



# Friends Peace Teams Peace Ways

Fall-Winter 2014 - 2015  
Volume 9 Issue 2

## Working to Prevent Displacement

By Val Liveoak, coordinator of Peacebuilding en las Américas

In Friends Peace Teams (FPT), we are working not only to help internally displaced people, but also to prevent displacement in the first place. In Peacebuilding *en las Américas* (PLA), preventing displacement is a particular focus of the work in Colombia and Honduras. Poor people, especially those who live in the countryside, minorities, indigenous and other marginalized peoples are the most vulnerable. Depending on the situation, pressure to leave and/or destruction of their homes comes from criminal gangs, active warfare, their own government, or other powerful interests who want their land for other purposes.

For example, near Barranquilla, Colombia a community of formerly displaced people built a settlement on unused land. After 12 years of farming it, building houses, planting orchards and raising livestock, the government decided that a new industrial park would be built there. Houses, trees, and animals were bulldozed into a large hole.

This group and others are receiving Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) training and Community Based Trauma Healing workshops from PLA partners. The AVP Coordinators also help these communities by publicizing their plight and connecting them with other groups that can provide help with supplies, advocacy and civil resistance.



*Garifunas and supporters from around Honduras celebrate the opening of a support meeting with a circle of food and calling on their ancestors.*

How can AVP help in these situations? That's a good question because AVP in the US has explicitly eschewed "political activity", and these campaigns are involved in struggles with the State. Garifuna (descendants of ex-slaves and indigenous people) in Honduras and Afro-Colombians, as well as indigenous peoples and victims of previous displacement in both countries, have a legally protected status.

AVP helps build people's understanding of and commitment to nonviolence. It points them toward alternatives to armed struggle when faced with overwhelming forces. It helps them work together to deal with some of the conflicts that plague groups organized to protect themselves. AVP builds unity and provides a model of power-sharing that contrasts with the corrupt and oppressive governments that dominate their experience. Community Based Trauma Healing helps individuals and communities recover and reconcile. Our work with PLA and FPT is not, in itself, sufficient to change everything that needs changing. But it does provide tools, help develop relationships, give encouragement, and support the people who are the ones who will build peace in their countries.

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## Editorial

from David Zarembka,  
Coordinator of African Great Lakes Initiative

During and after WWI and WWII, Quakers, as a religious group, pioneered humanitarian relief work and were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947 for that work. What the Quakers did during the last century is now commonplace for many organizations—the United Nations World Food Program, World Relief, Catholic Relief Services, and so many others. Quakers were a bright light that showed the way for both religious and non-religious organizations. Since then, Quakers worldwide have moved on to new endeavors and developed new tools.

Starting in the 1970's Quakers developed the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), which teaches non-violent empowerment. That program has been adopted

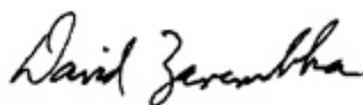
and expanded well beyond the Quaker community. It is also one of the keystones of Friends Peace Teams (FPT) work.

Since then, we have realized that war is not only materially destructive of lives, houses, businesses, and animals, but also brings unseen psychological damage. As a result, Quakers have begun conducting programs for psycho-social trauma recovery all over the world. These programs represent the 'cutting edge' in peacemaking efforts.

Twelve years ago the FPT African Great Lakes Initiative developed the program Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC). Originally implemented in Rwanda and Burundi, HROC is now in seven African countries and the United States

The HROC concepts, generically referred to as "community-based trauma healing", have been adapted by the other FPT initiatives, Asia West Pacific, and Peacebuilding *en Las Américas*. In the latter, it has become an extension of AVP.

The articles in this issue of PeaceWays provide examples of how Friends Peace Teams and its partners are making a difference—helping communities recover from severe violence, change cultures of violence and prevent new violence.



### 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 Manuel Garcia, Coordinator of AVP-Colombia. Translated by Val Liveoak

## AVP and the Peace Process in Colombia

Today is a time of lively hope in Colombia—we hear of a reconstruction of the social fabric, and there is greater participation in reconciliation processes. Although we remain a country with a lot of violence, we are no longer in the list of the ten most violent countries. No doubt, deaths, massacres and kidnappings in Colombia have



declined significantly; however, much remains before we become the Colombia of our dreams.

Hope grows as the news reports the coming of long awaited events including peace talks, rumors of more peace talks, and the promised end of conscription into the armed forces. In 2015, a law will go into effect requiring mandatory Peace Studies in all educational institutions, governmental or private, from kindergarten through high school.

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in Colombia echoes this peace process. Our AVP work in schools and communities, with teachers, managers of educational institutions at the secondary and

university level, and the general population, has empowered us [to realize] that the road to peace is dialogue, nonviolence and reconciliation.

Through AVP's playful activities and nonviolent ideology, we recognize a way—nearly abandoned in the past—to forgiveness and nonviolent struggle for our rights. People have become gradually aware that we have the tools to build a society where we can live in peace.

A guerrilla attack in 2000 left the town of Granada in ruins and nearly deserted. Today, 14 years later, the town of Granada has been rebuilt and its social fabric has been recovering using AVP. Teachers and administrators in the main educational institution of the municipality, together with the religious establishment, have adopted AVP as a philosophy to guide reconstruction and nonviolent work together. Now they teach students various AVP techniques to develop nonviolent lives.

by *David Zarembka*

## Central African Republic

An excerpt from a news article from the New York Times (Nossiter, Adam, January 19, 2014) "Central African Town Is Left Charred, Empty and Hopeless Amid Violence":

*In January 2014, Bossangoa was described as a ghost town, "strangely empty" with "no people, only charred houses and storefronts, block after block of blackened roofless dwellings, an abandoned bank, a gas station stripped down to the metal frames of its pumps, and an emptied city hall." The population, which once numbered 50,000, has mostly fled the city to escape communal violence between Muslims and Christians in the aftermath of the civil war. The population was living in two separate camps—one for Muslims and one for Christians.*

Have you ever heard of Bossangoa? I hadn't. It is a town in the northwest part of the Central African Republic (CAR) where a militia, called Seleka, from the north, composed mostly of Muslim fighters, overthrew the CAR government in March 2013. Their leader was unable to control his troops, who looted the countryside and killed many people in the south who were mostly Christians. The Christians



***Pastor Matthew, one of our new facilitators in Bossangoa is standing in his house, destroyed by the Seleka.***

retaliated with their own vigilante groups and ethnic-religious cleansing followed.

As I write this, two experienced HROC facilitators, Florence Ntakarutimana from Burundi and Chrisostome Nshimiyimana from Rwanda, are in the partially recovered Bossangoa introducing the HROC program. This work is being sponsored by Catholic Relief Services (CRS). Florence and Chris will be training their community staff in Bossangoa and in the nearby town of Bouare to become HROC facilitators. If HROC can work in this remote, devastated place, it can then work anywhere.



***The certificate of facilitators is being awarded to Clotilde Wamboi (center), Governor of Ouham Province, where Bossangoa is located. She came for the opening ceremony but stayed for the whole three-day training.***

***African Great Lakes Initiative  
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# AVP is Taking Off in Asia West Pacific

What began as one Friend's ministry in Indonesia has turned into an expanding Friends' program in Asia West Pacific (AWP). We invest in people-to-people relationships between Friends traveling for peace and people committed to living peacefully.

## Philippines

*From reports by Esther Cowley-Malcolm*



**Youth workshop in the Philippines**

*Esther Cowley-Malcolm was one of the first Quakers in Aotearoa/New Zealand to be trained in AVP and facilitated the first AVP workshop in a prison in New Zealand. She has traveled with Friends Peace Teams to Indonesia and the Philippines.*

Esther Cowley-Malcolm joined Filipinos Kins Aparace and Ludwig Bon Quirog in organizing AVP workshops in the Philippines in April 2014.

The first workshop Esther conducted had a mix of women and men with a broad age range. Many participants commented that The Transforming Power Mandala served as a catalyst for personal change in them and that it has helped them become less violent. A second workshop included much younger participants aged from 11-20.

Esther expressed that her take away from her wonderful adventure was a determination to reach out to the different ethnic communities where she lives and encourage them to implement AVP. There is a need for more AVP facilitators who know multiple languages and have cultural knowledge and an understanding of the sociopolitical context where they work.

## Nepal

*By John Michaelis*

In partnership with Children Nepal, a team comprised of Judith Simpson, Vidya Sutton and John Michaelis returned to Nepal in April and May 2014 to run several Alternatives to Violence Project Basic Workshops in remote villages.

Many teachers expressed a concern to find non-violent ways to teach, while still maintaining order. Friends Peace Teams member Judith Simpson is an Australian teacher who began teaching when beating was still the norm in Australian schools. She taught through the transition when physical punishment was eliminated. Her personal testimony as to how the elimination of physical punishment resulted in better, rather than worse, order in the classroom was invaluable. She was able to respond to many questions concerning such a transition.



**Teachers workshop in Nepal**

In AVP, participants act out violent or potentially violent situations and explore how violence could be avoided or defused. The teachers acted out scenarios that depicted typical violent beatings in the schools. In debriefing, many shared personal stories of beatings they had received, witnessed or administered.

*AWP, continued*

## **Aceh, Indonesia**

*From reports by Fauziah*

*Fauziah is a mechanic who works fixing tires or selling fish, fruit, or whatever she can. She has support from the local government to bring people together for Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops. There is ethnic diversity in her area. Fauziah is trying to bring the ethnic groups as well as different ages together in the workshops.*



The participants in the workshop, shown above, in Kotalintang— of different ages, ethnic backgrounds and genders—did not let differences get in the way of their sense of unity. In fact, the differences brought the experience beautifully alive.



The participants in the photo to the left share in the AVP exercise, “A Problem I Solved Nonviolently”. Without realizing it, everyone became very good at describing how they had solved problems nonviolently.

*Asia West Pacific Initiative  
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## **Opportunities to Engage!**

### **Join a Friends Peace Team:**

#### **Asia West Pacific in 2015:**

- A workshop on AVP, Trauma Healing and Play in Java, Indonesia March 15-22. See details at [www.fpt-awp.org](http://www.fpt-awp.org).

- Other 2015 AWP Peace Teams are in planning: Palestine in early 2015, extension of the Java stay in March, Sumatra in April, South Korea in February and April-May, Nepal early in the year, and Philippines. Watch for details on [www.fpt-awp.org](http://www.fpt-awp.org), or contact the AWP-FPT office at [AWPOffice@friendspeaceteams.org](mailto:AWPOffice@friendspeaceteams.org).

#### **African Great Lakes Initiative:**

AGLI provides opportunities in Summer Work Camps and Extended Service Peace Teams. See the AGLI web site, [www.aglifpt.org/get/get.htm](http://www.aglifpt.org/get/get.htm).

### **Sign up for e-news:**

Write an initiative to request a subscription to their e-news list: AGLI David Zarembka [dave@aglifpt.org](mailto:dave@aglifpt.org); AWP Jenna Morales [AWPOffice@friendspeaceteams.org](mailto:AWPOffice@friendspeaceteams.org); PLA Val Liveoak [valliveoak@gmail.com](mailto:valliveoak@gmail.com).

### **Donate:**

Donations to any initiative or the general fund may be made on the FPT website or by check, in U.S. dollars, to Friends Peace Teams at 1001 Park Ave., Saint Louis, MO 63104-3720 USA. Other options for donating to FPT-AGLI and FPT-AWP can be found on those initiatives' websites, [www.aglifpt.org](http://www.aglifpt.org) and [www.fpt-awp.org](http://www.fpt-awp.org).

## Sabaot Land Defense Force on Mt. Elgon, Kenya

Although it never made much news, even in Kenya, 600 to 1000 people were killed and 100,000, out of a population of 150,000 people, were displaced in the Mt. Elgon district, by the Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF). The violent conflict began in 2006 as one clan of the Sabaots claimed that they should have been given land in their homeland that was given to another clan. The politically-based violence soon turned into mindless banditry and barbarity. In 2008, the Kenyan army arrived and killed the leader of the SLDF and many of his supporters, together with many innocent young men.

AGLI began working on Mt Elgon in 2008, beginning tentatively with Healing and Rebuilding Our Community (HROC) workshops. In preparation for the 2013 election, Friends Church Peace Teams (FCPT), our partner in Kenya, conducted large numbers of AVP, HROC, and mediation workshops in the communities most affected by violence. Recently, we purchased a plot of land and started building a peace center in the middle of the most disputed section on the mountain. Even though it is incomplete, we have begun using it for HROC workshops.

Getry Agizah, FCPT Coordinator, reported her experience [paraphrased due to space constraints]:

*At four recent HROC workshops, six members of SLDF who wanted to be part of what we do in the community, attended. "The thought of some people to come up with a peace center made them feel that there is God everywhere," said Kirwa, one of the members. Toward the end of the training, a Kikuyu businessman was assassinated, and an announcement on the radio said that the SLDF was re-grouping. That triggered our participants and their leaders from SLDF to rise up and speak. That is how I found myself in a closed-door meeting with the SLDF leaders and my two colleagues, Erastus Chesondi and Peter Serete.*

*We were all strangers to each other. There was deep tension from everyone there. I asked, "Who are we? And why are we here?" I could see fear in their eyes and their expression. A sense of empathy arose in me with the need to understand what happened and what they really wished us to do for them.*

*After a long pause, Stephen, the leader, started by giving a history of how the SLDF was formed; it*

*was started by a group of concerned citizens. There was unfairness in land allocation and people lost their senses and committed crimes. Now, whenever crime happens in the Mt. Elgon community, someone goes to the media to announce that the SLDF is re-grouping. Another member said, "We are not re-grouping. My brother has been a participant in the HROC workshop. He meets with most of us. We are changed. Some of us have been sentenced for four or five years, and we have learned our lesson. We want to be happy in our community. I fear that another person might attack me. We don't sleep in our houses because of fear." They went on and on, each wanting to talk. Peter and I only managed to nod our heads and patiently listen.*

*Then they came to the second issue—they wanted to be part of the work we do on Mt Elgon. They requested training to learn how to live with peace. As they raised this request, there was desperation in the room. One of the members said, "My sister and I live in fear. We are carrying big loads of pain and emotion in us. We need our community. We really want to be put together with them and start a life. Some of the SLDF members who came out of prison are hiding in nearby towns. They are suffering and they need to come home. But they don't know how." Each wanted to talk and we listened. Some were openly trembling, not sure if they really trusted us.*

*We sat for seven and a half hours, listening to them. Then we traveled back home to prepare to meet the next day with the local administration. At that meeting, we shared with the administration what we felt was of concern, and suggested having an open dialogue and follow up with some workshops aimed at community integration.*

After the meeting with the administration, we began a series of four HROC workshops with the SLDF leaders and their followers. In the first workshop were the former SLDF deputy leader, their operations commander, their armory commander, and other commanders. To symbolize building a new life with a new identity, we used an AVP technique in which each person uses a positive adjective with his or her first name. The SLDF commanders chose "Steward," "Truthful," "Resourceful," "Amani" (Peace), and "Beautiful." The long road to re-integration, to peace in the community, has begun.

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By Adrian Bishop

## PeaceQuest 2014

Peace activists from all over the world gathered June 20-22 at Friends School of Baltimore and Stony Run Friends Meeting to teach, learn, and celebrate 20 years of Friends Peace Teams peacemaking! The conference examined peacemaking in personal, family, community and global contexts.

workshops that riveted their audiences. One Friend remarked he had never seen so little distraction during a seminar; the halls outside the workshops were empty! Another thanked us warmly—he had no idea that such conditions existed and that Friends were responding so remarkably. Unfortunately our attenders were so tired out by their day-long adventures that only a few stayed to dance to the music of Elikeh, a largely west African fusion band. The conference concluded on Sunday with Meeting for Worship and reflection.



*Friends Peace Teams members and volunteers at PeaceQuest 2014 - in front of Stony Run Friends meetinghouse.*

We thank Friends School of Baltimore, Friends Meeting of Baltimore, Stony Run Friends Meeting, South Central Yearly Meeting, Earlham College, Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Zarembka family, Bethesda Friends Meeting, Friends Witness for a Prolife Peace Testimony, and Friends Journal, as well as many vendors and friends for their Quakerly and financial support.

Carl Wilkens, keynote speaker, kicked off the conference at 7:00 p.m. on Friday. As a Seventh Day Adventist humanitarian aid worker, Carl moved his young family to Rwanda in the spring of 1990. When the Rwandan genocide was launched in April 1994, Carl refused to leave, even when urged to do so by close friends, his church and the United States government. Carl was the only American to remain in the country. His actions saved the lives of hundreds. He is a remarkable storyteller. He challenges you to examine your life and your connections with others. Carl's message in Baltimore was essentially, "Be present where you are."

On Saturday, workshops running in four tracks focused on personal, local, global and child/parent peacemaking techniques learned from FPT work on four continents. Community peacemakers from Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the USA, Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Indonesia, the Philippines, New Zealand, Palestine, and Nepal gave remarkable

## Face-to-Face and PeaceQuest 2015

The annual Friends Peace Teams Face-to-Face Meeting will be held May 14 to 17, 2015 at West Richmond Friends Meeting, 609 West Main Street, Richmond, IN 47374. Along with the Face-to-Face, PeaceQuest 2015 will be held on Saturday, May 16, times and locations to be announced.

PeaceQuest 2015 will be similar to PeaceQuest 2014 and will be a good opportunity to meet and hear the FPT members and volunteers who are carrying on Friends' peace work in many far-flung places.



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### Crossing the River

Crossing the River is an activity used in Healing and Rebuilding our Communities. This picture is from a workshop in the Central African Republic. (See story on p. 3.) It is a team-building exercise that is intended to help participants work together toward a common goal and build a sense of mutual responsibility for each others' learning.

Two lines are laid down on opposite sides of the room, to represent the shores of a river. All of the participants are asked to stand on one "shore," and are given "flotation devices" (pieces of paper). The challenge is to get everyone across the river. The only way to cross the river is to step on flotation devices. There are other restrictions, such as, if no one is standing on or holding a flotation device, it will "float away" (be removed by a facilitator).

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 in U.S. dollars should be made out to "Friends Peace Teams" and mailed to 1001 Park Ave., Saint Louis, MO 63104-3720 USA. Donations can be made online at [www.friendspeaceteams.org](http://www.friendspeaceteams.org).