

THE PEACE CORPS WELCOMES YOU TO

SWAZILAND



A PEACE CORPS PUBLICATION FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS

June 2013 CCD

A WELCOME LETTER

Dear Peace Corps/Swaziland Invitee:

I am delighted that you will be joining the Peace Corps program in Swaziland. You have begun a journey that will provide an opportunity for you to contribute to Swaziland's fight against the devastation of HIV/AIDS. First, you were an applicant. Today, you are an invitee. Next, you will be a trainee. The training you will receive will lead you to the final destination: a Peace Corps Volunteer in Swaziland.

We look forward to working with you to make this a truly rewarding experience for you and the people with whom you will be working. Your skills, motivation, and adaptability, in conjunction with the support of your local communities, will make this happen. With your commitment and dedication, you will make a difference in your community. Again, welcome to the Peace Corps team in Swaziland!

Steve Driehaus

Country Director

Swaziland

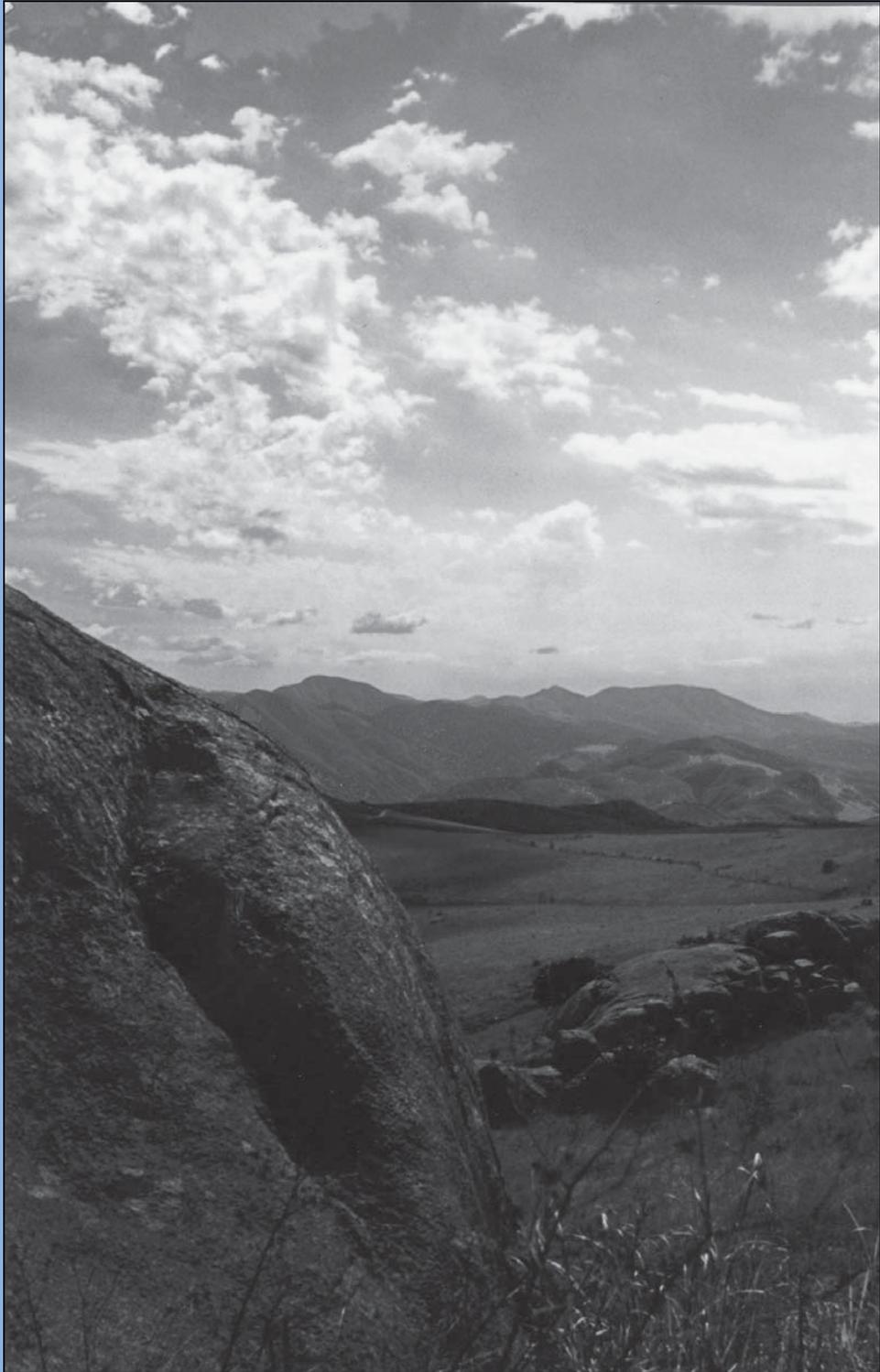
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CORE EXPECTATIONS FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

In working toward fulfilling the Peace Corps Mission of promoting world peace and friendship, as a trainee and Volunteer, you are expected to:

1. Prepare your personal and professional life to make a commitment to serve abroad for a full term of 27 months
2. Commit to improving the quality of life of the people with whom you live and work; and, in doing so, share your skills, adapt them, and learn new skills as needed
3. Serve where the Peace Corps asks you to go, under conditions of hardship, if necessary, and with the flexibility needed for effective service
4. Recognize that your successful and sustainable development work is based on the local trust and confidence you build by living in, and respectfully integrating yourself into, your host community and culture
5. Recognize that you are responsible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for your personal conduct and professional performance
6. Engage with host country partners in a spirit of cooperation, mutual learning, and respect
7. Work within the rules and regulations of the Peace Corps and the local and national laws of the country where you serve
8. Exercise judgment and personal responsibility to protect your health, safety, and well-being and that of others
9. Recognize that you will be perceived, in your host country and community, as a representative of the people, cultures, values, and traditions of the United States of America
10. Represent responsibly the people, cultures, values, and traditions of your host country and community to people in the United States both during and following your service

PEACE CORPS/SWAZILAND HISTORY AND PROGRAMS

History of the Peace Corps in Swaziland

The Peace Corps was invited to work in Swaziland in 1969, a few months after the country gained independence from Great Britain. Over the next 28 years, 1,400 Peace Corps Volunteers served in Swaziland, working in the education and agriculture sectors. Playing a prominent role in Swaziland's development, Volunteers taught English, agriculture, mathematics, science, and vocational education in secondary schools and promoted agricultural cooperatives in rural areas.

A programming review in 1994 recommended that Peace Corps/Swaziland begin phasing out the education project because of the Ministry of Education's lack of long-term priorities and objectives for the education sector. In addition, the ministry did not have a strategy for overcoming the increasing deficit of qualified secondary school teachers. These factors made the sustainability of the education project difficult.

The same review recommended the design of an environment project to protect the environment, further the education of the public on conservation issues, and promote small business development. This project was successfully launched in 1995, but in 1996, the Peace Corps faced budgetary constraints that necessitated the early closure of the Peace Corps/Swaziland program.

History and Future of Peace Corps Programming in Swaziland

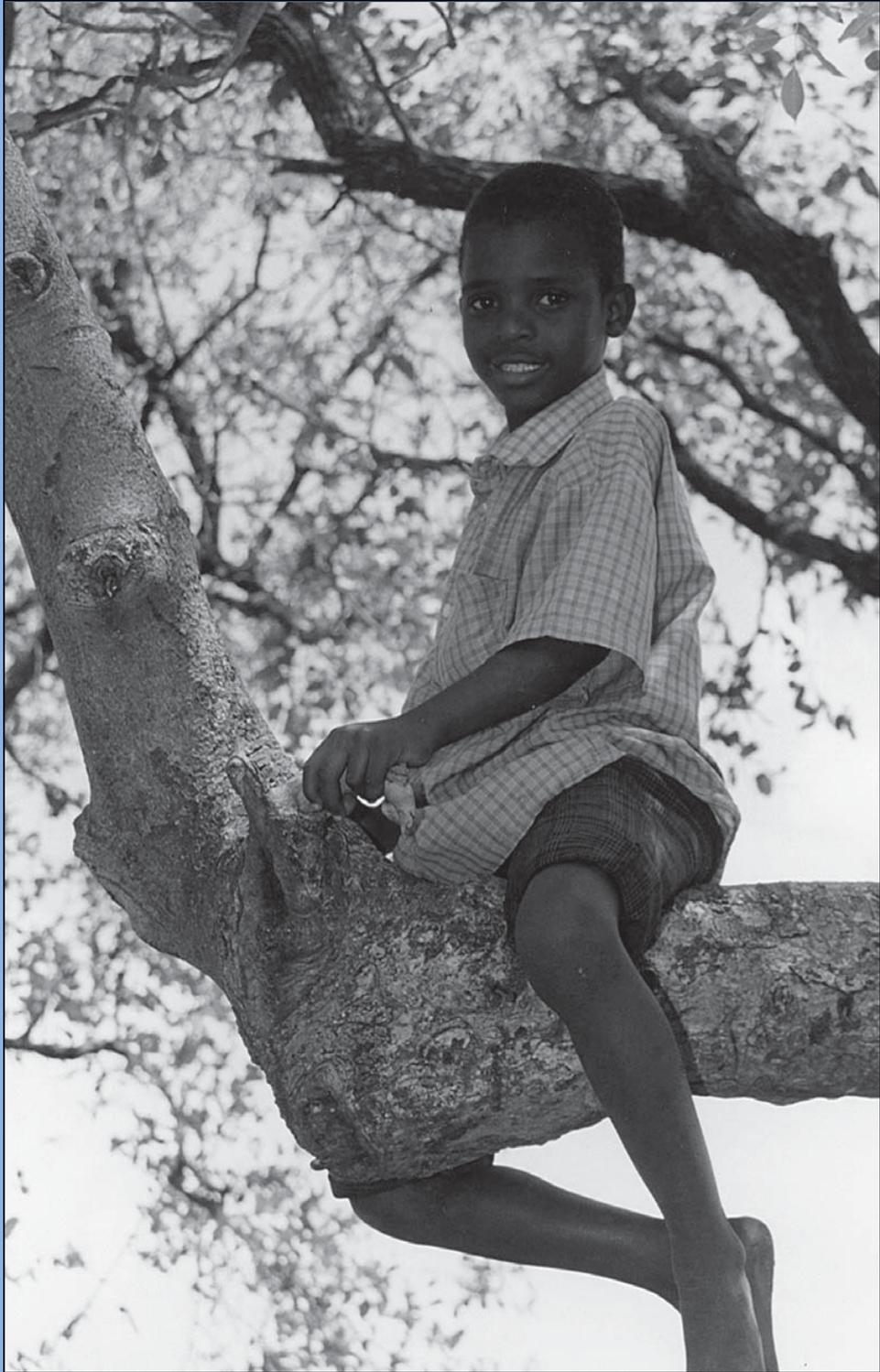
In Swaziland, whose population staggers at 1,109 000, one in four adults are living with HIV. Since the first cases of AIDS were reported in the country in 1986, the virus has spread at an alarming rate and now Swaziland has the highest HIV prevalence in the world at 26 percent. The pandemic has had a devastating impact on the country, particularly among families and households, with 6,813 adult and child AIDS-related deaths in 2011. The impact of so many AIDS related deaths exacerbates existing poverty for families, resulting in a very youthful population. More than a third of the population is under 14 years, and only 5.9 and 4.7 percent females and males respectively are over 65 years. According to 2011 figures, life expectancy is at 48.7 years.

The rapid spread of HIV in Swaziland has resulted in a significant number of children becoming orphaned or vulnerable (OVC); in 2010 an estimated 104 026 children were classified as being OVC. With such high prevalence amongst the most productive working age ranges, responsibility for the care of orphaned and vulnerable children often falls upon older generations, such as grandparents.

In April 2002, a Peace Corps assessment team visited Swaziland to determine how Volunteers could assist the Swazi people. The team found that the overwhelming effects of AIDS on the country's people indicated a need for immediate assistance. The areas in which the Peace Corps feels it can best help the people of Swaziland are training teachers and community members in life skills aimed at HIV/AIDS prevention, initiating and promoting programs in HIV/AIDS awareness, identifying partnerships and resource alliances to fight the epidemic, strengthening existing HIV/AIDS intervention strategies and activities, mobilizing communities to respond to the effects of HIV/AIDS, and working with in-school and out-of-school youth.

The Peace Corps reopened its Swaziland program in 2003. The program is now devoted entirely to HIV/AIDS prevention, mitigation, care, and support.

The AIDS pandemic strikes across all social strata in many Peace Corps countries. The loss of teachers has crippled education systems, while illness and disability drains family income and forces governments and donors to redirect limited resources from other priorities. The fear and uncertainty AIDS causes has led to increased domestic violence and stigmatizing of people living with HIV/AIDS, isolating them from friends and family and cutting them off from economic opportunities. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will confront these issues on a very personal level. It is important to be aware of the high emotional toll that disease, death, and violence can have on Volunteers. As you strive to integrate into your community, you will develop relationships with local people who might die during your service. Because of the AIDS pandemic, some Volunteers will be regularly meeting with HIV-positive people and working with training staff, office staff, and host family members living with AIDS. Volunteers need to prepare themselves to embrace these relationships in a sensitive and positive manner. Likewise, malaria and malnutrition, motor vehicle accidents and other unintentional injuries, domestic violence, and corporal punishment are problems a Volunteer may confront. You will need to anticipate these situations and utilize supportive resources available throughout your training and service to maintain your own emotional strength so you can continue to be of service to your community



COUNTRY OVERVIEW: SWAZILAND AT A GLANCE

History

The Swazis are descendants of the Nguni people, who settled in the area that is now Mozambique in the mid-18th century. After a series of conflicts with people living near what is now Mozambique's capital, Maputo, the Swazis settled in an area of South Africa formerly known as Zululand (now KwaZulu-Natal province), gradually moving northward in the early 1800s to the area of modern Swaziland. Swazis' contact with the British came when King Mswati II asked British authorities for assistance against Zulu raids into Swaziland. After Mswati's death, the Swazis reached agreements with Britain and South Africa over a range of issues, and from 1894 to 1903, South Africa administered Swaziland. Swaziland became a British protectorate in 1903 after the Boer War of 1899-1902. The British refused repeated requests by South Africa that the territory be handed over and administered Swaziland as a "high commission territory."

Britain expected that Swaziland would eventually be incorporated into South Africa, but after World War II, South Africa's intensification of racial discrimination induced Britain to prepare Swaziland for independence. Political activity calling for independence and economic development increased in the early 1960s. In 1966, the British government agreed to discuss a new constitution with the Swazis. A committee agreed on a constitutional monarchy for Swaziland, with self-government to follow parliamentary elections in 1967. The country became independent on September 6, 1968.

The first post-independence elections were held in May 1972; however, in 1973, King Sobhuza II repealed the constitution and dissolved Parliament, imposing a state of emergency in which he assumed all powers of government and prohibited political parties. A new constitution in 1978 continued to concentrate political power in the hands of the monarch, but called for the appointment of a prime minister and a cabinet and an elected Parliament, the Libandla, in which political parties would remain illegal. The Parliament's functions were restricted to conveying advice to the king and his principal advisory body, the Liqoqo (Supreme Council of State).

The current monarch, King Mswati III, was crowned in April 1986. Shortly afterward, he abolished the Liqoqo, and in 1987, a new Parliament was elected and a new cabinet was appointed. An underground political party, the People's United Democratic Party (PUDEMO), emerged in 1988 and clandestinely criticized the king and the government, calling for democratic reforms. In response to this political threat and to growing calls for greater accountability in government, the king and the prime minister initiated a national debate, which continues to this day, on the political future of Swaziland. In 2008, the government of Swaziland passed the Anti-Terrorism Act.

The government then declared that PUDEMO and other civil society organizations were banned for being "enemies of peace, stability, security, and national progress." The legislation and the government declarations have been controversial, inciting criticism from the media, faith-based institutions, and international entities. Although steady pressure has been exerted on the king from both inside and outside the country, he remains immune to threats and continues as one of the world's remaining absolute monarchs.

Government

National executive power in Swaziland is vested in the king, who appoints, and is assisted by, a prime minister and cabinet. One house of Parliament (the Libandla) is the National Assembly, which has 65 members, 55 of whom are directly elected from a list of candidates nominated by traditional local councils and 10 of whom are appointed by the king. The 30-member Senate consists of 10 members elected by the National Assembly and 20 appointed by the king. Judicial authority is vested in a high court and subordinate courts. Civil matters among Swazis are handled by traditional leaders, subject to appeals to the high court.

A new constitution was written and adopted by Parliament and then signed by the king in the Summer of 2005.

Economy

In this small, landlocked country, subsistence agriculture occupies more than 80 percent of the population. Manufacturing consists of a number of agro-processing factories. Mining has declined in importance in recent years. Diamond mines have shut down because of the depletion of easily accessible reserves; high-grade iron ore deposits have been depleted; and health concerns have cut the world demand for asbestos. Exports of soft-drink concentrate, sugar, and wood pulp are the main sources of hard currency. Surrounded by South Africa, except for a short border with Mozambique, Swaziland is heavily dependent on South Africa, from which it receives nine-tenths of its imports and to which it sends two-thirds of its exports. Remittances from the Southern African Customs Union and Swazi workers in South African mines substantially supplement domestically earned income.

People and Culture

Swaziland has been a monarchy ever since the Nguni people entered the territory about 400 years ago. The monarchy plays an integral role in the life of the nation and is the focus of many traditional ceremonies and much of its cultural life.

Although indigenous religions are not widely practiced, traditional Swazi culture remains strong and is celebrated in the forms of religious music, dance, poetry, and craftsmanship. Two important ceremonies that are central to Swazi culture are the Incwala (fruit

ceremony) and Umhlanga (reed dance). Swaziland is predominantly a Christian country, with 30 percent of the people holding traditional beliefs and 10 percent being Muslim.

The population of Swaziland is estimated at 1.1 million, with an annual growth rate of -0.4 percent. Most of the people are ethnic Swazis, although there are small populations of Zulus, Tsonga-Shangaans, and Europeans. Mozambican refugees of both African and European descent also form a significant minority. English and siSwati are the official languages, and English is used for all government business.

The administrative and judicial capital is Mbabane, while the traditional royal capital is Lobamba. Approximately 25 percent of the population lives in urban areas. In 2005, an estimated 71 percent of school-age children were enrolled in primary schools, while an estimated 45 percent were enrolled in secondary schools. The literacy rate is estimated at 80 percent.

Environment

The Kingdom of Swaziland is one of the smallest political entities of continental Africa. Covering an area of only 6,945 square miles, or 17,363 square kilometers (slightly smaller than New Jersey), it is surrounded by South Africa on the north, west, and south and separated from the Indian Ocean on the east by Mozambique.

The geography consists of a surprisingly wide range of ecological zones, from savanna scrub in the east to rain forest in the northwest, with patches of the finbos, or “fine bush,” which is renowned in South Africa. The mountainous border with Mozambique is harsh and dry, and sharp mountains poke out of the highveld in the west. More than 75 percent of Swazis work in agriculture, mainly at the subsistence level, although the nation is not self-sufficient in food.

Swaziland’s natural resources, including game reserves and national parks, are well-managed. Wildlife is abundant in all the reserves, and the country has hundreds of bird species. In addition to wildlife, Swaziland has subtropical woodlands and swamps in the east and hardwood forests in the western highlands, which the logging industry is chipping away at.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Following is a list of websites for additional information about the Peace Corps, Swaziland, and to connect you to returned Volunteers and other invitees. Please keep in mind that although we try to make sure all these links are active and current, we cannot guarantee it. If you do not have access to the Internet, visit your local library. Libraries offer free Internet usage and often let you print information to take home.

A note of caution: As you surf the Internet, be aware that you may find bulletin boards and chat rooms in which people are free to express opinions about the Peace Corps based on their own experience, including comments by those who were unhappy with their choice to serve in the Peace Corps. These opinions are not those of the Peace Corps or the U.S. government, and we hope you will keep in mind that no two people experience their service in the same way.

General Information About Swaziland

www.countrywatch.com

On this site, you can learn anything from what time it is in the capital of Swaziland to how to convert from the dollar to the Swaziland currency. Just click on Swaziland and go from there.

www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations

Visit this site for general travel advice about almost any country in the world.

www.state.gov

The State Department's website issues background notes periodically about countries around the world. Find Swaziland and learn more about its social and political history. You can also go to the site's international travel section to check on conditions that may affect your safety.

www.psr.keele.ac.uk/official.htm

This includes links to all the official sites for governments worldwide.

www.geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm

This online world atlas includes maps and geographical information, and each country page contains links to other sites, such as the Library of Congress, that contain comprehensive historical, social, and political background.

www.cyberschoolbus.un.org/infonation/info.asp

This United Nations site allows you to search for statistical information for member states of the U.N.

www.worldinformation.com

This site provides an additional source of current and historical information about countries around the world.

Connect With Returned Volunteers and Other Invitees

www.rpcv.org

This is the site of the National Peace Corps Association, made up of returned Volunteers. On this site you can find links to all the Web pages of the “Friends of” groups for most countries of service, comprised of former Volunteers who served in those countries. There are also regional groups that frequently get together for social events and local volunteer activities. Or go straight to the Friends of Swaziland site: Insert link

www.PeaceCorpsWorldwide.org

This site is hosted by a group of returned Volunteer writers. It is a monthly online publication of essays and Volunteer accounts of their Peace Corps service.

Online Articles/Current News Sites About Swaziland

<http://www.gov.sz/>

The official government website, which also contains a link to Swaziland Today, a weekly newsletter.

<http://mbabane.usembassy.gov/>

The website of the U.S. Embassy in Mbabane.

<http://allafrica.com/Swaziland/>

A site with news from all regions of Africa.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm>

Current news from the BBC.

<http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp>

A site sponsored by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

<http://www.sadc.int/>

The website of the Southern Africa Development Community.

<http://www.africaaction.org/index.php>

The website of Africa Action, a U.S. organization that works for political, economic, and social justice in Africa.

International Development Sites About Swaziland

www.unaids.org

A United Nations site with detailed information about the AIDS epidemic.

www.usaid.gov

Site of the U.S. Agency for International Development

www.worldbank.org

Site of the World Bank

<http://www.wfp.org/english/>

Site of the World Food Programme, the United Nations' main agency in the fight against global hunger

Recommended Books about Swaziland

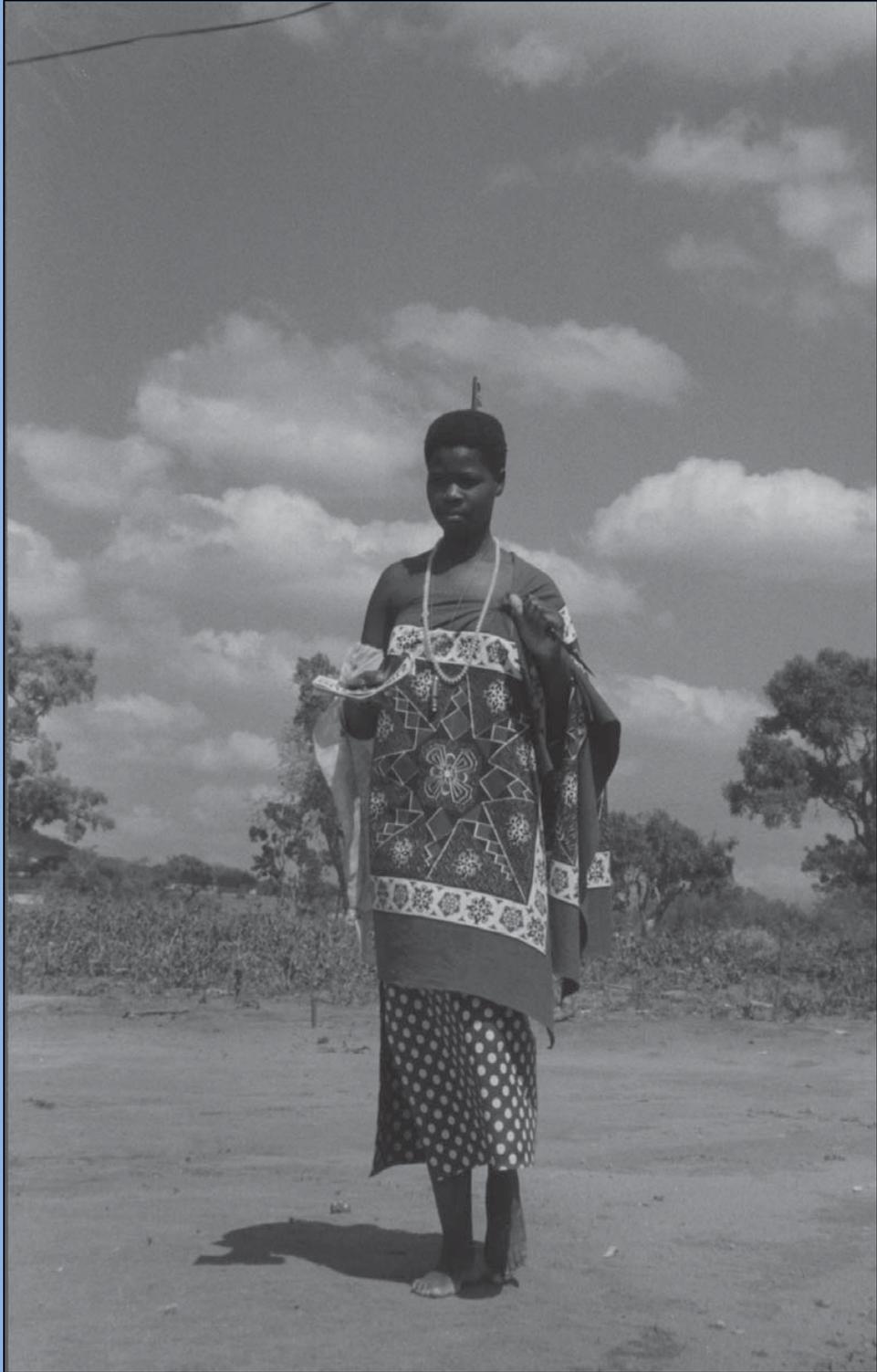
- Hall, James. *Sangoma: My Odyssey Into the Spirit World of Africa*. Carmichael, Calif.: Touchstone Books, 1995.
- Kessler, Cristina. *All the King's Animals: The Return of Endangered Wildlife to Swaziland*. Honesdale, Pa.: Boyds Mills Press, 2001.
- Krog, Antjie. *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*. Times Books, 2000.
- Locke, Ron and Peter Quantrill. *Zulu Vanquished: The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom*. London: Greenhill Books, 2005.
- Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. London: Little Brown, 1995.
- Mphahlele, Martha. *A Time of Bliss*. Exposure Publishing, 2007.
- Nolen, Stephanie. *28 Stories of AIDS in Africa*. New York: Walker Publishing Company, Inc. 2007

Books About the History of the Peace Corps

- Hoffman, Elizabeth Cobbs. *All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Rice, Gerald T. *The Bold Experiment: JFK's Peace Corps*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
- Stossel, Scott. *Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2004.
- Meisler, Stanley. *When the World Calls: The Inside Story of the Peace Corps and its First 50 Years*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2011.

Books on the Volunteer Experience

- Dirlam, Sharon. *Beyond Siberia: Two Years in a Forgotten Place*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: McSeas Books, 2004.
- Casebolt, Marjorie DeMoss. *Margarita: A Guatemalan Peace Corps Experience*. Gig Harbor, Wash.: Red Apple Publishing, 2000.
- Erdman, Sarah. *Nine Hills to Nambonkaha: Two Years in the Heart of an African Village*. New York, N.Y.: Picador, 2003.
- Hessler, Peter. *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*. New York, N.Y.: Perennial, 2001.
- Kennedy, Geraldine ed. *From the Center of the Earth: Stories out of the Peace Corps*. Santa Monica, Calif.: Clover Park Press, 1991.
- Thompsen, Moritz. *Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle*. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1997 (reprint).



LIVING CONDITIONS AND VOLUNTEER LIFESTYLE

Communications

Mail

Postal rates in Swaziland are reasonable, and airmail to the United States generally takes two to three weeks. Aerogrammes (foldable and gummed paper for writing a letter for transit via airmail) and other mailing supplies can be purchased at post offices. Sending large packages via airmail can be very expensive, but smaller items such as CDs can be sent via airmail for a reasonable charge. Surface mail takes two to four months to reach the United States. During pre-service training, you will receive mail at the training location. During Volunteer service, you are likely to be able to receive mail directly at your site.

Telephones

Domestic and international phone service is available in large towns and in some villages. You will certainly have the opportunity to make or receive international calls during your service. Cellular phones are becoming more affordable as cellular service is available throughout Swaziland, and Peace Corps/Swaziland provides Volunteers with funds to purchase a cellular phone after completion of pre-service training. However, depending on network coverage, you may not be able to telephone your home from your site on a regular basis.

Computer, Internet, and Email Access

Email access is available at Internet cafés in Mbabane and other large towns. As telephone service has increased, so has Internet access. You are likely to have access to these services in your cell phone and if there is access near your site. You should not expect to have access to the Internet and email during pre-service training.

Housing and Site Location

Your community will provide safe and adequate housing in accordance with the Peace Corps' site selection criteria. However, you need to be very flexible in your housing expectations. Housing will vary from a mud house with a thatch or tin roof, to a cement block house, to a room with a local family in a traditional homestead. Most Volunteers live on rural homesteads with Swazi host families. There is no guarantee that you will have running water or electricity; if you do not, you will collect your water from a community tap and spend evenings reading by candlelight or lantern. You will receive a settling-in allowance in local currency to purchase necessary household items.

Living Allowance and Money Management

The Peace Corps provides each Volunteer with a small allowance during training, a settling-in allowance, and a monthly living allowance for routine, basic expenses. A leave allowance equivalent to \$24 a month and a travel allowance for official in-country travel are also provided. The allowances are calculated to allow a modest lifestyle in Swaziland, which most Volunteers find to be adequate.

The local currency is the lilangeni (plural: emalangeni). South African rand are also accepted as legal tender. MasterCard credit cards are widely accepted in Swaziland, while Visa has more limited use. Traveler's checks are also widely accepted. (Be sure to keep the original receipt of purchase.) Volunteers recommend that you bring some U.S. currency and credit cards if you plan to travel during vacations or after your service. The amount of cash you need will depend on the amount of traveling you plan to do. In neighboring South Africa, credit cards are widely accepted at places of business, and there are many ATMs that provide access to bank accounts in the United States.

Food and Diet

The staple food in Swaziland is maize (corn), prepared as a thick porridge and eaten with vegetables or a sauce. Common vegetables include tomatoes, greens, potatoes, cabbage, and onions. Various fruits and vegetables are available seasonally, which means that some things will not be in markets year-round. A variety of meat and dairy products are also available. You are likely to find canned goods and basic food items throughout Swaziland. Vegetarians will be able to maintain a healthy diet in Swaziland after becoming familiar with local food items and their preparation. However, being a vegetarian will require some compromises and a willingness to continually explain your diet to others.

Transportation

The primary modes of transportation in Swaziland are public buses and minivans. Minivans travel between towns on irregular schedules (i.e., when full), so travel via this form of transport is never a timed affair. Bus schedules are fairly regular, but buses generally are not available in remote, rural areas. Roads generally are in good condition in the larger towns and cities. Poorly maintained vehicles, livestock wandering into the road, and intoxicated drivers are the main causes of road accidents in Swaziland.

Swaziland Volunteers assess their need for a bike in their community during integration and submit a request and rationale in writing to the Peace Corps/Swaziland office no later than their reconnect in-service training (IST). If approved, the Volunteers purchase a bike and helmet of their choice and are reimbursed in cash for the purchase up to a specified amount set by the administrative officer. Some Volunteers use a bicycle (along with a helmet) to facilitate transportation to and from their work. Peace Corps policy requires that helmets be worn when riding a bike.

Volunteers are not allowed to own or operate motor vehicles, including motorcycles. Furthermore, Volunteers are not allowed to ride or be a passenger on a motorcycle. All trainees will receive a copy of Peace Corps/Swaziland's transportation policy during pre-service training. Violation of this policy will result in your being terminated from Volunteer service.

Geography and Climate

Swaziland can be divided into four distinct geographical areas, running north to south, each with its own climate and other characteristics: highveld, middleveld, lowveld (or bushveld), and the Lubombo Plateau.

On the western border is the highveld, lying on the edge of an escarpment at altitudes averaging 4,000 feet. This mountainous area has abundant rivers, waterfalls, and gorges. The climate is temperate with wet, warm summers and cold, dry winters. The capital, Mbabane, is located in this area. Moving toward the east, at a lower altitude, is the middleveld, which gets slightly less rain, has a warm climate, and features lush, fertile valleys. This region is the main area for agriculture and industry and has the densest population. Adjacent to the middleveld is the lowveld, which is hotter and drier than the areas to the west. Major export crops such as sugarcane and citrus fruits are cultivated here. Dominated by grasslands and thorn trees, the region is the least populated area. Eastern Swaziland consists of the Lubombo Plateau, an escarpment bordering Mozambique. This mountainous area is broken by three main rivers and has a subtropical climate much like that of the middleveld.

The moderate climate ranges from subtropical to temperate depending on the altitude. June through September is cool and dry, but often cold at night, while October through May is warm and wet. Higher elevations are generally cloudy, mist covered, and about 10 degrees cooler than the rest of the country. The temperature in Mbabane ranges from 75 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit in January and 42 F to 67 F in July.

Social Activities

Your social life will vary depending on where you are located. In more rural communities, the major pastime is visiting with neighbors and friends. Cultural festivities, sporting events, weddings, and even funerals provide opportunities to meet and catch up with community members and their extended families.

Although Volunteers often want to visit other Volunteers on weekends or holidays, the Peace Corps encourages Volunteers to remain at their sites to develop relationships in their community and to promote the second goal of the Peace Corps (i.e., cultural exchange). Also, in accordance with the Peace Corps' philosophy of full community integration, Volunteers are deemed to be on duty seven days a week, except on national or local holidays.

Swaziland has a few television stations and several radio stations that play popular music.

Professionalism, Dress, and Behavior

Swazis value professional dress in the workplace, and dress is more conservative in rural areas than it is in cities. In the United States, we often view clothes as a reflection of our individuality. In Swaziland, dressing well is seen as a sign of your respect for others, and how you are viewed by your local colleagues will be highly dependent on the way you present yourself. Swazis do not appreciate clothes that are dirty, have holes in them, or are too revealing. Wearing such clothes will reduce the amount of respect given to you and, therefore, your effectiveness. While jeans and T-shirts are acceptable as casual wear, it is more common to see men in shirts with collars and casual slacks and women in casual dresses, skirts, or slacks with blouses or shirts.

The Peace Corps expects you to behave in a way that not only fosters respect toward you, but reflects well on both the Peace Corps and the United States. Your dress, behavior, and attitude will all contribute to how well the agency is received. As an invited guest, you must be sensitive to the habits, tastes, and taboos of your hosts.

Personal Safety

More detailed information about the Peace Corps' approach to safety is contained in the "Health Care and Safety" chapter, but it is an important issue and cannot be overemphasized. As stated in the Volunteer Handbook, becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer entails certain safety risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment (oftentimes alone), having a limited understanding of local language and culture, and being perceived as well-off are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Many Volunteers experience varying degrees of unwanted attention and harassment. Petty thefts and burglaries are not uncommon, and incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although most Swaziland Volunteers complete their two years of service without incident. The Peace Corps has established procedures and policies designed to help you reduce your risks and enhance your safety and security. These procedures and policies, in addition to safety training, will be provided once you arrive in Swaziland. Using these tools, you are expected to take responsibility for your safety and well-being.

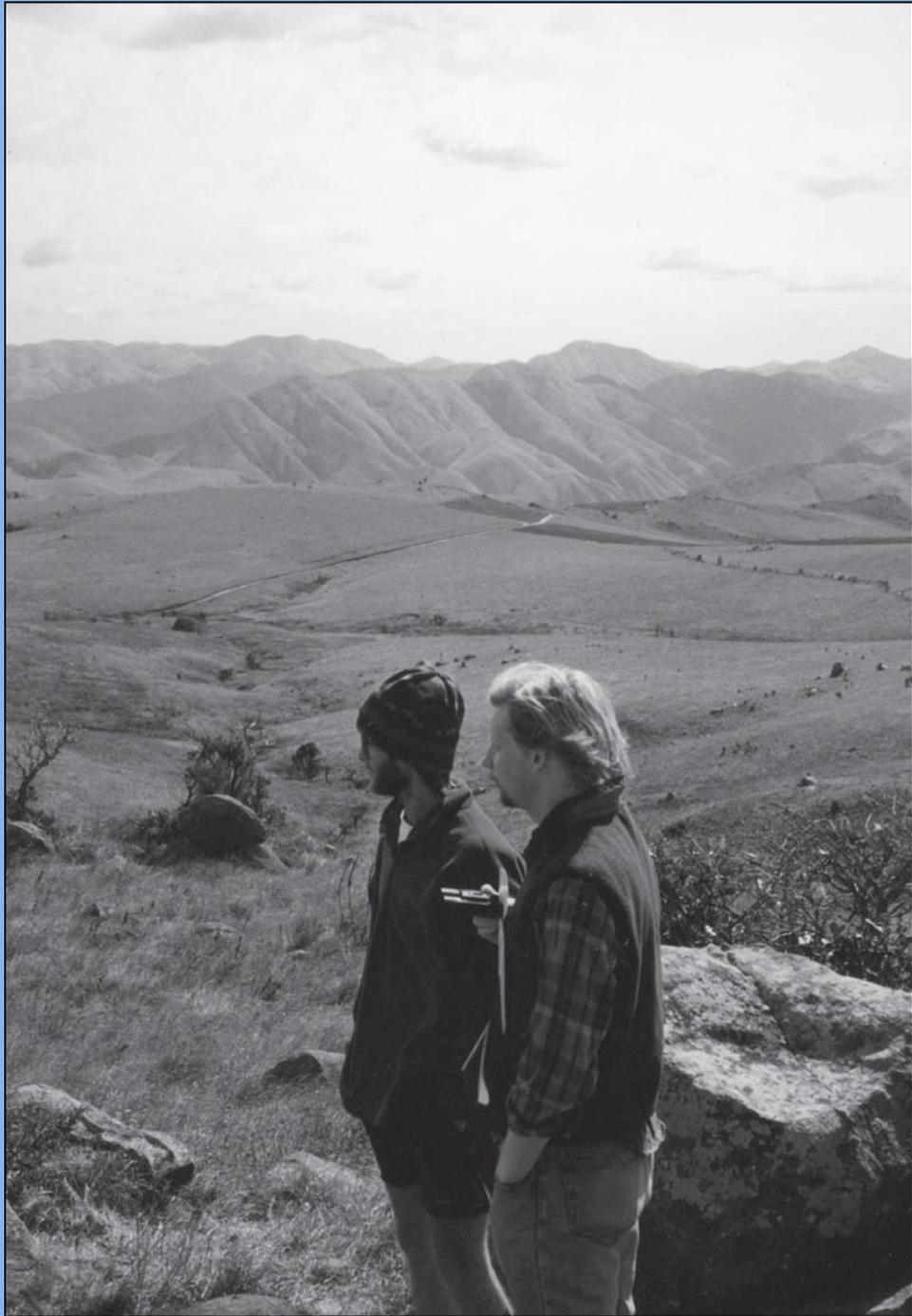
Each staff member at the Peace Corps is committed to providing Volunteers with the support they need to successfully meet the challenges they will face to have a safe, healthy, and productive service. We encourage Volunteers and families to look at our safety and security information on the Peace Corps website at www.peacecorps.gov/safety.

Information on these pages gives messages on Volunteer health and Volunteer safety. There is a section titled "Safety and Security – Our Partnership." Among topics addressed are the risks of serving as a Volunteer, posts' safety support systems, and emergency planning and communications.

Rewards and Frustrations

Invariably, Volunteers who have completed their service speak of the relationships they have established as the highlight of their service. Many speak of how they learned to value and respect a more family- and community-centered way of life and of how they have grown in patience and understanding. Most are able to point to specific contributions they have made to a country's development. In Swaziland, such contributions might include increasing the dialogue about HIV/AIDS; helping improve the level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS among community members, teachers, and students; seeing colleagues try new approaches to nonformal education; and helping a community organize and plan an important project.

The positive reflections are the endpoint of a series of highs and lows that are part and parcel of the process of leaving the United States, arriving in Swaziland, and adapting to the practices and slower pace of life in a new culture. You will have less guidance and direction than you would get in a new job in the United States. Oftentimes you will need to motivate yourself and your counterpart without receiving any feedback on your work. You will need flexibility, maturity, open-mindedness, and resourcefulness to overcome difficulties. Community development work is not a 9 to 5 job. Often there is little structure in place as a result of the devastation of HIV/AIDS in rural areas. If you are willing to respect and become integrated into your community, to work hard at your assignment, and to be open to all that Swaziland has to offer, you will be a successful Volunteer. You, too, will be able to look back positively on the relationships you have built and the small differences you have made by virtue of those relationships.



PEACE CORPS TRAINING

Pre-Service Training

Training is an essential part of Peace Corps service. Our goal is to give you enough skills and information to allow you to live and work effectively in Swaziland. In doing that, we build on the experiences and expertise you bring to the Peace Corps. We anticipate that you will approach your training with an open mind, a desire to learn, and a willingness to be involved. Trainees officially become Volunteers after successful completion of training.

The nine-week training program will provide you with the opportunity to learn new skills and practice them as they apply to Swaziland. You will receive training and orientation in language, cross-cultural communication, development issues, health and personal safety, and technical skills pertinent to your specific assignment. The skills you learn will serve as the foundation upon which you build your experience as a Volunteer in Swaziland.

At the beginning of training, the training staff will outline the training goals that each trainee must reach before becoming a Volunteer and the criteria that will be used to assess achievement of those goals. Evaluation of your performance during training is a continual process based on a dialogue between you and the training staff. The training director, along with the language, technical, and cross-cultural trainers, will work with you toward the highest possible achievement of training goals by providing you feedback throughout training. After successful completion of pre-service training, you will be sworn in as a Volunteer and make the final preparations for departure to your site.

Technical Training

Technical training will prepare you to work in Swaziland by building on the skills you already have and helping you develop new skills in a manner appropriate to the needs of the country. The Peace Corps staff, Swaziland experts, and current Volunteers will conduct the training program. Training places great emphasis on learning how to transfer the skills you have to the community in which you will serve as a Volunteer.

Technical training will include sessions on the general economic and political environment in Swaziland and strategies for working within such a framework. You will review your technical sector's goals and will meet with the Swaziland agencies and organizations that invited the Peace Corps to assist them. You will be supported and evaluated throughout the training to build the confidence and skills you need to undertake your project activities and be a productive member of your community.

Language Training

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will find that language skills are key to personal and professional satisfaction during your service. These skills are critical to your job

performance, they help you integrate into your community, and they can ease your personal adaptation to the new surroundings. Therefore, language training is at the heart of the training program. You must successfully meet minimum language requirements to complete training and become a Volunteer. Swaziland language instructors teach formal language classes five days a week in small groups of four to five people.

Your language training will incorporate a community-based approach. In addition to classroom time, you will be given assignments to work on outside of the classroom and with your host family. The goal is to get you to a point of basic social communication skills so you can practice and develop language skills further once you are at your site. Prior to being sworn in as a Volunteer, you will work on strategies to continue language studies during your service.

Cross-Cultural Training

As part of your pre-service training, you will live with a Swaziland host family. This experience is designed to ease your transition to life at your site. Families go through an orientation conducted by Peace Corps staff to explain the purpose of pre-service training and to assist them in helping you adapt to living in Swaziland. Many Volunteers form strong and lasting friendships with their host families.

Cross-cultural and community development training will help you improve your communication skills and understand your role as a facilitator of development. You will be exposed to topics such as community mobilization, conflict resolution, gender and development, nonformal and adult education strategies, and political structures.

Health Training

During pre-service training, you will be given basic medical training and information. You will be expected to practice preventive health care and to take responsibility for your own health by adhering to all medical policies. Trainees are required to attend all medical sessions. The topics include preventive health measures and minor and major medical issues that you might encounter while in Swaziland. Nutrition, mental health, setting up a safe living compound, and how to avoid HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are also covered.

Safety Training

During the safety training sessions, you will learn how to adopt a lifestyle that reduces your risks at home, at work, and during your travels. You will also learn appropriate, effective strategies for coping with unwanted attention and about your individual responsibility for promoting safety throughout your service.

Additional Trainings During Volunteer Service

In its commitment to institutionalize quality training, the Peace Corps has implemented a training system that provides Volunteers with continual opportunities to examine their commitment to Peace Corps service while increasing their technical and cross-cultural skills. During service, there are usually three training events. The titles and objectives for those trainings are as follows:

- In-service training: Provides an opportunity for Volunteers to upgrade their technical, language, and project development skills while sharing their experiences and reaffirming their commitment after having served for three to six months.
- Midterm conference (done in conjunction with technical sector in-service): Assists Volunteers in reviewing their first year, reassessing their personal and project objectives, and planning for their second year of service.
- Close-of-service conference: Prepares Volunteers for the future after Peace Corps service and reviews their respective projects and personal experiences.

The number, length, and design of these trainings are adapted to country-specific needs and conditions. The key to the training system is that training events are integrated and interrelated, from the pre-departure orientation through the end of your service, and are planned, implemented, and evaluated cooperatively by the training staff, Peace Corps staff, and Volunteers.



YOUR HEALTH CARE AND SAFETY IN SWAZILAND

The Peace Corps' highest priority is maintaining the good health and safety of every Volunteer. Peace Corps medical programs emphasize the preventive, rather than the curative, approach to disease. The Peace Corps in Swaziland maintains a clinic with a full-time medical officer, who takes care of Volunteers' primary health care needs. Additional medical services, such as testing and basic treatment, are also available in Swaziland at local hospitals. If you become seriously ill, you will be transported either to an American-standard medical facility in the region or to the United States.

Health Issues in Swaziland

The most common health concerns in Swaziland are HIV/AIDS and malaria. Because malaria is endemic in the country, you will be required to take antimalarial pills. In addition, you will be vaccinated against hepatitis A and B, meningitis, tetanus, typhoid, yellow fever, influenza, and rabies. Gastrointestinal infections are also common, but can be avoided by regularly washing your hands, thoroughly washing fruits and vegetables, and boiling, filtering, and bleaching drinking water. Swaziland's rate of HIV/AIDS infection is the highest in the world, and HIV/AIDS is a major health and development problem in the region.

Helping You Stay Healthy

The Peace Corps will provide you with all the necessary inoculations, medications, and information to stay healthy. Upon your arrival in Swaziland, you will receive a medical handbook. At the end of training, you will receive a medical kit with supplies to take care of mild illnesses and first aid needs. The contents of the kit are listed later in this chapter.

During pre-service training, you will have access to basic medical supplies through the medical officer. However, you will be responsible for your own supply of prescription drugs and any other specific medical supplies you require, as the Peace Corps will not order these items during training. Please bring a three-month supply of any prescription drugs you use, since they may not be available here and it may take several months for shipments to arrive.

You will have physicals at midservice and at the end of your service. If you develop a serious medical problem during your service, the medical officer in Swaziland will consult with the Office of Medical Services in Washington, D.C. If it is determined that your condition cannot be treated in Swaziland, you may be sent out of the country for further evaluation and care.

Maintaining Your Health

As a Volunteer, you must accept considerable responsibility for your own health. Proper precautions will significantly reduce your risk of serious illness or injury. The adage “An ounce of prevention ...” becomes extremely important in areas where diagnostic and treatment facilities are not up to the standards of the United States. The most important of your responsibilities in Swaziland is to take the following preventive measures:

Insert any specific health issues or challenges for Volunteers in the country

Many illnesses that afflict Volunteers worldwide are entirely preventable if proper food and water precautions are taken. These illnesses include food poisoning, parasitic infections, hepatitis A, dysentery, Guinea worms, tapeworms, and typhoid fever. Your medical officer will discuss specific standards for water and food preparation in Swaziland during pre-service training.

Abstinence is the only certain choice for preventing infection with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. You are taking risks if you choose to be sexually active. To lessen risk, use a condom every time you have sex. Whether your partner is a host country citizen, a fellow Volunteer, or anyone else, do not assume this person is free of HIV/AIDS or other STDs. You will receive more information from the medical officer about this important issue.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to an effective means of birth control to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. Your medical officer can help you decide on the most appropriate method to suit your individual needs. Contraceptive methods are available without charge from the medical officer.

It is critical to your health that you promptly report to the medical office or other designated facility for scheduled immunizations, and that you let the medical officer know immediately of significant illnesses and injuries.

Women’s Health Information

Pregnancy is treated in the same manner as other Volunteer health conditions that require medical attention but also have programmatic ramifications. The Peace Corps is responsible for determining the medical risk and the availability of appropriate medical care if the Volunteer remains in-country. Given the circumstances under which Volunteers live and work in Peace Corps countries, it is rare that the Peace Corps’ medical and programmatic standards for continued service during pregnancy can be met.

If feminine hygiene products are not available for you to purchase on the local market, the Peace Corps medical officer in Swaziland will provide them. If you require a specific product, please bring a three-month supply with you.

Your Peace Corps Medical Kit

The Peace Corps medical officer will provide you with a kit that contains basic items necessary to prevent and treat illnesses that may occur during service. Kit items can be periodically restocked at the medical office.

Medical Kit Contents

Ace bandages	Dental floss
Adhesive tape	Diphenhydramine HCL 25 mg (Benadryl)
American Red Cross First Aid & Safety Handbook	Insect repellent stick (Cutter's)
Antacid tablets (Tums)	Iodine tablets (for water purification)
Antibiotic ointment (Bacitracin/Neomycin/Polymycin B)	Lip balm (Chapstick)
Antiseptic antimicrobial skin cleaner (Hibiclens)	Oral rehydration salts
Band-Aids	Oral thermometer (Fahrenheit)
Butterfly closures	Pseudoephedrine HCL 30 mg (Sudafed)
Calamine lotion	Robitussin-DM lozenges (for cough)
Cepacol lozenges	Scissors
Condoms	Sterile gauze pads
	Tetrahydrozoline eyedrops (Visine)
	Tinactin (antifungal cream)
	Tweezers

Before You Leave: A Medical Checklist

If there has been any change in your health – physical, mental, or dental – since you submitted your examination reports to the Peace Corps, you must immediately notify the Office of Medical Services. Failure to disclose new illnesses, injuries, allergies, or pregnancy can endanger your health and may jeopardize your eligibility to serve.

If your dental exam was done more than a year ago, or if your physical exam is more than two years old, contact the Office of Medical Services to find out whether you need to update your records. If your dentist or Peace Corps dental consultant has recommended that you undergo dental treatment or repair, you must complete that work and make sure your dentist sends requested confirmation reports or X-rays to the Office of Medical Services.

If you wish to avoid having duplicate vaccinations, contact your physician's office to obtain a copy of your immunization record and bring it to your pre-departure orientation. If you have any immunizations prior to Peace Corps service, the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for the cost. The Peace Corps will provide all the immunizations necessary for your overseas assignment, either at your pre-departure orientation or shortly after you arrive in Swaziland. You do not need to begin taking malaria medication prior to departure.

Bring a three-month supply of any prescription or over-the-counter medication you use on a regular basis, including birth control pills. Although the Peace Corps cannot reimburse you for this three-month supply, it will order refills during your service. While awaiting shipment – which can take several months – you will be dependent on your own medication supply. The Peace Corps will not pay for herbal or nonprescribed medications, such as St. John's wort, glucosamine, selenium, or antioxidant supplements.

You are encouraged to bring copies of medical prescriptions signed by your physician. This is not a requirement, but they might come in handy if you are questioned in transit about carrying a three-month supply of prescription drugs.

If you wear eyeglasses, bring two pairs with you – a pair and a spare. If a pair breaks, the Peace Corps will replace them, using the information your doctor in the United States provided on the eyeglasses form during your examination. The Peace Corps discourages you from using contact lenses during your service to reduce your risk of developing a serious infection or other eye disease. Most Peace Corps countries do not have appropriate water and sanitation to support eye care with the use of contact lenses. The Peace Corps will not supply or replace contact lenses or associated solutions unless an ophthalmologist has recommended their use for a specific medical condition and the Peace Corps' Office of Medical Services has given approval.

If you are eligible for Medicare, are over 50 years of age, or have a health condition that may restrict your future participation in health care plans, you may wish to consult an insurance specialist about unique coverage needs before your departure. The Peace Corps will provide all necessary health care from the time you leave for your pre-departure orientation until you complete your service. When you finish, you will be entitled to the post-service health care benefits described in the Peace Corps Volunteer Handbook. You may wish to consider keeping an existing health plan in effect during your service if you think age or pre-existing conditions might prevent you from re-enrolling in your current plan when you return home.



SAFETY AND SECURITY: OUR PARTNERSHIP

Serving as a Volunteer overseas entails certain safety and security risks. Living and traveling in an unfamiliar environment, a limited understanding of the local language and culture, and the perception of being a wealthy American are some of the factors that can put a Volunteer at risk. Property theft and burglaries are not uncommon. Incidents of physical and sexual assault do occur, although almost all Volunteers complete their two years of service without serious personal safety problems.

Beyond knowing that Peace Corps approaches safety and security as a partnership with you, it might be helpful to see how this partnership works. Peace Corps has policies, procedures, and training in place to promote your safety. We depend on you to follow those policies and to put into practice what you have learned. An example of how this works in practice – in this case to help manage the risk of burglary – is:

- Peace Corps assesses the security environment where you will live and work
- Peace Corps inspects the house where you will live according to established security criteria
- Peace Corps provides you with resources to take measures such as installing new locks
- Peace Corps ensures you are welcomed by host country authorities in your new community
- Peace Corps responds to security concerns that you raise
- You lock your doors and windows
- You adopt a lifestyle appropriate to the community where you live
- You get to know neighbors
- You decide if purchasing personal articles insurance is appropriate for you
- You don't change residences before being authorized by Peace Corps
- You communicate concerns that you have to Peace Corps staff

Factors that Contribute to Volunteer Risk

There are several factors that can heighten a Volunteer's risk, many of which are within the Volunteer's control. By far the most common crime that Volunteers experience is theft. Thefts often occur when Volunteers are away from their sites, in crowded locations (such as markets or on public transportation), and when leaving items unattended.

More serious crimes, however, do occasionally occur. Based on information gathered from incident reports worldwide in 2010, many reported incidents could have been avoided through observing mitigation strategies learnt in trainings. PC Swaziland has seen a drastic decrease in violent crime against PCVs over the last two years. Violent crime would consist of physical and sexual assaults, armed robbery and burglary. Non Violent crimes would be theft, threats, vandalism and other types of minor physical assaults.

Risk factors can vary within countries throughout the world that are served by the Peace Corps. A Volunteer in Swaziland may face risks specific to this country in addition to risks associated with living in a developing country. At this point the Royals Swaziland Police Service seem to be winning the fight against crime and PC Swaziland enjoyed very good relations with the local Police service.

Before you depart for Swaziland there are several measures you can take to reduce your risk:

- Leave valuable objects in the U.S.
- Leave copies of important documents and account numbers with someone you trust in the U.S.
- Purchase a hidden money pouch or "dummy" wallet as a decoy
- Purchase personal articles insurance

After you arrive in Swaziland, you will receive more detailed information about common crimes, factors that contribute to Volunteer risk, and local strategies to reduce that risk. For example, Volunteers in Swaziland learn to:

- Choose safe routes and times for travel, and travel with someone trusted by the community whenever possible
- Make sure one's personal appearance is respectful of local customs
- Avoid high-crime areas
- Know the local language to get help in an emergency
- Make friends with local people who are respected in the community
- Limit alcohol consumption

As you can see from this list, you must be willing to work hard and adapt your lifestyle to minimize the potential for being a target for crime. As with anywhere in the world, crime does exist in Swaziland. You can reduce your risk by avoiding situations that place you at risk and by taking precautions. Crime at the village or town level is less frequent than in the large cities; people know each other and generally are less likely to steal from their neighbors. Tourist attractions in large towns are favorite worksites for pickpockets.

The following are other security concerns in Swaziland of which you should be aware:

Insert potential safety risks in the country

While whistles and exclamations may be fairly common on the street, this behavior can be reduced if you dress conservatively, abide by local cultural norms, and respond according to the training you will receive.

Staying Safe: Don't Be a Target for Crime

You must be prepared to take on a large degree of responsibility for your own safety. You can make yourself less of a target, ensure that your home is secure, and develop relationships in your community that will make you an unlikely victim of crime. While the factors that contribute to your risk in Swaziland may be different, in many ways you can do what you would do if you moved to a new city anywhere: Be cautious, check things out, ask questions, learn about your neighborhood, know where the more risky locations are, use common sense, and be aware. You can reduce your vulnerability to crime by integrating into your community, learning the local language, acting responsibly, and abiding by Peace Corps policies and procedures. Serving safely and effectively in Swaziland will require that you accept some restrictions on your current lifestyle.

Support from Staff

If a trainee or Volunteer is the victim of a safety incident, Peace Corps staff is prepared to provide support. All Peace Corps posts have procedures in place to respond to incidents of crime committed against Volunteers. The first priority for all posts in the aftermath of an incident is to ensure the Volunteer is safe and receiving medical treatment as needed. After assuring the safety of the Volunteer, Peace Corps staff response may include reassessing the Volunteer's worksite and housing arrangements and making any adjustments, as needed. In some cases, the nature of the incident may necessitate a site or housing transfer. Peace Corps staff will also assist Volunteers with preserving their rights to pursue legal sanctions against the perpetrators of the crime. It is very important that Volunteers report incidents as they occur, not only to protect their peer Volunteers, but also to preserve the future right to prosecute. Should Volunteers decide later in the process that they want to proceed with the prosecution of their assailant, this option may no longer exist if the evidence of the event has not been preserved at the time of the incident.

Crime Data for Swaziland

Crime data and statistics for Swaziland, which are updated yearly, are available at the following link: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/countrydata/swaziland>

Please take the time to review this important information.

Few Peace Corps Volunteers are victims of serious crimes and crimes that do occur overseas are investigated and prosecuted by local authorities through the local courts system. If you

are the victim of a crime, you will decide if you wish to pursue prosecution. If you decide to prosecute, Peace Corps will be there to assist you. One of our tasks is to ensure you are fully informed of your options and understand how the local legal process works. Peace Corps will help you ensure your rights are protected to the fullest extent possible under the laws of the country.

If you are the victim of a serious crime, you will learn how to get to a safe location as quickly as possible and contact your Peace Corps office. It's important that you notify Peace Corps as soon as you can so Peace Corps can provide you with the help you need.

Volunteer Safety Support in Swaziland

The Peace Corps' approach to safety is a five-pronged plan to help you stay safe during your service and includes the following: information sharing, Volunteer training, site selection criteria, a detailed emergency action plan, and protocols for addressing safety and security incidents. Swaziland's in-country safety program is outlined below.

Delete information and insert text here if your country's safety approach differs from the following, but each country's safety plan should closely resemble what follows.

The Peace Corps/Swaziland office will keep you informed of any issues that may impact Volunteer safety through **information sharing**. Regular updates will be provided in Volunteer newsletters and in memorandums from the country director. In the event of a critical situation or emergency, you will be contacted through the emergency communication network. An important component of the capacity of Peace Corps to keep you informed is your buy-in to the partnership concept with the Peace Corps staff. It is expected that you will do your part in ensuring that Peace Corps staff members are kept apprised of your movements in-country so they are able to inform you.

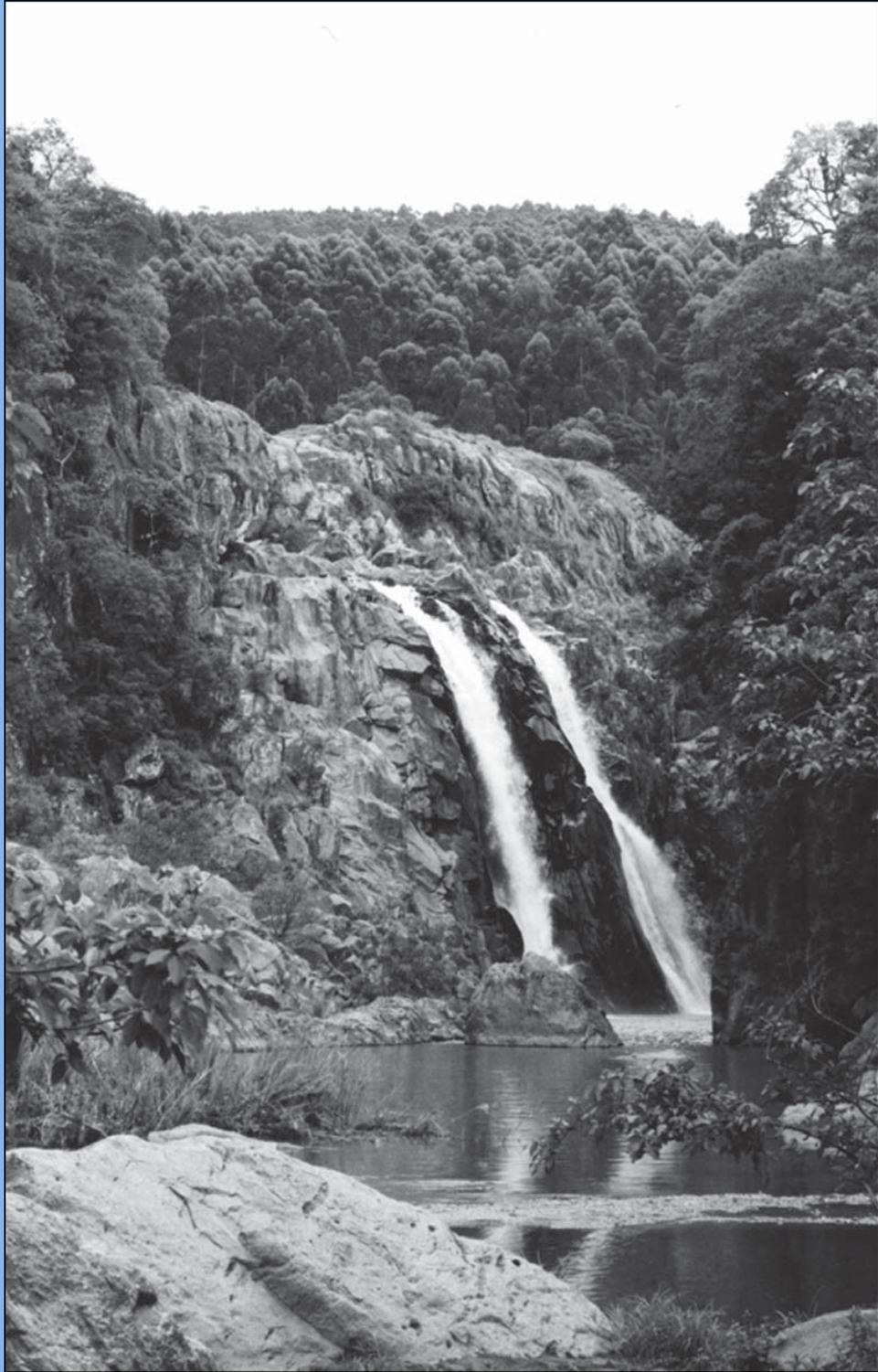
Volunteer training will include sessions on specific safety and security issues in Swaziland. This training will prepare you to adopt a culturally appropriate lifestyle and exercise judgment that promotes safety and reduces risk in your home, at work, and while traveling. Safety training is offered throughout service and is integrated into the language, cross-cultural aspects, health, and other components of training. You will be expected to successfully complete all training competencies in a variety of areas, including safety and security, as a condition of service.

Certain **site selection criteria** are used to determine safe housing for Volunteers before their arrival. The Peace Corps staff works closely with host communities and counterpart agencies to help prepare them for a Volunteer's arrival and to establish expectations of their respective roles in supporting the Volunteer. Each site is inspected before the Volunteer's arrival to ensure placement in appropriate, safe, and secure housing and worksites. Site selection is based, in part, on any relevant site history; access to medical, banking, postal, and other essential services; availability of communications,

transportation, and markets; different housing options and living arrangements; and other Volunteer support needs.

You will also learn about Peace Corps/Swaziland's **detailed emergency action plan**, which is implemented in the event of civil or political unrest or a natural disaster. When you arrive at your site, you will complete and submit a site locator form with your address, contact information, and a map to your house. If there is a security threat, you will gather with other Volunteers in Swaziland at predetermined locations until the situation is resolved or the Peace Corps decides to evacuate.

Finally, in order for the Peace Corps to be fully responsive to the needs of Volunteers, it is imperative that Volunteers immediately report any security incident to the Peace Corps office. The Peace Corps has established protocols for **addressing safety and security incidents** in a timely and appropriate manner, and it collects and evaluates safety and security data to track trends and develop strategies to minimize risks to future Volunteers.



DIVERSITY AND CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES

In fulfilling its mandate to share the face of America with host countries, the Peace Corps is making special efforts to assure that all of America's richness is reflected in the Volunteer corps. More Americans of color are serving in today's Peace Corps than at any time in recent history. Differences in race, ethnic background, age, religion, and sexual orientation are expected and welcomed among our Volunteers. Part of the Peace Corps' mission is to help dispel any notion that Americans are all of one origin or race and to establish that each of us is as thoroughly American as the other despite our many differences.

Our diversity helps us accomplish that goal. In other ways, however, it poses challenges. In Swaziland, as in other Peace Corps host countries, Volunteers' behavior, lifestyle, background, and beliefs are judged in a cultural context very different from their own. Certain personal perspectives or characteristics commonly accepted in the United States may be quite uncommon, unacceptable, or even repressed in Swaziland.

Outside of Swaziland's capital, residents of rural communities have had relatively little direct exposure to other cultures, races, religions, and lifestyles. What people view as typical American behavior or norms may be a misconception, such as the belief that all Americans are rich and have blond hair and blue eyes. The people of Swaziland are justly known for their generous hospitality to foreigners; however, members of the community in which you will live may display a range of reactions to cultural differences that you present.

To ease the transition and adapt to life in Swaziland, you may need to make some temporary, yet fundamental compromises in how you present yourself as an American and as an individual. For example, female trainees and Volunteers may not be able to exercise the independence available to them in the United States; political discussions need to be handled with great care; and some of your personal beliefs may best remain undisclosed. You will need to develop techniques and personal strategies for coping with these and other limitations. The Peace Corps staff will lead diversity and sensitivity discussions during pre-service training and will be on call to provide support, but the challenge ultimately will be your own.

Overview of Diversity in Swaziland

The Peace Corps staff in Swaziland recognizes the adjustment issues that come with diversity and will endeavor to provide support and guidance. During pre-service training, several sessions will be held to discuss diversity and coping mechanisms. We look forward to having male and female Volunteers from a variety of races, ethnic groups, ages, religions, and sexual orientations, and hope that you will become part of a diverse group of Americans who take pride in supporting one another and demonstrating the richness of American culture.

What Might a Volunteer Face?

Possible Issues for Female Volunteers

Men and women are expected to fulfill distinct roles and responsibilities in Swazi culture, and women are traditionally regarded as members of a legal minority. In rural areas especially, female Volunteers may find extremely conservative attitudes regarding gender equality. For example, a Swazi woman might be expected to bow to the ground before her husband or male elders; a strong and visual demonstration of the power disparity between the sexes. Many Volunteers have difficulty reconciling their personal values with the severe gender inequality entrenched in traditional Swazi culture. This inequality affects both women and men, personally and professionally, and should be given careful consideration as you decide whether or not to accept your invitation to serve here. Likewise, the behavior of female Volunteers is scrutinized or criticized more often than is the behavior of male Volunteers. Although the Peace Corps encourages understanding of and sensitivity toward other cultures, it may occasionally be necessary to explain or defend why you believe something or behave a certain way. In addition, you may often be asked about your marital status and receive marriage proposals, professions of love, and other unwanted attention from men.

Possible Issues for Volunteers of Color

Most Swazis in cities and towns are aware of the different racial and ethnic groups that exist in the United States, but people in rural areas are not likely to have this level of awareness. Volunteers who are African, Asian, or Hispanic American may not be recognized as Americans. African Americans may be expected to learn local languages more quickly and may be more readily accepted into the culture than other Volunteers. On the other hand, they may be less readily accepted because of their Western cultural heritage. Asian Americans may be expected to exhibit stereotypical behavior Swazis have observed in films, which is sometimes referred to as the “kung fu syndrome.” In addition, the presence of Asian merchants in the country may have an impact on how Asian-American Volunteers are perceived or treated. Over time, most Volunteers find that these stereotypes diminish as people get to know them, although negative attention persists while traveling outside their communities.

Possible Issues for Senior Volunteers

In Swaziland, older members of society are viewed and treated with a great deal of respect. Younger Volunteers may have to work harder than their older colleagues to be accepted as professionals. Swazi counterparts may be surprised by the amount of energy and physical fitness demonstrated by senior Volunteers. They may also be curious or puzzled about why a senior female Volunteer seems to have no spouse or children, even if she has the pictures to prove otherwise. Because most Volunteers are under 30, it may be difficult for older

Volunteers to find friends and support among the most accessible group—other Peace Corps Volunteers.

Possible Issues for Married Couple Volunteers

Married couples who serve together in the Peace Corps are in a unique situation. While they benefit from having a constant companion to provide support, they may have differing expectations of service. One spouse may be more enthusiastic, homesick, or adaptable than the other. Spouses often experience differing levels of language ability, acceptance by their community, or job satisfaction. A wife may be expected by Swazis to perform certain domestic chores and may find herself in a less independent role than she is accustomed to. A husband may feel cultural pressure to act as the dominant member in the relationship and to make decisions without considering his wife's views.

Possible Issues for Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Volunteers

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual Volunteers should know that Swaziland has a very conservative society. Homosexuality certainly exists in Swaziland but not with the same level of acceptance as in the United States. Local media frequently portrays homosexuality in a very negative light. Most Swazi homosexuals and bisexuals are likely to have migrated to the larger cities, while most Volunteers are posted in rural sites. Because of Swazi cultural norms, you will not be able to be open about your sexual orientation in your community. You may serve for two years without meeting another homosexual or bisexual Volunteer, and there may be little support for your sexual orientation within the Volunteer social scene. Lesbians, like all American women, may have to deal with constant questions about boyfriends, marriage, and sex, while gay men may have to deal with machismo: talk of sexual conquests, girl watching, and dirty jokes.

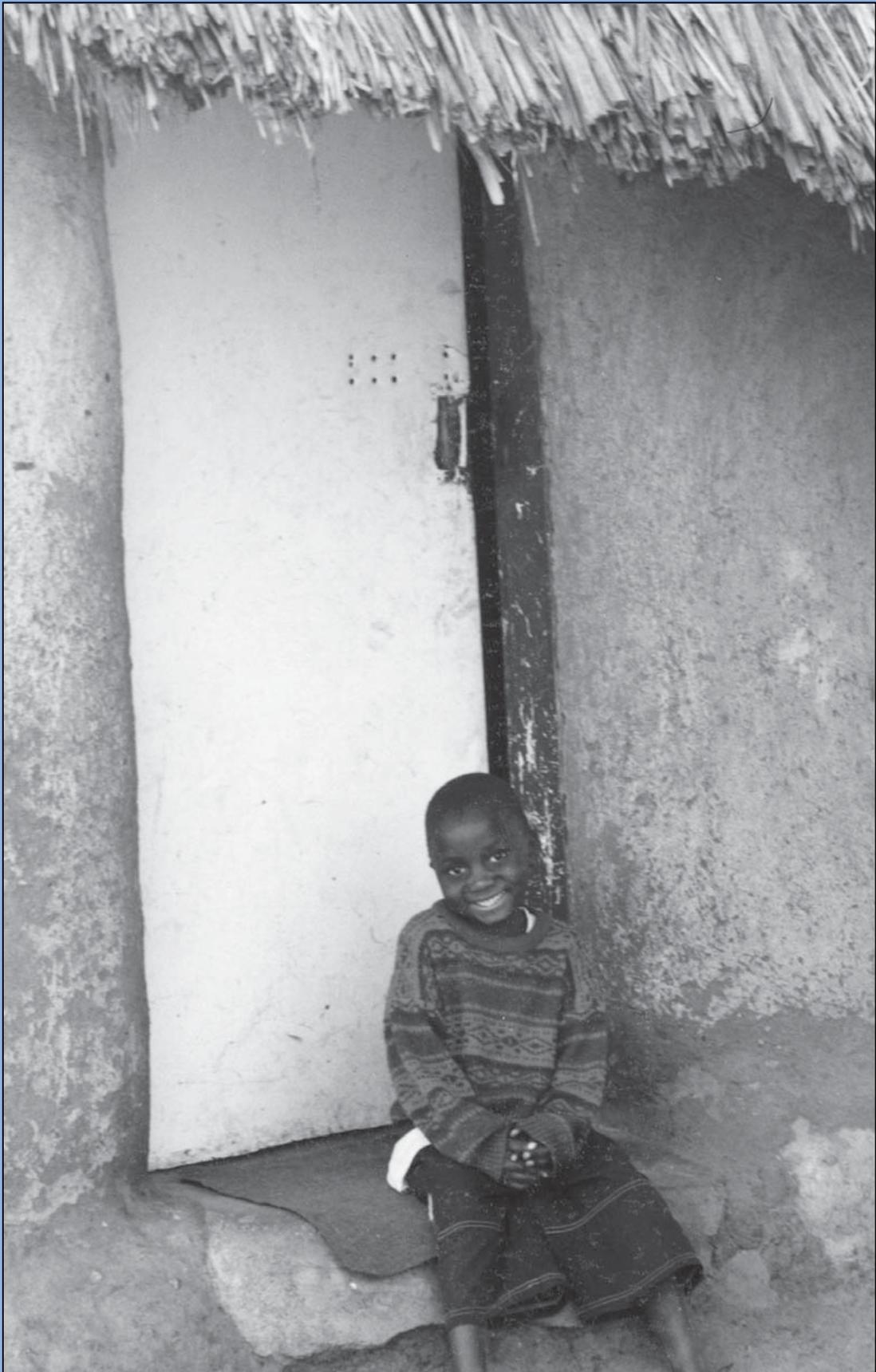
A recommended resource for support and advice prior to and during your service is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender U.S. Peace Corps Alumni website at www.lgbrpcv.org.

Possible Religious Issues for Volunteers

The vast majority of Swazis have some religious affiliation and attend church regularly. Both Christian and non-Christian Volunteers may be expected to attend church with members of their community. You may be asked if you are Christian or why you do not belong to a certain Christian denomination, if you have been “saved,” and other questions you may consider to be intrusive or prejudicial. Although this behavior may take some getting used to, you are sure to find effective ways to cope with these challenges and gain a deeper understanding of the Swazi people.

Possible Issues for Volunteers With Disabilities

As part of the medical clearance process, the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services determined that you were physically and emotionally capable, with or without reasonable accommodations, to perform a full tour of Volunteer service in Swaziland without unreasonable risk of harm to yourself or interruption of service. The Peace Corps/Swaziland staff will work with disabled Volunteers to make reasonable accommodations for them in training, housing, jobsites, or other areas to enable them to serve safely and effectively.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This list has been compiled by Volunteers serving in Swaziland and is based on their experience. Use it as an informal guide in making your own list, bearing in mind that each experience is individual. There is no perfect list! You obviously cannot bring everything on the list, so consider those items that make the most sense to you personally and professionally. You can always have things sent to you later. As you decide what to bring, keep in mind that you have a 100-pound weight limit on baggage. And remember, you can get almost everything you need in Swaziland.

How much luggage am I allowed to bring to Swaziland?

Most airlines have baggage size and weight limits and assess charges for transport of baggage that exceeds those limits. The Peace Corps has its own size and weight limits and will not pay the cost of transport for baggage that exceeds these limits. The Peace Corps' allowance is two checked pieces of luggage with combined dimensions of both pieces not to exceed 107 inches (length + width + height) and a carry-on bag with dimensions of no more than 45 inches. Checked baggage should not exceed 100 pounds total with a maximum weight of 50 pounds for any one bag.

Peace Corps Volunteers are not allowed to take pets, weapons, explosives, radio transmitters (shortwave radios are permitted), automobiles, or motorcycles to their overseas assignments. Do not pack flammable materials or liquids such as lighter fluid, cleaning solvents, hair spray, or aerosol containers. This is an important safety precaution.

What is the electric current in Swaziland?

The electrical current is 220 volts, 50 cycles. If you bring any American-manufactured electrical items with you, you will need a small power converter set (with plug adapters and a transformer).



You must verify the electrical rating on your devices before you get here. If you plug something into the wall that isn't rated properly, your device will likely be permanently damaged and unusable.

To verify this device, look at the wall adapter or documentation for your device. If it looks similar to these pictures, and is rated for 220volts / 50HZ you are ok. If you have hesitation, or are unable to tell, ask a friend before bringing extra weight for nothing.

You may or may not have electricity at your site; therefore, you may want to wait to purchase electrical appliances until you know your particular living situation. Electricity is very expensive to have as a volunteer, even if you have electricity, you may consider reducing the number of items you bring that require electricity. The sun is very powerful and solar powered devices will save you money over the course of your service.

How much money should I bring?

Volunteers are expected to live at the same level as the people in their community. You will be given a settling-in allowance and a monthly living allowance, which should cover your expenses. Volunteers often wish to bring additional money for vacation travel to other countries. Credit cards and traveler's checks are preferable to cash. If you choose to bring extra money, bring the amount that will suit your own travel plans and needs.

The ATMs in the capital can be used for cash advances from a credit card, but you will not have access to them during training. Additionally you will not have access to a money exchange facility during training, so if you do bring extra cash, have it converted into South African Rand at your earliest convenience. South African Rand bills are accepted throughout Swaziland.

When can I take vacation and have people visit me?

Each Volunteer accrues two vacation days per month of service (excluding training). Leave may not be taken during training, the first three months of service, or the last three months of service, except in conjunction with an authorized emergency leave. Family and friends are welcome to visit you after pre-service training and the first three months of service as long as their stay does not interfere with your work. Extended stays at your site are not encouraged and may require permission from your country director. The Peace Corps is not able to provide your visitors with visa, medical, or travel assistance.

Will my belongings be covered by insurance?

The Peace Corps does not provide insurance coverage for personal effects; Volunteers are ultimately responsible for the safekeeping of their personal belongings. However, you can purchase personal property insurance before you leave. If you wish, you may contact your own insurance company; additionally, insurance application forms will be provided, and we encourage you to consider them carefully. Volunteers should not ship or take valuable items overseas. Jewelry, watches, radios, cameras, and expensive appliances are subject to loss, theft, and breakage, and in many places, satisfactory maintenance and repair services are not available. If you take personal property insurance out on any of your belongings, keep a person in the US informed about the details, as coordinating with your Insurance company

if you have an issue will be difficult from Swaziland due to time zones, lack of Internet connectivity, and the expense of international calls.

Do I need an international driver's license?

Volunteers in Swaziland do not need an international driver's license because they are prohibited from operating privately owned motorized vehicles. Most urban travel is by bus or taxi. Rural travel ranges from buses and minibuses to trucks, bicycles, and lots of walking. On very rare occasions, a Volunteer may be asked to drive a sponsor's vehicle, but this can occur only with prior written permission from the country director. Should this occur, the Volunteer may obtain a local driver's license. A U.S. driver's license will facilitate the process, so bring it with you just in case.

What should I bring as gifts for Swaziland friends and my host family?

This is not a requirement. A token of friendship is sufficient. Some gift suggestions include knickknacks for the house; pictures, books, or calendars of American scenes; souvenirs from your area; hard candies that will not melt or spoil; or photos to give away. It is suggested to keep immediate gift-giving to a very limited minimum at first. Giving too many things has connotations that may hinder your service while in a resource-poor environment.

Where will my site assignment be when I finish training and how isolated will I be?

Peace Corps trainees are not assigned to individual sites until after they have completed pre-service training. This gives Peace Corps staff the opportunity to assess each trainee's technical and language skills prior to assigning sites, in addition to finalizing site selections with their ministry counterparts. If feasible, you may have the opportunity to provide input on your site preferences, including geographical location, distance from other Volunteers, and living conditions. However, keep in mind that many factors influence the site selection process and that the Peace Corps cannot guarantee placement where you would ideally like to be. Most Volunteers live in small towns or in rural villages and are usually within one hour from another Volunteer. Some sites require a 6- to 8-hour drive from the capital. There are several volunteers placed in each of the four regions within Swaziland.

How can my family contact me in an emergency?

The Peace Corps' Office of Special Services (OSS) provides assistance in handling emergencies affecting trainees and Volunteers or their families. Before leaving the United States, instruct your family to notify the Office of Special Services immediately if an emergency arises, such as a serious illness or death of a family member. During normal business hours, the number for the Office of Special Services is 855.855.1961, then select option 2; or directly at 202-692-1470. After normal business hours and on weekends and holidays, the OSS duty officer can be reached at the above number. For non-emergency questions, your family can get information from your country desk staff at the Peace Corps by calling 855.855.1961.

Can I call home from Swaziland?

International phone service to and from Swaziland is reasonably good in cities, although calls to the United States can be very expensive. You may not have quick or easy access to a landline telephone. Therefore, we recommend letter writing and setting up periodic calls from home in advance for special occasions. Half way through training, you may acquire a cell phone. Certain applications such as Whatsapp for Smart-phones are popular in Swaziland are an inexpensive way to stay in touch.

Should I bring a cellular phone with me?

Probably not. A cell phone purchased in the United States will not function using the local cellular service unless it is GSM 900 compatible. Cellular phone service is growing in Swaziland although all regions are not covered. Peace Corps/Swaziland provides Volunteers with funds to purchase a cellular phone following completion of pre-service training. If you have an unlocked smart phone that operates on a 3G network and is capable of using a SIM card, it may be useful to consider this. The phone must be unlocked and capable of switching SIM cards to function within the country. Check with your current service provider to find out the steps necessary prior to bringing your phone. Unlocked smart phones are available for purchase within Swaziland.

Will there be email and Internet access? Should I bring my computer?

Internet service is growing in Swaziland, and Internet cafes can be found in most large towns. Many Volunteers bring a laptop if they already own one, but do not recommend buying a new one to bring. If you decide to bring a laptop computer, you will be responsible for insuring and maintaining it. The Peace Corps will not replace stolen computers and strongly encourages those who bring them to get personal property insurance. Because of the high value of laptops, owners significantly increase their risk of becoming a victim of crime.



WELCOME LETTERS FROM COUNTRY VOLUNTEERS

Dear Invitee,

Congratulations, you have been selected to come and serve in Peace Corps Swaziland! By now, you've hopefully located Swaziland on a map – unless you know your African geography better than I did – and have read everything Google has to offer on the subject of Swaziland. If so, you've seen pictures of the striking beauty we have here. But more than just seeing new places in the world, Peace Corps service is about the little things – learning a new language, perfecting the art of water purification and conservation, learning to get around on crazy public transportation, and surviving run-ins with insects you could never have imagined. You will get a true taste of the country of Swaziland and the continent of Africa. You will make relationships that will impact you deeply, and learn lessons that you won't soon forget. All these encounters, experiences, flavors, fears, conversations, failures, and successes are what will make the next two years some of the most unforgettable of your life. More than any one thing, the sum of the experience will make living and serving in Swaziland worth it.

Although you'll hear this in training, we encourage you to just soak it all in. For the next two years, your job is just to live, breathe, eat, and just be with the people in your community. Get rid of any expectations you might have about what you can accomplish and the myriad projects already being planned in your head. Instead, get to know your community on a real level and try to truly understand where they are coming from and where they wish to go. Forget your concept of time as soon as you can, because whether you do or not, Swaziland will give you a proper education on 'African Time'. There's no need to be in a rush anyway. You have two years.

While we all come with the best intentions, don't think you're here to 'save the world'. If it were that easy, someone would have done it by now. And by thinking like that, you are only setting yourself up for failure. Rather, think of how each conversation, each greeting, and each workshop you do, each tutoring session is changing the world in a small, yet incredibly significant way. In doing this, you might begin to grasp the amazing impact we are having here, even when it doesn't seem like it. I don't think any of us will come anywhere close to realizing the full measure of our impact here.

Swaziland is a place that we all hope you will come to love. It is an amazing country full of remarkable landscapes, beautiful people, a vibrant culture, but also home to plenty of contradictions. It is in the grips of a devastating HIV epidemic and many questions surrounding its potential place in the world. All these questions can simultaneously exhaust you and challenge you, but also inspire you and change you in ways you never dreamed of. And that's part of the true beauty of the next two years: We came here to impact Swaziland, but many of us will leave completely changed by it. In the midst of all

the teaching and sharing, we come away learning just as much, if not more, than we have given.

In the end, remember to have fun! They always say your service is what you make of it, and that has proven true to us in these past two years. This is one of the most amazing opportunities you'll ever have to grow, learn, teach, share, and truly create change in your world and in yourself. And in the midst of all that, you will create lasting friendships and learn what it truly means to have a "home" halfway across the globe. Happy packing and see you soon!

Peace

Lewis Kiker

PACKING LIST

This list has been compiled by Volunteers serving in Swaziland and is based on their experience. Use it as an informal guide in making your own list, bearing in mind that each experience is individual. There is no perfect list! You obviously cannot bring everything on the list, so consider those items that make the most sense to you personally and professionally. You can always have things sent to you later. As you decide what to bring, keep in mind that you have an 100-pound weight limit on baggage. And remember, you can get almost everything you need in Swaziland.

Note: This list serves as a synopsis of a more detailed packing list written by Volunteers. If you choose to accept your invitation to Swaziland, you will receive the detailed version approximately one month before staging.

General Clothing

The climate in Swaziland varies according to both the altitude and the season. You should be prepared for temperatures ranging from 40 to 100 degrees Fahrenheit. You will be expected to dress professionally for your job. You will wash clothes by hand in cold water, in a basin or bucket, and hang them to dry on a line or the nearest fence. White clothes soil easily, so neutral colors are best for hiding dirt. Clothes made of rayon or nylon are good because they dry quickly and do not need to be ironed, but lightweight cotton fabrics are best for the hot climate. It does get cold in the winter, so bring some warm clothes too.

- Warm coat or jacket (fleece works well and can be layered)
- Waterproof rain jacket
- Jeans (for weekends and travel)
- Two or three sweaters (lightweight cotton and wool)
- T-shirts (in neutral colors)
- Baseball cap or sun hat
- One-piece swimsuit
- Sportswear
- Good socks (four to six pairs)

For Men

- Three or four pairs of dress slacks or khakis
- Three or four cotton dress shirts (both long- and short-sleeved)
- Several casual collared shirts, such as polo or golf shirts
- One sports coat for special events

- One or two ties
- Underwear and socks

For Women

- Three to five dresses or skirts (knee length or longer)
- Two or three pairs of trousers or dressy slacks
- Five to seven blouses and other tops (short- or long-sleeved)
- Tights to wear with skirts in colder weather
- Plenty of cotton underwear and bras, including a sports bra
- Two slippers (knee- and ankle-length)

Shoes

People who wear larger sizes (12-plus for men and 10-plus for women) should bring an extra pair or two of shoes and sandals, as larger sizes are difficult to find in Swaziland.

- Comfortable dress shoes for work
- Athletic shoes
- Waterproof hiking boots
- Sandals (e.g., Tevas or Birkenstocks)

Personal Hygiene and Toiletry Items

All the little things you need to keep your life running smoothly are available locally at reasonable prices, albeit in a limited selection. You should bring enough toiletries to at least get you through pre-service training (including feminine hygiene products). Remember to bring a three-month supply of any prescription drugs you take, to cover you until the Peace Corps medical unit can order them.

Kitchen

You can buy most kitchen supplies in Swaziland (e.g., dishes, pots, glasses and utensils). Peace Corps will provide you with minimal set of utensils before you go to your training homestead. There is a variety of spices and foodstuffs available in the larger towns, but you will not have much access during training. However, you might consider bringing the following items:

- Plastic storage bags and containers (these can be purchased locally in larger towns)
- Can opener and vegetable peeler
- Sturdy water bottle (e.g., Nalgene)
- Cookbook or recipes

- Small packages of your favorite condiments, spices, sauce mixes, soft-drink mixes, etc.

Miscellaneous

- Watch (durable, water-resistant, and inexpensive)
- Reliable alarm clock
- Small sewing kit
- Solar shower (much easier than “bucket bathing” with a cup and washbasin)
- Radio (FM/AM and shortwave), iPod, CD player, and favorite music
- Camera and film
- Binoculars
- Swiss army knife or Leatherman tool
- Lightweight sleeping bag (often needed when visiting other Volunteers or staying at back-packer lodges)
- Backpack
- Small tent (if you enjoy camping)
- Pictures of your hometown, U.S. historical sites, family and friends
- Small flashlight and extra bulbs and/or headlamp
- Guidebooks on the region
- Hobby materials like journals, sketching pads, pencils, etc.
- Musical instruments
- Craft supplies for projects with schoolchildren
- Games (Scrabble, cards, chess, Frisbee, etc.)

PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

The following list consists of suggestions for you to consider as you prepare to live outside the United States for two years. Not all items will be relevant to everyone, and the list does not include everything you should make arrangements for.

Family

- Notify family that they can call the Peace Corps' Counseling and Outreach Unit at any time if there is a critical illness or death of a family member (24-hour telephone number: 1-855-855-1961, then press 2; or directly at 202-692-1470).
- Give the Peace Corps' On the Home Front handbook to family and friends.

Passport/Travel

- Forward to the Peace Corps travel office all paperwork for the Peace Corps passport and visas.
- Verify that your luggage meets the size and weight limits for international travel.
- Obtain a personal passport if you plan to travel after your service ends. (Your Peace Corps passport will expire three months after you finish your service, so if you plan to travel longer, you will need a regular passport.)

Medical/Health

- Complete any needed dental and medical work.
- If you wear glasses, bring two pairs.
- Arrange to bring a three-month supply of all medications (including birth control pills) you are currently taking.

Insurance

- Make arrangements to maintain life insurance coverage.
- Arrange to maintain supplemental health coverage while you are away. (Even though the Peace Corps is responsible for your health care during Peace Corps service overseas, it is advisable for people who have pre-existing conditions to arrange for the continuation of their supplemental health coverage. If there is a lapse in coverage, it is often difficult and expensive to be reinstated.)
- Arrange to continue Medicare coverage if applicable.

Personal Papers

- Bring a copy of your certificate of marriage or divorce.

Voting

- Register to vote in the state of your home of record. (Many state universities consider voting and payment of state taxes as evidence of residence in that state.)
- Obtain a voter registration card and take it with you overseas.
- Arrange to have an absentee ballot forwarded to you overseas.

Personal Effects

- Purchase personal property insurance to extend from the time you leave your home for service overseas until the time you complete your service and return to the United States.

Financial Management

- Keep a bank account in your name in the U.S.
- Obtain student loan deferment forms from the lender or loan service.
- Execute a Power of Attorney for the management of your property and business.
- Arrange for deductions from your readjustment allowance to pay alimony, child support, and other debts through the Office of Volunteer Financial Operations at 855.855.1961, extension 1770.
- Place all important papers—mortgages, deeds, stocks, and bonds—in a safe deposit box or with an attorney or other caretaker.

CONTACTING PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS

This list of numbers will help connect you with the appropriate office at Peace Corps headquarters to answer various questions. You can use the toll-free number and extension or dial directly using the local numbers provided. Be sure to leave the toll-free number and extensions with your family so they can contact you in the event of an emergency.

Peace Corps Headquarters Toll-free Number: 855.855.1961, Press 1 or ext. # (see below)

Peace Corps' Mailing Address: Peace Corps Headquarters
1111 20th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20526

Questions About:	Staff:	Toll-Free Ext:	Direct/Local #:
Responding to an Invitation	Office of Placement	x1840	202.692.1840
Country Information	Gregory Pachuta Desk Officer / (Swaziland & South Africa) swaziland@peacecorps.gov	X2197	202.692.2197
Plane Tickets, Passports, Visas, or other travel matters:	CWT SATO Travel	x1170	202.692.1170
Legal Clearance	Office of Placement	x1840	202.692.1840
Medical Clearance & Forms Processing (includes dental)	Screening Nurse	x1500	202.692.1500
Medical Reimbursements (handled by a subcontractor)	Seven Corners	N/A	202.692.1538 800.335.0611
Loan Deferments, Taxes, Financial Operations	Office Of Volunteer and PSC Financial Services	x1770	202.692.1770
Readjustment Allowance Withdrawals, Power of Attorney, Staging (Pre-Departure Orientation), and Reporting Instructions	Office of Staging <i>Note: You will receive comprehensive information (hotel and flight arrangements) three to five weeks prior to departure. This information is not available sooner.</i>	x1865	202.692.1865
Family Emergencies (to get information to a Volunteer overseas) 24 hours	Office of Special Services	x1470	202.692.1470