

Peace Corps Botswana

ANNUAL REPORT 2011



History of the Peace Corps

The idea of forming the United States Peace Corps was first proposed by John F. Kennedy in 1960, when he challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in other nations. From that inspiration grew an agency of the US federal government devoted to world peace and friendship. Peace Corps continues to help people who want to build a better life for themselves, their children and their communities. To date, more than 200,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries; today 9,095 Volunteers serve in 75 host countries. Peace Corps as an agency works in six sectors, including: health, education, agriculture, environment, community economic development, and youth in development. Peace Corps has four cross-cutting initiatives which are integrated across sectors, which are: HIV/AIDS, Youth, Women in Development/Gender and Development, and Information Communication Technology.



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Peace Corps Worldwide Goals

- Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women
- Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of peoples served
- Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans





Message from the Country Director

The year 2011 marked many events of significance for Peace Corps and its program here in Botswana. Peace Corps as an agency celebrated its 50th anniversary, and showed the world that we are as relevant and vibrant as ever. Peace Corps/Botswana completed 39 years of impactful work in Botswana, with the last 8 years focused on HIV/AIDS. Our Volunteers represent the best that America has to offer. Promoting peace and helping others surely never goes out of style!

Although the headquarters of Peace Corps/Botswana is in Gaborone, the real action is occurring throughout the country – from Middlepits to Shakawe, Charleshill to Semolale, along with Rakops and everywhere in between. We are now entering our 40th year of service in Botswana, and during that time our Volunteers have lived and worked in over 110 different villages across the nation. And I really do mean lived in these communities, as Volunteer assignments are for two full years of service in a given community.

We closed 2011 with 117 active Volunteers, all focused on addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. They work in schools, with a wide variety of non-governmental organizations, in health clinics and social work offices, along with District AIDS and District Health offices. They place a great emphasis on training and capacity building, to ensure that skills are transferred and the impact of their efforts will be sustainable. We owe a huge debt of thanks to their counterparts and supervisors, along with the Ministries of Health, Education and Skills Development, Local Government, and the National AIDS Coordinating Agency. Our efforts can only be successful if we work in a truly collaborative environment – and this is what we have long found in Botswana.

The staff and Volunteers of Peace Corps/Botswana are making a meaningful and lasting impact. Some of their efforts are focused at the individual level, perhaps helping

a disadvantaged or orphaned youth build valuable life skills. Other efforts are focused at the organizational or community level, perhaps through getting a pre-school construction project off the ground or helping various offices to run more efficiently. All in all, last year more than 80 organizations demonstrated improved systems to respond to the demands of HIV/AIDS through Volunteer interventions.

Our Volunteers are especially engaged with youth and HIV prevention, as healthy youth represent the hope and future of this nation. In 2011, Peace Corps/Botswana Volunteers collectively reached over 30,000 Batswana with individual and small-group prevention activities! Many of the individuals reached were trained or coached by our Volunteers to subsequently conduct additional HIV prevention activities, so there is a multiplier effect to their efforts.

I'm happy to report that Botswana was well represented at the Peace Corps 50th anniversary celebrations held in Washington, DC. The Naro Giraffe Dance Group traveled all the way from D'Kar to join in the festivities. Their multiple performances of traditional dances were amongst the highlights of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival of 2011. One of the goals of Peace Corps/Botswana is to highlight the incredible culture and accomplishments of Botswana in the United States, and we do all we can to showcase this wonderful nation. Another of our goals is to show Batswana what Americans are really like, which we achieve by having our Volunteers live in villages and speak the local languages.



On a personal note, 2011 marked 25 years since I myself was a Peace Corps Volunteer serving in Cameroon. It is truly an honor to return to Peace Corps as a Country Director, and there is no country in which I would rather serve than right here in Botswana! Botswana is the gem of Africa, and Peace Corps never tires of spreading that message. We very much look forward to 2012 as the 40th year of impactful collaboration between the people of Botswana and the staff and Volunteers of the United States Peace Corps.

Tim Hartman

Tim Hartman - Country Director

Volunteer story, in his own words - Matt J.

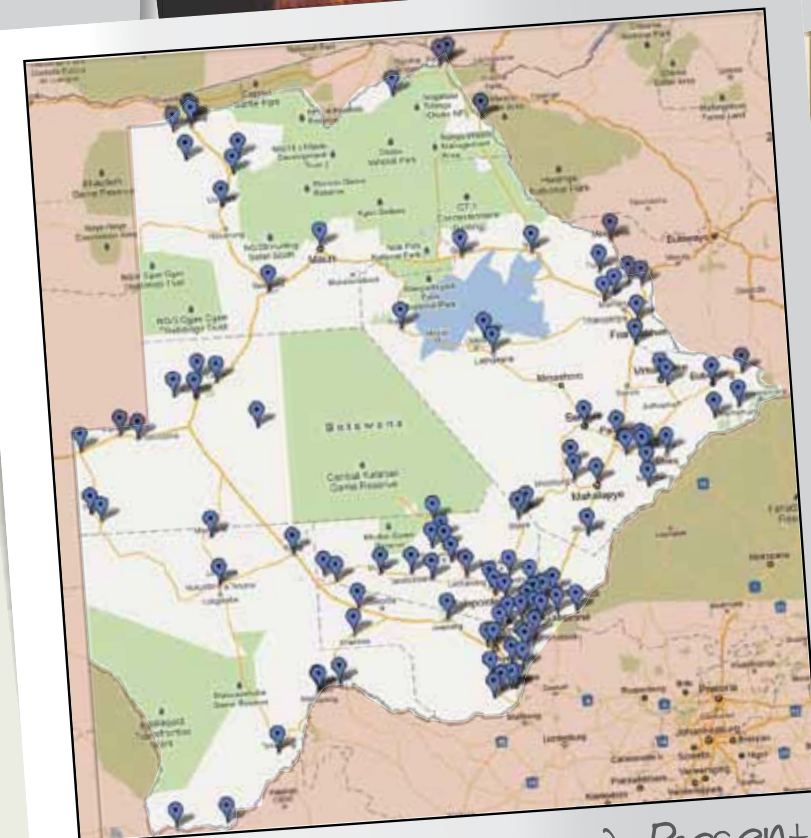
Botswana has the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the world. The generation of youth today lost a large portion of the population in their parents' age range since HIV/AIDS has hit those of reproductive age. Because of a large portion of a parenting generation died, social systems have broken down and children and youth miss out on some of the parenting they might have had, including the social training and direction. A large proportion of youth end up dropping out of school for various reasons, including lack of resources or social instruction to complete school. Nonetheless, with some encouragement and support, these youth can succeed in school and life.

A group of young women drop outs in Molepolole came together at first on an informal basis to spend time together and learn life skills. This group met regularly and with their own energy, and with Volunteers' guidance, they blossomed, becoming engaged and eager to learn again and work. With our help, the group applied for a grant from a new grant fund for youth, under the Botswana National Youth Council, or BNVC. In collaboration with an NGO branch that focuses on women's empowerment in their village, the group won an unprecedented grant of \$150,000 or P1,000,000. This grant allows 14 of the young women to return to school, for the affiliate NGO to hire two Program Coordinators to manage the grant, and other young women in the group to begin income generating activities, including a poultry farm. The young women returned to school, and for the poultry farm was identified, and Coordinators were hired. An HIV testing event was mobilized early in 2011 by the youth group; the event brought out more people than the mobile testing organization ever expected - a testament to these young women's influence on their community and the planning skills they learned as part of the group.



Peace Corps/ Botswana

The Peace Corps is fortunate to be warmly welcomed in Botswana. Many leaders recall the positive influence that a Volunteer in their home community had on their lives. Peace Corps entered Botswana in 1966, just two months after independence. Volunteers were teachers, health specialists, planners, and agriculture extension workers, just to name a few examples. Over 1,900 Volunteers served in Botswana from 1966 until 1997 when Peace Corps graduated its program in Botswana. In 2002, President Mogae met with President Bush to ask Peace Corps to return to address the impact HIV/AIDS was having on the country. Since re-opening in 2003, over 440 Volunteers have served or are currently serving in Botswana. Presently, 20% of Volunteers are over age 50. Volunteers have lived and worked in over 110 communities across Botswana, represented in this map.



Volunteer Sites: Past and Present

Peace Corps/Botswana Program

Peace Corps Botswana operations are guided by a Project Framework that is aligned to the National Strategic Framework II for HIV/AIDS. There are three goals that Peace Corps/ Botswana seeks to achieve and these are:

- Men, women and youth will participate in activities that promote healthy lifestyles and emphasize prevention of HIV to move Botswana closer to the national prevention goal of no new infections by 2016.
- Organizations, agencies, and departments have improved systems to respond to the demands of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC's), people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), caregivers, community members, and service providers will provide and/or have access to quality services related to HIV/AIDS.

To achieve these goals, Volunteers serve under the Ministries of Local Government, Health, and Education and Skills Development; in addition we collaborate with the National AIDS Coordinating Agency (NACA). Volunteers are placed in one of four assignments, including:

- Schools to work with guidance counselors and teachers to implement a leadership and Life Skills curriculum called *Living*;
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) to assist in organizational development and capacity building for those especially working to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children;
- District AIDS Coordinator Offices and District Health Management Teams to assist in the coordination of monitoring and evaluation and all HIV/AIDS related prevention, care, and treatment in a given district; and
- Health Clinics and Social and Community Development offices to strengthen community outreach especially related to prevention and services to the most vulnerable.



Life Skills Assignment

An important component for preventing new HIV infections is working with in and out-of-school youth. In this assignment, Volunteers work with schools, teachers, and community leaders and parents to design and implement activities to address identified needs, such as leadership training, lack of recreational activities, and health education.

Activities

- Train school-based clubs
- Facilitate support groups for children living with HIV/AIDS
- Conduct training on interactive classroom methods and classroom management methods
- Assist in lesson planning
- Co-facilitate lessons

Outcomes

- Prevention of new infections by offering healthy alternatives
- Increased and improved leadership skills, self-confidence, and self-awareness
- Delayed sexual debut or abstinence and reduced pregnancies
- Improved study skills
- Raised awareness about alcohol abuse
- Strengthened Guidance and Counseling teams in schools

Volunteer Story, in his own words - Joel D.

I worked with my neighbour to help complete the building of a preschool. This project began in 2006, and had received two Peace Corps Partnership Project grants through my predecessor which provided for most of the funding for the early building stages. During my tenure, it needed additional support to reach the final touches, including finishing the dining hall and the kitchen and store room. To achieve this, I needed help from both the community and my Peace Corps friends. I recruited community members to help out with the manual labor; it took many weeks but it was completed in 2011.

I was able to work with many community members and teach them to budget for the building and also do some fund raising to get additional funds for supplies of labor man hours. People really invested in the project and worked hard, for a much cheaper rate than normal as a partial donation to the project. It is great to see a dream nearing the completion. The kids now have a sheltered lunch area and multi-purpose rooms where student learning activities can take place. I think the greatest thing to see is to watch people realize that early childhood education is so vital and they have taken an initiative to start teaching young people at an early age. This school will help prepare young children to be better prepared for formal schooling and their future.



NGO Assignment

An important element of Botswana's strategic framework to prevent new infections and support those living with HIV/AIDS is building the capacity of civil society. The Volunteers placed in this assignment work with NGO's, CBO's and FBO's to build capacity to provide services to clients and work to achieve the organization's goals. It is widely recognized that civil society in Botswana is at a nascent stage - particularly in the HIV/AIDS service sector - therefore Volunteers work with such organizations to help them achieve the organization's vision. The focus of Volunteers placed with HIV/AIDS service organizations is systems strengthening, resource mobilization, and organizational development.

Activities

- Coordinate or assist in advisory or board member meetings
- Collect, compile, and update program results information
- Provide management and human resources guidance
- Write and train on grant applications
- Provide computer training

Outcomes

- Prevention of new infections through improved service provision and program implementation
- Systems established to improve human resource management, governance, financial account, and monitoring and evaluation systems to support programming
- Improved grant writing skills and increased funding

Community Capacity Building Assignment

Botswana’s rural environment leaves many communities dispersed far and wide; Volunteers in this assignment are placed at the village level with clinics and social and community development offices to help them achieve their mandate for community outreach and HIV/AIDS prevention and care. Volunteers in these placements work with their communities to mobilize and educate them on different programs such as ARVs, TB prevention, and policies that enforce implementation of programs targeted to orphans and the destitute.

- Activities
- Educate communities on HIV/AIDS transmission and alcohol abuse
 - Provide technical support to the lay counselors and community clinic workers
 - Coordinate football tournaments with an HIV/AIDS messaging component
 - Assist with data collection, storage, and analysis to improve programs and outreach
 - Work with village youth to develop life skills
 - Address adolescent reproductive health outreach needs

- Outcomes
- Prevention of HIV infections through improved education and outreach to targeted audiences
 - Improved data capturing and reporting to national level
 - Improved computer skills, including typing and internet use
 - Improved implementation of programs by committees such as the Health Committee, Men’s Sector, and Peer Mothers support group

District Community Liaison Assignment

Coordination at the district level is essential to achieve Botswana’s national goals for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support. DCL Volunteers are placed in District AIDS Coordinator offices and with District Health Management Teams. DAC-assigned Volunteers play a key role in the annual planning process and the coordination of its implementation, especially related to monitoring and evaluation. DHMT-assigned Volunteers work primarily in data gathering and analysis activities, supply chain troubleshooting, and human resource management assistance.

- Activities
- Gather evidence for planning processes
 - Provide IT support to the RAC offices
 - Work with different community groups to:
 - Assist them to achieve their mandates;
 - Support the monitoring and evaluation functions;
 - Assist in national campaign roll-outs

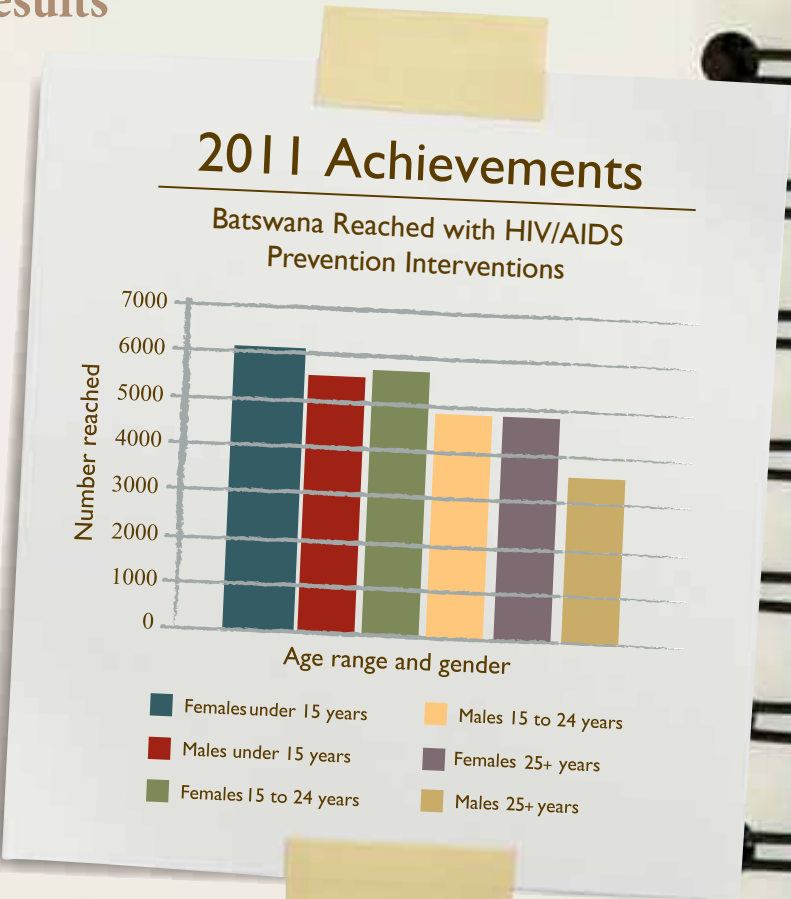
- Outcomes
- Coordination of Civil Society organizations working on HIV/AIDS programs
 - Creation of monitoring tools and databases
 - Improved computer literacy comprehension by DHMT and DAC staff

Peace Corps/Botswana Project Results

Peace Corps/Botswana Volunteers worked diligently and creatively with Batswana counterparts to reach 30,000 Batswana with HIV/AIDS prevention messages and interventions. One thousand four hundred (1,400) service providers, such as teachers, nurses, health education assistants, lay counselors, and social workers were reached to improve their knowledge or skills with regards to prevention.

Volunteers worked with 494 organizations to improve their capacity to address HIV/AIDS, through work such as strategic planning, improved meeting facilitation and documentation, information technology improvements, database establishment, or evidence based planning processes followed.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children, People Living with HIV/AIDS, and caregivers also benefited from Volunteer interventions, including 2,500 individuals and service providers. Further, our Volunteers worked with 233 communities to implement HIV/AIDS related activities, far beyond their official site placements in order to get out the HIV/AIDS messages far and wide. The graph offers a breakdown of the age ranges of people reached in an array of settings, from schools to clinic waiting areas, and from football pitches to conference rooms.



Volunteer Story, in her own words – Salwan H.

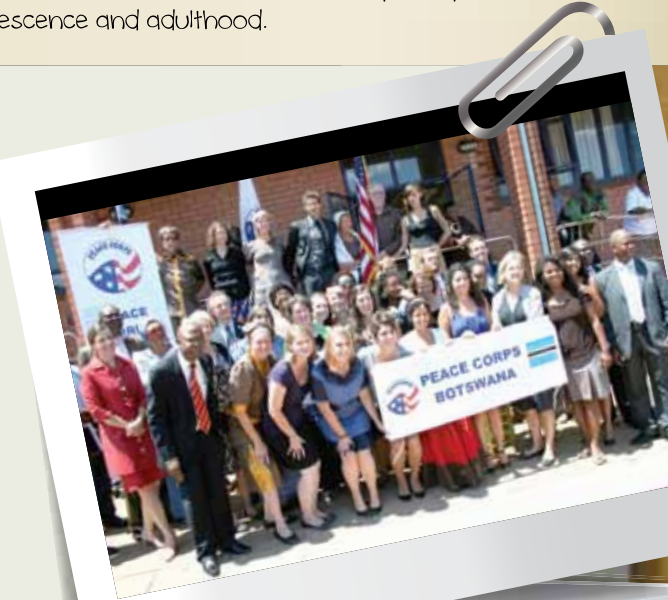
One of the most successful projects I undertook as a PCV is the peer counseling and life skills workshop we planned for the PACT Club at the Tsetsebjwe CJSS. My counterparts at the school and I had determined that there was a lack of understanding amongst the members of the PACT Club of what peer counseling really is. The main premise of the PACT Club is to provide support and counseling to their peers on issues specific to adolescents, yet this particular group of kids lacked these skills. So we decided to organize a workshop to provide them with basic counseling skills, as well as a deeper understanding of certain issues relevant to young people, such as the importance of education and the effects of teenage pregnancy.

We coordinated with the Bobonong DAC office, which provided the funding, and the District Health Management Team to come up with materials and an appropriate syllabus. It was important to have these stakeholders involved and present at the workshop. The target audience was the members of the PACT Club at the junior secondary school. The workshop covered various aspects of peer counseling, such as active listening, life skills, and role plays performed by the facilitators and was set up to be more of an open forum, where the students were encouraged and expected to share their opinions and comments and ask questions. Overall, much was learned and people appreciated our approach to address the issues identified; facilitators believe participants learned invaluable skills that they will carry into their older adolescence and adulthood.

Peace Corps/Botswana Community Grants

Volunteer Assisted Support and Training (VAST):
The VAST mechanism is a funding source through the US government’s President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, which supports Volunteer projects that are initiated by the communities in which they serve. Projects must be community centered with an HIV/AIDS focus. Three Volunteers worked with communities on three VAST grants, including: a grant to support a project in Maun focused on assisting people with disabilities to increase their prevention knowledge and skills; a project with a remote western village to work with their identified orphans and vulnerable children to learn agriculture and business management skills as a means for employment; and a project in the northeast with a preschool serving primarily orphans and vulnerable children to improve community gardening techniques and improve overall nutrition.

Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP):
This grant mechanism connects small community initiated projects with donor partners in the US for financial support. It does not directly provide funding but provides a link to groups, foundations, and service organizations as well as individuals wanting to contribute to the work that Volunteers do with their host community. In 2011, several projects were undertaken under this mechanism, including playground equipment purchase and installation in Semolale and Medie, BNYC equipment purchase in Ghanzi, training for after-school care providers in Boka’a, equipment purchases for community gardens in Rakops and Mogobane, and training for safe infant formula feeding in Ramokgonami.



Cross-Cultural Exchange

A significant portion of the work of Volunteers is to promote a better understanding of Americans by Batswana as well as to promote the understanding of the culture of Botswana by Americans.

Volunteers have met these goals in the past year through blogs, websites, correspondence, and conversations with family and friends in the US - as well as with their local friends, counterparts, and communities. To the right is a table that shows the breakdown of how many of our Volunteers in 2011 conducted such cross-cultural exchanges.

Cross-Cultural Activity	Number of Volunteers
Active this reporting period in the Coverdell World Wise School / Correspondence Match program	31
Electronic updates, stories and/or photos to educate Americans about Botswana	57
Hard copy/paper updates, stories, or photos to educate Americans about Botswana	31
Personal website or blog to educate Americans about your host country	37
Hosting American visitors (friends, family or others)	30



Volunteer Story, in her own words - Sydney L.

In November 2011, Sua CJSS in Nata hosted a regional Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) Camp. This initiative was aimed at empowering young girls to make healthy lifestyle decisions and become leaders in their own communities. This camp included delegations of five girls ages 12-16, one Volunteer and one local counterpart from seven villages in the North-East region. The villages represented were Nata, Sowa, Dukwi, Tonota, Tshesebe, Pandamatenga and Maitengwe. Girls went through a rigorous application process to attend the camp, and 50 were selected from 7 villages across the northeast region of the country. The camp ran for five days and four nights at Nata Senior Secondary School. PCVs and counterparts, which included nurses, teachers and peer educators, helped to facilitate all the sessions. The session topics included decision making, sexual reproductive health, how pregnancy happens, HIV/STIs, and leadership. In addition to life skills education, there were activities meant to explore the girls creativity such as tie dye, bead making and a talent show.

Overall, the camp was a tremendous success. Girls, Volunteers, and counterparts all felt a renewed energy to continue with the GLOW mandate beyond the camp. Most of the delegations have gone on to form GLOW clubs in their own schools and to share what they learned at the camp with other girls. Hopefully there will be another opportunity next year to host a similar GLOW camp for the next set of girls eagerly awaiting the opportunity to bloom into mature leaders.

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PEACE CORPS



ANNIVERSARY

1961-2011