

Mozambique

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

Education



Since 1961.

Program: Education

Job Title: High School English Teacher

Dates of Service: December 3, 2016 – December 3, 2018*

Staging Date (in U.S.): August 30, 2016*

Pre-Service Training September 1, 2016 – December 2, 2016*
(in Mozambique):

*dates subject to change



This document is intended to give an overview of the project you are invited to work on in the Peace Corps. For more detailed information about living and working in Mozambique, please read the Welcome Book via the link included with your invitation.

For further information about serving as a High School English Teacher in Mozambique, you may call the Country Desk Officer for Mozambique at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. (9 a.m. to 5 p.m., EST):

Toll-free: 1-855-855-1961, press 1, then extension 2865;
or directly at (202) 692-2865
or via email at Mozambique@peacecorps.gov

A Note from Your Associate Peace Corps Directors for Education

Bem vindos ao Corpo da Paz/Moçambique!

Congratulations on your invitation to serve in the twenty-seventh group of Peace Corps Volunteers in Mozambique. We can assure you that you are about to embark on one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of your life.

Our role in the programming unit is to prepare you for and support you during your Peace Corps service. Our goal is to help you understand, create, and manage the conditions in which you can live and work independently and successfully. We have worked with the Ministry of Education and Human Development at the national, provincial, and district levels to define the goals and objectives for your project and to explore and establish opportunities for collaboration.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) you may live anywhere from a small rural town to a small city that is a provincial capital of the country. Your work will be as an English teacher in a secondary or technical school. You will be at times stretched to the limit or frustrated by the slow pace at which things are happening. However, there are many joys and rewarding moments of working and living with the people of your community: the eagerness of students to learn, lessons that go well, and friendships that will last a lifetime.

We welcome you to Peace Corps/Mozambique Education Project.

Até breve,

Gelane Madjibui and Sérgio Matsinhe

APCDs for Education

PEACE CORPS/MOZAMBIQUE HISTORY

After centuries of colonialism and a 16-year civil war, Mozambique's economy is growing fast, with foreign investors showing interest in the various untapped mineral resources. The government and foreign assistance programs are making the transition from years of humanitarian aid and disaster relief to sustainable development. The government continues to encourage a free market economy and an active civil society. Education, health, and agriculture are high priorities for Mozambique.

Investment in school infrastructure and resources has significantly increased access to education, but there is still much to be done to improve the quality of education. While the number of teachers has increased, the number of highly skilled and experienced teachers is inadequate. The vast majority of English teachers are male. Mozambican class sizes are large (40-100 students) and most schools have very limited resources (no textbooks, desks, chairs, labs or equipment, etc.). Classroom techniques are generally teacher-centered, with blackboard explanations and class repetition, while pair or group work and other communicative activities are rarely used. Most teachers believe their primary responsibility is to prepare students to pass the national exams.

In August 1998, Peace Corps first opened an office in Maputo with Mozambican and American staff. The Mozambican Ministry of Education and Peace Corps decided to progressively phase Volunteers into secondary education, starting with English teaching in the southern half of the country. In 1999, the first Peace Corps Volunteers were assigned as English teachers in grades 8 through 10 to technical and secondary schools in Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, and Sofala provinces. In the following year, new sites were opened for both English and biology teachers. In 2001, the program expanded to include English Teacher Trainer Volunteers, who helped to train local English teachers to begin teaching the new curriculum in sixth and seventh grades.

Currently, the Education project has over 100 Volunteers, who teach English, math, biology, and chemistry in secondary schools. Volunteers are presently working in ten of Mozambique's eleven provinces: Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane, Sofala, Manica, Tete, Zambézia, Cabo Delgado, Nampula, and Niassa.

YOUR PRIMARY DUTIES

Specifically, in your role as an English teacher, you will work at a general secondary or technical school to:

1. **Improve teaching** by helping Mozambican teachers to provide effective and creative instruction in order to enhance student achievement.

The majority of English teachers in Mozambique are young and inexperienced. You will work with them as counterparts in meetings, skill-building workshops, and activities to improve each other's teaching skills. You will plan lessons together as well as observe each other's lessons to share different teaching styles in practice.

When appropriate, you will supplement and adapt textbooks to take into account local needs and attend to individual student needs. You will also work with fellow teachers and school administrators in setting up resource centers with locally produced or donated materials for use by teachers and students.

2. **Increase student achievement** in English through the introduction of student-centered teaching methods and educational opportunities.

Under the supervision of your school director, you will carry a workload similar to that of your counterparts in teaching and completing administrative duties expected of an English teacher. Outside of classroom hours, you may organize English clubs, student newsletters, and field trips to enhance learning.

Your English teaching load will average 18 to 24 classroom hours per week. Lessons vary between 2 to 5 lessons per week, depending on the grade level. If you teach grade 10 or 12, you will be preparing students to pass the national exams for entry into higher academic levels, including university and teacher training colleges.

3. **Promote early grade reading** for primary school students and community members in order to increase their reading skills in Portuguese and improve their educational achievement.

Although your assignment will be to teach English at a secondary school, we provide you with this unique opportunity to work with small children and other community members to improve their reading skills and create community libraries. Many Volunteers have found this to be an exciting way of contributing to education beyond the school community. It is also a way to promote capacity-building among Mozambicans, since Volunteers are paired with a local counterpart who will work with the students even after the Volunteer has left.

Mozambican and Volunteer teachers describe two major challenges about teaching English: students' anxieties about passing national examinations, and providing lessons with limited school resources that meet the needs of students' different levels and abilities in English. In addition, Volunteers encounter difficulties in dealing with what American society would consider rampant cheating and significant administrative corruption.

During your first year of teaching in Mozambique, you will probably find that preparing lessons and correcting students' written work take up much of your time. Initially, you will also need time to adapt to an education system that expects teachers to take on administrative responsibilities for their students, including typing tests, creating attendance records, preparing tests, participating in staff meetings, and proctoring and grading trimester and final exams. Your professionalism in carrying out these tasks, in being punctual and courteous, and in running well-managed classes, will be greatly appreciated by your students and colleagues.

During service, you will have the opportunity to report on your work and measure your impact by participating in the Peace Corps monitoring, reporting, and evaluation (MRE) process. All Volunteers receive training on the Peace Corps MRE tracking and reporting system. Every Volunteer regularly reports MRE information, and this information is summarized to describe overall progress of the project. This important MRE system helps Peace Corps improve its programming and report its accomplishments. The opportunity to learn and practice professional monitoring and evaluation skills is one of the many valued benefits of Peace Corps service.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECONDARY/COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Communities in Mozambique present plenty of opportunities to extend oneself beyond the classroom. Volunteers link the classroom to the community by organizing activities for boys and girls through field trips, study groups, theater productions, science fairs, and sports programs. Volunteers facilitate small community education projects related to improving prevention and awareness of environmental and health issues, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Many Volunteers collaborate with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on small projects that benefit their communities.

Some of the activities that Volunteers are involved in include:

1. Community English classes after school hours;
2. Working with out-of-school youth and secondary school students on initiating or implementing HIV/AIDS peer education groups;
3. Malaria awareness activities and other health education initiatives;

4. Computer literacy classes in schools that are fortunate to have computers;
5. Helping communities to establish small resource centers.

You will be serving in one of the posts participating in Let Girls Learn, an important agency initiative promoting gender awareness and girls' education and empowerment. All Volunteers in your country program will receive in-depth training on incorporating methods of gender analysis into community assessment and development efforts. You will be encouraged to find culturally appropriate ways to incorporate gender awareness and the promotion of youth, especially girls, into your work and projects as appropriate and report on these efforts and their impact. You will learn more about this initiative during your Staging event as well as during pre-service training.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Available Resources

Your school or institute of assignment may not have many teaching materials or equipment. Most likely, you will find that your only resources are a chalkboard and chalk. Your Mozambican counterparts must function with whatever is available locally – and so must you. In order for the ideas you introduce to be effective, they must be realized with resources that your teachers have on hand and that are sustainable.

Location of Job

Currently, English teachers are assigned to ten of the eleven provinces in southern, central, and northern Mozambique. Volunteers in your training group will most likely be assigned to a secondary school or technical institute. Towns with general secondary schools have populations that average approximately ten to twenty thousand people. Most people in the surrounding areas make their living from subsistence agriculture. Some schools have electricity, dormitories for students, and houses for teachers and administrative offices.

Work Hours

School class hours vary but can be broken down to three times of day: morning (7 a.m. – 12 p.m.), afternoon (12 – 5 p.m.), and evening (6 – 11 p.m.), for adult classes. Volunteers' teaching schedules vary within each institution. Some may have all morning classes, while others will have a mix of morning and afternoon lessons. As a development worker, your working hours are 24/7, extended way beyond the school day, as you will be expected to engage in other school and community development activities.

Please note that leave can only be taken during school holidays and breaks, with the approval of both the school director and Peace Corps/Mozambique staff.

Cultural Attitudes and Customs in the Workplace

In the Mozambican context, respect comes with age and experience. Therefore, younger Volunteers may sometimes experience initial difficulties in gaining respect from their supervisors and members of their community. However, this is short-lived if they demonstrate confidence, motivation, and professionalism, as well as an eagerness to learn about Mozambique, its people, and its culture.

At school you will be expected to take your place as a professional member of the staff and adhere to standards, policies, and procedures of the Ministry of Education. In the community, you will likely be perceived as a person with exceptional skills and knowledge, and thus be expected to comport yourself professionally.

Dress Code

Teachers in Mozambique dress professionally for work. Women wear dresses, trousers, or skirts and blouses. Men wear long pants and button-down shirts. All teachers might be expected to wear a 'bata,' a white button-down jacket, in the classroom. All clothing should be clean, mended, and well-pressed. Please refer to the Welcome Book for more guidance on dress and packing.

TRAINING FOR YOUR JOB

You will receive 13 weeks of Pre-Service Training (PST) prior to beginning your assignment. This intensive training will be broken into three community-based phases with an emphasis on language and technical skills. After a brief orientation in the capital city of Maputo, you will live with a Mozambican family for six weeks (Phase 1) in Namaacha, a rural community about an hour and a half west of Maputo. After the completion of Phase 1, you will spend three weeks at your assigned site (Phase 2) living with a Mozambican family and shadowing a Mozambican teacher and/or a currently serving Volunteer. In Phase 3, you will return to Namaacha to complete four final weeks of training before swearing in as a Volunteer. Throughout PST, you will be instructed in technical education skills, Mozambican culture and history, and both the official language of the country, Portuguese, and the predominantly spoken local language in your assigned province.

Training is a qualifying process. As with most adult education programs, it is based on participatory methods. You will be expected to take responsibility for much of your learning and progress against a series of defined competencies. The training staff will be there to provide guidance, advice, support, and counseling as needed. The decision to accept you as a Volunteer will be based on how well you absorb and apply technical information and skills, your ability to

communicate in Portuguese, and the ease with which you adapt to the demands of cross-cultural adjustment to living in Mozambique.

Technical training for English teachers consists of learning about the Mozambican education system, including its historical development and structure, and how to be a teacher using learner-centered teaching techniques. You will have a two-week model school practicum where you will teach English to Mozambican students in an environment similar to that at your site. With the help of experienced staff and Volunteers, you will learn and practice planning, participatory approaches, and effective practices for your work. HIV/AIDS education will also be a part of your training.

Language and cross-cultural training also receive high priority because of their interdependence with breaking cultural barriers, cultural adjustment, primary assignment success, and safety and security at site. When you work in collaboration with others, which necessitates communicating in the official language, job success can be achieved. Being aware of and understanding the challenges that Mozambique faces will enable you to appreciate the developmental transition your Mozambican hosts are going through and make your work more meaningful. Awareness and understanding will also help put into perspective possible reactions people may have to your presence in Mozambique, and possible reactions you have to the behaviors and attitudes that you encounter.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Housing conditions for teachers are poor, and the availability of acceptable housing is extremely limited. Your house may be one of the following: a mud house with cement floor, a reed house, an old cement house that needs repair, or a new cement house in a school compound. You may or may not have electricity and/or running water. It is likely that you will be sharing a home with another Volunteer or Mozambican counterpart. You will have separate bedrooms but share a bathroom, kitchen, and living space.

Communication is usually not very challenging because the telecommunication system in Mozambique is adequate. However, communication could be difficult in some parts of the country. Most schools do not have computers or access to the Internet or email.

For your home you will be given a “settling-in” allowance by Peace Corps to purchase initial household goods such as a small stove, kitchen equipment, utensils, etc. Your school will provide a bed, chair, and table.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES & REWARDS

Please reference the [Welcome Book](#) for more detailed information regarding diversity and cross-cultural issues, as well as safety and security in the Peace Corps.

There will be challenges throughout your service that test your commitment to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer. We expect you will find, as do most Volunteers, that the rewards of meeting those challenges far outweigh their frustrations.

The pace of work and lack of structure may become very challenging in Mozambique. You must assess the pace and method in which things are done and then use sensitivity and good judgment as to how and when to try to introduce different concepts and ideas. Additional challenges that you might come across include unreliable transportation, gender stereotypes, differing work ethics, and low morale among your colleagues and students at school.

The role of the Volunteer is to contribute to development and not necessarily to change ways. Remembering this will go a long way in guaranteeing your overall success. Eventually you will likely derive deep satisfaction from knowing that you have made an important contribution to the development of skills and knowledge of Mozambicans. In return, you will learn more about yourself, your own country, and its culture in relation to Mozambique. Your job skills will increase, and you will gain knowledge and friendships that will last throughout your life.

Volunteers who are of an American racial, ethnic, or national minority may find they experience a higher degree of curiosity or unwanted attention from host country nationals. Please be aware that American concepts of politeness and appropriate behavior around aspects of diversity are not universal. Ethnically, nationally, or racially diverse Americans may be asked where they are “actually from” or if they are “really” American. Many Volunteers have been able to turn these encounters into learning experiences, share American values, and deepen local community members’ understanding of Americans.

Similarly, Mozambican norms concerning sexual orientation and gender identity are different from those in the U.S. Volunteers will need to be mindful of cultural norms and use their judgement to determine the best way to approach sexual orientation and gender identity in their communities and host countries. During Pre-Service Training, staff and currently serving Volunteers will address these and other topics related to diversity and identify support mechanisms in-country.

COMMENTS FROM VOLUNTEERS

“People say that what we’re all seeking is a meaning for life. I don’t think that’s what we’re really seeking. I think what we’re seeking is an experience of being alive.” – Joseph Campbell

If you ask a Volunteer why he or she joined the Peace Corps, you will likely receive a response about seeking some sort of “experience.” Maybe they wanted to experience “another culture,” or to experience “poverty,” or maybe they just wanted to experience an “adventure.” But at the most fundamental level, all Volunteers join, just as Campbell suggested, because they are seeking the experience of being alive. There is something in the roots of our collective unconscious that tells us to truly “feel alive” we must, like the shaman, leave our communities behind and forge ahead into the great unknown. It is only there amongst the unfamiliar that we may receive the light.

My light was Jonas. Jonas is a teacher’s dream student. He is precocious, passionate, punctual, and always prepared. He is the student who does every exercise I assign; the one who attends every study session; the one who is always first to participate and last to leave; and the one who reads every last word in the books I lend him over and over until he knows them by heart. He makes me proud to be a teacher and he inspires me to be better.

However, outside the classroom, Jonas is also caught in the Mozambican vortex of poverty. His parents are farmers. They have no political connections. He likely has no prospects beyond the constant toil of subsistence. He is also the eldest of eight siblings and, as such, he is their primary caretaker. Every day he has to primp them, bathe them, help them with their school work, and, when his parents aren’t looking, sneak them food from his plate. When I first met him, he was shy and despondent. I could see in his eyes the encroaching walls of poverty were threatening to swallow him whole. I knew he needed an outlet for his frustrations, so I invited him to join my English theater group.

The English theater competition is an annual event started by PCVs, in which teams of students showcase their English skills by performing a theater piece about their lives. It is always eagerly anticipated as the biggest highlight of the year and a bit of an emotional catharsis for the students. Jonas auditioned for the role of narrator, the role with not only the largest number of lines, but arguably also the most difficult ones. The narrator had to deliver a long soliloquy at the end of the piece intended to elicit an emotional response from the audience. Much of the success of the piece depended on the effectiveness of his delivery.

On the day of the competition the group was a bundle of nerves. I had watched them steadily improve over the preceding months but our last rehearsal had been a bit of a disappointment. As they began, I paced nervously backstage. The first and second act went on without a hitch,

but I knew everything hinged on Jonas. As he walked out to deliver his speech, time began to slow. Sometimes a moment on the physical plane acquires enough psychic significance to transcend space and time, and resonate directly within our innermost being. In that moment the division between the conscious mind and objective reality is shattered and we experience the true force of being alive. As Jonas began his speech, he and I experienced just such a moment. His poverty, his frustration, the hopelessness of his situation, in that moment it all melted away. Reality melted away. Even our separation as teacher and student melted away. Suddenly we were one being, delighting in the wonder of our mutual existence. His words no longer left his mouth to traverse the lonely abyss between us but bellowed straight up from the innermost chambers of my soul.

Later when they announced the winner of the competition, hearing our team called was a delight, but somehow it seemed hollow in comparison to the magnitude of what I had just witnessed. After he accepted the trophy on our team's behalf, Jonas and I cordially shook hands, but said nothing. We didn't need to. Everything had already been said.

PCV Chris Boyer – Cabo Delgado province

The greatest positive difference I have made during my service is the Community Children's Library, which is successfully up and running independently of me.

One of the problems that the Community Children's Library addresses is the lack of access to books and reading material for children. Children enter school at age 6 or 7 and are expected to be reading at the end of their first year of school. Considering the fact that a good number of them are not able to count to five or identify any letter of the alphabet before entering school, this is a huge task for the primary schools. Thus the Community Children's Library is an excellent resource for the teachers, as well as a place children where can go after or before school to practice their reading.

There were many steps involved in carrying out this project. First, I presented the project to my community to gain their support. Then, I worked with Peace Corps staff to apply for a Peace Corps Partnership Program grant and raised the money for the Community Children's Library. After the grant was funded, I worked with community members to paint the building, put in a new door, two new windows, a bookshelf and electrical wiring. During this time, I reached out to a local non-governmental organization that donated 200 books to the library. When the books arrived and the building was ready, we had an opening ceremony with the *Administrador*

(mayor) of Homoine and the local community members. The library was officially open and the next week the community provided a librarian, who works four and a half days each week.

The library is constantly flooded with children at all times of the day! There are students who come every day before and after school. The most surprising and unexpected aspect of the Community Children's Library is that it has become a learning center for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities rarely are sent to school due to a perception that they cannot learn. The librarian at the Community Children's Library works individually with the children with disabilities every day to help them learn how to read. In my opinion, this is a big step forward. The librarian's willingness to spend her time with these children means that she believes they have the ability to learn. Additionally, when other children come to the library, they, too, can see the children with disabilities learning to read and hopefully change their preconceptions of these individuals.

The Community Children's Library has exceeded my expectations. I wasn't sure if it could continue running without my help, but I have found that the community is very engaged in taking care of the library. Community members took the initiative to install and pay for the electricity and have the name of the library painted on the front of the building. The community is taking records on what children and how many children come into the library on a daily basis. The community of Homoine is showing that they want the library to function and therefore I am sure it will be sustainable after I leave.

Theresa Cole – Inhambane province