

Peace Corps Times

July — December 2015

From Gender-Blind to Gender Mainstreaming

Integrating and promoting gender equality
in international development

BROs Need Camps Too

Promoting gender equality at boys' camps

Going For Gold

Vying for medals at the
Special Olympics World Games



Top Bloggers

BRING IT HOME

This year, the Peace Corps recognized 10 Volunteer bloggers with eight blogs for the third annual Blog It Home contest. The winners, selected by public vote from 20 finalists in August, traveled to Washington, D.C., from October 4-10, to continue sharing their host country cultures with Americans.

During their tour, the winners visited Voice of America for an interview, presented at the White House, and spoke at a recruiting event at The George Washington University, a culture-sharing event at D.C. public schools, and a Let Girls Learn event for International Day of the Girl Child with local girls.



Top bloggers: Stephen Pope (Mozambique, back row, from left), Robert Hall (Morocco), Katrina Johnston (Ethiopia), Brandon Hebert (Senegal), and Brent Moser (Zambia); Sarah Jean Bryce (the Philippines, front row, from left), Julie Feng (Morocco), Dominique Gebru (Jamaica), and Bonnie Moser (Zambia). Not pictured: Jonathan Salamanca (Ecuador)

The top blogs shared about everything from trying balut (fertilized duck egg) in the Philippines to female permagardeners in Mozambique, from quilt-making in Zambia to speaking Patois in Jamaica.

From the 400 blog submissions, 20 finalists were chosen for a public vote on Facebook from August 3-10. The finalists garnered 20,000 votes and 670,000 people viewed the Blog It Home voting.

Finalists were selected based on cross-cultural sharing, cultural richness, and quality of photos and writing. To read the winning blogs, visit peacecorps.gov/blogithome.

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Editor's Letter

For this issue of Peace Corps Times, we look at gender in international development—and barely scratch the surface. Gender affects nearly everything we do. Every day, all of us face expectations of what we should or should not do based on how someone perceives our gender and how we perceive it ourselves. In places where there is greater gender disparity, the impact can be heartbreaking. From health care to climate change impact, it's hard to know where to focus, how to move forward to affect change. Do you start with education, legal standing, economic opportunity, health care, violence, or political representation? In resource-limited areas, how do you make sure that you are not shortchanging one for another, overcompensating for past mistakes?

When one begins to explore the disparities, then their impact, it's hard not to be distracted by how they came to be. How does a society determine the value of male over female, boys over girls? What societal structures are in place to perpetuate that? More importantly, how do we change them—at home and in our host countries and communities? And how do we change behavior in a culturally appropriate way? How do we say, it's not OK to hit your wife? How do we say, it's not OK to marry pre-adolescent girls? How do we say, sexual assault—against women, girls, men, or boys— is not OK? How do we, working in the international development sphere, affect positive change without disrupting host country cultures?

The short answer is education. But also, analysis and dialogue. We must continue to look at how societies and laws treat women, girls, men, and boys disparately, consider the impacts, talk about how to remedy problems, then put action plans in place. We have to involve everyone as it affects all of us, albeit in vastly different ways. We must pursue both female empowerment and gender-mainstreaming.

At the end of September, the United Nations ratified its Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, which build on the Millennium Development Goals released in 2000. While acknowledging that progress has been made toward gender parity, the U.N. notes that women and girls “are often more deeply impacted than men and boys by poverty, climate change, food insecurity, lack of health care, and global economic crises.” As in the MDG, the SDG contains one goal devoted specifically to gender parity, Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. But, similar to the Peace Corps' approach to gender and development as a cross-sector programming priority, the U.N. asserts that women and girls must be considered in—and will be key to achieving—each of the 17 goals.

To quote Secretary of State John Kerry, “No country can get ahead if it leaves half of its people behind.”

—Sarah Blazucki
Editor

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Agency News

U.S. Global AIDS Czar on PEPFAR Progress

Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet welcomed U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Ambassador and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy Deborah Birx, head of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), for a town hall-style meeting at Peace Corps headquarters August 6. At the event, Birx and Hessler-Radelet discussed PEPFAR's progress and reiterated the importance of controlling the epidemic.

Birx also thanked Peace Corps Volunteers for their work in the fight against HIV, emphasizing the role the agency plays in creating sustainable, community-led responses to HIV in countries around the world.

"Before PEPFAR and the global response," Birx said, "nearly 30 million people were living with HIV and 10,000 new HIV infections happened globally in 2001. The infection rate was 20–30 percent, and half the community would be living with AIDS."

"Since 2003, PEPFAR has saved millions of lives. 7.7 million people are on life-saving ART [anti-retroviral therapy]. More than 1 million babies have been born HIV-free. 6.5 million men have received [circumcision] services. There has been care and support for more than 5 million orphans."

Birx lauded the use of community- and country-level data to track HIV incidence and put appropriate programs in place.

Birx gave several examples—Haiti, Malawi, Kenya, and Uganda—where data mapping has helped align resources with disease burden, even when budgets are flat.

"We look at data maps—where HIV is—then look at services. Do they match up? Is our programming aligned where our problem is greatest?"

In Haiti, Birx said that data mapping analysis helped identify one county with high disease burden that wasn't getting services.

"We wouldn't have found that without doing the data visualization and analysis," she said. "Even though we thought we were reaching every place—we've been in Haiti for 12 years."

Birx also compared the data of Malawi, which has few doctors and nurses, and Kenya, which has more, and credited Volunteers with helping to create health cadres in the former.

Even though the budget has plateaued, the country said it wasn't going to wait to address the HIV crisis, Birx said.

"Malawi has been able to create more coverage of services" using health cadres and with Volunteers working in communities and schools to focus on prevention for young women and getting pregnant women living with HIV into treatment.

Birx said the goal was to reduce infections by 40–50 percent, even in resource-limited areas.

"We know we can do it," she said. "For communities that are easy to reach, we have 100 percent coverage. This site-level data analysis allows us to come to a different place."

Birx said we have the knowledge and resources to end AIDS as a public health threat.

"We have a unique opportunity, and the responsibility to execute it," she said. "We have the science, the tools, people in the communities, and people on the ground."

40-Year Application Record Set

Nearly 23,000 people applied for Peace Corps service in fiscal year 2015, breaking a 40-year application record. Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet announced the news on the steps of the University of Michigan student union, 55 years after then-Sen. John F. Kennedy first challenged students to serve their country in the cause of peace.

The application record marks a 32 percent increase over applications submitted in fiscal year 2014, and the highest number submitted since 1975.

The application record comes on the heels of historic reforms in the application process in July 2014, which shortened the process to about one hour and now lets individuals choose their sector and where they'd like to serve.

Middle School Raises \$2.5k

In June, Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet and U.S. Rep. Mark DeSaulnier (Calif.) thanked students at Stanley Middle School in Lafayette, California, for their support of Let Girls Learn and girls' education around the world.

Students in the school's Global Relief Outreach club had donated \$1,500—raised by selling popsicles and hot chocolate—to the Let Girls Learn initiative, and presented Hessler-Radelet with another \$1,000 donation during her visit.

The students' donation will support Peace Corps Volunteer projects to help expand girls' access to education worldwide.

Peace Corps, Rotary International Expand Partnership

In May, Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet and Rotary International General Secretary John Hewko signed a memorandum of understanding to help Volunteers and Rotary clubs to expand existing connections.

Since last year's initial collaboration, the two organizations have raised thousands of dollars for projects in three pilot countries: Philippines, Thailand, and Togo.

Under the agreement, Rotary clubs can support community-initiated Volunteer projects through the Peace Corps Partnership Program.

CHR Pledges to Expand Peace Corps Response in Samoa, Visits Host Family After 32 years

In June, Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet returned to Samoa, where she and her husband, Steve, served from 1981–83, to sign an agreement with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme to improve climate change response.

Hessler-Radelet announced that Peace Corps Response Volunteers would be placed with SPREP, which works to protect the environment and promote sustainable development across the Pacific region. The new Response Volunteers will work six- to 12-month assignments to improve adaptation and resilience to climate change impacts in Pacific island countries. The new assignments will focus on biodiversity and ecosystem management, climate change, waste management and pollution control, and environmental monitoring and governance.

Samoa is among the top 10 most vulnerable small

islands in the South Pacific, according to the International Panel on Climate Change, and its population is ranked sixth in vulnerability to climate change risks.

In addition to signing the memorandum of understanding and visiting Volunteers, Hessler-Radelet reunited with her host family and host mother, Losa, who she calls “the mother of my career.”

Hessler-Radelet often cites Losa’s difficult childbirth during her service as the reason she pursued a public health career, which ultimately led her back to head the Peace Corps.



Homecoming
Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet (left) visited her host mom, Losa, in Samoa, during her return to sign an agreement to expand Peace Corps Response.

After 40 Years, Annual Volunteer Survey Still Counts

In 2015, the Peace Corps Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning marks the 40th anniversary of the Annual Volunteer Survey. First fielded in 1975, the AVS was one of the earliest large-scale public opinion surveys in the U.S. The survey data, submitted anonymously by current Volunteers, helps inform everything from agency policy decisions, such as the agency becoming independent after ACTION dissolved in 1993, to agency-related legislation, such as the Kate Puzey Act of 2011. Offices that use the information span Global Operations, Health Services, and Safety and Security.

Though the survey now focuses on topics such as motivation, Volunteer satisfaction, safety, integration, and stress, past surveys have asked some different questions, with some unusual

answer options. In 1976, the survey asked how Volunteers felt recently. The multiple-choice answers included “bored” and “on top of the world.” In 1981, the survey asked what mode of transportation PCVs used to get to work. Multiple-choice answers included “walk,” “animal (e.g., horse),” and “bicycle.” (PCT did not get data on how many Volunteers commuted to work by animal in 1981—or 2014.)

PCT spoke with program analyst Marina Murray, who coordinated the 2014 AVS—which had over 5,000 respondents—and authored the yearly report, to find out more.

PCT: How has the survey changed over the years?

MM: The length of the survey has fluctuated, from 40 questions in 1975 to 109 questions in 2012, to 55 questions in 2014.

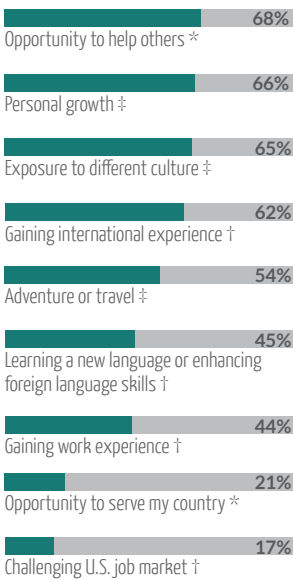
PCT: What are the most significant findings this year?

MM: Altruism is overtaking adventure in Volunteer’s motivation to serve. In contrast to the 1970s, when the majority of PCVs identified adventure or travel as the main reason for joining the Peace Corps, the majority of Volunteers in 2014 identified helping others. [Pragmatism is the third motivating factor.]

PCT: How and why was the AVS started?

MM: In 1975, the President’s National Voluntary Services Advisory Council requested the agency to administer a questionnaire to all Volunteers. It was the first attempt to collect a systematic feedback from Volunteers globally.

Reasons Why Volunteers Joined the Peace Corps



* Altruism
† Pragmatism
‡ Sense of adventure/travel
Data source: 2014 Voice of the Volunteer



From Gender Blind to Gender Mainstreaming

Integrating and promoting gender equality in international development

Healthy equality

In Burkina Faso, students learn about sexual health at Camp ACE hosted by PCVs in September. At the three-day camp, 20 students aged 12–18 participated in camp activities and learned about reproductive health, gender norms, and equality.

Gender:

(Peace Corps definition)

A set of socially and culturally constructed roles, responsibilities, behaviors, and opportunities. Gender roles and expectations are learned, change over time, and vary within and among cultures.

With the White House's new emphasis on girls' education at the global level, it'd be easy to think that focusing on women in international development is relatively new. It's not.

In 1975, the Peace Corps created the Women in Development Office, a year after Congress amended the Peace Corps Act with the Percy Amendment, which directed the agency to give attention to "programs, projects, and activities which tend to integrate women into the national economies of developing countries, thus improving their status and assisting in the overall development effort."

Women in Development—Global Perspective

In the field of global development, it has long been recognized that gender-blind

development efforts have a disproportionately negative affect on women. Findings published by the International Center for Research on Women, a Washington, D.C.-based applied research institute focused on women and girls, have long demonstrated this.

"Women are half the population. Not taking their needs into account in development programs and policies, quite literally handicaps our own efforts to combat poverty," said Lyric Thompson, senior policy manager at ICRW.

"Women and girls face unique challenges," Thompson said. "They're more likely to experience violence. Girls are significantly more likely than boys to be married early and against their will, face unique health challenges, including restricted access to health care for HIV/AIDS, lack of access to reproductive health care and information, and maternal mortality. Not taking these unique challenges

faced by women and girls into account undercuts our ability to tackle some of the greatest impediments to global development worldwide."

Not incorporating gender-awareness in development efforts can be detrimental, including "decreased effectiveness of development interventions, as well as marginalizing female voices and participation," Thompson said. "That's not only unfair but, down the road, translates into compromised returns on education, health, democratic governance, and economic development investments."

But then the pendulum swung from ignoring gender to, in some cases, focusing efforts exclusively on women. In places, this had the unintended effect of increasing marginalization.

In the past two decades, a number of international development agencies, organizations, and governments, including the United Nations, The World

Bank, and the U.S. government, have adopted more nuanced gender development policies that address how gender roles and disparities negatively impact men and women, with women often carrying the greater burden.

In the Millennium Development Goals, released by the United Nations in 2000, each of the eight goals intentionally addressed gender disparities, with Goal 3—Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women—calling it out explicitly.

The 2015 Millennium Development Goals Report noted that progress spanned each of the goals, but still, there were “uneven achievements and shortfalls in many areas.”

According to the report, there are more girls in school now compared to 15 years ago. But, only 64 percent of developing countries had achieved gender parity in primary education, and only 36 percent of developing countries had achieved parity in secondary education. Moreover, girls’ education doesn’t translate to workforce or income equality: Globally, women earn 24 percent less than men and are twice as likely as men to be “economically inactive.” (Fifty percent of working-age women are economically inactive vs. 23 percent of working-age men; 47 percent of working-age women are in the workforce vs. 72 percent of working-age men.)

In the U.N.’s newly released Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, there is again one goal devoted to gender parity, but this one more bold: Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The accompanying position paper by U.N. Women recommends global indicators to monitor how the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are implemented for women and girls, with specific recommendations on what indicators will ensure that women and girls benefit.

The United Nations Development Programme, which focuses the U.N.’s development efforts around the globe and commissions the annual U.N. Human Development Report, asserted that “Gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the heart of UNDP’s development mandate” in its Gender Equality Strategy 2014–17. Specifically, the strategy seeks to ensure that “UNDP supports the empowerment of women and girls through gender-specific targeted interventions and address gender concerns in the developing, planning, implementing, and

Women’s equality is a core civil and human rights principle in the United States and around the world.

—President Barack Obama
August 2015

evaluating of all policies and programmes.” Moreover, the UNDP “prioritizes gender mainstreaming as the main strategy to achieve gender equality.”

In its Gender and Development Policy Framework, The World Bank characterized gender as a cross-sector issue, and stated that gender disparities lead to inefficiencies for countries: “A growing body of empirical evidence shows that countries with low gender disparities tend to have lower rates of poverty and better growth. Evidence also shows that increasing women’s productivity and earnings is a way to lower household poverty.”

Across the U.S. government, agencies that work in international development have adopted the gender and development approach, recognizing that holistic efforts have improved outcomes across societies.

In 2012, the U.S. Agency for International Development released its Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, which asserted “No society can develop successfully without providing equitable opportunities, resources, and life prospects for males and females so that they can shape their own lives and contribute to their families and communities.”

Despite the progress at the policy level, addressing these challenges on the ground is difficult, Thompson said.

“Promoting gender equality and female empowerment is inherently controversial, because it means disrupting and questioning established power structures and norms—and that’s a good thing!” she said. “It does, however, take sustained, smart interventions. A growing body of work documents how to structure our community-based interventions to effectively and productively shift norms and behaviors and open opportunities for women and girls.”

Thompson said ICRW has found that, “When we

work with boys and girls at a young age, and fold our efforts into schools’ already-existing curriculum, we can begin to shift notions about the gender roles and discriminatory attitudes that lead to problems like gender-based violence.”

“We have made massive gains in the past couple of decades,” she continued. “Women and girls have gone from being an afterthought—in politics, in poverty-reduction programs, and in businesses—to being recognized as integral to the success not only of communities, but of entire countries.”

“Initiatives within the Peace Corps like Let Girls Learn are an opportunity to dismantle discriminatory norms and open opportunities for girls to thrive—get an education, delay marriage and childbearing, learn their rights, and be healthier, happier, better-prepared women as they transition to adulthood,” Thompson said.

But still, Thompson said, old challenges persist and new challenges have emerged.

“Recently released data from the World Health Organization shows that self-harm and suicide now tops the list of causes of death for girls aged 15–19 worldwide,” Thompson said. “While we don’t know the exact reasons that have

led to this trend, we do know that challenges girls uniquely face, including forced marriage, violence, and discrimination, lead to ill mental health. Without better understanding what's driving these trends, we don't know what interventions could improve the mental—and physical—health of girls worldwide.”

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Laura Groggel has seen both progress and challenges in her work as a gender integration specialist in Central Africa for a U.S.-based international nongovernmental organization.

During her service as an Agriculture Volunteer in Togo from 2008–11, Groggel worked on natural resources management projects, often working with female farmers, as well as with a youth club and teaching the community about sexual harassment. She also was a counselor at Camp UNITE, a boys’ summer camp that provided apprenticeships.

“We had one of the first gender education camps [in Togo] that had male PCVs talking about female empowerment and girls’ education,” she said. “It was very powerful: Men are given more respect in those contexts.”

“The idea was to create peer leaders to go back and train their communities,” she said. “They really did it,” carrying the messages back via theater. “The most favorite theme was gender equity: men helping wives cook, boys helping girls with household chores. It was the most popular activity for the male and female camps.”

In her NGO work now, Groggel has found that access to information is very unequal for women, particularly to government agencies that work through agriculture extension projects. The result is that women have lower access to agricultural inputs—seeds, fertilizer, and labor.

“The major problem is decision-making,” she said. “You can have this focus on women, train women, provide them with input, but if, at the end of the day, the man has sole decision-making power, you don’t see the impact you want.”

Thus, her agency has started implementing projects to influence the household power dynamics through improved education techniques and creating safe spaces for men to talk about masculinity. She said their efforts are most effective when they explain the concrete



economic benefits for the household.

“People understand. They want their daughters to have the same access,” she said, “but it comes down to behavior change. You say you want your daughter to have the same as your son, but when they come home from school, you have all these chores for your daughter, but your son can study.”

She also said it was important to be culturally sensitive, while still advocating for change.

“One of the things I hear all the time is, ‘You are trying to come in and change our culture,’” she said. “For patterns of abuse, it’s not about changing cultural patterns; we need to be very clear about not changing behaviors that are not hurting anyone.”

She added that women can resist new ideas too—like having men in the kitchen, which is often the one place where women have decision-making power.

“It comes from a place of fear,” she said. “We can’t make claims about changing roles. We can’t start with that, as the

conversation just stops. So, it’s not a female empowerment project, it’s a nutrition project.”

She said her agency’s efforts hadn’t always seen the impact they’d hoped to, primarily because gender hadn’t been approached holistically.

“Within the guiding principles, we work with the most vulnerable in a holistic human development way to meet primary needs, often for women and women-headed households. [Previously,] a lot of our interventions hadn’t been taking into account both men and women.”

Talking about female empowerment “hasn’t worked in the most extreme cases—where it’s most needed—but instead caused a backlash,” she said. “When it became gender and development, and power relations, people have gotten on board.”

“In East Congo, it’s a huge problem to do a female empowerment project: The way it’s been presented, when they hear the word ‘gender,’ the men feel really disempowered,” she said.

The result has been an



increase in gender-based violence and a larger backlash.

In response, Groggel said, the agency has been including “more gender analysis in the design phase, designing projects that are gender sensitive. We’ve changed to gender and development, and partners are more on board with that.”

One of the most successful techniques they use is to train couples on communication skills and conflict resolution, creating a positive deviant model—essentially a couple who went through the training and is willing to testify about the changes: “I used to beat my wife, and now I don’t do it, and these are the benefits.” Benefits span increased communication, joint decision making on household expenditures, decreased domestic partner violence, and less household conflict.

Women in Development—Peace Corps Perspective

In 1975, the newly established Peace Corps Women in Development Office was tasked with assuring the Percy Amendment was integrated into all facets of the agency’s work. Early on, WID Volunteers developed separate women’s projects. Unfortunately, this approach was found to alienate men, and further marginalize women. Through the 1980s, the Peace Corps began to explore and implement a gender and development approach, which considers how gender impacts development, both separately and collectively. In the 1990s, the agency began taking a more holistic approach, and began integrating WID and GAD. In 1999, the WID office formally changed to WID/GAD. But it wasn’t until 2012 that the agency fully integrated its approach, renaming the office

Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GenEq). Under the Focus In/Train Up initiative, gender equality also became a cross-sector programming priority, as it cut across all six program sectors.

In 2014, 37 posts reported GenEq activities, across all three regions. Nearly 2,750 Volunteers reported working on GenEq activities in fiscal year 2014, with 6,900 unique gender-related activities. Volunteers reported working with more than 279,360 beneficiaries in GenEq topics. Some 350 Volunteers worked on GenEq camps that reached 14,645 beneficiaries worldwide.

And 2015 has been a banner year for gender initiatives at the Peace Corps. In September, the agency released its first Guidance for Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Peace Corps Programming, spearheaded by gender specialists Meghan Donahue and Kathryn Goldman. This year also marked the first gender training workshop for posts’ gender coordinators. Under the Let Girls Learn initiative, launched in March with the

White House and other U.S. government agencies, the Peace Corps has expanded its gender training at staging and is working on fundraising initiatives to support Volunteer projects that promote girls’ education.

Donahue, who recently left headquarters to take on the newly established role of Africa regional adviser for Let Girls Learn, has long championed bringing a stronger gender lens to Peace Corps programming efforts.

“We need to make sure we provide access, opportunity, and empowerment” to the communities we serve, and make qualitative changes in our host communities, she said. This is more than what old models provided for, which was simply reporting that a project had female beneficiaries.

One way the Peace Corps has historically integrated women’s voices is through the Participatory Analysis for Community Action model. Introduced in the mid-1990s, PACA provides a set of gender-sensitive tools to facilitate participatory

Empowerment in action [facing page]

Laura Groggel (RPCV Togo, 2008–11) works with a peer education group, discussing sexual harassment in schools.

Power relations [above]

An international NGO conducts gender analysis research in Burundi. As a gender specialist for the NGO, RPCV Laura Groggel helps implement community trainings built around gender equality and women’s empowerment.

development—used to establish partnerships between Volunteers and their communities and ensure that the voices of women, men, girls, and boys are included when deciding how to commit community resources.

When she came to the agency in 2010, Donahue noted that progress on gender priorities had stalled and the agency wasn't keeping track with other federal and international agencies, specifically with regard to program guidance.

"As I went through the files, I noted that there had been a global workshop in 2000 and it basically introduced one training session along with PACA," she said. "At the same time, federal and U.N. agencies were developing guidance for their respective organizations with renewed energy. For the Peace Corps to have a seat at the table, it was important for us to develop a gender guidance that demonstrated our unique approach to development working at the grassroots level."

Long-term, Donahue would like to see Volunteers be better informed on how gender impacts their efforts in their host communities.

"I hope that we see a difference in how Volunteers see their work," she said. "That is, that they do their work with a different viewpoint, that they learn how to ask questions about who does what with what resources, who benefits, and who has opportunities. Then once that is found out, how do they address these gaps in a culturally appropriate and transformative way."

This year also marked the first time the agency held a global training for posts' gender coordinators, with 56 staffers coming to Washington, D.C., for the seven-day workshop.

"The staff has to be part of this or we will not succeed," Donahue said. "If staff is able to communicate the gender issues and how to address them in the country, that will make the difference. We can't do this without them."

"So far, we have a global group of staff who believe that having a gender lens makes a difference and it is only a slight shift in the programming, training, and evaluation that they already do," she said.

Now, "almost every post has a gender point of contact. So, what are the small things that we

can do in pre-service training? How can we do it in a way that is culturally sensitive—through our presence, through role modeling. How do you make things fair in a way that isn't going to offend the culture?"

But Donahue doesn't expect to see a result until fiscal year 2016—a year and a half of promoting this gender work.

"At present, we are seeing momentum that is directly related under Let Girls Learn with the activities that Volunteers do daily," she said. "Because we have a specific focus on this, Volunteers and staff realize that the work they already do—to make sure that no one is left out of development opportunities—supports Let Girls Learn and, therefore, gender integration."

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment—Volunteer Perspective

One of the most successful and long-running gender projects developed and implemented by Peace Corps Volunteers is Camp GLOW—Girls Leading Our World. Started 20 years ago by a Volunteer in Romania, Camp GLOW has spread to more than 60 Peace Corps countries; inspired boys' camps, tech camps, and environment camps; inspired a leadership certification program (GLOW Certified Leaders); and reached an estimated 145,000 girls.

This summer, PCVs in Albania held the first Camp GLOW funded by Let Girls Learn, with 60 campers attending.

Recent Volunteer initiatives have included partnering with men and boys, teaching

gender equality in schools, and addressing violence against women. Volunteers' gender projects extend far beyond camps, working in all six program sectors: Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth In Development.

In Togo, PCV Daniel Brown worked on a training for teachers "Educating Educators: Men As Partners," which covered terms and strategies to prevent sexual harassment in school. Days after the training, he witnessed teachers using techniques they had recently learned to discipline a boy who tried to forcibly kiss a girl in class.

In Guatemala, PCV Britt Urban hosted a two-day gender conference, working with the Municipal Women's Office, the Ministry of Education, and youth leaders. The workshops included Gender and Discrimination, Domestic Violence, Positive Masculinity, Analyzing Your Work Through a Gender Lens, and a session with a local female justice of the peace.

PCV Bob Sturm, who served in Azerbaijan, helped start Girls Ride Bikes, Too, a community organization and a private enterprise partnership to teach girls to ride bicycles. In addition, the group rented the bikes to non-members to cover the cost of maintenance and to pay a female cyclist to train the first groups of riders.

In Senegal, PCV Meredith Kozak helped organize a Girls' Leadership Conference, in which girls brought their guardians with them to share

in learning and activities. In one session, the girls shared action plans they created earlier in the day with their fathers. For one father, it was the first time they'd discussed what his daughter wanted: Before, he assumed she would just get married after she finished middle or high school. Knowing that she wants to be a teacher, he promised to help pay for as much of her schooling as he could, and that he would not give her hand in marriage until after she became a teacher.

And, in the WID tradition, PCVs continue to work to empower women in their communities.

In El Salvador, PCV Catherine Lampi helped organize the first women's group in her host community, restarting a small food business, which culminated in holding an "International Cooking Bazaar." The event raised \$200 and instilled in the women confidence that they could pursue income-generating activities without the guidance of male counterparts.

In China, Kayla Stewart coordinated a three-day Nu Women's Summit for 43 girls with seven other PCVs, which focused on goal setting, healthy relationships, and global women's issues, and hosted a career panel with an entrepreneur, a college professor, and a doctor.

In Panama, PCV Chelsea Mackin hosted a biodiversity seminar for women, after a previous one attracted a mostly male turnout. The seminar covered agricultural aspects, income-building activities, and empowering women to mitigate climate change.

With the new Let Girls Learn collaboration, which includes the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, launched in March, the Peace Corps is working to empower girls to stay in school and to build local support for girls' education. Additionally, the Peace Corps is establishing innovative partnerships and new collaborations—such as working with MORE magazine and the WNBA Dream in Atlanta—to fund Volunteers' projects.

In June, First Lady Michelle Obama discussed the collaboration at the first annual MORE Impact Awards, outlining the reason behind the effort, and the Peace Corps' role.

"Our focus on adolescent girls is deliberate, because we know that that critical moment



Gender work
Youth in Nebaj, Guatemala, attend a two-day gender conference. Through the efforts of PCV Britt Urban, local government and youth leaders, participants engaged in workshop discussions about gender discrimination and domestic violence.

when a girl is becoming a woman, so often, that's when we lose her," she said. "That's when they first confront the cultural barriers that take them away from school—things like early and forced marriage, genital mutilation and cutting, and the belief in so many communities that girls simply are just less worthy of an education than boys."

"So while we've made significant progress getting girls to complete their primary education, not enough of them are going to high school and beyond," Obama continued. "Through Let Girls Learn, Peace Corps Volunteers are going to be working to support adolescent girls' education progress—projects all around the world—things like mentoring programs

and leadership camps, entrepreneurial initiatives, and so much more. I've had the pleasure of meeting with so many Peace Corps Volunteers, and they are passionate and they are smart, and they are ready to get this done."

"These projects are going to be community-driven—which is critical—and community-led. That's why the Peace Corps is key, because they're on the ground every day in communities all over the world. Our Volunteers are going to be working side by side with local leaders, with families, and, more importantly, with the girls themselves to create programs that best meet the needs and aspirations in those communities."



A Camp of Their Own

Promoting gender equality through boys' camps

Reaching boys

Some of the 90 youth at the second annual Camp BRO in Lesotho, held in May, which trained out-of-school youth on life skills and gender equality

In 2002, PCVs in Romania hosted the first camp for boys—Teaching Our Boys Excellence aka TOBE—seven years after the first GLOW Camp (Girls Leading Our World) was held there.

Since then, PCVs around the globe have hosted boys' camps under a variety of names—TOBE, BRO, UNITE, and BUILD—reaching thousands of boys.

But why host a boys-only camp?

It's an essential question for someone who aims to promote gender equality: If you are working to promote equality, it will be more effective if you work with women *and* men, girls *and* boys.

The reasons to host a boys' camp range from post to post, from Volunteer to Volunteer, but have a single underlying tenet: Gender, as a set of roles and expectations based on sex, affects us all, albeit in different ways. If Peace Corps projects work only with girls and women, boys and men are left out of the equation—and vice versa.

PCV Brendan Rosen, who helped host the first and second BRO—Boys Reaching Out—Camps in Lesotho, wanted to develop positive role models and leadership in his community.

"Camp GLOW has been a long tradition in Lesotho and has improved the lives of thousands of Basotho women," Rosen said. "We felt the time has come to give boys their own camp. We

believe that men also suffer from the rigid roles placed on them from society, and they are at higher risk of self-destructive behavior, such as violent and criminal activity and substance abuse.

"We also believe that by empowering men and teaching them the value of love and respect for others and themselves, we will help improve the lives of all members of the community."

This year, 90 youth participated in the three-day Camp BRO in Lesotho, with seven PCVs and 15 host country counterparts.

Rosen said the camp focused on out-of-school youth and young men, ranging from age 12–35, and was held by his host organization, Kholokoe Youth Reformation Association.

"A major reason for making the camp is because of the high levels of alcoholism, unemployment, rape, and gender inequality in Lesotho," Rosen said. "We saw the camp as a great opportunity to discuss and mitigate some of these pressing problems.

"We believed that out-of-school youth are the most at risk of—or are already participating in—the negative issues mentioned. We also thought that non-students deserved to attend the camp as much as in-school youth."

He continued, "Focusing on out-of-school youth allowed us to get perspectives from a group that is normally hard to reach. We were able to hear diverse views on gender equality, HIV/AIDS, leadership, and development. Teaching and discussing issues with these boys was challenging at times because their opinions were strongly based in their traditions and

cultural norms, which are typically at odds with gender equality and non-stigmatization. This allowed us to improve our communication skills with the Basotho youth and get a more broad perspective on how people actually think here.”

Rosen said that in addition to leadership and life skills, the camp took on gender parity.

“Gender equality was addressed through several education sessions and games throughout the camp,” he said. “We focused on gender roles, the difference between gender and sex, and sexual rights of the individual. A big theme in the discussions was the idea of a dowry, or ‘lobola’ as it’s called here, for purchasing a wife.”

Planning the camp enabled Rosen and his fellow PCV Joe Downes to collaborate with the local community leadership.

“The counterparts were very happy about holding a camp in their community,” Rosen said. “It was the first thing of its kind to happen in their village. They are now inspired to hold more BRO camps in the future and spread the concept to other nearby areas.”

However, Rosen said the greatest impact was being able to reach boys and young men who will likely stay in their communities, and can impart progress and change.

“The most positive aspect came from the benefits the boys received in leadership, agriculture, and safe sex,” he said. “Many of these youth will stay in their communities and become future leaders, businessmen, and farmers, as opposed to the many educated people who leave for work in the urban areas. The skills and ideas we gave these boys will allow them to better lead their communities and boost their economies and food security when the time comes for them to do so. HIV/AIDS and safe-sex education was also a major theme of the camp. After hearing the boys’ opinions on these issues before and after the camp, we feel confident that they will make responsible decisions related to sex in the future and curb the spread of HIV and unplanned pregnancy.”

Britt Urban, who recently finished her service in Guatemala, helped put on the first Camp BRO in her village in December, after the boys requested a camp of their own.

“We had done two GLOW camps previously, and all the boys from our schools kept asking about a camp for them,” Urban said. “We decided it is equally important for boys to have an opportunity to learn about the important topics discussed during the camps, so we expanded and did a boys’ camp as well during the December vacation period.”

Urban’s Camp BRO, attended by 19 boys aged 11–17, exposed the youth to topics not often covered in their rural homes and classrooms.

“There is a big problem with domestic violence and machismo attitudes in the community, so we brought the topics of positive masculinity, healthy relationships, and gender equality to the boys’ camp as well,” Urban said. “It was important to do the camps separately, however, because both boys and girls in that community seem to participate differently with each other than separately.”

Urban said the collaboration with community partners was imperative to the boys’ learning, particularly regarding gender roles and health.

“Any message we want to give to local youth is so much more powerful when it comes from a local community member than from a foreigner, especially with such sensitive topics like positive masculinity and sexual health,” Urban said.

PCV Jordan Ricketts helped plan and hold the first BRO Camp in Swaziland in December, which had 30 participants, aged 15–21.

Ricketts said the inspiration for the camp was seeing the need to address male issues in Swaziland, and to complement and support the GLOW camps.

“It was also to work with males on gender equality and supporting female empowerment, discussing male issues surrounding health and character development, education and résumé and interview skills, and HIV/AIDS education and prevention amongst males here,” Ricketts said.

For himself, Ricketts said he was inspired to get involved because he saw the need for men to work on gender issues and that, as a male, he could relate to the boys. But he also noted that some topics were difficult to address.

“I saw the need of having male support to promote gender empowerment amongst the women as well in Swaziland,” Ricketts said. “The

root of many of the causes of HIV/AIDS transmission and the spread can come from males and lack of education with men. Swaziland being a polygamist society makes it hard to educate on some of these issues.”

Ricketts said another outcome of the camp was to build rapport among the youth and with their teachers, creating both peer support networks (friendships!) and relationships with role models.

“They were able to see that they are not the only ones in Swaziland who go through some of the issues surrounding what we discussed at the camp and were able to talk to other peers on the subject,” he said. “I think the counterparts learned a lot as well, about how to view young men as adults and giving them a choice and being individuals. It can be hard for some of the kids to open up and be honest with their teachers. This shed some light on that, showing that their teachers do care.”

Some of the topics Ricketts’ Camp BRO discussed included self-esteem, communication, HIV/AIDS, sexual reproductive health, men’s health issues, relationships, fatherhood, gender equality, male identity, résumé and interview skills, and setting goals for the future.

Ricketts said they have started planning for the next Camp BRO, scheduled for December, and plan to host it annually.

“Our goal is to grow and promote this camp to create a complement all over for GLOW camps and be able to work together on both of these issues,” he said.



Going For GOLD

PCVs help Mongolia, Paraguay vie for medals at Special Olympics World Games

Peace Corps Volunteers host a lot of youth and sport camps, teaching young people about teamwork, respect, HIV prevention, and life skills. Historically, they've even worked with athletes training for the Olympics. But this year, Volunteers have helped some very special Olympians (pun intended): Special Olympics athletes.

Special Olympics is one of the Peace Corps oldest relationships, but the partnership wasn't formalized until 2011 with a memorandum of understanding. Founded in 1968 from Eunice Kennedy Shriver's vision, Special Olympics began working with the Peace Corps shortly after. Kennedy Shriver's husband, Sargent Shriver, was the first director of the Peace Corps and also served as a longtime president and board chair emeritus for Special Olympics.

In recent years, Volunteers have worked with Special Olympic programs in Albania, El Salvador, Jordan, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, and South Africa on local and regional events—and a new Special Olympics program in Mongolia. (Fun side note: Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet helped found the Special Olympics Gambia program in 1986.)

In July and August, 6,500 athletes participated in the World Games in Los Angeles, including 22 from Paraguay and 14 from Mongolia, where Peace Corps Volunteers helped establish the new Special Olympics program in 2013.

PCV Abbie Rees started a Special Olympics



program at her host organization, the Center for Students with Special Needs in Fram, Paraguay, where she began service in 2013.

"I started teaching gym classes at the Center for Special Needs, which turned into forming a Special Olympics team," Rees said. "It was the first time many of them had ever participated in sports. I had to start from scratch, teaching them things like how to stretch, warm up, to use their arms to run, and the importance of wearing gym shoes to play."

She worked with 11 students on the team, eventually taking several to the regional and national competitions. At the national competition, the five athletes who competed won nine medals, and then, two qualified to be on the Paraguayan National Special Olympics track team and one qualified to be an alternate for the World Games in Los Angeles.

Even though she was finishing her service in April, Rees kept working with the athletes, traveling with them one week a month to training sessions in the capital of Asuncion, seven hours away.

When she left her site, at the end of her service, Rees had something to look forward to: She

Pursuing gold

Returned Volunteer Abbie Rees (right) and Paraguayan Special Olympians Ana (left) and Ramon from her host community

[facing page]

The Paraguayan team and coaches show their spirit—and medals—at the World Games this summer in L.A.



was selected as a delegation liaison for the Paraguayan team at the World Games. Rees accompanied the team from when they arrived at the airport, through their competitions, up until their departure from the U.S.

“Being able to work with the Paraguayan delegation here in the U.S. was one of the most amazing experiences of my life,” she said. “I was with them to help with daily logistics, planning, issue resolution, and to interpret English to Spanish and Paraguayan Sign Language.”

Both athletes Rees coached in Paraguay won medals at the World Games: Ramon won two silvers and a bronze; Ana won a silver.

As a former Division I college volleyball player and lifelong athlete, Rees said she was glad to have been able to share something that was so important to her in her Peace Corps service.

“I was so happy to be able to share a passion of mine with the kids in my community,” she said. “Most of the kids [at the Center for Special Needs] had never been involved in sports before.”

And the effects went beyond her students.

Because of her efforts, the Center for Special Needs decided to forego an expansion they’d been saving for in order to pay for Ana and Ramon’s travel. Moreover, the center hired a gym teacher and the town volunteered to host the upcoming regional Special Olympics competition later this year.

“Paraguay and my community were so proud of the athletes,” she said. “It will hopefully open their eyes to the fact that people with intellectual disabilities are as capable and important as any other person. They are just like everyone else.”

PCV Jennifer Seller began working with Special Olympics Mongolia in September 2013—the first month she was at her permanent site. In the U.S. before her Peace Corps service, Seller had worked with children with intellectual disabilities and had helped with Special Olympics events.

“I wanted to help as much as possible,” Seller said. “In my community, I started to hold trainings and informational meetings that discussed what Special Olympics was.”

In May 2014, coaches from her province participated in trainings for the first Special Olympics Mongolia games; that September, her province sent three athletes to the national games. One, Davaajargal, was even featured on an ESPN documentary—and went on to win silver in the 100 meter run at the World Games this year.

Fourteen Mongolian athletes attended the World Games, and did well.

“Our athletes did wonderfully,” she said. “It was their first time, and Mongolian athletes won three gold, four silver, and four bronze medals.”

The Mongolian delegation competed in table tennis, track and field, and judo.

Seller said witnessing the impact it’s had on Mongolian attitudes toward individuals with intellectual disabilities has been rewarding.

“It has been absolutely incredible to see how quickly and successfully Special Olympics has grown in Mongolia,” she said. “In Mongolia, there is a negative stigma attached to disabilities. Since sports competitions are extremely popular in the culture, this has helped Mongolians to view disabilities in a more positive light. Mongolians are extremely proud that these athletes excelled and that will help

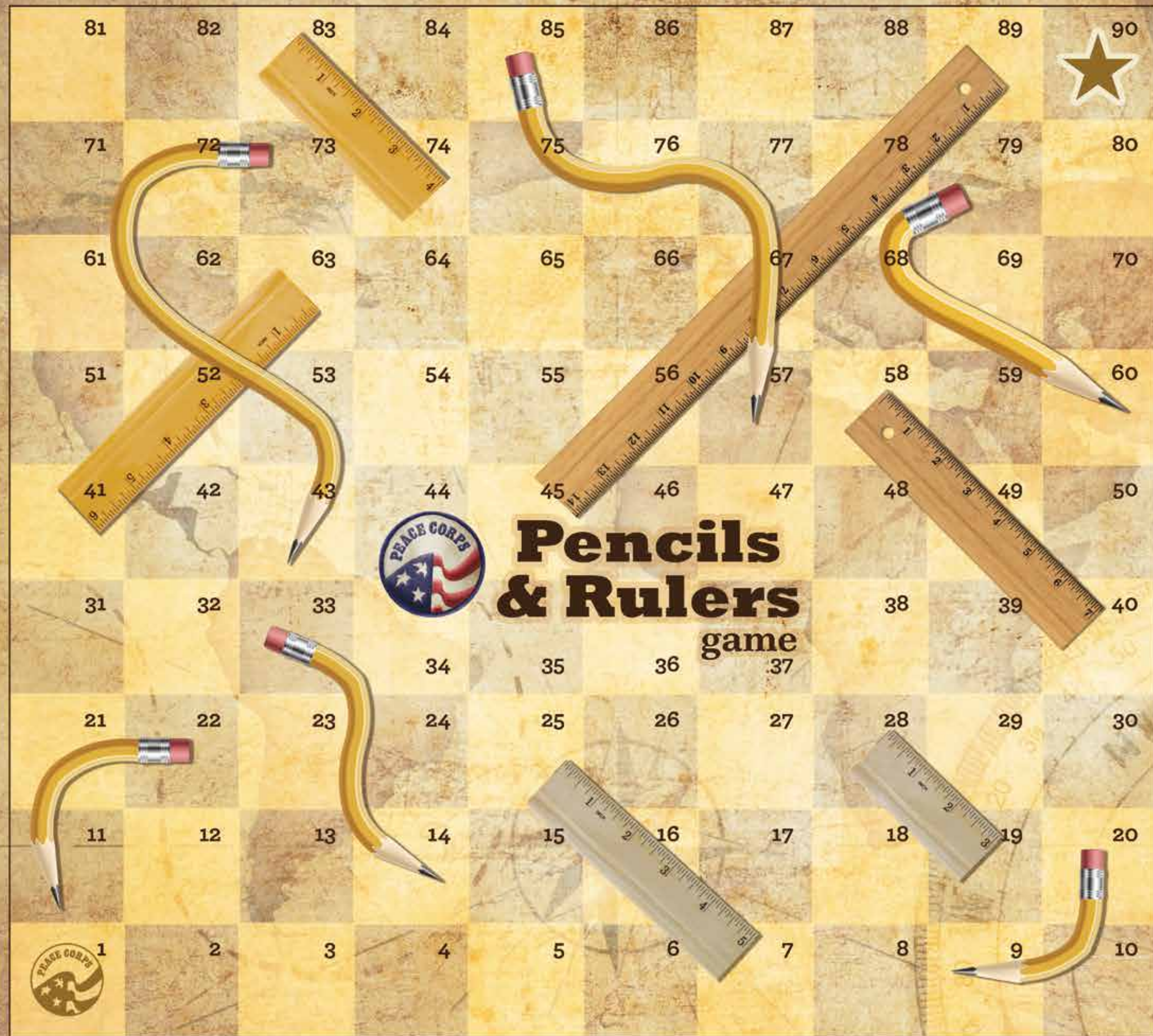
build more understanding and acceptance.”

The games have also been transformative for the athletes themselves, Seller said.

“Seeing the athletes participate in two Special Olympics games has also been amazing,” she said. “Special Olympics has allowed an otherwise marginalized population to participate in something fun and healthy. I have seen athletes become more secure with who they are and proud of what they have accomplished. Participation in Special Olympics has exponentially increased the confidence of the individuals who participate.”

PCV James Busacca, who worked with Special Olympics Mongolia on the three-day national games and training for the World Games, echoed Seller’s sentiment.

“Special Olympics Mongolia has been a great organization to work with because we get to offer amazing experiences to Mongolians with disabilities and their families,” Busacca said. “We also get a chance to educate a wide audience throughout the country through high-profile events like the Special Olympics World Summer Games.”



How to play

2-4 players

Players move around the board, hoping to move up a ruler—not slide down a pencil.

Each player should select a counter (use paper chits below, stones, coins, etc.), and place it to the left of the Start position. The youngest player goes first. Spin the spinner (use the arrow below or a pen or pencil to spin), then move the counter the number of squares indicated. If the counter lands on a square at the base of a ruler, the counter moves to the top of it. If the counter lands on the eraser of a pencil, the counter slides down the point. The first player to land on the finish square by an exact count wins!





BOOK SHELF

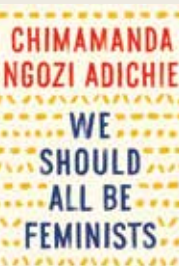
Gender, Development, and Growth

Five nonfiction books look at development, poverty, and gender, through poetry, essay, reporting, and biography.

We Should All Be Feminists

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Nigerian writer Adichie expands her TED Talk in this slim volume, detailing why, exactly, we should all be feminists. She recounts compelling stories of how sexism has impacted her and expands into how sexism hurts boys and men by placing unrealistic expectations on them—how the weight of gender expectations weighs us all down.



Behind the Beautiful Forevers

By Katherine Boo

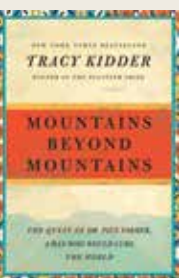
Boo's nonfiction book illuminates the bleak conditions of a Mumbai slum, Annawadi, where she spent three years documenting inhabitants' lives. The result is an unflinching look at the strength and resolve of families and individuals as they pursue prosperity and happiness—on their own terms and in the face of crushing poverty and tragedy. While deeply humanizing, the story is also heartbreaking.



Mountains Beyond Mountains

By Tracy Kidder

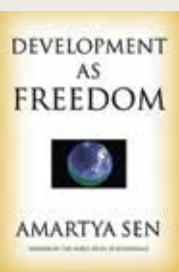
This is the story of Dr. Paul Farmer, whose dedication to solving to infectious disease in rural medicine led him to fight tuberculosis in Haiti, Peru, and Russia. Farmer set up rural health facilities in all three, fighting for lower-cost drugs and treatment changes. His fight to improve treatment of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis resulted in cure rates similar to those in the U.S.



Development as Freedom

By Amartya Sen

Nobel Prize-winner Sen explores a new framework for international development, rejecting traditional approaches that conflate development with industrialization. Instead, he defines development as a measure of the real freedoms that people enjoy. Sen explores the possibility of freedom amidst increasing inequality, asserting that development can only be achieved when individuals are free to "do and be."



Brown Girl Dreaming

By Jacqueline Woodson

Written in free verse, the Poetry Foundation's Young Person's Poet Laureate tells the story of her childhood, moving from South Carolina to Brooklyn. Poignant and evocative, she recounts growing up in more than one place, her family and her self feeling split in two. Her poetry touches on poverty, race, and gender, through her younger self's voice, but with the insight she's gained over the years.



PUZZLE PEACES ANSWERS

Games on page 28

Crossword Answers

Across

1. Camp GLOW
4. Nepal
7. Sargent Shriver
9. March
11. Hispanic
12. Dili
17. Health
20. Alpha Phi Alpha
22. Howard University
23. MORE

Down

1. Cuerpos de Paz
2. Understanding
3. Joseph Kennedy
5. University of Michigan
6. GHSP
8. Latin America
10. Sixty Two Million
13. Lillian Carter
14. Ghana
15. Twenty Eight
16. Legacy Project
18. Thirty Two
19. Earth Day
21. One hour

Sudoku Answers

Easy

3	7	9	1	2	6	8	5	4
8	1	2	4	5	9	6	7	3
4	6	5	7	3	8	9	1	2
9	3	4	6	7	2	1	8	5
1	2	8	5	9	4	3	6	7
6	5	7	3	8	1	4	2	9
7	4	6	2	1	3	5	9	8
5	9	3	8	6	7	2	4	1
2	8	1	9	4	5	7	3	6

Medium

2	8	4	5	9	1	6	7	3
5	6	3	7	4	8	2	9	1
1	7	9	6	3	2	4	5	8
3	4	2	9	7	5	8	1	6
9	1	6	2	8	4	5	3	7
8	5	7	1	6	3	9	2	4
4	9	1	3	5	6	7	8	2
7	2	8	4	1	9	3	6	5
6	3	5	8	2	7	1	4	9

Hard

9	3	1	6	4	8	2	7	5
7	2	5	3	1	9	6	8	4
8	6	4	7	5	2	3	1	9
4	9	6	1	2	7	8	5	3
3	1	7	5	8	4	9	6	2
2	5	8	9	6	3	1	4	7
1	7	3	4	9	6	5	2	8
6	4	2	8	3	5	7	9	1
5	8	9	2	7	1	4	3	6

Peace Corps Lesson: Humility, Kindness, & Patience



Start it up
Marco Werman, longtime host of PRI's "The World," credits his Peace Corps service in Togo (top, on a Peace Corps motorbike with his violin and firewood) as underpinning his journalism career.

Marco Werman, longtime host of PRI's "The World," a weekday news show broadcast by 300 public radio stations in the U.S., learned many skills during his Peace Corps service in Togo, 1984–87. Though he studied French and history in college, he taught dry-season gardening in a secondary school in Dapaong, and wrote a how-to guide in his third year of service. But it isn't the dry-season gardening skills that he's used as host of "The World," which he helped found 20 years ago. Instead, it was the humility, kindness, and patience he learned that has stayed with him.

"The interactions I had with people and the friends I made, even if I'm not in touch anymore with many of them, were valuable in changing me as a person," Werman said. "It lent me more humility and, I believe, kindness. And patience. You can't wait for hours by the side of the road for a broken bush taxi to get repaired and not learn to be patient. Today, when I'm waiting for a Skype line to Yemen to get clear, it's not a problem. And if it doesn't materialize—like that spare tire for the bush taxi—that's OK too. I've learned to roll with a lot of things."

Another lesson Werman learned in the Peace Corps? That your efforts might only affect a few people and might not last, even if that's what you strive for.

"For example, I worked with a school in Togo to plant trees on their grounds, creating a mini-forest with lots of shade for the students to enjoy during recess and soccer games," he said. "I heard some years after that all the trees were cut down to cook millet beer in the village market. That was disappointing, but I had already learned to find satisfaction at a retail level: Working successfully with one person can lead to other people coming on board."

Werman found he loved West Africa and the cultures there, and felt at home.

"Moving to a place like Burkina Faso to freelance for the BBC and The Associated Press was a natural move for me after the Peace Corps," Werman said. "I was already immersed in the place, I had a strong command of French."

"The Peace Corps had given me skills. Everything since then has cascaded off my Peace Corps experience."

Though Werman had known he wanted to pursue journalism since he was young, he also knew he wanted to submerge himself in a service opportunity first.

"I wanted to do something somewhere else first that wasn't journalism, but which would immerse me in something and some place special that would also allow me to contribute my energy to helping," Werman said. "As a child of the Kennedy generation, the Peace Corps was always high on the list of 'things to do after college' that would allow me to reach my plan. So I did it."

Werman cited several reasons to go into Peace Corps service that resonate today.

"We live in one of the richest countries in the world," he said. "Get out to some place much less affluent. Work with people who have less than you, and learn to be modest. In a time when we all focus on the self, think outside the self and do national service for someone else. Even if you need to think selfishly, understand that two years outside the U.S. could very well focus your aspirations for the future more tightly, and you will probably emerge a more productive and progressive person with something concrete to contribute to the world."

His final reason for service echoes the agency's mission, to spread world peace and friendship.

"Americans tend to hear the spooky news coming out of our media machine," he said, "and I believe it's worth going out into the world to remind ourselves that there is a disproportionate attention to the bad, and we need to see first-hand that there's still a lot of hope and goodness out there."



Pursuing health
Teachers in
Pohnpei develop
lesson plans
based on the new
Health Curriculum
Framework.

PCV, U.S. Navy Team Up to Fight Disease in Pohnpei

Like many Pacific islands, the tiny island-state of Pohnpei is facing a rising burden of noncommunicable diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.

One in four Pohnpeians over age 40 has type 2 diabetes. There is one hospital on the island-state to serve 36,000 residents.

PCV Sarah Winston, who teaches fourth- and fifth-grade reading and science, was looking for a way to promote healthy nutrition and educate her elementary school students without scaring them. She decided to write a health curriculum for her school, and attended a local public health meeting hosted by another Volunteer. That local meeting led to a meeting with a health specialist at the Pohnpei Department of Education, a collaboration with the Pacific Partnership 2015 humanitarian mission, and a three-day health teacher symposium with a brand-new health curriculum.

The USNS Mercy hospital ship and the USNS Millinocket, as part of the Pacific Partnership 2015—an annual humanitarian and disaster-response preparedness mission in the Indo-Asian-Pacific area—visited seven nations in the Pacific islands, to improve disaster response preparedness and host nation capability. This year, in addition to providing direct health-care services, the mission, led by the U.S. Navy with personnel from Australia, France, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, and Timor-Leste, wanted to expand its education role.

PCV Winston, along with U.S. Navy Lt. Jenna DiMaggio, planned the Health Teacher Symposium, bringing together 23 teachers for three days in June. The teachers received training from dental hygienists, first aid specialists, and physiologists from the Pacific Partnership team, with Winston presenting one day of training.

DiMaggio, a member of the medical planning and advance party team for the USNS Millinocket, which traveled with the USNS Mercy, had met with a Pohnpei Department of Education health specialist last December to work on a needs assessment for the school system and teachers. She'd conceptualized a two-day teacher symposium to train teachers on basic first aid, CPR, and mental health topics to include teacher self-care and how to interact with students with disorders, such as ADHD. The health

specialist, Rihna, put her in touch with Winston, and the three began collaborating.

"Once we finalized our agenda for this two-day symposium, myself, Rihna, and Sarah decided to add a third day," DiMaggio said. "Sarah led the third day of the symposium in order to instruct the teachers how to implement this new health curriculum."

"The entire U.S. military team was excited to meet Sarah and hear her experiences as a Peace Corps Volunteer," DiMaggio said. She added, "We always look forward to partnering with many different organizations to increase our ability to build capacity in each host nation."

In addition to the in-person training, Winston said the health curriculum, which covered first aid, mental health, child abuse prevention, autism awareness, and noncommunicable disease prevention, was printed and distributed to the teachers, along with sample lesson plans. If all the teachers use the curriculum, it will reach some 7,000 eighth-grade students.

Even though the USNS Mercy left Pohnpei on July 6, shortly after the symposium, Winston said the curriculum plans will live on and grow. In addition to the health curriculum, she is working on a physical education curriculum, and seeking endorsement from both the Pohnpei Department of Education and Department of Health. A fitness exam pilot program is planned at four of the largest schools in Pohnpei this coming school year.

Winston is optimistic that both will be adopted and implemented.

"It is the hope that both the Health Curriculum and Physical Education Curriculum become integral parts of the learning experience for all Pohnpeian students, so that they are armed with valid information about health-related issues unique to their island," she said.

Because the project started as just a curriculum for her school, Winston was both surprised and excited by helping create a national health curriculum.

"I had no intention for my small health curriculum to reach so many schools but it did!," she said. "Being able to reach teachers from across the state of Pohnpei was a wonderful experience. Hopefully the next generation of Pohnpeians will have more information regarding health and the trend of noncommunicable diseases will only get better with time."



COS Trip: **Peru, Chile, & Argentina**

Spanning from the Equator all the way to Cape Horn, Peru, Chile, and Argentina comprise picturesque landscapes, unique cultures, and delicious food, with great variety among the three. Connected by the Andes Mountains along western South America, the countries boast mountains, beaches, and rainforests—from tropical to polar climates. A higher degree of development and good infrastructure facilitate tourism and, while a visitor could easily spend a month in each, it's relatively easy to visit more than one in less time. The main language in all three countries is Spanish, although there are local indigenous languages spoken throughout.

Getting There

The major airports in these three countries are Jorge Chávez International Airport (LIM) in Lima, Peru; Arthur M. Benítez International Airport (SCL) in Santiago, Chile; and Ministro Pistarini International Airport in Buenos Aires, Argentina. All three international airports offer flights daily to destinations around the globe. Additional airports important to tourism include Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport (CUZ) in Cusco, Peru; Presidente Carlos Ibáñez International Airport (PUQ) in Punta Arenas, Chile; and Comandante Armando Tola International Airporte (FTE) in El Calafate, Argentina.

Flight prices between cities can be affordable although, as with all air travel, prices vary significantly on timing. LAN is the major airline in South America with major hubs in each of the main airports. Avianca airline has the second-most destinations on the continent.

The second most common way to travel is by bus. Travel between countries is easy, but bus rides are often long due to the size of the countries. In Peru, buses are more affordable than in Argentina and Chile. Buses in all three countries are comfortable and often provide a meal or snack.

Visa and Vaccination Information

If traveling in each country for less than 90 days, a visa is not required. Exit and entry stamps are given at the border. However, U.S. citizens must pay a reciprocity fee of \$160 online ahead of arrival to the Argentinian border and must show the receipt of this payment. No vaccinations are required, though Peru recommends the yellow fever vaccination.

Peru



Huascarán National Park

Featuring many of Peru's highest peaks, this park is located just outside of the city of Huaráz. The UNESCO World Heritage site boasts diverse flora and fauna and beautiful landscapes. Day trips and multiday treks depart from Huaráz to view glaciers and lakes among the towering mountain peaks. Among the many treks offered, the Santa Cruz trek is the most popular—a four-day trip through stunning panoramic views of glaciated mountain peaks, high-altitude lakes, and rushing rivers.
Best time to visit: April–September

Peru



Machu Picchu

Easily Peru's most visited site, Machu Picchu is famous for its archeological importance to the Inca Empire and the unbelievable views. The ruins, which sit 2,400 meters above sea level, were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1981 and are considered one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. Several treks are offered to reach the ruins, including the famous Inca Trail, which must be booked several months in advance. Alternatively, you can take a tour, bus, or train from Cusco to Aguascalientes before visiting Machu Picchu the following day.

Best time to visit: May–September (closed February)

Chile



Torres del Paine National Park

One of Chile's largest and most visited parks, this park contains glaciers, pristine emerald lakes, and mountain peaks that will impress any visitor. Weather conditions can change by the hour, so tourists always need to be prepared for rain, snow, strong winds, and freezing temperatures. The most popular trek is the "W," which is five days with the chance to see a variety of animal life, including the elusive puma and condor, and some of the most beautiful landscapes on earth.

Best time to visit: October–April



Valparaíso

Known for its bohemian culture, street art, and colorful houses, visitors can spend days wandering the streets of eclectic Valparaíso, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003. The various cerros (hills) provide great views of the city and of the ocean. The cerros are accessed by elevators dating back to the late 1800s—an entertaining way to get up and down. Valparaíso was also home to one of Chile's most famous poets, Pablo Neruda. His home is now a museum, named La Sebastiana.

Best time to visit: November–May

Argentina



Perito Moreno Glacier

One of the most famous glaciers in the world, the Perito Moreno Glacier is located in Los Glaciers National Park near the city of El Calafate. Visiting the glacier without a tour takes a half-day; just head to the visitor's center, where you can watch large pieces of ice collapse into the water as the glacier advances—a spectacular event. In El Calafate, you can book a full-day trip with a tour agency, which provides an opportunity to walk on top of the glacier and explore ice caves, cracks, and lagoons.

Best time to visit: November–April



El Chaltén

Best reached by bus from El Calafate, El Chaltén is a small town inside Los Glaciers National Park below the famous Cerro Fitz Roy (3,405 meters above sea level) and Cerro Torre (3,128 meters) mountains, considered two of the most technically challenging mountains on Earth. The town is almost completely dedicated to tourism, as backpackers flock here to take advantage of the many trails to glaciers, high altitude lakes, and viewpoints for condors and eagles.

Best time to visit: November–April



PEACE OF MIND

Empowerment: *The Wizard of Us*



Once there was a girl who, longing for freedom, found herself swept away on an adventure far from the comforts of home. Trusted

companion by her side, she clumsily explored this colorful new world, all the while seeking an expeditious path home. Assembling a nomadic group of kindred spirits, she set off on a pilgrimage of personal empowerment. Trading one precarious obstacle for the next, the group grew in fellowship, allowing members, in turn, to demonstrate previously unknown powers of wisdom, compassion, and courage. Only after all obstacles were finally surmounted did the girl recognize her true strength as echoed by Glinda, the Good Witch of the North: "You've always had the power my dear, you just had to learn it for yourself."

Personal empowerment, as evidenced by Dorothy in the classic tale "The Wizard of Oz," is often construed as a subjective feeling of influence ("I feel in control"). But a feeling does not necessarily translate into tangible proof of influence ("How am I in control?"). Researchers Lauren B. Cattaneo and Aliya Chapman of George Mason University assert that actual empowerment is an alchemy of personal action and social reaction: "...a process in which a person who lacks power sets a personally meaningful goal oriented toward increasing power, takes action toward that goal, and observes and reflects on the impact of this action, drawing on his or her evolving self-efficacy, knowledge, and competence related to the goal." ("The Process of Empowerment: A Model for Use in Research and Practice," American Psychologist, 2010, 65, p. 647) Thus, personal empowerment may be more aptly viewed as an interactive process, whereby feeling is translated into meaningful action in one's social world.

Personal empowerment can rise or fall based on one's efforts. Actions leading to positive results ("I'm melting! I'm melting!" —the Wicked Witch of the West) can promote a sense of empowerment. Those leading to negative

results ("The smell of the flowers is killing us all!" —Lion) can instill a sense of disempowerment.

Dorothy showed us goal attainment can be increased when the following exist:

1. A strong belief in one's ability to master the problem ("I'm not afraid of her!"),
2. Knowledge of the problem's system and dynamics ("Oh, please! Please, sir! I've got to see the Wizard! The Good Witch of the North sent me!"),
3. Well-honed skills and resources to meet the problem (Water bucket? Check!), and
4. A problem's reasonable degree of resolution ("We want to see the Wizard!").

This feedback loop is integral to personal empowerment.

We, like Dorothy, leave behind the comforts of home in search of personal empowerment and, in so doing, have the potential to catalyze others' pathways to empowerment. Landing at our assigned posts, we struggle to re-calibrate. Clumsily, we practice our new language and customs, and are jolted with every new sight, sound, taste, and touch. We are overwhelmed! ("Oh dear! I keep forgetting I'm not in Kansas!" —Dorothy) But we know vulnerability can inspire growth and we persevere. Bracing ourselves, we undertake an honest assessment of our capabilities, acquire new skills and resources, and carefully study our new social landscape. We assemble our social support. Moving from one challenge to the next, we grow in fellowship, inspiring each other to do more than we would alone.

As you follow the yellow brick road of Peace Corps service, be sure to recognize this plain truth about yourself and inspire self-recognition in others as voiced by Glinda, the Good Witch of the North: "You are capable of more than you know."

For mental health support, contact the Counseling and Outreach Unit at 202.692.1470.



CORPS INNOVATION

Med Kit Refills Go Mobile

PC Medlink automates refill process

Over the past year, Peace Corps/headquarters has been rolling out a new automated way for PCVs to order medical kit refills, which will improve tracking and delivery, and cut down on administrative time for refills. Previously, without a standard global process, many posts struggled to efficiently track and process orders to refill medical kit items that arrived via email, phone call, text, WhatsApp, and in person.

The new platform, PC Medlink, is currently in use by 12 Peace Corps posts and has processed orders for more than 4,000 items while reducing processing time by 75 percent.

How it works

There are two ways to access PC Medlink: SMS text or at pcmedlink.org. If you are using text, simply text your order to a country-specific phone number using five-letter "short codes" for medical kit items. If you go to the website, you sign in, then enter your order using a drop-down list. Once you order, you receive an immediate confirmation receipt and an expected response date, then the medical unit staff can view a compiled list of requests and process all the orders at once, communicating back to PCVs by both email and text. A short while later, the system sends PCVs an inquiry to confirm delivery.

How it helps staff

In 2013, post medical staff spent up to 32 hours a month responding to requests from Volunteers to resupply their medical kits. It was not uncommon for medical assistants to arrive at the office hours before other staff to work through these requests before taking on their other responsibilities during normal work hours. Using PC Medlink, medical units have reported they have reduced the processing time to just eight hours per month, allowing them to dedicate more time to providing direct support to Volunteers.

"PC Medlink has really helped us a lot since first launching," said Dewi Daulika, a medical secretary at Peace Corps/Indonesia. "It saves time, is cost effective, and allows us to concentrate on other tasks."

PC MEDLINK Example

If Volunteer Jane wants to order ibuprofen, ace bandages, and antibiotic ointment, she would text IBPRF, ABAND, and ANBON to the country-specific number.

IBPRF, ABAND, ANBON, thank you

In addition to streamlining the ordering and tracking, PC Medlink also automates communications, reducing the likelihood that an order will get lost and catching when there's a delivery problem.

The technology

PC Medlink utilizes advances in web-based SMS APIs (application programming interface, basically an information gateway between your cellular provider and the application) to integrate orders that come in via text message with those placed online. This allows Volunteers on both ends of the connectivity spectrum to easily place orders. PC Medlink stores everything via cloud, allowing Volunteers and staff to access the system from anywhere and on any device. It is written in Ruby on Rails, a modern coding language that is fast to write and easy to adjust.

An innovative approach to software development

Perhaps the coolest aspect of PC Medlink is that it was developed pro bono by software developers from all over the U.S. who volunteered their time toward the Peace Corps mission. In fact, 27 individuals contributed to the code base. James Dabbs, a Ruby instructor at The Iron Yard (a 12-week coding bootcamp in Atlanta) leads the U.S.-based volunteer development efforts.

Dabbs was introduced to the project after meeting Patrick Choquette, Peace Corps director of innovation, at a hackathon in June 2013 in Atlanta. The prototype solution developed that weekend won the top prize for its innovative integration of SMS and the web.

Last year, Dabbs visited a Peace Corps medical officer training event in Atlanta, where the Peace Corps medical officers were able to thank him in person.

"It was incredible to get to see all the PCMOs and see them respond to the work that we've done," he said. "That's why you do this sort of thing. It's incredibly rewarding."

Since then, PC Medlink has gone through many rapid iterations, following a human-centered design approach where user feedback has been central to development. PC Medlink continues to improve as the team works to develop the most simple and effective solution possible.

You can follow, or contribute toward, the progress of this platform at <https://github.com/PeaceCorps/medlink>.

If you think your med unit could benefit from this tool, encourage them to contact the Office of Innovation. (Talk to your PCMO if PC Medlink might be right for you!)

The Office of Innovation works to enable more efficient operations and implement "smarter" government initiatives.



From PCV to Teacher (or Not)

Dear Career Development Specialist:

I've spent two years of my Peace Corps service teaching English at the high school level as my primary assignment. Although I do not have a teaching degree, I want to continue teaching upon returning to the U.S. However, I'm not sure I have it in me to return to the undergraduate level to get a bachelor's degree in education. Are there any alternatives?

Dear Peace Corps Volunteer:

Congratulations on nearing the end of your service. And yes, there are many ways you can teach in the classroom upon returning to the States that do not involve returning to get a bachelor's in education.

First, consider applying to teach in a private school where formal certification is not mandatory. Outside of requiring a bachelor's degree (in any major) and the ability to pass a background check, private schools have much more flexibility than public schools in who they hire and aren't limited to hiring a teacher who is formally credentialed in that subject.

This bodes well for Education Volunteers who have gained valuable experience in teaching and an ability to connect with students.

Even in the public education sector, there are alternative ways to secure a teaching position without a formal teaching certification. Some states, such as California, accept Peace Corps teaching service in lieu of state licensing requirements, provided they have completed at least 18 months of service, during which at least 50 percent of the primary assignment consisted of classroom teaching. For more details on California's program, see www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl535.pdf.

Interested in teaching in another state? Try contacting that state's licensing agency for teacher certification to see if they recognize Peace Corps teaching service. Providing a link to California's program may be helpful.

You can also check into alternative teaching certification programs that work to alleviate the severe shortages of teachers in at-risk or underserved schools. Teach for America is one of the better-known programs, placing talented and resourceful individuals as teachers in at-risk schools throughout the States, but it is certainly not the only one. In nearly every state there are alternative certification programs to choose from, some of which even allow the participant to receive a master's in the process, all while working a paid teaching job. Note that many of these programs are only open to non-education majors. Doing an online search will produce many options to explore!

Finally, the Peace Corps recently began offering a Teaching English as a Foreign Language Certificate program, which includes 120 hours of training and two years of supervised teaching at select posts. For more information, go to peacecorps.gov and search "TEFL."

Good luck and happy teaching!

Dear Career Development Specialist:

Although I've enjoyed my Peace Corps service and teaching assignment, I do not want to be a full-time teacher after my service ends. What other options are there for me?

Dear Peace Corps Volunteer:

Just because you served as an educator during your Peace Corps service doesn't mean you will be typecast as a teacher forever, unable to break from that career direction. Your employment options are many, regardless of what sector you worked in during your service. The key comes down to spinning your experience to address skills required for each position to which you are applying, and this means tailoring each and every résumé.

Fear not, tailoring your résumé isn't as hard as it sounds. It may be as simple as adding some of the keywords from the job description and reordering the bullets to put the more relevant ones—perhaps even non-teaching ones—first.

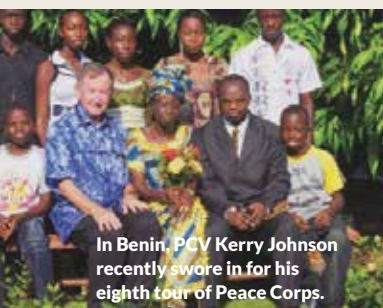
As you've surely learned, teaching involves more than lesson planning, classroom instruction, and grading papers: Think assessing needs (formally through testing or informally through observation), managing logistics (for special events or grants), and fundraising and budgeting (money or supplies). By highlighting these additional responsibilities—and any pertinent skills acquired through secondary projects—you can describe your service and experience in a way that highlights relevant skills to make a strong case for yourself regardless of the job.

Good luck and happy (future) job searching!

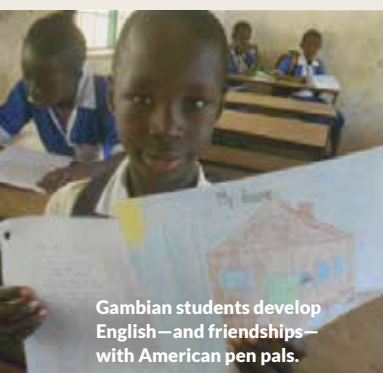
If you have a question about post-Peace Corps employment, email career development specialist Jodi Hammer at rpcvcareercenter@peacecorps.gov.



Notes from the Field



In Benin, PCV Kerry Johnson recently swore in for his eighth tour of Peace Corps.



Gambian students develop English—and friendships—with American pen pals.



In Mexico, 150 people received first-time eye care at a two-day vision clinic.



More staff at a local health clinic in Zambia enables natal services, and saves lives.

Benin

View From an Eighth Tour

Kerry Johnson has dedicated more than 70 months of his life to serving others through the Peace Corps and currently serves as a Peace Corps Response Volunteer in Benin. He has taught community members to operate computer networks, start their own small businesses, communicate in English, make movies, and take photographs. In his current role, Johnson works as an information technology specialist for a nongovernmental organization that provides support to young entrepreneurs—his third time helping Beninese communities with information technology projects.

"Being a Peace Corps Volunteer is not a career: It is taking time away from careers to voluntarily give of your knowledge, skills, and attitudes for the benefit of others," he said.

Cambodia

Using Sports to Educate Boys and Girls

PCV Fatuma Youb (2013–15) and her counterparts built the area's first sports education and recreation center at a local high school to provide the community—particularly girls and women—with a safe space for sports practices, local competitions, and health education classes. With the lack of available resources, students had to travel several miles to the nearest facilities and girls in Youb's community were often discouraged from playing sports all together.

The Gambia

Fostering Friendships through Pen Pals

PCV Jessica Fryman (2014–16) fostered new friendships, intercultural exchange, excitement, and curiosity in her Gambian primary school students through a pen pal program with American students. The project encouraged children to engage with reading and writing in new ways and introduced different teaching techniques to teachers.

"The letters are far from perfect, but I've realized that's not the

point," Fryman said. "It's about the excitement to learn about reading, about writing, about the world. It's about friendship—across cultures, without borders."

Mexico

Visiting Clinic Brings First-time Eye Care

RPCV Matt Pickler (2011–14) helped more than 150 members of his Mexican community receive proper eye care for the first time by organizing a vision clinic in his village. During the two-day clinic, over 150 local adults and children were given vision tests and screenings, fitted for glasses, and, in a few cases, diagnosed as needing corrective eye surgery.

"Half of the patients received new, custom-fit lenses for the first time in their lives," Pickler said. "For the older adults, having proper glasses allows them to work and read again. Some had not read a book in over 20 years and were delighted to be able to see words with clarity."

Tanzania

PCV Returns to Africa to Improve Health Care

RPCV Eunice Kimunai (2014–15) recently returned from Tanzania after working for a year as a nurse and health educator with the Global Health Service Partnership, an innovative collaboration of the Peace Corps, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and the nonprofit Seed Global Health. As an African immigrant herself, Kimunai's familiarity with the culture and knowledge of topics often overlooked in health education, such as the prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission, allowed her to build trust in the classroom and empower her students to seek answers to tough questions.

"In Tanzania, many doctors leave the country to practice or work for NGOs instead of hospitals where they could provide direct patient care. I am hoping that my work in Tanzania helped inspire my students to stay in their country and be agents of change," said Kimunai.

Togo

New Pumps, Clean Water

PCVs Lauren Saint-Erne of Temecula, California, and Kelsey Jo Corey of Flower Mound, Texas, are working with local community members to replace broken water pumps in 16 Togolese villages. The new pumps provide clean water to more than 25,000 villagers and help reduce water-borne illness and infant mortality rates.

"Access to clean water is not only the basis of development work; it is the foundation of a productive and fully functioning community," said Saint-Erne, a graduate of San Francisco State University who has served in Togo since 2013.

Uganda

Improving Water Access on World Water Day

PCV Jenna Marcotte (2013–15) worked with her community to restore a rainwater collection tank on top of the local school to ensure a reliable, clean source of water for students and staff. With the help of school staff and parents, she was able to make this first step in improving the sanitation and health standards for schools in her community.

Zambia

Expanding Health Care and Improving Treatments

PCV Nicole Nation (2014–16) is improving health care for more than 15,000 members of her community by increasing the number of staff at the local health clinic in order to increase access to vaccinations, antenatal care, growth monitoring, and HIV treatment. Due to staff shortages, the health center is unable to offer life-saving outreach services to thousands of Zambians who live in remote areas and rely on field visits from health-care professionals.

"By bringing in more permanent staff, we can ensure further trust in the clinic, increase care seeking, and ultimately save lives," Nation said.



VOLUNTEER LIFE

Providing Sanitary Pads, Keeping Girls in School

Branden Ryan (PCV Tanzania, 2013–16)

“Mwalimu Branden?”

“Yes?” I replied, turning around to see one of my form 3 female students approaching me.

“May I have permission?” I was teacher-on-duty for the week, which meant having to field a slew of requests from students to go home early or to skip out on afternoon activities. “Permission to do what?” I asked.

With little hesitation, she responded, “I need to go home to get one of my pads for my period.”

////////////////////////////////////

When I arrived at my site in southern Tanzania, I would not have thought that my female students would be so forthright with me, the foreign, male teacher from the Peace Corps who likes to dance in class, reward students with stickers and small gifts, and run for miles through the local villages. Fast-forward two years, and now students feel free to approach me and other teachers concerning a variety of health-related issues.

Last year, Peace Corps/Tanzania forged a partnership with Huru International, a female-empowerment organization originating in Kenya that provides girls and women with HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and life-skills education, together with kits of re-useable sanitary pads to help keep girls in school (*huru* means “free” in Swahili). When I first heard about Huru’s goal, I was intrigued: With two younger sisters, I imagined myself in their shoes, living in rural Tanzania with no sanitary means of managing my menstrual cycles, missing school as a result and thus, any opportunities in life that follow as a result of education. Even though I wasn’t sure how I’d go about implementing the project as a male, I wanted to see if managing menstruation truly was a barrier to receiving education for my female students.

Together with my primary counterpart, who is also male, we surveyed all 150-plus female students at our school to see if there was a need to bring Huru. The results were (to us) shocking: 100 percent of students reported missing school because of their periods; over 75 percent reported being unable to afford disposable pads. To manage their periods, students reported using pieces of cloth, pieces of mattress foam, and even paper. The embarrassment and shame felt by students and the unsanitary methods of menstrual hygiene both scared me and

affirmed the need to address these issues.

While explaining the purpose of applying for a Huru grant to the school staff, my counterpart summarized the issue: “We cannot empower women if they’re being left behind, and women are going to be left behind if they cannot get educations because they miss school.”

For the first Huru training in the country, three counterparts came with me, one of whom was male. There were over 25 Volunteers and counterparts, yet we were the only men in the room. The Kenyan staff from Huru were equally happy and surprised to see males involved in the project, though we often found ourselves speaking generally for the minority sex in the room. While preparing to implement the project at site, scheduling seminars for our female students and their guardians, some teachers expressed their apprehension about males presenting on female hygiene and menstruation, wondering if it would be culturally appropriate. After lengthy debate in the staffroom, we decided we would be there to introduce ourselves first, and then pose the question directly to the guardians of our female students during the pre-Huru informational meeting: “Will you feel uncomfortable discussing *hedhi* (menstruation) with men in the room?”

On the day of the parents’ meeting, the resounding “No!” of the some 75 women in attendance lifted my spirits and still does to this day. One mother stood up and said, “It is very important for men to talk about these issues too!” “Yes, and we thank you so much for bringing this to our girls and to our community,” agreed another. The chorus of thank-yous and the round of applause that erupted soon thereafter were reminders that this project was not only necessary, but would

“Issues that affect our girls and women affect all families, and ... the entire community at large.”

be wholeheartedly embraced and supported by the community.

My primary counterpart and I have both been asked why we wanted to get involved with Huru International and promoting women's empowerment. We've been met with skeptical comments as to whether or not males can adequately address issues of women's health or if it is taboo for male teachers to be discussing menstruation with female students in Tanzania. The shouts of “no” by the parents echo in my ears every time I answer these questions. Ultimately, the goal of my work goes beyond just women's empowerment, but promoting true gender equality. Issues that affect our girls and women affect all families, and issues that affect families affect the entire community at large. My counterpart enjoys using the phrase “collective action” to assert that problems faced by a particular group in society should be tackled by the society as a whole.

My time in Tanzania has taught me that we cannot segregate issues by implying that the effects of each particular problem are limited in their impacts. While menstruation and unsanitary hygiene practices might have immediate health consequences for women only, the ripples reach each corner of society, whether economically or financially for families who support out-of-school youth or girls who cannot find jobs beyond subsistence agriculture or through family planning and early pregnancies due to a lack of sexual education. By overcoming the initial apprehension of implementing a largely female-oriented project, we have provided health education to over 500 students, both male and female, at two secondary schools, and have distributed over 600 Huru kits to students and female guardians from four of the surrounding villages. We've been able to use Huru as a platform to break down gender barriers, to show our boys that it is not right to mock girls who might be on their periods, to show our girls that they can take ownership of their bodies and sexuality without consequence, and to show the community the power of change.



Why did I decide to take on a huge secondary project whose main focus was on females? I thought of my own sisters. I thought of the clear gap in test scores between male and female students. I thought of the disparities between male and female attendance at school. I thought of the opportunity not only to educate and empower females, but also to increase understanding among males—a vital, yet often ignored, aspect of gender equality. And, anyone who knows me knows I like to be unconventional and shake things up.

I'm proud to say that I was the first male Volunteer to implement Huru projects in his community, just as my counterpart is proud to say that he was the first as well. We were able to break down the preconception that Huru was a project that would only be able to be implemented by female Volunteers, and now, as Peace Corps/Tanzania approaches its fifth Huru training, five other male Volunteers have implemented Huru projects at their sites. We are directly engaging in collective action by showing how people of different cultures and genders can come together for a common purpose. And now, on behalf of my students and students all over Tanzania who can focus on studies rather than skirt stains and mocking laughs, I can say, “*Tunashukuru Huru! Sasa, tuko FREE!*”

Breaking gender barriers

PCV Branden Ryan (Tanzania, 2013–16) with some of his students

Papusas



Ingredients

1 t kosher salt

2 cups masa harina (9 ounces by weight, can substitute regular or corn flour if needed)

1 & 1/2 cups water

12 ounces queso fresco or mozzarella, grated
Vegetable oil, as needed
Curtido, for serving

Instructions

1. In a large bowl, mix salt and masa harina well. With your hands, knead the water into the masa harina in a few additions; work in all the water evenly (it will feel like stiff mashed potatoes).
2. Divide the cheese into 9 equal piles. Roll a 2-ounce ball of dough in your hands, about the size of a golf ball, and pat it out in your hand to form a disc a little larger than your palm. (If the dough is very sticky, lightly moisten or oil your hands.) Pat a pile of cheese onto the masa, leaving just a little space around the edges (cup your hand slightly). Carefully close your hand to bring the edges of the disc closer, and use your other hand to pat and pinch it together to enclose the cheese in a rough ball. Patch any holes with a little more masa, but don't worry too much: Cheese that leaks out will brown deliciously in the pan. Pat out the papusa on a lightly floured surface, forming a disc about 4 inches wide. Repeat, forming a second papusa.
3. Heat a large nonstick sauté pan over medium heat, and very lightly grease it with oil. When the oil thins, lay the papusas in the pan, and cook until richly browned in spots, about 4 minutes. (If you can fit 3 or 4 papusas at a time in the pan, increase heat to medium-high.) It's OK if the cheese starts to bubble out. Flip the papusas, and cook another 4 minutes, until they're browned and cooked through. Serve finished ones immediately with curtido, and repeat forming and cooking the remaining papusas.

Makes 9 papusas.

Curtido

Ingredients

1 pound cabbage, finely shredded (green or red or both, can substitute other hearty vegetables)
2 & 1/2 cups water
1/2 medium onion, thinly sliced
1/2 cup white vinegar
2 T kosher salt
1/2 to 1 t dried oregano, crumbled
Black pepper, to taste
Ground cumin, to taste

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a large, clean bowl. Using tongs or your hands, gently crush the vegetables in the brine liquid.
2. Place a clean plate on top of the vegetables, and weigh it down to fully submerge them under the brine. Let sit at room temperature for at least 3 days, or longer to your taste; the flavor will deepen and mellow over time. When it's to your liking, transfer to clean jars, making sure brine covers the vegetables, and store in the refrigerator. Can keep for weeks.

Rice Cooker / Slow Cooker Hacks

Don't have a stove or a hot plate at your site, but you have a rice or slow cooker? Use it! Remember that it won't get as hot as a burner or an oven, and you need to be careful not to blow the fuse when you repeatedly hit the "cook" button.

Eggs

Boiled (technically steamed): add 2 cups of water and steam for 15–20 minutes, then place eggs in cold water for easier peeling; or frittata style: whisk eggs in the cooker, add pre-cooked veggies, then cook on the regular rice time.

Soups and chili

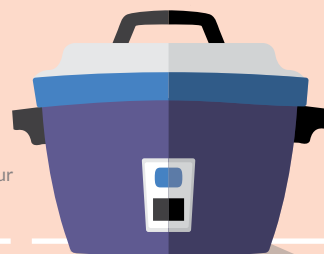
Think minestrone or Tex-Mex chili, add your ingredients and go.

Steamed veggies and fish

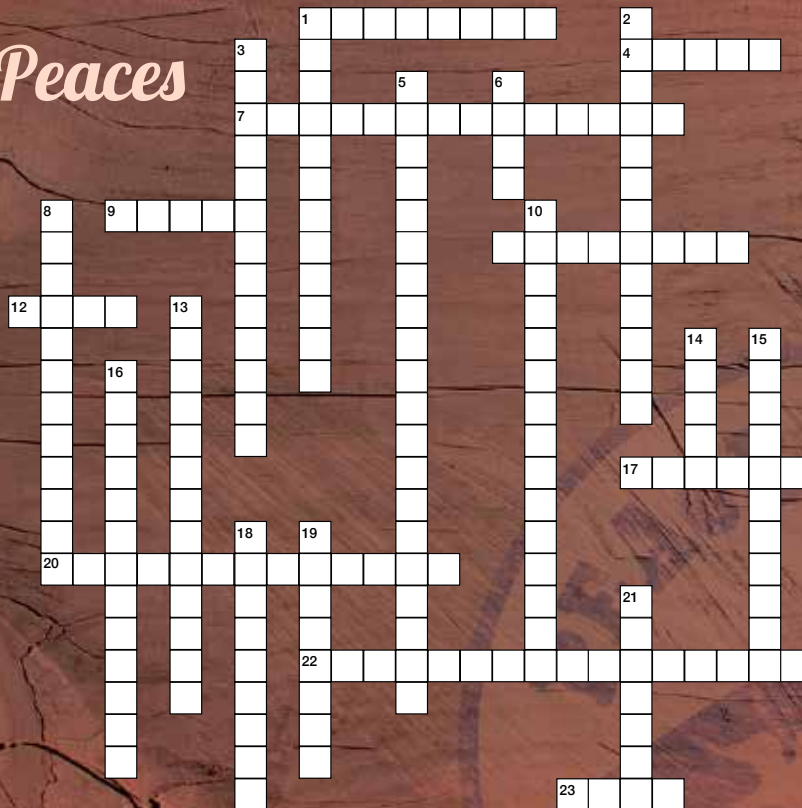
If your rice cooker came with a steamer, you are good to go. If not, place veggies and/or fish on top of your rice once it's cooked halfway. (Hardier veggies might need to be parboiled first.)

Desserts

Brownies? Check. Cake? Check. Pudding? Check. Cheesecake? Check. Mix your ingredients in the cooker and time appropriately. Brownies and cake will take about an hour; pudding and cheesecake will take one regular cooking cycle.



Puzzle Peaces



Crossword

See page 16 for answers.

Leadership and Legacy

Across

1. Girls' leadership initiative that turned 20 this year
4. The only non-rectangular host country flag
7. The first Director of the Peace Corps
9. Month that the Let Girls Learn initiative was launched
11. Heritage month celebrated Sept. 15 to Oct. 15
12. Capital of Timor-Leste
17. Second-largest Volunteer program sector
20. In 2014, Peace Corps solidified a partnership with this historically black fraternity
22. The 2015 Top-Volunteer Producing HBCU
23. Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet spoke on Let Girls Learn at the ___ Impact Awards

Down

1. "Peace Corps" in Spanish
2. To help promote a better _____ of other peoples on the part of Americans.
3. RPCV who serves in the U.S. House of Representatives for Massachusetts
5. Site of President Kennedy's original Peace Corps commissioning
6. Program launched by the Peace Corps, Seed Global Health, and PEPFAR (abbr.)
8. 23 percent of Volunteers serve in this geographic region
10. Number of girls, globally, who are not in school
13. U.S. President's mother who served as public Health Volunteer in India
14. The first two countries to host Peace Corps Volunteers: Tanganyika and _____
15. Average age of Volunteers
16. Interviews with prominent people from around the world who were influenced by a Volunteer
18. Director Hessler-Radelet served in Western Samoa ___ years ago
19. Celebrated on April 22 every year
21. Average duration of new application

Sudoku

Easy

				2		8		
8			4	5		6	7	
4		5	7					
	3					1		5
		8	5		4	3		
6		7					2	
					3	5		8
	9	3		6	7			1
		1		4				

Medium

2		4					7	
	6		7		8	2		
1			6		2			
	4		9	7		8		
		6		8		5		
		7		6	3		2	
			3		6			2
		8	4		9		6	
	3					1		9

Hard

	3		6	4	8			
7	2	5						4
			7					
	9		1	2	7			
3		7		8		9		2
			9	6	3		4	
					6			
6						7	9	1
			2	7	1		3	



WORLD FOOD DAY

Peace Corps & Food Security

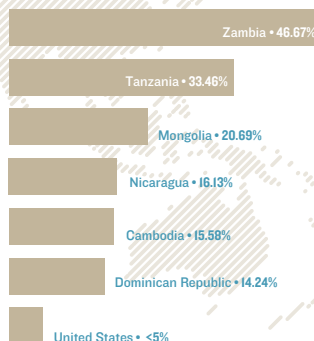
PEACE
CORPS
2015

Food security is when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.

—World Health Organization

Nearly
800 million
people worldwide are chronically
undernourished

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



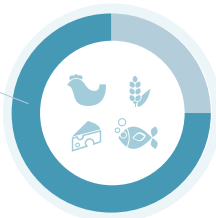
66 million primary school-aged children attend classes hungry across the developing world with **23 million** in Africa alone

UN World Food Programme

Percentage of country population undernourished out of the total population

FAO 2014 report

Peace Corps Volunteers work to increase food security in **75%** of the current Peace Corps countries



Volunteers trained
27,251
people globally in
child health
and nutrition best practices



A school garden in Ghana

Some students in Ghana do not get enough Vitamin A or iron in their diets. With help from the community, Volunteers planted a school garden with **600** pepper plants, **300** tomato plants, and **4** beds of dark leafy greens. Now, **600** students have fresh vegetables for lunch every day helping to provide those essential nutrients.



A Small Project Assistance grant helped start a community garden in **Cambodia**.

1,102 pounds of vegetables were delivered to more than **40 families with children**



Volunteers trained **55,951** local farmers to integrate improved technologies — such as composting, mulching, grafted fruit trees, pest management, and erosion control—into their farming.



More than 23,250.15* acres worldwide are now under improved technology/management practices due to trainings from **PCVs**

*a little larger than the size of Manhattan (21,610 acres)



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



The View from Here: The Market

Next Issue: View from My Commute

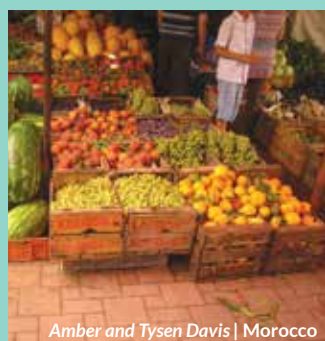
Send photos from your daily commute to pctimes@peacecorps.gov. Include your name, country, and service dates. Make sure your photo is 300 dpi and at least 3 inches wide.



Suradee Thongkattikul | Ghana



Victoria Carberry | Philippines



Amber and Tysen Davis | Morocco



Stephen Henry | Thailand



Deanna Rowe | Swaziland



Shay Priester | Ecuador



Adam Cohen | Togo



Denis Illige-Saucier | Comoros



Andrea Edman | Cambodia