



Friends Peace Teams

Peace Ways

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Expect the Unexpected (Kenyan saying)

By David Zarembka

In 2003 AGLI* developed the HROC* program to bring individual and societal healing to Hutu and Tutsi involved in deadly conflict in Rwanda and Burundi. The hope was to restore normal human relationships which had occurred before the violence.



Participants in a specialized HROC workshop on gender-based violence participate in an exercise.

Testimonies like this mystified us. The workshop did not address marital problems and family violence. However, when a person is traumatized – angry, bitter, depressed, isolated – then he or she is quite likely to take his or her frustrations out on family members. Relieving the trauma

removes a cause of family strife. And a renewed, peaceful family life contributes to a calmer community.

The First Unexpected Development

When we followed up to assess the effects of our workshops on the participants' lives, we received numerous testimonies on healing and reconciliation, as expected. However, we also received testimonies like the following:

After the workshop that I attended, I wished that my husband would get this extraordinary chance too. Fortunately, God answered my prayers! He participated in the last one you conducted. My home has become a paradise! Before we attended these workshops, my husband was always furious. He was treating us as slaves. My home was a hell. Since he had participated in the HROC workshop, he has now time for the children and me. When he comes from work, he greets us, tells us how things have been for him and asks us how we have been doing too (which he never did before). Now he consults me before making any decision. You understand that there is a reason for me to be this joyful woman.

A Second Unexpected Development

Many non-government organizations focus their work on established community leaders. With our grassroots workshops, we found this was not a useful strategy. Those leaders were too busy to attend regularly during their training workshops (normally three days long) and did not have the time to lead HROC workshops in the future. For example, we once had a government minister attend a basic HROC workshop, but she was continually being called on her cell phone and had to frequently leave the workshop to respond. Another time we trained a chief (a government official in Kenya) as a facilitator. He could rarely get away for three days to lead a workshop.

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* See Key to Acronyms p. 2

From the Editor

The peacebuilding training provided by Friends Peace Teams often produces effects that go beyond creating a more peaceful environment while life goes on otherwise unchanged. With foresight, the community-based trauma-healing program developed in the African Great Lakes region was named "Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities," in hope that the first step of trauma healing would improve community relations and lead to other positive changes in communities. Newsletters and other communications from FPT have repeatedly verified the positive changes in individuals' lives, families and communities.

In this issue, we present some examples of the wider effects that Friends Peace Teams programs and partners are having. As David Zarembka describes in "Unexpected Surprises," the range of effects of FPT programs was a surprise in the early days of Friends Peace Teams. The article "How Does the AVP Model Work?" describes the process by which FPT train-

ing is translated into broader effects. Note that the "AVP Model" is used in trauma healing as well as in alternatives to violence, per se. The PLA article "The Broad Impact of AVP Work in PLA" provides specific examples of wider effects. The AWP article "Ripples of Peace Education" shows how a local organization based on principles of non-violence, even one whose immediate participants are small children, can have an effect on the wider community.

Starting from the basic programs, FPT and its partners have expanded their efforts in ways that serve the needs of local situations, as with the Peace and Democracy Groups referred to by David Zarembka and the Joglo Preschool described in the AWP article. Keep following the progress of FPT's and its partners' programs in future PeaceWays issues and on the FPT website, friendspeaceteams.org.

Caroline Lanker

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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Key to Acronyms

FPT – Friends Peace Teams

Initiatives:

AGLI – African Great Lakes Initiative

AWP – Asia West Pacific

PLA – Peacebuilding en Las Américas

Programs:

AVP – Alternatives to Violence Project

HROC – Healing & Rebuilding Our Communities

Other:

FARC – Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Rebel organization. Translated: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)

GBV – Gender-Based Violence

LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

How Does the AVP Model Work?

[There is no question about it, over the years, we have seen some incredible outcomes from the peace education FPT and its partners provide. Some are revealed in this issue of PeaceWays, some in past issues, some in private conversations. Our PLA Initiative provided us with a terrific, succinct account of why AVP-based Peace Education workshops work so well and produce outcomes beyond the primary goals of peacebuilding and trauma healing.]

Personal Impact

These workshops often have a very personal impact on participants by providing a safe space to talk, laugh, cry, and reflect on their experiences.

Everyone is invited to participate in the workshops, including: at-risk youth, students, teachers, prisoners, Afro-descendant and indigenous communities, displaced people, former guerrilla fighters, former paramilitary members, former FARC members, police officers, members of the LGBT community, and people with disabilities.

With a diverse base of attendees, the workshops draw on shared experiences. Using interactive exercises, discussions, games and role-plays we examine the ways we respond to situations where injustice, prejudice, frustration and anger can lead to violence.

Broader Effects

The lessons learned from the workshops do not just stay with participants, but they improve

other areas of their lives at homes, churches, schools, and workplaces.

"I feel that it functions first in us and later projects where you live, study and in your family," says Lorena Escobar, Coordinator of AVP Guatemala. "You start to see a change in families. When a mother takes a workshop, she brings this home to her family and it is reflected in the way she deals with her husband and her kids."



At a workshop in Colombia.

A Workshop Becomes a Community

A sense of community is created within the diverse backgrounds and experiences of participants. This challenges discrimination rooted in difference that has often given rise to social conflicts.

"When we talk about respect and taking care of our neighbor, we are also talking about acceptance," explains Escobar. "You can be indigenous, rich, poor, Garifuna [of mixed African and indigenous descent], tall,

short, fat, or skinny. We are all distinct. This is something that is important in AVP. The emphasis is on respect and caring for others whether that be the Garifuna who is here with me or the indigenous here at my side."

Val Liveoak, founder of AVP, elaborated, "The AVP workshops provide ways to work together as a community that help prevent common difficulties of working together that include all types of disunity, competition and exerting power over one or another in all kinds of situations."

Building a Sense of Self-Worth

When people start believing that they have self-worth, it can help them to better analyze their reality and start thinking of a better future.

Many participants leave workshops with greater self-respect and the confidence that they have the power inside themselves to live better lives.

This has been the case for many women who have taken the workshops.

"Women live in a patriarchal society. Workshops allow them the ability to start reclaiming space for themselves," says Saskia Schuitemaker, country contact for AVP Guatemala. "So few women think of themselves as having needs and a purpose other than being a mother and wife. The fact that we can create

a space that allows people to visualize dreams for the future is huge. What do *you* want? These actions give them value and a sense that they have a path in life and can make decisions. The personal right and ability to be assertive is very powerful for women. They see that if they change their own communication style, they can change their relationships and learn how to de-escalate situations."

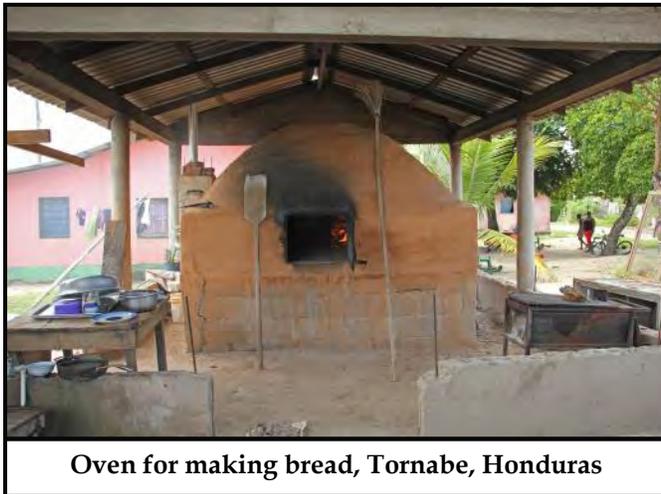
That brings us back to the "community" focus of our workshops. In many cases, the communities built from our workshops have served as ongoing places of support for participants and facilitators alike. As the workshops progress, exercises go beyond individual focus to community building, compassionate listening, and respect.

"The AVP experience is very useful in building community among participants and that spills over into broader communities," says Paul Stucky, who was instrumental in bringing AVP to Colombia. "Community helps reaffirm personal dignity and contributes to how people relate to others' dignity. This is so significant in a country where the basic message of violence is that other person's life doesn't matter," ■

By Allie Prescott, PLA

The Broad Impact of AVP in PLA

Since its founding in 2002, Peacebuilding *en Las Américas* has initiated ten AVP programs in Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Colombia. Facilitators from these programs have completed over 900 workshops in communities, hospitals, schools, NGOs, churches, and prisons, impacting over 4,000 participants.



Oven for making bread, Tornabe, Honduras

In the El Porvenir Prison in La Ceiba, Honduras, one participant shared his testimony about how AVP turned his attitude around. He had led a protest against the guards in his former prison and had 80 men following him with AK-47s and other weapons. The protest went on all day and all night. He was then considered one of the most dangerous men in Honduras. He was transferred to El Porvenir, where he took the AVP workshops.

AVP changed my life. It made me learn about things in my life that I was doing and things I was doing badly. AVP also helped me

heal myself internally. It is beneficial for all of the people who have an ego inside. The internal ego is me, me, me. I can do everything. When one has this, they trick themselves. One sees from a different point of view. And now, thanks to God, I am seeing from another point of view.

We can change. We have the will to change...The truth is AVP has served me a lot. ...I only have help from two places: the first is God and the second is AVP. Yes, you can change. I have two things: before and now.

During a Trauma Healing Workshop with Garifuna women in Tornabe, Honduras, one woman who had suffered greatly from domestic abuse was able to visualize a better future. She dreamed of creating a huge adobe oven to make bread to sell. After a year, facilitators went back to Tornabe and saw a huge brick oven; her dream had become a reality. (See photograph.)

At a Basic workshop in Colombia, one participant had been a paramilitary commander and another had been a FARC member. The paramilitary and FARC had fought each other for 60 years. In the workshop, they laughed together, cried together and ultimately were able to see each other as human.

A workshop in Guatemala brought together Evangelicals and Catholics. Unfortunately, many Evangelical churches

teach that you shouldn't even talk to Catholics. It's a big issue in Guatemala.

"[For] Catholics to go to an Evangelical church is alone impressive." says Lorena Escobar, Coordinator of AVP Guatemala. "By being in the workshop, they began to respect each other."

After doing workshops with churches, El Salvador coordinator Salomon Medina saw how pastors began to promote and teach the principles of Transforming Power to their congregations.

In Guatemala, many students come from broken homes and



At a trauma healing workshop in Guatemala.

live in environments with excessive bullying, drug consumption, extortion, and gang violence.

One location is Comunidad La Esperanza, a free middle school where PLA facilitates both formal and weekly mini-workshops. Comunidad direc-

tor Hilda Vasquez describes some of the effects the school has seen from AVP.

A nice experience was in a class where we had a very difficult student. He did everything possible to upset us: lifting the girls' skirts, recording videos under their skirts, bothering the other classmates, organizing fights among the youth. He recorded videos and sold them.

After the first workshop, where in one of the activities all the classmates told him what they thought of what he did, he reflected a lot. Everyone reflected a lot about his behavior because many of them had rejected him due to his actions, and they isolated him. So, maybe that had provoked more aggressive behavior on his part.

During this activity when he understood what they really thought of him, he said, 'I'm going to change. Now I'm not going to do this or that, or any of the things the students mentioned.' The youth apologized to him, too, for sometimes isolating him and discriminating against him to a certain point. Since then, there has been a lot of harmony in this class and a lot of behavior change."

In effect, the workshop raised awareness about issues of violence against girls, created a safer space for all students to learn, and affirmed students' dignity. Ultimately, the learning environment improved. Students have shown more interest in school and leave wanting to continue their education. ■



Mónica Maher PLA Coordinator

PLA is pleased to announce that the initiative's new coordinator is Mónica Maher. Originally from the United States, Mónica is a bilingual AVP facilitator who lives and works in Quito, Ecuador. In 2011, she attended the AVP International Gathering in Guatemala where she participated in the training workshop in trauma healing led by PLA members.

Mónica holds a PhD in Christian Social Ethics and has over 25 years of experience in community service, human rights and solidarity work in Latin America. Currently, she serves as visiting professor of Sociology and Gender Studies at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Quito. She has over five years of AVP experience and has co-facilitated workshops in several countries.

For more information about Mónica Maher, please see pla.friendspeaceteams.org/index.php/2016/05/02. ■

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Ripples of Peace Education

We have a family with two young children who have attended the Joglo Preschool since they were toddlers. The older child has special needs. As an infant, he had trouble speaking, could not focus, had a hard time connecting when spoken to, exercised no self-control in interacting with other children, and physically disrupted his surroundings. Before he attended Joglo, this condition forced his mother to stop working to attend to his needs. While her son was an infant, she met a child with the same special needs as her son. He was thriving at the Joglo Preschool.

She researched the school and learned of the methods they employ based on AVP. These methods reflect the principles of respect, affirmation, listening, communicating and working together peacefully. Each child is appreciated, treated kindly, and supported. The child's grandparents wondered why their grandson would go to a Christian school with a visiting *bule* (fair-skinned, tall, large person). In Java, *bule* look like the Dutch, who colonized Indonesia for centuries. Why was their grandson at a school that did not teach the Al-Qur'an, while other children their grandson's age could cleverly recite Qur'anic verses?

Struggling internally with sending her Muslim son to a Christian school, the mother asked her husband if he thought it was right to send their son to Joglo, and he ex-

Even though the Joglo Preschool has both Christian and Muslim teachers and the concern of whether or not to offer optional Al-Qur'an instruction is constant, it is, in fact, a Christian school.

To this day the children remain at Joglo. The mother teaches them the Al-Qur'an at home. Joglo has won several awards this past year for model education and student performance, although it receives no government funding, and its teachers' salaries are one tenth of those of public school teachers. The special needs boy has improved beyond any expectations: in self-control, concentration, physical, and cognitive abilities.

The mother speaks of the AVP approach so highly that when her sister and husband were dispatched to work here in Pati for a month, they asked if their small children could attend Joglo also. The mother and father of the special needs boy even invited an FPT volunteer to stay at their home this year to experience the atmosphere of Ramadan. The volunteer was well received by everyone, including the grandparents. ■



Photo by Dwi Surya Saputra

Children and parents from Muslim and Christian families play a game at a Family Play day at Joglo Preschool.

pressed no strong objections. Her inner struggles drove her to browse the internet for teachings by *Kyai*, Islamic experts, on the education of young children and on relations among Muslims and Christians.

At the same time, she was introduced to approaches to raising and educating children based on AVP, and its underlying philosophy of education and community life. The mother was committed to sending her children to a school that respects, as well as teaches, them.

Asia West Pacific Initiative

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As a result, when we are looking for possible candidates for HROC facilitators, we look for people who, as Florence Ntakarutimana from Burundi says, have the “heart” for trauma healing work. Upon return to their home communities, they, along with other HROC team members: conduct apprentice HROC workshops, work with people on family issues, and help resolve conflicts in their community.

The unexpected surprise for us was learning that soon after these people return to their communities and become active, they become community leaders.

For example, in 2015, Peace and Democracy Groups were formed in Burundi from participants in HROC workshops. When demonstrations against the president of Burundi broke out and turned violent in the town of Buterere, people asked the local Peace and Democracy Group to step in. The standing of the group in the community and their reputation for impartiality enabled them to successfully defuse the situation and prevent more violence. Read the full story at davidzarembka.com/rfk/2016/09/10/371.

Realizing Potential

Although we had seen unexpected results from our HROC workshops, and we knew that experienced and active HROC facilitators became community leaders, it

was not until Felicite Nyonzima’s brave announcement that we realized the tremendous potential of workshops based on the HROC model.

In 2005 Felicite Nyonzima stood up in church and announced that she was HIV+. To do so implicated her spouse or her as having “sinned” with sex outside of marriage. As soon as she did this, other women came quietly to her to say that they were also HIV+. She soon realized that living with HIV was a major social issue for the Quaker Church in Burundi.

We were challenged to adapt the HROC workshop for those who are suffering from the trauma of being HIV+. The workshop was modified to include lessons on healthy living.

After our success with using the HROC model to develop workshops for HIV+ individuals, we (or our project partners) designed workshops for:

- ◆ rape and gender violence survivors;
- ◆ women prisoners about to be released into the communities where they had committed crimes;
- ◆ the second generation of youth who were either very young or not yet born at the time of violence – a much more difficult group to handle since they have no

concrete knowledge of what happened and normally their parents tell them nothing;

- ◆ mid-wives (birth companions) who have had babies and/or mothers die under their care;
- ◆ the deaf community;
- ◆ the marginalized Twa communities in Rwanda and Burundi,

and we have several exciting targeted workshops planned for the future.■

AGLI News



David Zarembka

After long and fruitful service as the coordinator of FPT’s African Great Lakes Initiative, David

Zarembka has stepped down from that position, effective October 31, 2016. The FPT Council is grateful for his tremendous contribution in building AGLI and for his substantial contributions to FPT as a whole.

David will continue his “Letters from Kenya” online at www.davidzarembka.com/rfk.

In the coming months, FPT will start a search for a new AGLI coordinator. In the meantime, the AGLI network, developed by David, will continue to operate, supported by the FPT AGLI Working Group.■

African Great Lakes Initiative

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Photo by Wiji Prasetya Jati



AWP: FPT supported the purchase of land next to Peace Place in Pati, Indonesia. On the land is a newly built "Traffic Park" to help the children in the Joglo Preschool learn about traffic and traffic signs and conversation with others. See the AWP article, p. 6.



AGLI: Participants in a specialized HROC workshop for Gender-Based Violence Accompanists (volunteers who assist survivors of gender-based violence), discussing the effects of trauma. See the AGLI article, p. 1.

PLA: A group in a basic workshop in Ciudad Bolivar, Bogota, Colombia. See the PLA article, p. 4.



Please contribute to Friends Peace Teams. Undesignated donations to FPT go to the general fund to provide shared administrative support to the initiatives, publish *PeaceWays*, and maintain the website. Donations may also be designated for the initiatives. Checks in U.S. dollars should be made out to "Friends Peace Teams" and mailed to 1001 Park Ave., St. Louis, MO 63104-3720 USA. Donations can be made online at www.friendspeaceteams.org. Other options for donating to the AWP and AGLI Initiatives are available on their websites, www.fpt-awp.org and www.aglifpt.org.