

Peace Ways **AGLI**

Spring 2008 Volume III Issue I

# Confronting the Conflict in Kenya:

Analysis and Response



The African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) of the Friends Peace Teams strengthens, supports, and promotes peace activities at the grassroots level in the Great Lakes region of Africa (Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda). To this end, AGLI responds to requests from local religious and non-governmental organizations that focus on conflict management, peace building, trauma healing, and reconciliation. AGLI sponsors Peace Teams composed of members from local partners and the international community.

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**For further information please contact:**

David Zarembka, Coordinator  
African Great Lakes Initiative  
of the Friends Peace Teams  
P. O. Box 189  
Kipkarren River 50241 Kenya  
Tel. + 011 254 726 590 783  
E-mail: [dave@aglionline.org](mailto:dave@aglionline.org)

US Office:  
African Great Lakes Initiative  
of the Friends Peace Teams  
1001 Park Avenue,  
St Louis, MO 63104 USA  
314/647-1287  
Email: [dawn@aglionline.org](mailto:dawn@aglionline.org)

**PeaceWays AGLI**

David Zarembka, *editor*

Dawn Rubbert, *copy editor*

Tommy Zarembka, *layout*

PSSI/We Print, *printer*

## Editorial Comment

In late December 2007, Gladys, my wife, and I had traveled to my father-in-law's house for the one-year memorial service for my mother-in-law. The next day we were stuck there as we could hear gunshots and see smoke a few miles away in the town of Mbale. So we hunkered down trying to learn about and understand the chaos that was erupting around us. The fruits of this can be found in my article here, **"The Blind Men and the Kenyan Elephant: Nine Interpretations of the Conflict in Kenya in Early 2008."**

But many peacemakers, including AGLI's partners in Kenya, were quick to respond. Within the week, with members of Lumakanda Friends Church, Gladys and I were visiting the 2,400 internally displaced Kikuyu from our community. Soon we were taking them small amounts of relief supplies. This was not nearly enough to fill the need, but on the one hand every little bit helps and on the other this was a sign of condolence and support for those who were understandably quite bitter. We are now doing Alternatives to Violence workshops with the youth in the camp—the workshops are turning this bitterness into constructive, positive action. On page 7 you will find the article, **"Empowering Youth to Find Alternatives to Violence,"** by **Julia O'Connor**.

In the next few months AGLI is planning to conduct 200 Alternatives to Violence workshops, mostly with the youth who were so involved in the violence. We will focus these workshops on ten to twenty specific communities so that they will have a decisive impact. This is a huge undertaking since it will mean an average of almost eight three-day workshops per week! To accomplish this we have already upgraded our twenty-three active AVP facilitators, done a training for sixteen additional facilitators who we must now apprentice to become experience facilitators, and develop the contacts, enroll the 4,000 youth involved, and secure the funding for this (at this writing we have approximately 3/4 of the funds needed for this).

**"Peace Dialogues in Kenya"** by Jared Nyagwoka describes his work bringing peace to the border between two communities where the violence became particularly severe, done with support from AGLI. As he says, "It was so easy to become bitter and join the leaders who were mobilizing youth to join the Militias; yet we chose to preach peace." This was particularly imperative in his case since he is a member of one group in the conflict and his wife is a member of the other.

Since the Kenyan conflict has calmed down, the international media is no longer much interested in Kenya. As the hard work of peacebuilding, community trauma healing, and reconciliation continues in earnest, I ask that you keep Kenya in your concerns and prayers and stay as informed as possible especially about the more positive aspects that we and others hope to achieve.

**David Zarembka**

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## The Blind Men and the Kenyan Elephant:

### Nine Interpretations of the Violence in Kenya in Early 2008

*By David Zarembka, Coordinator*

There is an Asian parable about blind men and the elephant that became popular in the West through a 19<sup>th</sup> century poem by John Godfrey Saxe. The tale involves a group of blind men who touch an elephant to learn what it is like and each one touches a specific yet different part. One man feels the side of the elephant while another touches the tusk. When the men come together for discussion, they are in complete disagreement. The story is often used to indicate that reality may be viewed differently depending upon one's perspective, suggesting that what seems an absolute truth may be relative due to the deceptive nature of half-truths.



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Before we begin exploring the Kenyan elephant, I would like to put the situation into context. I recently received an email from Hezron Masitsa, the AVP-Coordinator in Nairobi. He wrote that a Kenyan named Joran Shijenje had been shot and killed on his way home from work. This story seemed like more of the same violence we had been hearing about for months. However, the Kenyan Joran Shijenje had been shot coming home from work in Baltimore, Maryland. During the two months of conflict in Kenya when 1,000 to 1,500 were killed, there were 5,000 to 6,000 homicides in the United States. While the United States is 8.5 times more populous than Kenya, the violence has died down in Kenya, while in March and April another 5,000 to 6,000 Americans were murdered. So, the violence in Kenya, while shocking and unfathomable, is similar to what many Americans live with every day.

It is also important to put this information into context vis-à-vis other African conflicts. While up to 1,500 people were killed in Kenya in 60 days, compare this with 850,000 who died in the Rwandan genocide in 100 days, 300,000 who died in 12 years of civil war in Burundi, and the estimated 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 who have died in the eastern Congo since 1996.

Until the violence broke out on December 27, 2007 Kenya was perceived to be a stable country. After the Electoral Commission of Kenya announced that President Mwai Kibaki was re-elected, the opposition felt that the election had been stolen from them resulting in large-scale demonstrations, looting, rioting, and police brutality in response.

This post-election conflict in Kenya can be interpreted in at least nine different ways. You may find that

you feel comfortable with one or more of those interpretations and reject others. As you will see, I have versions of the “elephant” that I believe more than others.

**1. “Ancient Tribal Hatreds:”**

Almost all the international coverage of the crisis in Kenya was based on the interpretation that the conflict was due to “ancient tribal hatreds.” For example, on January 27, the Rueters wire service distributed a picture of a woman lying dead on the floor in a pool of blood with her baby boy crying on a chair behind her. The caption read, “The body of a woman lies on the floor as her child cries during ethnic clashes in Naivasha...after members of Kenya’s President Mwai Kibaki’s Kikuyu tribe fought running battles with the Luos and Kalenjins who back Kibaki’s rival Raila Odinga.” The problem with this interpretation is that the woman, a Luo married to a Kikuyu, was killed by the police. In fact 43% of those murdered in

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## What we accomplished together!

**Burundi:**

- Introduction of AVP in 2002
- Development of HROC workshop in 2002, 77 basic workshops, 14 follow-up days, 11 community celebrations, and 4 Healing Companion trainings.
- Development of HROC workshop for HIV+ persons.
- Initiation of the Friends Women’s Association and launching of the Kamenge Clinic
- Introduction of mediation training to facilitators.
- Initiation of Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Center in 2000.
- Six workcamps

**Congo:**

- South Kivu: Introduction of AVP in 2005
- North Kivu: Introduction of HROC in

- 2007, 20 HROC workshops completed, one training of Healing Companions
- Introduction of mediation training to facilitators

**Kenya:**

- Introduction of AVP in Nairobi and western Kenya in 2003, over 150 AVP workshops completed in western Kenya
- Introduction of HROC in 2007, 6 Basic Workshops completed.
- Introduction of mediation training in Nairobi and western Kenya.
- Three workcamps

**Rwanda:**

- Introduction of AVP in 2001, over 200 AVP workshops completed to date
- Development of HROC workshop in

- 2002, over 100 basic workshops, 20 follow-up days, 10 community celebrations, and 4 Healing Companion trainings.
- Introduction of mediation training to facilitators.
- Rwanda Secondary School Scholarship Program
- Four workcamps

**Uganda:**

- Development of Bududa Vocational Institute beginning in 2003
- Children of Peace Sponsorship program for 200 orphans
- Five workcamps

# Peace Dialogues in Kenya

From a report by *Jared Nyagwoka*,  
*UZIMA Field Officer, Nyanza Province*

*People of the Kisii ethnic group were considered supporters of President Mwai Kibaki by their neighbors who strongly supported Raila Odinga. When a Kisii policeman assassinated a Kalenjin Member of Parliament, the border between these two groups erupted into violence. At least thirty people were killed, over 500 houses, a school, and many businesses were torched. The African Great Lakes Initiative supported Jared Nyagwoka of UZIMA Foundation in the peace-making dialogue sessions reported here. Jared is a Kisii.*

The year 2008 will go down in history as a unique year, especially for people who were born after independence, like most UZIMA youth. “Kenya the island of peace” turned into a battlefield after the announcement of the results of the presidential race in the December 27 general elections of 2007. Nyanza province was at the heart of the violence.

A once peaceful community turned violent and people killed each other and destroyed property that had taken hard work to build. The Kisii community found themselves at the receiving end with the Kalenjin attacking them from one side, the Luo on the other side and Maasai on yet another side. We found ourselves surrounded by hostile forces. This was particularly painful for us at UZIMA because we had campaigned vigorously for the changes proposed on the ODM platform. Like many young Kenyans, we wanted change and we had managed to vote out some very

long-standing politicians who we felt were not delivering. Now we were facing the wrath of so called ODM supporters.

It was so easy to become bitter and join the leaders who were mobilizing youth to join the Militias; yet we chose to preach peace. My wife, Chebii, who is a nurse, is Kalenjin and this made matters even more complicated with neighbors threatening to kill her or burn our house. Her family, fearing for her life, was threatening to come and take her and our children out to safety. How could I let that happen? At times when she felt really afraid Chebii would join her brothers, who also live in the neighborhood, and think of fleeing to safety. It was a difficult decision for me but I decided that if we had to die then we would die together. I would not lose my family in this way. People at the hospital where she worked needed her since all the Kalenjin staff had run away. It was a very delicate balancing act, and it still is, because of the many lives that were lost.

On January 21, 2008 UZIMA Executive Director, Malesi Kinaro, visited the Nyanza Office for a staff meeting and briefing on what was happening nationally and how we as an organization were to respond. She then held a three hour meeting with the leaders of Matatu [mini-bus] conductors and touts from nearby and all the shoe-shiners. Twenty-nine participants attended including two older men who are members of local committees. We felt that while these youth could easily be lured into violence they

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## Ways to Give



1. Stay informed on the progress of peacebuilding in the Great Lakes region of Africa.
2. Pray for/hold in the Light the success of AGLI programs in the region.
3. Attend an AGLI presentation—see page 4.
4. Coordinate an AGLI presentation for your meeting, church, and/or community.
5. Choose a specific AGLI program and actively follow its development.
6. Join an AGLI workcamp or become a short/long term team member in the region.
7. Support AGLI or a particular AGLI program with your tax-deductible donation:

\* Mail a check to Friends Peace Teams/ AGLI, 1001 Park Avenue, St Louis, MO 63104 USA

\* Make an on-line donation with your credit/ debit card by visiting the AGLI website, [www.aglionline.org](http://www.aglionline.org)

\* Become a regular monthly or quarterly donor. Contact [tzarembka@comcast.net](mailto:tzarembka@comcast.net) for details.

\* Host an AGLI fundraising event.

\* Ask your meeting, church, or other organization to include AGLI in their annual budget.

could also be of great use in securing peace.

[On January 22 and 24, Jared and another staff member, George Ongubo, visited government officials in Sotik District (Kisii) and Borabu District (Kalenjin) to promote dialogue. Four meetings were subsequently held between the two communities.]

**First Intertribal Dialogue Meeting, 29th January:** The meeting was held for Sotik District leaders and 36 people attended. Our efforts to have a joint meeting between the leaders of Borabu and Sotik District were accepted and this took place on February 4th at Arokket Sotik recreational center.

**Second Intertribal Dialogue Meeting, 4th February:** Since UZIMA had been pushing for this meeting it was agreed that I chair the meetings as I was seen to be more neutral than the government officials.

The joint meeting was attended by 127 leaders from five Districts. Among the participants were the District Commissioners from the five Districts, their District Officers, Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, eleven Councilors and four Members of Parliament. The dialogue meeting lasted six tense hours with leaders expressing their anger and mistrust of each other. Each group blamed the other for fanning the fighting. The Provincial Administration promised to deal with the law breakers. There was confusion when it came to the session for drawing resolutions because there

was a demand to redraw the boundaries between the provinces of Nyanza and Rift Valley. However, the following resolutions were agreed upon under the Chairmanship of the UZIMA Field Officer, Nyanza:

- Establish border security committees.
- Deploy more police at the borders.
- Political leaders to hold joint peace rallies.
- Livestock stolen from either side to be returned.
- Schools to reopen for learning.
- All illegal road blocks to be removed especially along the highway.
- Respect for personal properties.
- Government to act fast on reports of threats to life and property.
- Leaders especially politicians to check public utterance to avoid incitement.
- All political leaders to appear on local radio talk shows to preach peace.

**Third Intertribal Dialogue Meeting, 18th February** brought together 79 participants including 5 District Commissioners, 3 Members of Parliament, 5 District Officers,

Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs and Church Leaders in what was now being referred to as Border Committees.

**Fourth Intertribal Dialogue Meeting, 21st February** brought together 103 participants including the same people as before except there were only 2 Members of Parliament. This was a follow up to the Border Peace Committee of 18<sup>th</sup> February. One of the decisions reached was that sports would be organized for youth across the borders. The first games took place on March 2nd. Nine Kalenjin and nine Kisii youth were mixed together creating two teams who then played against each other.

Malesi Kinaro commented on these dialogues: “The case of Nyanza is so fantastic that there is need for some public recognition of UZIMA. Jared Nyagwoka and his team have more on their plates than they can handle. They face danger daily yet they even dropped the police who used to guard them and chose to just venture into the “enemy” camp on their own. What they have achieved is something that I wish could be emulated by more Kenyan youths.”



Youth from the IDP camp at Turbo discuss the conflict in a small group at an AVP workshop.

# Empowering Youth to Find Alternatives to Violence

By Julia O'Connor

*From April 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Julia O'Conner participated in an AVP workshop at the Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camp at the Turbo police station in the Lugari District of western Kenya. Most of the participants were Kikuyu who had been displaced by the violence in January and February, although five of the participants were from the National Youth Service camp which is next to the IDP camp.*

*Julia is from Britain and works in a Swiss youth hostel. She was visiting Kenya between skiing and summer season. Each year she goes to those parts of the world where there is major conflict—like Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir, and the West Bank—as a peace emissary.*

## Introduction

Since many latent conflicts in Kenya became manifest in direct physical violence following the corrupt December 2007 elections, the call for Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops has been increased far beyond the previous level. The day before the workshop began I accompanied the four facilitators to the IDP site where they made arrangements.

Facilitator Peter explained to one of our hosts that our reason for reaching out to the youth — in this and many other current workshops — is because it is the youth that are most “vulnerable.” This statement seemed to surprise the host who perhaps like many Kenyans tends to think more readily of the youth as the cause of trouble rather than the victim of it. What Peter and the other facilitators Margaret, Caleb and Beverly believe is that it is the youth who need to hear about non-violence because it is the youth who are in danger of “succumbing to violence.”

During the workshop I gained a greater understanding of this idea; the youth of Kenya suffer the

violence of disempowerment and this creates the potential for further violence. I will relate my understanding of how the AVP workshop I attended facilitated a transformation in participants from (relative) disempowerment/violence to empowerment/non-violence. I will follow the utilitarian structure of the workshop itself, raising consciousness and moving incrementally from passive negative elements to positive active elements.

## Disempowerment in Context

As a traditional society, Kenya values family, tribe and the authority of elders. Youth are not valued for their voices and throughout Kenya the young do not assert their needs and indeed are not encouraged to do so. Through the media and international links, today's youth are exposed to the riches they do not possess. This increases dissatisfaction and awareness of injustice when they cannot even afford quality food, housing and secondary education; all problems expressed by the group. They are told Kenya is a free society of opportunity and social mobility but suffer shame as they fail to get job after job, another problem

consistently expressed. Denied education and jobs, the youth may then be considered idle and further disdained and humiliated.

While the pain of poverty is felt by all, in Kenya's gendered society disempowerment tends to be felt in different ways by males and females. For males, the failure to meet the expectation put upon them to earn, provide, be productive, and effective is felt keenly. During an exercise in which participants shared their happiest memory, one young man told of the first time his parents went away and told him to keep house. He spoke of his pride at bearing this responsibility saying, “I know that in the future I can be head of the house. I can keep land and keep family.” Youth may be looked down upon for appearing to shirk responsibilities which they in fact long for but simply have no means of acquiring. The expectation of females is lower and, though they tend to avoid the worst of the feelings of failure in this area, they often bear the brunt of the man's sense of emasculation and frustration. The post-election violence and subsequent displacement has further

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## **A Brief Report**

*By David Zarembka*

April 29, 2008

These last two days have been a gathering at Lubao for the 36 active AVP facilitators we have in western Kenya. I texted Getry that it was a nice 2 day gathering. She texted back, "I am very excited about it too. Happy AVP life. Thanks for making it a success and the support. Pass my appreciation to Mama Gladys."

Perhaps two of the facilitators were in their 50's, 3 or 4 more in their 40's, and the rest (30 or so) in their 20's and 30's. Were they lively!!! We have worked to expand outside of the Luhya group and here perhaps half were Luhya, a little less than half were Luo, and 4 were Kikuyu. We are still missing Nandi (Kalenjin), but we are working on this from a few different angles—for example, tomorrow I am meeting with Sister Leonidas Wafula from Eldoret who is the Mother Superior of the Sister of the Assumption based in Eldoret, but with a house in Turbo on the Nandi side of the border. They want AVP for their 125 nuns and then perhaps we can do AVP with the communities they are working with—they are supported in some of their activities by some Americans, including a Quaker from California who connected us.

Wednesday and Thursday we are starting 6 AVP workshops including one here in Lumakanda.

The Lubao Center has only 20 beds. Where did the other 16 sleep? On the floor on mattresses. No complaints. Gladys and I (being old foggies) did not spend the night there, but I was told that they stayed up until 12 midnight doing role plays on transforming power.

Like Getry says, "It's exciting."

disendowed people and exacerbated the problems.

The AVP workshop began with the sharing of personal testimonies which laid a foundation for understanding the context of the issues to be addressed. One young female participant told of how she was forced to leave her home for an IDP camp when the violence started, and she unhappily added that the first IDP she reached was simply a field with no blankets and no facilities. The day before, this young woman had been employed in a salon. The unmistakable sense of humiliation she felt as she told her story was shared by many. She had been materially disendowed through looting, disempowered through her inability to respond to her circumstances and felt a loss of freedom to do even simple things, such as choose which foods she would eat. While they told their stories, few participants had stories containing positive personal elements, almost all presenting themselves as objects in their own life stories.

### **Understanding how Disempowerment Leads to Further Violence**

The AVP workshop featured a "Roots and Fruits of a Tree" exercise wherein participants volunteered what they thought to be the causes and consequences of both violence and non-violence. Many of the things discussed (poverty, powerlessness, lack of freedom) were identified by participants as being violent, harmful, and contrary to full human realisation. Participants also recognised the fact that many things, such as mistrust and tribalism, could be seen simultaneously as a cause and a consequence. The violence tree

presented a perverse and violently dehumanising world. Idleness, injustice, corruption and incitement were all identified by the group as causes of violence.

Through experiential learning tasks, participants identified specific ways in which violence may arise. The "Chinese whispers" exercise exemplified the corruption of information and the folly of dependence on hearsay. In another listening exercise participants reported that they felt they got better information when they listened without getting "chipping in" from the listener. Failure to listen was appreciated not only as a source of misunderstanding but also as being limiting and frustrating for the speaker; all of which add to violence.

For the first two days of the workshop I observed that participants spoke in an increasingly sophisticated way about the nature of violence and how it arises, but were much less forthcoming when called upon to contribute ideas for non-violent activity. Thinking of a single instance when "I solved a conflict non-violently" was a struggle for many. An empathy exercise which required people to volunteer potential non-violent responses to specific anonymous personal problems was particularly difficult. Participants were effectively unaware of their capacity to choose non-violence and struggled to come up with ideas.

### **Knowing how to be Empowered, Active and Non-violent**

As participants came to a deeper understanding of the wide context of violence and more consciously aware of the ways in which it can become manifest, they progressively came to know about the more positive side of the AVP workshop;

becoming empowered, choosing non-violence and being and acting non-violently. As it is termed in the AVP workshop, participants learned to use their Transforming Power for peace.

*Self Respect:* The importance of self respect had been encountered on the first day as participants spoke about something they liked about themselves. They were assured that they were not being boastful, but rather addressing the goodness within them. Participants witnessed somebody else relating a positive account of themselves to another person and experiencing a good feeling at hearing themselves being spoken about in positive terms.

Participants learned that this self belief was fundamental to their own Transforming Power. Self belief and respect, as well as being good and positively peaceful in themselves, were acknowledged as a foundation for further peace. Belief in ones own goodness and worth, in the ability to choose, and to act enabled an increased willingness to risk looking for non-violent solutions and to base ones position on the truth.

*Care for Others:* Participants discussed the fact that there is good in all people and recognized that they can care for all people in some way. One participant succinctly summarised “it is what he did that is bad, not him.” Participants were quick to recognize their own worth and the worth of others or, as one facilitator put it, to believe that they are not “just there.” Everyone seemed encouraged and upbeat on these points, aware of their own and others failings but also their ultimate goodness and power to choose. I felt that participants initially struggled to see how this could be applied. There seemed to be recognition of the power but little idea of what one could actually do and little expectation that non-violent solutions could work.

*Look for Non-Violent Solutions:* At this stage participants were given practical suggestions of how to look for non-violent solutions. For example, to listen so as to understand the conflict properly and to be willing to change ones own position, to use humor and surprise, and be creative about solutions. Participants asked for further help with the humor,

surprise and creative elements. For example, on the problem of being unable to afford education, participants were unable to make suggestions until facilitators gave specific ideas such as church-fundraising events, attending a cheaper school or “prayer and patience” as a positive empowered choice.

Participants were introduced to a range of idealised problem solving tools. The Broken Squares exercise taught that cooperation and give and take were often necessary. “I messages” were practised; participants were shown how to convey negative personal feelings without accusation and to relate what feels wrong and what would make it better without antagonizing the other party. This exercise was successful as participants formulated “I messages” well. Subsequent discussion saw the ideas internalized and some participants seemed confident not only in using “I messages” explicitly but also in co-opting the ideas into their wider approach to conflict.

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One AVP participant succinctly summarized:

***“It is what he did that is bad, not him.”***

*Think Before Reacting:* Following the “I messages” exercise one participant asked how he would use an I-message in a particular situation, such as a money problem - he needs to pay for something and he doesn't have the money. Facilitators used this to explain the reflexive and intuitive aspects of Transforming Power, showing that different situations call for different and modified solutions.

*Expect the Best:* Finally, hope was emphasised as we will be more open and trustful and goal oriented if we expect the best.

### **Practicing Non-Violence**

On the afternoon of the final day, participants got into groups to prepare and then present a short role-play. Each role-play consisted of a conflict and a non-violent solution to that conflict. Participants utilized what they had learned and consolidated the knowledge acquired. All of the groups were effective in identifying a violent context, such as jealousy/infidelity, in which direct conflict may arise which had not previously been looked at in great detail. All of the groups showed a good understanding of causes and sustainers of conflict, including things such as violent gestures.

Groups also showed a good grasp of finding non-violent solutions. I believe that some of the reservations and difficulties that participants initially had with the idea of choosing and applying solutions were alleviated by the preparation of this role-play. In practice, participants found that with the foundations of self respect and recognition of the value of others they were able to intuitively use their own knowledge and resources. This involved simple appropriate things-

eye contact, lowered voices, recognition of the shared desire to be together, use of an impartial mediator accepted by both parties.

Following each role-play participants observing the presenting group were asked if the conflict had been successfully solved non-violently. In one instance, doubts were expressed. In the play in question there was a consensus that the final hand-shake had been half hearted and that the underlying problem had not been resolved. The detection of this struck me as a sign of great awareness of the need for positive peace and also as a signifier of deep understanding and high level of sensory acuity on the part of participants.

### **Summary and Unanswered Questions**

I believe that the three day basic level AVP workshop was a success with participants moving from being disempowered to being empowered to act non-violently. This was initially done rather passively through recognition of the context of violence and then more engagingly through internalization. Through enabling Transforming Power the positive ability to be and act non-violently came to fruition.

Participants grew in confidence, understanding and capacity at each level. As well as having a progressive structure, the workshop also facilitated deep learning processes through the range and order of methods used. Transforming Power was first introduced didactically, then discussed with learning aids, and then put into practice reaching practical fulfilment in the role-play. The success of these methods is evident in the observable increase in participants understanding.

Participants moved from seeing themselves as passive, to asking how they were in a position to act, to asking specifically and animatedly which actions they could usefully employ.

On the final day we addressed unanswered questions. By this stage a few members of the group were quite adept in the language of non-violence and were formulating difficult and far reaching questions (“Do you think Kibaki would have done anything if people hadn't fought?” “How can we change elite corruption non-violently?”). Facilitators confirmed these as difficult questions and spoke of the importance of starting with ourselves, our families, friends etc.

The greatest evidence of the success of the workshop to transform participants could be seen in the role-play. Groups came up with contexts, situational violence and non-violent responses which had not been explicitly discussed before thus demonstrating that they had internalized the ideas and gained sufficient understanding to be able to apply the ideas to situations encountered outside the workshop and in their lives.

One participant, Elijah, shared that two days after the workshop he had found his father and brother quarrelling over the food share they had received from the Red Cross. He told me proudly, “I used my Transforming Power to unite them.” He did this intuitively through calm talk. It is a great success that Elijah now feels empowered to speak and act, strengthening his self respect and belief even as he helps those around him solve conflicts without violence.



Kenya were killed by the police and not in any ethnic fighting. Contrary to international and Kenyan law, the police used live bullets against demonstrators, rioters, and looters.

While the international media was focusing on those burnt to death in a church outside of Eldoret, the Kenya media was focusing on those killed and wounded by the police in Kisumu. Of the 82 people killed in Kisumu, the home city of the Luo, no Kikuyu were killed by the Luo; all were killed by the police. In fact the Luo and Luhya (the ethnic group of most of the 139,000 Quakers in Kenya) do not kill people as they believe that the spirit of someone killed would haunt the killer with a guilty conscience. They may beat them and push them out of their homes, but they do not kill them.

Raila Odinga says that the election was not about ethnic divisions since many Kikuyu voted for him including 3,000 in Mwai Kibaki's home constituency in Central Province. More to the point, one of his daughter-in-laws is Kikuyu and there are many ethnically mixed marriages in Kenya.

To understand the situation in Kenya as "ancient tribal hatreds" is to understand World War I and World War II as "ancient tribal hatreds" between the Germans on one side and the French, English, and

Russians on the other. This interpretation explains nothing.

**2. Stolen election:** The second interpretation is that the conflict was a result of the election being stolen by the Kibaki Government. On the election day of December 27, I was a poll observer in Lumakanda where I live. The voting itself was excellent. People waited for an hour or two in the sun to vote (the lines were much shorter in the afternoon) and the voting for President, Member of Parliament (MP), and the local county council was very orderly and well done. I watched as the votes were counted and the observers from the various political parties signed the results. It was in Nairobi during the tallying of the votes from the polling stations that the fraud took place. As soon as the results were announced, the appropriate form declaring Kibaki the new President was taken to the State House by the Head of the Electoral Commission. The Chief Justice just happened to be there to administer the oath of office. Within one hour of the public announcement Kibaki was sworn in for a second term—this is usually done a few days later with foreign dignitaries present.

Those people who supported Raila Odinga and his Orange Democratic Party (ODM) felt that the election had been stolen from them. They

had gone patiently and properly to the polls to vote and then the results were manipulated. ODM planned a rally at Uhuru Park in Nairobi where a million of his supporters were expected to attend. Although freedom of assembly is one of the freedoms people have, the Government blocked the park by ringing it with riot police who used tear gas, water cannons, and live bullets to disperse those who were planning to attend. Naturally many of the youth who were tear gassed rioted and, thus, began the destruction in Nairobi. Other cities which were supposed to have demonstrations had the same result. For some reason the authorities in Kapsabet, in the volatile Rift Valley province, allowed a demonstration there which went on peacefully. The demonstrators blew off steam, went home and there was no violence.

The Government, again contrary to international standards, clamped restrictions on the media. I had to listen to BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) to learn what was really happening in Kenya. Twice people in the United States informed me of developments in Kenya before I heard them here in Kenya myself.

The difficulty with this interpretation is that, in a counterfactual world where Raila Odinga became President, the problem would still be

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“ To understand the situation in Kenya as “ancient tribal hatreds” is to understand World War I and World War II as “ancient tribal hatreds” between the Germans on one side and the French, English, and Russians on the other. This interpretation explains nothing. ”

the same—a sharply divided country—with only the faces of power having changed.

**3. Class warfare:** A third interpretation is class warfare. The election results were no more than a trigger for decades-long tension due to economic inequality. During the five years of the first Kibaki term as President, after years of stagnation, the economy had grown robustly reaching 7% in 2007. But this growth in income had almost exclusively benefited the wealthy. Kenya (along with the United States) is a nation with one of the highest rates of inequality in the world. Former President Moi's two sons are reported to have fortunes of over \$500 million and none of this was inherited since their father is still living. Kenya is supposed to be a poor country yet the Kenyan elite is extremely wealthy. Many of these elite are Kikuyu. So the average person, who has no direct contact with the wealthy elite, took out their pent up rage on their Kikuyu neighbors who, actually, were economically no better off than they were.

Another aspect of this inequality is that Government funds, economic development, and business opportunities were confined to Nairobi and Central Province, the home area of the Kikuyu, while much of rest of the country was starved for funds. People everywhere paid taxes which were disproportionately spent in the center of the country. The violence was a response to these economic injustices.

**4. Youth rebellion:** Another interpretation is that the violence was a youth rebellion. Many youth felt alienated perceiving that they had no stake in Kenyan society and no hope for a better future. While older people tended to vote for Kibaki, the youth tended to vote for Raila. I was at a meeting where two parents said that they had voted for Kibaki, while their children had voted for Raila and this had created tensions in the family. The youth who voted for Raila were voting for change and a better future. They felt that their vote had been stolen from them after they had gone naively, as it turned out, to the polls to vote for change.

There is no doubt that the newly elected members of parliament are much younger and better educated than the previous parliament. Note that in this election only 80 out of 222 MP's were re-elected. Many of those who lost were the old members who had been in government and politics since the time of independence in 1963. The

youth also wanted change at the top—Kibaki is 76 while spring-chicken Raila is a mere 62.

**5. Land issues:** Particularly in the Rift Valley, but also in other parts of the country, there are issues over ownership and control of land. When the British came to Kenya at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Kalenjin and Maasai groups in the Rift valley gave military opposition. As a result the British crushed them, which in those days meant not only defeating the warriors in battle, but burning their villages, killing their animals, and destroying their crops. The surviving Maasai and Kalenjin were pushed north and south to the more agriculturally marginal areas of the Rift Valley, leaving the fertile, well-watered land in the middle mostly vacant.

In this fertile, and now ethnically cleansed region, the British created the “white highlands,” giving large estates to British settlers. We are not talking about the small bits of

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Large Kikuyu owned shop in Kipkarren River, western Kenya, looted and destroyed during the violence early in the year.

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land given to American settlers when they settled the West. Karen Blixen, the author of *Out of Africa*, had 6,000 acres. Others were given 10,000, 20,000, and even 100,000 acres. This in a country where there is only 1.5 arable acres per person. The Mau-Mau rebellion of the 1950's was partly a protest against this great inequality.

When Kenya gained independence in 1963 the Kalenjin and Maasai thought that the lands seized from them would be returned. What actually happened was that many of these large estates were transferred from the departing British settlers to the new ruling Kenyan elite who were mostly the loyalist supporters of the British during the Mau-Mau rebellion. Others of the estates were bought up by land companies and sold off as small plots to those who could afford them—in most cases this meant the Kikuyu from Central Province rather than the original owners of the land.

These land issues have not been resolved, but allowed to fester. In the 1992 elections there was violence in the Rift Valley which killed an estimated 1,000 people and Kenyans in Lumakanda tell me that it was even worse than this recent round of violence. At the time of the 1997 election there was additional violence. On Mount Elgon since June 2006, over 500 people had been killed over a land dispute among two clans. There had been other deadly disputes in Molo, Rongai, Laikipia, and elsewhere. The election results triggered additional violence in all these areas.

**6. Violence as usual:** Although Kenya, unlike many of its neighbors, had the reputation of being a peaceful, calm country, I had always



considered it otherwise. On May 5, 1969, I was in Kenya when the powerful Minister for Economic Development, Tom Mboya, a Luo, was assassinated. Kenya felt then just as it did during this crisis. The glue that had been holding the country together was no longer working. One feared that the country would descend into chaos. The difference this time was cell phones and the internet. In 1969 we had to rely solely on rumor. This time we could contact people we knew in other parts of the country by calling or texting with our cell phones to ask what was happening. Then we could make reports to the outside world, as I did, of the events as we saw them.

The campaign period leading up to December 27 was also very violent. At least 25 people were killed. An assistant minister was found with “traditional weapons” (machetes, bows and arrows, clubs, etc) in his Government-sponsored vehicle and nothing happened to him (although he did lose the election). A prominent Minister in the Kibaki Government

who had controlled the Kisii area for decades was shown on TV talking to the leader of a gang who had a bow and arrow in his hand. Two minutes later the gang leader attacked members of the opposition who were alighting from a helicopter. One of the major leaders of the opposition descending from the helicopter, William Ruto, was put in the hospital for a week or more. Again nothing happened to this Minister (although he too also lost the election). At the local level, our electrician was the leader for the ODM Youth in Lugari District. While putting up posters of their candidate he and four other youth, were attacked by youth supporting a rival candidate. He had to go to the hospital for treatment and two of his friends were hospitalized.

Lastly, almost every few days one reads in the newspapers of people killed by mob justice. I have seen this myself in Nariobi where a large crowd runs after an alleged thief who survives only if the police are able to rescue him. This occurs because the police are corrupt and

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# AGLI Speaking Tours

## Florence Ntakarutimana from Burundi

- June 11 - 15: Intermountain Yearly Meeting
- June 18 - 22: Illinois Yearly Meeting
- June 23: Urbana Champaign Meeting
- June 24 - 28: Washington, DC
- June 29 - July 5: Friends General Conference (Johnstown, PA)
- July 9 - 13: Friends United Meeting (High Point, NC)
- July 14 - 28: Colombia, South America

## David Zarembka from Kenya

- June 17: Blueberry Hill, No. Virginia
- June 19: Loyola University, Chicago
- June 22 - 23: Workcamp orientation
- June 24 - July 1: Northern California
- July 2: FGC Interest Group (Johnstown, PA)
- July 9 - 13: Friends United Meeting

## Theoneste Bizimana from Rwanda

- July 7 - 11: Washington, DC
- July 14 - 28: Colombia, South America
- July 29 - Aug 3: Iowa (C) Yearly Meeting
- Aug 3 - 7: New England Yearly Meeting
- Aug 8: Hartford Meeting

## Getry Agizah from Kenya

Fall of 2008:

Contact Dave at [dave@aglionline.org](mailto:dave@aglionline.org) if you would like to arrange a speaking engagement for her.

## David Zarembka from Kenya

Oct 22: Wilmington College, Ohio

If you would like to arrange a speaking engagement for him in the eastern US around this time, contact Dave at [dave@aglionline.org](mailto:dave@aglionline.org).

when people turn in a thief, within a day or two he has paid a bribe and is out on the streets again. The attitude that makes this acceptable is the same attitude that allows a person to attack a neighbor because they happen to be from a different ethnic group.

**7. Centralized government:** The nature of colonial rule is that everything is controlled by the colonial power from the center. Consequently, when the British gave Kenya independence it also gave them a very strong central government. When Jomo Kenyatta was president this centralization was increased as he was an icon that could not be challenged. As a result in Kenya the President controls not only the executive branch, but also the judicial branch, the legislature, the electoral commission, the police, and the army. For example, President Kibaki appointed all 22 members of the Electoral Commission of Kenya – the same commission that announced that he had won the December 27 election.

A result of this highly centralized government is that winning the election becomes crucial as the candidates either win “everything” or nothing. It also dictates that the control of wealth and power goes to the group that controls the presidency. Kenyatta was a Kikuyu and he started the trend to reward the Kikuyu over others. When Kenyatta died, Daniel arap Moi became president and he quickly accommodated himself with the Kikuyu elite power structure and maintained power for twenty-four years until Kibaki defeated him in the 2002 election. Part of Kibaki’s platform during this election, where he was supported by the Luo and other ethnic groups, was to

decentralize the government and make the distribution of resources more equitable. But as soon as he gained control of this centralized power, he refused to give it up. As a referendum on centralized power, Raila won six of the eight provinces, 99 members of parliament, and control of almost all the cities outside of Central and Eastern provinces which were won by Kibaki. So the violence was a demand for “devolution” of power, as it is being called.

**8. International Community:** We must not let the international community off the hook. I will give three examples of how actions of the international community have adversely affected the situation in Kenya.

The first is birth control. In 1980 when there was a big debate about abortion in the United States, the Reagan administration cut off funds for family planning accusing them of promoting abortion. In Kenya this came to mean opposition to birth control. When I was in Kenya in 1970 in Machakos District, the family planning clinic had three people for a population of almost one million. At that time Kenya had one of the highest birth rates in the world. It was the large number of children born during this time who grew up to become the disenfranchised youth who participated in the violence after the election.

The second is the structural adjustment program placed on Kenya in the 1980’s by the International Monetary Fund. This meant that the Kenyan Government could not increase the number of public servants, including teachers. So as the population of school aged

“ A solution to the violence will require much more than a political settlement by the two sides. Rather it will necessitate a major restructuring of Kenyan society that addresses the underlying causes. ”

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children was increasing rapidly, the number of teachers was not. Moreover, in 2003, the Kibaki government declared free primary school education and about one million additional children showed up for school. The result is classes of up to 100 students with few resources for their education. So the large group of children born in the 1960's, 70's, and 80's did not receive adequate education.

Lastly there is the issue of corruption. The centralized form of government in Kenya also allows for gigantic corruption at the center. Kenya is known as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. The former dictator of Zaire (now the Congo) is reported to have said, “I know I am corrupt, but who is corrupting me?” This question can be applied to Kenya as well. International partners — corporations, governments, NGO's, and UN agencies, were involved in almost every case of grand corruption in Kenya. I will give one example.

Safaricom is the most profitable company in East Africa with 10 million cell phone subscribers. At one time it was wholly owned by the Kenyan Government. A few years ago they sold 30% of the shares to Vodafone, a large British telecommunications company. Later it came out that the Government had only 65% of the shares left because another 5% had been given to a mysterious company called Mobitelea Ventures. The public does not know who the officers or

shareholders of this company are. It is therefore assumed that this was the “bribe” that Vodafone paid Kenyan officials and politicians for buying the Safaricom shares. The Kenyan Government is now selling off another 25% of their holdings in Safaricom in by far the largest sale of any government parastatal in Kenyan history. There are 10 billion shares at 5/- each (\$800 million) and this is so large that it may disrupt the Kenyan economy, raise interest rates, strengthen the Kenyan shilling against the dollar (making imports more expensive for everyone), and depress the other shares on the Nairobi stock exchange.

**9. Spiritual/religious:** The zeitgeist of modern Kenyan society is Hobbesian economics — if everyone does things in their own (and family, clan, and tribal) interest, society will function for the best. This has long ago been determined to mean that the fortunate few exploit the many for their own interest. Among the middle and upper classes in Kenya personal and family greed is more important than societal prosperity. This is true from the rulers at the top to those at the bottom who believe that stepping on others is a way to get ahead. Rather than praising Kikuyu for their hard work and emulating their success, the violence after the election was an attempt to bring down to the level of everyone else those who were perceived to have succeeded.

The Biblical injunctions to love one's neighbor, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you, have

been ignored. A few weeks after the violence began I heard a sermon at the Lumakanda Friends Church in which it was stated that a true Christian would never loot property, burn a home, or kill someone—and this was from a woman who had to move out of her house in Eldoret because it was owned by a Kikuyu. I have heard that this message was preached in many other churches of all denominations at this time.

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So you may select those interpretations that seem most logical to you. I would say that a solution to the violence will require much more than a political settlement by the two sides. Rather it will necessitate a major restructuring of Kenyan society that addresses the underlying causes mentioned above. Kenyans are well aware of these issues and the need for corrective action. Unfortunately in the past whenever there has been a crisis in Kenya, the tendency has been to ignore the underlying causes as the country returned to “normal.” But “normal” in Kenya has meant allowing pressure to build up beneath the surface. Pressure which will eventually explode into violence again unless these issues are addressed. It is still too early to determine if fundamental changes will be made this time or if all will soon be “back to normal”; if there will be significant improvements for all, or another round of violence, perhaps during the next election in 2012.



# AGLI Releases Malesi Kinaro for Peace Building in Kenya

At the beginning of the conflict in Burundi in October, 1993 and the Rwandan genocide in April, 1994, Malesi Kinaro was General Secretary for the Friends World Committee for Consultation—Africa Section (FWCC-AS). She visited both Burundi and Rwanda a number of times becoming a rare Kenyan who saw and understood the horror of those times. Unlike many Kenyans who thought that Kenya was an “island of calm” in the region, Malesi realized that Kenya could undergo the same types of ethnic conflicts. When AGLI proposed introducing the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in Kenya, Malesi was one of the first to see the real need for the program.

After Malesi left FWCC-AS she founded two organizations. Before and during the 1992 Kenya elections, there had been substantial violence in the Rift Valley province with perhaps 1000 people killed and hundreds of thousands displaced. Malesi and her husband, John, were among those displaced as they had purchased a small farm near Turbo in the Rift Valley. Their house was destroyed, their animals killed, and crops looted. This led Malesi to spearhead the founding of Friends for Peace and Community Development (FPCD) in 1994 to work on the issues that underlay the violence at that time. FPCD became the AGLI partner in western Kenya for the introduction of AVP.

About the same time, the UZIMA (Wellness) Foundation was started by Miriam (Malesi’s sister) and

Humphreys. It focused on empowering Kenyan youth to live beneficial, constructive lives. Malesi was appointed the first Director “to put the dream into concrete programs.” Over the years, the UZIMA Foundation has reached at least 20,000 youth. In the last two years as part of its Peace, Justice and Leadership program, she has introduced the UZIMA youth to AVP and has developed a number of youth AVP facilitators.

In 2004, Malesi made a speaking tour of the United States where she raised sufficient funds to buy a plot of land and with the help of AGLI workcamps has now turned it into the Friends Peace Center—Lubao.

For over ten years Malesi and her family had not returned to their farm. Recently they began cultivating it again. In the violence this year, she lost her house, maize store, toilet, the fence that had just been replaced, and the trees that had survived the previous crisis.

When the violence struck Kenya on December 30, 2007, many peacemakers in Kenya were shocked and paralyzed. Malesi, on the other hand, was visiting the displaced Kikuyu in the camps in Kakamega within two days. She implemented the idea of having peace T-shirts with “Friends for” on the front and “Peace” on the back. She quickly arranged a number of listening sessions for youth, UZIMA foundation employees, the staff at Eldoret prison, and elsewhere. She helped develop a one-day listening

program for the Kisumu and later the Nairobi staff of the US Center for Disease Control. Forty-two sessions were held in Kisumu for 500 staff and three in Nairobi for 60 staff. She helped support the Peace Dialogues described on page 5.

Malesi is now laying down the responsibilities as Director of UZIMA. Since the youth were the ones who participated in the violence after the election and with AGLI’s current focus on conducting AVP with youth, the goals of these two organizations have become very similar.

In considering Malesi leadership and creativity in this time of crisis in Kenya, the Working Group of the African Great Lakes Initiative decided it was appropriate for Malesi Kinaro to become a released Friend. This concept of allowing a person to temporarily lay down their normal duties to pursue a calling had not been introduced among Quakers in Kenya previously, but it clearly seemed to fit this situation. Malesi has been released to pursue her peace making activities as she feels called to do for the 2008 calendar year. A Support Committee in Kakamega has been appointed to help her with her activities. If you would like to support her release, please mark the memo line of your check “Malesi Kinaro’s Release.”

*David Zarembka, AGLI  
Coordinator*



# AGLI UPDATES

## RWANDA:

**Icyizere—Hope:** During this time of remembering the victims of the 1994 genocide the film *Icyizere* was been shown in different cinema centers and many times on Rwandan television. The film chronicles a HROC workshop in Rwanda, It was shot last July and August by Patrick Mureithi of Springfield, MO. The film which is based on Rwandan culture and focuses on the inner power of healing and peace building of Rwandans has helped people to believe that there is a hope, that Rwanda can become again a peaceful society where there is no hatred, fear, and mistrust between Rwandans. Even though the film is not yet entirely completed, *Icyizere* will be a very important tool for HROC; we will be using it to achieve our goals of healing and reconciliation in Rwanda and other countries that have had similar experiences. [DZ—An English subtitled version is expected in the future.]

*Theoneste Bizimana, HROC Coordinator*

**AVP:** *In Kidaho, in northern Rwanda right under one of the volcanoes where the gorillas live, local government officials asked if AVP could deal with 30 families which had been in violent conflict, including three where a member had killed other members of the family. Three AVP workshops took place in January*

While the seminars took place, some of those who were expected to attend didn't come and we feared whether anyone would attend. The families who had been invited were afraid that they would be arrested and put in jail. They had conflicts between them. The local government leaders tried to reconcile them, but they refused. They thought that anytime they could be arrested. Finally 58 of them came and were trained. There has been a great

change of mind now because men and women forgave one another and all of them asked for forgiveness from the government local leaders.

*In eastern Rwanda, AVP is also doing a series of 36 workshops in 6 resettlement camps. Tanzania, Rwanda's neighbor to the east, is in the process of expelling all the Rwandan refugees (Tutsi) who had come either in the early clashes starting in 1959 or those (Hutu) who fled during the genocide in 1994. The Rwandan Government was resettling these returnees together regardless of ethnic classification, causing great tension in these new settlements.*

After attending our seminars about *the transforming power and the peace tree* [two lessons covered in the basic AVP workshop], they discovered that within them is a transforming power. They decided to transform the *violence tree* into the *peace tree*. They forgave one another, testifying that there is no cause of conflict between them except the wrong history. They decided to live together and have fellowship in every activity. They replaced the above conflicts with brotherhood and friendship. They decided to work together to develop their potential. All the participants in the seminars asked us to continue to do so because they know that these seminars helped them get out of a very bad situation of hatred and misconception and go to a nice situation of love and reconciliation.

*Innocent Rwabuhiri, AVP Coordinator*

The film [***Icyizere—Hope***] which is based on Rwandan culture and focuses on the inner power of healing and peace building of Rwandans has helped people to believe tht there is a hope, that Rwanda can become again a peaceful society where there is no hatred, fear, and mistrust between Rwandans. A five-minute segment can be found at the AGLI website: [www.aglionline.org](http://www.aglionline.org).

## BURUNDI:

Andrew Peterson, a graduate of Haverford College, and most recently the Grants Manager for Friends Committee on National Legislation, will be going to Burundi with AGLI for one or more years to work with those in the HROC program and the Friends Women's Association on how to write, secure, and implement grants.



## UNITED STATES:



**QUNO:** The Quaker United Nations Office was delighted to host two visitors from the African Great Lakes Initiative in March of 2008. Adrien Niyongabo spoke to representatives of United Nations (UN) agencies and the UN Peacebuilding Commission about the work of the Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities Program, and engaged in a rich discussion about post-conflict justice and reconciliation in Burundi. He also discussed with non-governmental organizations reconciliation programs in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. David Zarembka offered a nuanced and thoughtful account of the situation in Kenya, following recent violence, to non-governmental organization officials. Both David and Adrien also spoke to members of the New York Quaker community about the work of AGLI. These speakers provided very valuable first-hand perspectives on issues before the UN and of interest to the Quaker community

*Gabriel Morden-Snipper, Quaker United Nations Office*

### AGLI Team Members

#### Working Group, USA

Laura Shipler Chico, Anna Crumley-Effinger, Rosalie Dance (recording clerk), Rachel Fretz (clerk), Rachel Madenyika, Adrien Niyongabo, Tom Paxson (treasurer), Mumia Shimaka.

#### Staff:

Dawn Rubbert (program manager), Kathy Wright, SL (FPT administrative coordinator), Tommy Zarembka (fundraiser/publicist), David Zarembka (coordinator)

#### Burundi:

Joselyne Dusabe, Marcelline Girukwishaka, Adrien Niyongabo, Alexia Nibona, Florence Ntakarutimana, Desire Nzeyimana, Andrew Peterson

#### Kenya:

Getry Agizah, Janet Ifedha, Gladys Kamonya, Malesi Kinari, Eunice Okwemba, Bernard Ongala, Peter Serete

#### North Kivu, Congo: Zawadi Nikuze

#### Rwanda:

Theoneste Bizimana, David Bucura, Josephine Mukangoga, Innocent Rwabuhahi, Solange Maniraguha

#### Uganda:

Hellen Kabuni, Barbara Wybar



## UGANDA:

**Bududa Vocational Institute (BVI):** An old Ugandan man came to our school a few weeks ago. He was barefoot, wore an old beat up hat and had a large, appreciative smile on his face. In his hands he was clutching a 5,000 Uganda shilling (\$3.00) note wrapped in bunch of small coins. He had come to put some money up towards his daughter's tuition as a student for the nursery school program at Bududa Vocational Institute.

After problems with management in the first location, Bududa Vocational Institute was re-opened on February 4<sup>th</sup> of this year. The new location in the small trading center of Konokoyi was chosen in January and, after a month of hard work by several volunteers from the United States including Barbara Wybar and two dozen members of the community, the school was renovated and ready by the beginning of the new term. The school opened with 26 students in three fields: nursery school teacher training, tailoring, and brick laying and concrete practice. The school hired qualified, diploma-holding teachers from some of the best vocational schools in Uganda.

The purpose of the school, encompassed in the motto, "Skills for Jobs" is to give young men and women who were not able to finish secondary school the opportunity to learn a trade that they can use to make a living. Over the course of our first term we have grown to 38 students, 29 of which are women. We want to give our students an opportunity for a better future. BVI aims to create positive and active members of the community that can serve as role models to their children and neighbors. To achieve this goal, the school is also offering classes on health, hygiene, life-skills, English, science and math.

**Children of Peace:** The second project that AGLI is supporting in Bududa is the Children of Peace, a sponsored orphans' program. The principle aim of the Children of Peace is to show these children that though they have lost a parent, they are still cared for. We want these students to continue in school and succeed in their lives. Our mission is to create an environment where being an orphan no longer means that the child is vulnerable.

The Saturday program is aimed to give children extra schooling, playtime, and healthcare to give them an opportunity to improve their future. There are almost 200 primary and secondary school aged children enrolled in the program with sponsors from the United States and Canada. Each Saturday they are divided by class and given extra tutoring in the Ugandan curriculum. They also get an hour of playtime and music lessons by a wonderful local musician. For most of the

students this is the most playtime they get in the week as it is not emphasized in schools or in the home.

The free healthcare offered to the students is a large part of the day. There have been a series of health volunteers and nurses that have been helping the students. Last week a barefoot, eight year old boy, Ivan came limping to the school. Almost all the local people go barefoot in Bududa. Ivan had so many jiggers (sand fleas) in his feet that it was painful to walk. The Canadian nurses that were assisting that day supervised a secondary school student take out the jiggers with a needle, after having scrubbed and soaked his feet in salt water. The entire process took two hours because of the sheer number of jiggers in his feet. The only part of the process that made him cry was when the nurses had to apply hydrogen peroxide to his feet to disinfect the wounds. They then wrapped his feet, but he had no shoes to walk home in. Barbara lent the child her Texas and sent him to the local shops with a teacher to buy new shoes. Though the process was long and painful, the boy was ecstatic and the care he received was better and more prompt than what he would have received at the local health center or hospital.

If you would like to sponsor a child, please contact Barbara Wybar at [bwybar@yahoo.com](mailto:bwybar@yahoo.com) and Karen Vaccaro at [vackern@yahoo.com](mailto:vackern@yahoo.com) for details..

*Lisandro Torre, US Peace Corps  
volunteer in Bududa*

“ Our mission is to create an environment where being an orphan no longer means that the child is vulnerable. ”

This young boy is saying in his mother tongue:

## ***Eeh Musungu Tunanyeshewa***



meaning "It rains upon us, *Muzungu* [white person]." During our visit there was much rain in those camps. As you can see from the picture, the small hut does not have sufficient grass to keep out the rain.

*During our trip in December to North Kivu, Congo, David Zarembka, Gladys Kamonya and I visited two IDP camps. People have suffered greatly; they are tired with these wars and conflict that have no end. Many people in the IDP camps have no shelter, not enough food and life is filled with difficulty. Children are not studying and the people have no hope of returning to their villages. Please hold Congo in your prayers so that security may come to that area and it can be easier for HROC to spread through the whole region bringing the message of healing and peace building among the groups who are now in conflicts.*

Theoneste Bizimana, HROC Rwanda

## **NORTH KIVU:**

In February, HROC-North Kivu did six basic workshops, three in the town of Goma and three in an internally displaced camp called, Bulengo. Here are a few testimonies from those workshops:

*In our family, we have a relative who lost all her children in the war. As a result, she has become sort of crazy. Due to her behaviors no one wants to live with her. Now that I have gained some knowledge, I understand that she is traumatized, not crazy as we thought. I am going to approach her and talk to the rest of the family that we should not reject her but rather love her.*

*I take care of 2 orphans and am very harsh with them due to their behaviors. I feel bad that I have been mistreating them, thinking that they are disobedient or giving me a hard time because I am not their biological father. Through these teachings, I have known that they are traumatized and I am going to give them love and get closer and help in a way that I can.*

*Being here in the camp is painful. When I have to queue for a small portion of food and yet I used to produce for the market is more painful. But I have gained some hope, in life there is a time to get and loose. I pray and hope that will be able to go back home though things will never be the same again, I will try to pick up rather than mourning.*

*I was please to see that our facilitators are from different ethnic groups. It shows unity and cooperation and that's what is needed for this country to go forward.*

Zawadi Nikuze, HROC Coordinator

