



# Friends Peace Teams Peace Ways

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By Val Liveoak and Margaret Lechner

## Poor Readers: Great AVP Facilitators

In Suchitoto, El Salvador, many adults were unable to attend school as they were growing up during the war. While opportunities for children are better today, many adult Salvadorans have poor literacy, even in the cities. Campesinos (small farmers), who make up 80% of the population of the Municipalidad (equivalent to a county) of Suchitoto, have significantly lower literacy rates than town dwellers.

Throughout the countries that Peacebuilding *en las Américas* (PLA) serves, this situation is likely to be common.

Facilitation of Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) depends on the use of the excellent manuals, written and translated over years of collaborative effort. Literacy is not an explicit

requirement of facilitators, but poor reading skills can be a significant handicap. In January 2010 the PLA team of Margaret Lechner and Val Liveoak co-facilitated AVP Training for Facilitators (T4F) with Salvadoran facilitator Maty Escobar. This T4F included a component new to the North Americans—introducing the manual to the participants two days in advance of the beginning of the T4F. The review of sections, with highlights of essential pages, gave tentative readers a head start on the workshop. We recommend this addition whenever a T4F includes individuals with limited literacy.

Maty had participated in a similar manual preview in 2008, when she took the first T4F held in

Suchitoto, led by Kelly Orbik and Guatemalan facilitator Silvia Barrios. We kept their idea of marking the different sections of the manual with tabs of sticky notes. We practiced working with pages numbered by sections (the Opening Talk begins on page A-12, Transforming Power Talks on page B-2). We explained the concept of exercises presented in alphabetic order -

and practiced looking things up. (“Let’s find the exercise ‘What is Violence?’”)

The T4F workshop continues the experiential (*educación popular*) methodology of the Basic and Advanced workshops, and the trainees are expected to lead practice sessions of activities from the Basic workshop. With prior

coaching and time to read the material at his or her own pace, trainees were on a more equal footing and better prepared to participate fully in their teams during the T4F workshop. All of AVP is an empowerment process, so we were happy to find a way to apply that principle to one of the more difficult aspects of the T4F: managing the manual.

Our work seemed to have been successful: the trainees were able to manage the manuals well. Mercedes, a charismatic community leader who is functionally illiterate, proclaimed “I can do this!” High praise indeed!



AVP facilitator-in-training team Nueva Esperanza (New Hope) planning their practice session

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## Project to Report on Elections in Burundi

Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities in Burundi (HROC-Burundi) is in the middle of a project titled Burundi Election Violence Prevention Program. We have selected nine communities that have experienced violence in the past and conducted four HROC workshops for 80 participants. These participants are now forming Democracy and Peace Groups in their communities. They will observe closely the conduct of candidates and political parties before, during and after the five Burundian elections that will occur between May 21 and September 7.

The African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) is working on a project that will combine these observations and send

grassroots information—with the advent of sophisticated cell phones—by SMS (short message service), email, picture and video to a call-in center at

I have not found any similar project to this one. In the last three or four years there has been an impressive boost in using cell phones for election reporting but this has all been open to anyone who wants to call in somewhere. Consequently, the information has not been verified; therefore, some people might be submitting misinformation. Moreover, there has been no link between the information gathered, policy organizations, and appropriate government or UN offices. The HROC-Burundi project will be a new method.

The rub is: Will the citizen reporters be in danger if they report election violence or irregularities in their community? If the citizen reporters note problems in their community, should they inform the local government authorities? What if the police or other government forces are the perpetrators of the violence? How should the Call-In Center communicate with the Burundian Government and the UN and other organizations supervising the elections?

This is an exciting project, venturing into the unknown. It will link AGLI's grassroots organizing and reconciliation work with the national and international community in a direct way. I anticipate that by September we will have learned a lot.



*Past. Levy Ndikumana explaining the cycle of elections—everything from enacting electoral laws through campaigning and voting, to identifying improvements for the next election.*

the HROC office. There, the staff will analyze the messages received and compose reports to send to Quaker policy organizations—the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in New York and Geneva, Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) in London, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) in Washington, DC, and others. They in turn will forward information to appropriate UN and government offices.

The crux of this program will be the 100 to 400 grassroots citizen reporters—the number will depend upon the funding AGLI receives for the project. These will be trained on everything from cell phone use to proper methods of reporting to possible intervention as a group in cases of potential or actual 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 Nadine Hoover

## Silver-Treated Ceramic Water Filters

In 2009, the Indonesian Initiative supported Reid Harvey from Silver Ceramic Systems in Alfred, New York, to travel to Jogjakarta in Java to train ten people in the production of silver-treated ceramic water filters. The training was sponsored by the Indonesian NGO Society for Health, Education, Environment and Peace (SHEEP) and FPT supplied equipment and materials, including fabrication of a press, construction of a test kiln, and materials for filters and water testing. For video clips of this workshop see [www.silverceramicsystems.com](http://www.silverceramicsystems.com).

Reid taught how to produce a "ceramic candle filter," which is treated with a tiny amount of silver nitrate prior to firing, providing 100% removal of pathogens without introducing any silver into the filtered water. Users of the filters find them appropriate and easy to maintain. The filter price is below US \$8.00, giving people a low-cost source of drinking water for decades.

Unfortunately, another company had purchased all available quality clay, so we had to use low-quality clay that required extensive processing. Also, SHEEP had advanced a large sum of money to the kiln owner for materials. He absconded with the funds, and it took time to recover them. SHEEP then took staff from its ranks to work full-time on procuring materials, managing the process, and locating another kiln.

Plastic end-caps used in Nepal were financially prohibitive in Indonesia, so the Indonesians

spent a great deal of time experimenting and designing ceramic end-caps that are glaze-sealed to the filter. Once the end-cap problem was solved, they produced 290 filters in 2009; production was dramatically slowed because they could not guarantee the effectiveness of every filter.

The Alfred Area AVP Coordinator, Nicholas (Nick) Dosch, a ceramic engineer working on the filters in the Alfred University lab, had asked, from the start, "How are you going to guarantee each filter?" So Nick will go to Jogjakarta in March 2010 to review production and assist in developing quality assurance.

The World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledged the acceptable use of this water filter in June 2009. Other groups in Indonesia have copied our filter, which we've taken as the greatest form of flattery. We tracked all of them back to one USAID contractor who has produced 32 filters but has not begun greater production, despite large injections of USAID

money. We talked with USAID personnel, but concluded that, at present at least, our small-scale approach stands a better chance of resolving problems and getting to production; so we persist.

Although we support open-source technology, concern about possible low-quality copycats threatening public trust in the filters has led SHEEP to look into patenting the technology in Indonesia.

A Friend involved in relief in Haiti told me, "Tell young people that hurrying down here to help is not the only, nor necessarily the best, thing they can do. They need to work on all types of support for people in disasters, as we are going to face more and more of them. Like those water filters. We know about them, but no one has started large-scale production. If anyone were producing them, we would order them by the thousands right now. Tell them to work on that." That underscores advice Al Cope, long-time Friend, scholar and activist gave young Friends in the 1970s: Get your education so you can offer the needed help in the future.

While results on the filters have been slower than we wished, we are clear that taking the time to build a solid, locally controlled base for this effort will guarantee the greatest success for the most people. Everyone involved, from the United States to Indonesia, is grateful to the donors who encourage this work.

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### Alternatives to Violence Project in East Aceh



*Young people in the Village of Lhee, Nurussalam, East Aceh, practice nonviolence as a road to peace.*



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# PeaceWays

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*Sign: Success AVP Basic in the Village of Lhee, Nurussalam [East Aceh, Indonesia]*

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 [www.friendspeaceteams.org](http://www.friendspeaceteams.org).

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