



Friends Peace Teams Peace Ways

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Volume 8 Issue 2

Moving to the Next Level

By David Zarembka, coordinator, African Great Lakes Initiative

The African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams has been promoting the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in the region for twelve years and has spent ten years developing Healing and Rebuilding Our Community (HROC), and seven years on mediation. Often, there have been setbacks because AGLI did not have sufficient funds to move forward and the needs in the region are so, so great. In the last year or so, that is changing as people are seeking out our programs.

In Rwanda, Care International asked for a few AVP workshops for couples who were in violent conflict. The report on the workshops is being written and, hopefully, will entice one of the big NGOs to support AVP. Likewise, the Mennonite Central Committee financed four HROC and four mediation workshops in a camp for refugees from the Congo; they have followed that up with a listening room and weekly gatherings of those trained.

In Kenya, there has been a move towards what is called there “self-sustaining workshops.” These are ones where a group requests workshops from one of the AGLI programs and provides the participants, the space, home hospitality, and most importantly, the food. AGLI then pays only for the facilitators, their transport, and materials. Already, we have had three Quaker yearly meetings request workshops – so different than 2003 when we introduced AVP in Kenya and had little Quaker interest. Recently a woman who heard me speak at Wellesley (MA) Meeting during my last speaking



AVP training in Kakuma Friends Church Refugee Camp, Kenya, August 2013

tour and was working with an organization in Kenya asked AGLI to introduce mediation to members of that group. We have great hopes that this will expand, taking a good deal of the financial responsibility off of AGLI’s limited budget.

But it is in Burundi that this has progressed the most. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has a large three-year grant to work in new “peace villages” where ex-combatants,

returning refugees, and others who have no place to live are settling.

Clearly, these communities are in a precarious position. After the first year, AFSC realized that their program needed HROC workshops for its participants, since without the healing and reconciliation there was a good deal of conflict. HROC-Burundi has been brought in to coordinate a program, with a full-time staff conducting 36 HROC workshops, 18 follow-up days, 3 community celebrations, 80 pre- and 80 post-project interviews per year for two years.

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From Tom Martin, Clerk of Friends Peace Teams Council

Dear Friends of Friends Peace Teams,

Just recently, when asked, I stepped up to the opportunity to clerk the Council of Friends Peace Teams, the governing and supporting body of Friends entrusted with the care of our three peace initiatives working in Africa, Latin America, and Asia/West Pacific.

As always, we have been working as a team shoulder-to-shoulder on the Council, continuing to do our best to be faithful to the principles, practices and values of Friends that have led us on the arduous path to peace. In this issue of PeaceWays, please savor reading the reports from the initiatives that record this challenging work of Friends engaged in peace work on the ground in the manner of Friends.

This past year we have sought and listened carefully to the guidance of the Great Spirit in our presence.

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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Though our funds are still limited, with no growth over the past few years, the impact of our grass-roots peace work has advanced significantly. There is new work ongoing in each of our initiatives, as our local partners ask us for more AVP workshops, for more trauma healing workshops, for more community building workshops, and for more tools for peace. As we become more deeply engaged and more valued in these communities, other opportunities are granted to us, such as preventing and dealing with violence in elections, training local teachers and guiding new schools, providing clean water, and offering a safe environments for learning peace for all ages.

We cordially encourage you to participate in our 20th Anniversary Celebration at Stony Run Friends Meeting in Baltimore, MD June 20 through 22, 2014. Please watch for more information from us about this event.

As always, we are grateful for your support and for the hard work of all our many volunteers who labor to spread the seeds of peace where it is so dearly needed and so well received. Thank you.



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There is a pending grant from another organization to introduce HROC to another province in Burundi. Friendly Water for the World from Olympia, WA, is supporting two water filter and sanitation programs with groups formed after HROC workshops.

AGLI's strategy for these collaborations is to support the basic administrative staff and expenses. Outside groups and organizations can then support the program work. In this way, AVP, HROC, and mediation can expand even though AGLI's resources have stagnated for the last five years since the economic crisis of 2008.

Our latest initiative, proposed by Rosalie Dance, long time AGLI Working Group member, is to have each of AGLI's five major programs develop small proposals between \$2000 and \$5000 and have meetings, churches, organizations, or individuals fund them. So far Bethesda Meeting has funded a trauma healing project for primary school teachers with HROC-Burundi, an individual has financed the introduction of AVP in a large, isolated refugee camp in Kenya, women from Baltimore Yearly Meeting funded a gender violence program with the Friends Women's Association in Burundi, and the new English charity, African Great Lakes Peace Trust, has funded seven HROC workshops in Goma, in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As projects get funded, others will be developed so that five projects will always be available. If interested in sponsoring a project, please contact me. ■

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By Valerie Joy and Nadine Hoover, coordinators, Asia West Pacific

Visiting and Knowing One Another

Friends Peace Teams (FPT) captures a sense of unity, harking back to our earliest years when Friends frequently were called by the Holy Spirit and were “released” by their local faith communities and families to travel in the ministry. Bringing that practice into the 21st century, FPT has developed ways to dialogue, work, worship, and explore faith with Friends and others in widely diverse places and situations.

Friends have been regularly visiting Indonesia, led by Nadine Hoover, Ferrizal, Fauzia, Petrus, Nanik, Bowo, Ninok, Mislán and Ida for the past decade. Nadine writes on the July 2013 Indonesia visit: “What we have experienced on this visitation is that Friends Peace Teams is in the business of transformation.” Visiting provides the opportunity to witness how individuals, families and communities have experienced transforming power through the application of guidelines and activities based on Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) principles and practices.

This transformation has soothed the afflicted, helped to heal the traumatized and broken cycles of violence. We provide a voice that advocates for human environmental rights while promoting honesty and integrity. Two couples, Petrus with Nanik and Mislán with Ida, are building AVP-based schools that develop confident, creative children through play and engagement rather than drills and punishment. The next peace team to Indonesia will be January 2014.

Nicholas Rozard and Rina Wijaya are still pursuing advances in water filter technology as volunteer time allows. They have produced filters that filter water to 99.9% clean. The next steps are to design an inexpensive, user-friendly household container for the filter and research the filter’s reliable production, providing a much needed, inexpensive source of clean drinking water.

John Michaelis and Subhash Kattel are running

AVP workshops in Nepal for Bhutanese refugees. Trauma resiliency and discernment workshops have been eagerly received by refugees who have experienced trauma, dislocation, and the worst of human behavior. A peace team to Nepal is taking place in November 2013.

Valerie Joy first visited the island of Bohol in the Philippines in 2010, while working for Friends World Committee for Consultation. There, a small interfaith worship and study group, including Friends, reaches out to youth through theater and environmental and peace activities.

Bohol Friends are rightly proud of their promotion of preschool education, tree planting, environmental clean-ups, immunization programs, recycling, and much more. After meeting the wider family of Friends at international events, they requested AVP training. As a preliminary step, Ludwig bon Quirog from Bohol joined the FPT team in Indonesia in July 2013 and is making arrangements for an FPT visit to Bohol.

This PeaceWays issue is going to press soon after a 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck Bohol. Our sympathies are with the people of Bohol. An FPT visit to Bohol scheduled for October 18-26 is, so far, expected to go ahead,

while being sensitive to the situation and needs in Bohol.

Peeking into the future, the model of visitation of Friends Peace Teams in Asia West Pacific may possibly be transferred to other places in Asia, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. If you are interested in visiting Friends or are a Friend visiting in Asia West Pacific with a concern for peace, please email awp@friendspeacetteams.org. ■



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Friends Peace Team to Indonesia, June-July 2013

AVP basic, trauma healing and developmental play workshops in six days in Langsa, Aceh, brought together people from Langsa, East Aceh, Tamiang, Central Java, Australia, the Philippines, and the U.S. The AVP banner, signed by facilitators worldwide, came from Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, NY, USA.



After years of war, preschool teachers in Langsa, Aceh, relearn how to play. Laughter releases pain, fear, anxiety and anger. As emotion clears, so does the mind. Joy breaks through with a whole new form of laughter.



Preschool teachers in an AVP workshop on developmental play practice direct observations with a banana leaf.



Sunhadi and Zumrotun, who were featured in the Spring/Summer 2012 PeaceWays, have a new baby girl along with their two sons, Aghus and Udin. They are the founders of a developmental preschool in Tondomulyo, a formerly closed, militant Islamic community. Zumrotun commented: "We were fanatics! Me too. I didn't think anything good could come with mixing with people outside our community, but I was wrong. I have learned so much meeting with the Friends Peace Team members who have visited and shared with us."

Mutaho Work Camp and HROC Workshop, Burundi, June-July 2013

A work camp in Mutaho, Burundi, run by AGLI and HROC-Burundi; sponsored by Rema (“be comforted”), a group from Mutaho Friends Church; and supported by AFSC became an opportunity for peacebuilding and reconciliation. Burundians of different ethnic groups participated, along with two Americans. An HROC workshop kicked off the series of activities.



The work project was constructing the foundation, washroom, and the first two of eight guest rooms for the community. The photo on the right, above, shows the partially completed building in the background.



One peacebuilding activity was the formation of two soccer teams, each half Hutu and half Tutsi, a first for the Mutaho area. A game was held between the two teams.



The work camp ended with a big community celebration attended by local dignitaries. The festivities included speeches, dancing, and drumming. Both soccer teams received prizes: one goat and two soccer balls for the winners and one goat and one soccer ball for the other team.

Peacebuilding en las Américas

has been working in Colombia since 2002. On this page and the next we share stories from two members of the original group trained as Alternatives to Violence trainers.

By Alba Arrieta

Our Work is a Privilege and an Opportunity

Being a facilitator of the Alternatives to Violence Program—AVP Colombia—has been a great privilege, and an opportunity to engage in practical and satisfying work for peace in Colombia. This work has allowed us to learn more about the ravages of armed conflict on rural families, and about problems with everyday conflicts in homes, religious orders, schools, churches and communities.

I use the word “privilege” because our experiences have enriched our own commitment to peace and inspired our peacemaking efforts as we have heard evidence of changes in personal relationships, and family, neighborhood, community and professional lives. Participants report transformations in their ways of dealing with conflicts, in using listening skills, in stating their own needs, in their ability to see the other as a person worthy of respect, in their ways of engaging others and in exercising leadership—turning imposing authoritarianism into building an inclusive community. All these changes give us the hope of a world in which peace is possible and of the possibility of building new communities that are inclusive, diverse, and humane. And all this happens in the midst of everyday conflicts and concerns that sometimes seem to move us away from our aim of further growth in Transforming Power.

Many organizations work for peace but AVP places us in various sectors of the population where we encounter varying goals and problems that have not disappeared but continue to challenge us every day in the development of our society, and indeed, of the world.

Violence is present at different levels but instead of our being discouraged, its ubiquity pushes us to widen our outreach to find more groups to work together to transform society. This is the opportunity our work provides.

We have become sensitive observers of the reality of violence that still exists today. AVP has led us to discover the importance of healing trauma, of overcoming grief, of starting local support groups to deepen transformations, and of facilitating ongoing reconciliation and forgiveness.

This work not only strengthens our personal commitment for peace but also leads to more ambitious community action to accompany victims of structural violence in processes including the defense of human rights, freedom of conscience, education, health, housing, recreation, work, food production, land restitution, non-discrimination, sustainable development, art,

ecology, and citizenship. These are among the many issues that we need to work to resolve in order to have peace with justice in Colombia. ■

Transforming Power

A key concept of FPT’s Alternatives to Violence Project workshops, Transforming Power is the ability of people and situations to change from destructive or violent ones to creative, cooperative, and constructive ones. That power exists in everyone and at all times. It works through us if we are open to it, and we can learn to access it in ourselves and others.



Alba Arrieta

By *Alejandro Parra*

Using AVP to Promote Conscientious Objection

When I became a conscientious objector 12 years ago, I did it because I didn't consider violence a form of service. But I was wondering, "How can I help the people of my war-torn country [Colombia] or those who think that eliminating others is the only way to deal with conflict?" Then, over eight years ago I encountered AVP. Since I took the first workshop, I wanted to learn and practice more.

While many young men of my country are required to train for the war, I decided to train for peace and get ready to help others. For seven years I have been an AVP facilitator and I discover new things in every workshop. I have worked with hundreds of young people, helping them find their Transforming Power through their own creativity. For me, AVP is like a workout for your conscience, one that prepares you to listen, appreciate and learn how to protect it.

In the future, I hope to use AVP to work with young people who have left armed groups, youths belonging to gangs and students from violent communities. For that I need a lot more tools and skills. Hopefully, I can meet other facilitators and keep learning and improving my way of service.



Alejandro Parra working with youth in Colombia

Alejandro has written an essay "Does Being in the Military Mean Renouncing Your Conscience?," available at forusa.org/blogs/for-colombia/does-being-military-mean-renouncing-your-conscience/12426.

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Follow-up:

Influence in Washington, D.C.

The July/August issue of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Washington Newsletter includes an article, "Learning from Kenyans," by Cassidy Regan, about her work as the FCNL Kenya Project Coordinator from 2011 to May 2013. In part, the article describes the beneficial effects of Friends Church Peace Team (FCPT) coordinator Getry Agizah's visits to U.S. lawmakers in 2011.

Excerpts from the article: "Here are a few of the takeaways that FCNL has shared with U.S. policymakers so far: Local peacebuilding works. It's hard to know for sure why Kenyans didn't return to violent crisis this March.... What's clear, though, is that local efforts to prevent violence had an impact on Kenya's communities—and Kenyan Friends' work, through the [FCPT] and African Great Lakes Initiative and others, is a powerful example."

The FCNL article provides a nice follow-up to the article, "All the Quakers Aren't Enough," by David Zarembka, in the Spring/Summer 2013 issue of *PeaceWays* and the accompanying photo of Getry Agizah at the FCNL offices in Washington, D.C..

Children's Peace Libraries in Rwanda

Children's Peace Libraries, an organization supported by AGLI, is bringing books and non-violence to children in four Rwandan villages. On August 23, 2013, the *Huffington Post* published an article on the Peace Libraries by Blair Forlaw, a Friend from Washington, D.C., who is volunteering at one of the libraries. See the report at www.huffingtonpost.com/blair-forlaw/childrens-libraries-see-_b_3803460.html and more about the peace libraries on the blog "A Library Grows in Byumba" at alibrarygrowsinbyumba.wordpress.com.



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AVP Introduction in the Kakuma Friends Church Refugee Camp, Kenya

AGLI began introducing AVP into the Kakuma refugee camp, which houses refugees from several nearby countries, in August, 2013. In all, five basic AVP workshops, one advanced AVP workshop, and one training for facilitators were held, training 15 facilitators and reaching 60 participants in all.

At left, newly trained facilitator Henry Munyaka prepares the agenda of day two in a basic workshop.

Kakuma Friends Church wishes to continue with more AVP workshops, providing experience for the new facilitators.

Save the Date

Friends Peace Teams 20th Anniversary Celebration

June 20-22, 2014

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Stony Run Friends Meeting

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Please contribute to the Friends Peace Teams initiatives and to the general fund. Undesignated donations to FPT go to the general fund to provide shared administrative support to the initiatives, publish PeaceWays, and maintain the website. Checks should be made out to "Friends Peace Teams" and mailed to 1001 Park Ave., Saint Louis, MO 63104-3720 USA. Donations can also be made online at www.friendspeaceteams.org.