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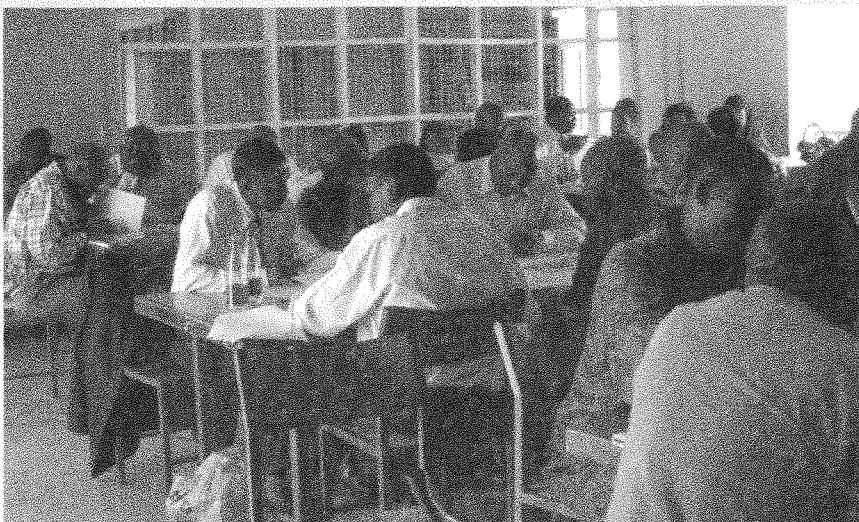
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Peace Curriculum for Friends High Schools in Kenya



Photos courtesy of Eloise Hockett

By Eloise Hockett and Lon Fendall

It all started with an e-mail, which said, “Can you help us?” The message was from John Muhanji, FUM representative in East Africa, who carried a deep concern for responding to the widespread violence in Kenya after the 2007 elections. The recipient of the message was Lon Fendall, who then was director of the Center for Peace and Justice at George Fox University. John and Lon had met at a peace conference in Kenya that drew Quakers, Mennonites and Church of the Brethren members from throughout Africa.

On the one hand, it would have been easy for Lon to say he would help. He was impressed with John’s leadership among Quakers in Kenya and had worked with peace studies for many years, both at George Fox University and at Wilmington College. But there were some reasons to be cautious. Yes, he had worked with peace studies and had seen some of the curriculum material on peacemaking and conflict resolution. In fact, the Center of Peace and Justice had a whole trunk full of material to loan out to educators. But this was mostly written by Americans, and mostly designed for American high schools. He wondered how useful it would be in Kenya.

It would have been easy enough to get some of this material to John and the principals of the more than 220 Friends high schools, hoping it would help their students become agents of peace. But still, the concern was that effective curriculum ideas needed to come from the Kenyan educators themselves, not from the Americans.

As Lon reflected on the request John had sent, he was led to breathe a simple prayer, “Jesus, is this something you are asking us to do?” And in time the answer became a simple one as well, echoing God’s voice to Moses, “What is that in your hand?” Lon felt at first that his hands were pretty empty. Sure, he had been to Africa many times, but didn’t have much knowledge about the Kenyan school system. Sure, he had met John and a few other Kenyan Quakers, but building a working relationship with them on a project like this wouldn’t be easy.

What was in his hand? For starters, a telephone. He thought about the excellent faculty and programs in George Fox University’s School of Education, which offers many kinds of masters and doctorates, as well as undergraduate teacher certification. But who did he know in that department that might respond positively to the idea of helping the Friends educators in Kenya? The first person that came to mind turned out to be the best choice he could have made. He called Scot Headley, who directs one of the graduate units in the School of Education. Scot and his wife, Debbie, are active in a Friends Church near George Fox University, one with a particularly strong emphasis on peacemaking. And, it turned out Scot had spent some time in Africa previously and had been thinking about how to get reconnected.

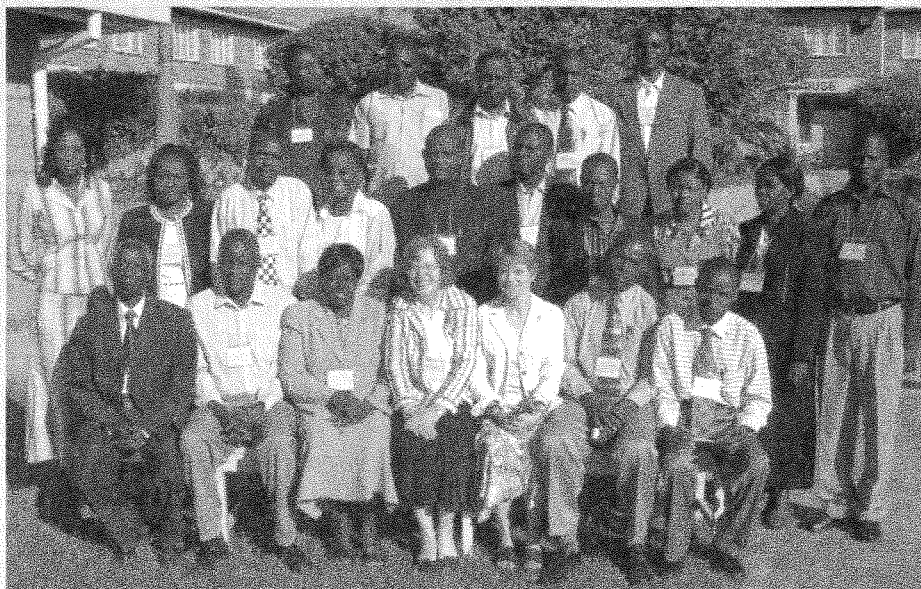
During that first phone call, Scot began to think about some of his colleagues who might be interested in the Kenya project. “These are busy people,” he said, “but if God calls

them to this work, they will do well at it." One had already done some curriculum consulting and teacher training in Kenya. Another had taught for several years in a Christian school in Kenya. And another had close relatives working in western Kenya, not far from some of the Friends schools. Others, he said, could be helpful because of their extensive experience in secondary schools, even if they didn't have previous Africa experience.

Not only did these education professors agree to come to a meeting to explore ways of helping, they continued to meet frequently and faithfully as the project unfolded. They were joined by a George Fox University student, Ernest Nasiombe, a graduate of one of the stronger of the Friends high schools

cation system and who knew they must try to do something to guide young people toward peaceful ways of responding to violent conflict.

One by one, doors of opportunity opened as the professors at George Fox moved forward. One open door was a helpful contact with Sylvia Graves, general secretary of FUM, who had also heard from John Muhanji about the urgent need for peace curricula in the Friends high schools. Another open door was the opportunity for Lon to go meet with some of the Kenyan educators, a last-minute add-on to a trip to Rwanda, Burundi and Congo. Another door was an offer from one of the George Fox committee members to meet with the Friends educators as part of a trip to Kenya he had



June 2009 curriculum workshop participants

in Kenya. In their first meeting, members of the group shared what they had learned about the situation in Kenya. By that time, the autumn of 2008, the post-election violence had subsided, but it appeared likely that the underlying tensions would erupt in the future. The conflicts, after all, were about much more than who got elected as president. There were long-standing frustrations with the government, tensions over ethnic differences, bitterness between the poor and the prosperous, generational differences and rampant unemployment. The list was long.

But the group at George Fox came back to the question God asked Moses, "What is that in your hand?" They thought and prayed about that, and acknowledged that none of them could claim expertise in developing curriculum on conflict resolution at the high school level. But they knew enough about the process of curriculum development to realize that the ideas had to emerge from those who were in the Kenyan classrooms every day, who fully understood the Kenyan edu-

already scheduled. Other doors opened as the George Fox committee began to explore ways to fund the coming collaborations and trainings.

It soon became clear to the George Fox team that they should begin with an initial four-day curriculum writing workshop on site in Kenya. John Muhanji and the Quaker educators arranged for the first workshop in April 2009 in Bungoma, Kenya. Seventeen Quaker school principals and teachers participated. In addition, John Muhanji and several education secretaries from various yearly meetings attended and provided support and encouragement. Four members from the George Fox University planning team, Ken Badley, Kristin Dixon, Lon Fendall and Eloise Hockett, provided the teaching and resources for the workshop sessions.

The most significant outcome of the April workshops was the development of the main themes of the curriculum. From those broad themes came the first draft of a number of lessons, strategies for writing the rest of the curriculum, a

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template for evaluating the lessons and a possible timeline for completing and implementing the project. In addition, the participants developed relationships with one another, assuring the collaborative spirit of the overall project.

As the first workshop neared completion, all of the participants recognized the need for another workshop before the one already scheduled for August. It was decided that Eloise Hockett, along with another colleague, would return in June to lead participants in further development of the curriculum.

In preparation for the June visit, the George Fox University team reviewed the outcomes of the April workshop, revised the goals for the curriculum project and prepared materials for the participants. Twenty-two principals, teachers and education secretaries came together in June in Kakamega for three days of curriculum writing and editing. Eloise Hockett and Suzanne Harrison introduced the participants to strategies designed to assist in the teaching process and enhance the curriculum for students. Participants wrote, revised and edited 33 lessons. Eloise and Suzanne then began the process of collating and organizing the material into one document.

Participants in the June workshop selected 12 schools and a timeline for pilot teaching the first lesson entitled, "Who Am I?" In addition, the participants agreed on the process for feedback from that first lesson.

Another significant outcome of the June workshop and trip was the opportunity for the George Fox team to visit a number of the pilot schools. The goals for these visits included the opportunity to visit the workshop participants and the other teachers and students in their own environment, observe teaching in classrooms and review curriculum and other materials.

In a span of three and a half days, Eloise and Suzanne visited schools of varying sizes and types. The school populations ranged in size from 160 (mixed day school) to 1,220 (girls boarding school). Classes ranged from 31 students to as high as 78 students. The principals and teachers graciously welcomed John and the George Fox team and provided important insights into their school environment. These school visits were very valuable for the George Fox team in understanding the Kenyan educational process and the challenges facing the Quaker high schools.

Equipped with 33 draft lessons and the information about the Kenyan participants and their schools, the George Fox team began planning for the August workshop. The main purpose for this workshop was to present the draft curriculum to representatives from more of the 220 Quaker high schools, and to further revise and edit the curriculum.

A total of 70 teachers, principals and education secretaries gathered together in early August for two separate workshops in two different locations. Each group of participants reviewed

the draft curriculum and provided feedback regarding the contents and the challenges involved in implementing the curriculum. In addition, four of the pilot schools reported on their experiences in teaching the first lesson of the curriculum. Overall, the participants affirmed the value of the curriculum project and committed themselves to further participation in the project.

The final highlight of the August visit was the opportunity to present the draft curriculum to the Kenyan Minister of Education, the Honorable Sam Ongeri. Six of the Kenyan planning team, along with Eloise Hockett and Linda Samek from George Fox University, met with the minister. He acknowledged the need for such a curriculum and affirmed the development and contents of the curriculum. He also pledged his support for guiding the project through the Kenyan Institute of Education (KIE) for further review.

Spurred on by Mr. Ongeri's support, the KIE approved the timeline for piloting the complete curriculum in 15 of the Quaker high schools beginning in February 2010. There will be additional teacher training as well as the monitoring of the pilot teaching process. It is our vision that someday all the schools in Kenya may have a chance to use the peace and conflict resolution curriculum and that it will positively impact the hearts and lives of the Kenyan students to become effective agents for peace.



Left to right: Kennedy, Eloise, Alfred, Lon and Kristin — Kenyan and U.S. co-laborers.

Eloise Hockett is an assistant professor of education in the School of Education at George Fox University. She is currently in her 12th year at GFU and teaches the introductory research courses for the Master of Education and Doctor of Education programs. In addition to her teaching duties she directs the Master of Education program and is the School of Education liaison to the state of Oregon for teacher licensure. Eloise lives in Newberg with husband Steve, and has two married children and two grandchildren.

Lon Fendall recently retired from George Fox University, where he had served as director of the Center for Peace and Justice, Center for Global Studies and dean of Undergraduate Studies. Prior to that, he held administrative positions at Tabor College and Wilmington College. He and his wife, Raelene, and three of their grandchildren live on a farm near Newberg, Oregon.