold” for Colombia!

[ed. note: In Latin America, people who are doing their share are said to be “putting in their grains of sand.” Luis says below that the Peacebuilding en las Américas initiative of Friends Peace Teams is putting in grains of gold, not sand.]

A tender and strong greeting of peace to all readers from one of the most fertile places in the world, Montería, on the banks of river Sinú in the Colombian Caribbean coast region. I share with you the welcome and noteworthy life experience I have had by enjoying the entire series of AVP workshops, including community-based trauma healing, that we have done in this region. This experience has transformed (I don't have any other word for it) my style of life and the way I interact with other people and communities.

It is very important that FPT offers this program, giving each participant the opportunity to experience that, yes, we can lower levels of violence ourselves by making

use of the Transforming Power that is in us. I have the opportunity to share my life with communities in this region that are very painfully marked by violence at all levels. My participation in AVP has caused such an impact within my family that I was interested in taking AVP beyond my home and out to the community. AVP has greatly strengthened the empowerment of my community to be a Sanctuary of Peace community. [There is a program of the Peace Churches in Colombia to formally become Sanctuaries of Peace.]

I am committed to being a peace promoter, starting with myself first and then unifying with others around me because our communities yearn hungrily for inner peace and a means of coexistence.

Many thanks to FPT for their great contribution of “grains of gold” to peaceful lives in our region.

Your friend, Luis Negrete

Please contribute to the FPT Initiatives and to the general fund. Undesignated donations to FPT go to the general fund to cover the costs of *PeaceWays* and provide financial accounting and administrative support to the Initiatives. Checks should be made out to “Friends Peace Teams” and mailed to the address at right. You can donate on line at friendspeaceteams.org.

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