



PEACE  
CORPS

# Times

INSIDE ISSUE 4, 2010

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## PCVs Find Natural Solutions to Food Security Crisis

While most people would categorize a bicycle as a mode of transportation, in Zambia a bicycle can also be used for food processing.

Such innovation remains at the forefront in battling the food security crisis that peaked in early 2008 and continues to be felt throughout the world. With everything from the bicycle – used as a pedal-powered cornhusker – to a device that shells peanuts, Volunteers are engaging their communities to lessen food security problems.

Food security has three main components: utilization, access, and availability. Utilization covers nutritional value, social value, and food safety. Access is affordability, allocation, and preference; and availability is production, distribution, and exchange.

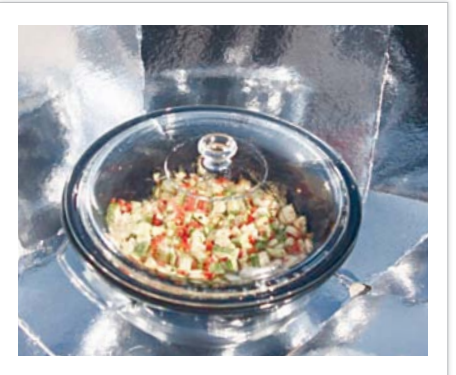
Poverty, a lack of education, food prices, illness, politics, inadequate infrastructure, and unemployment are among the many drivers of food insecurity. Working across all sectors, Volunteers can affect each of those drivers.

“Food security is not something you can achieve in one country. It’s across borders, a transnational issue,” said Kristine Hoffer, regional advisor for Coastal West Africa and Central Africa. “Volunteers in every sector have a contribution to make. Food security is not just an agriculture issue.”



Kevin McClellan, a Peace Corps Response Volunteer in Mali, has been promoting food security tool kits provided via Participating Agency Program Agreements (PAPAs). These are bilateral USAID agreements funded by the Feed the Future program.

The kits, when finalized, will provide a “best practices” guide for food security. The guide includes: training modules, radio show and theater scripts, photos, DVDs/videos/cassettes, journal articles, brochures, and posters. Additional items include past Volunteer



Sonya Greigor (left), a third-year Peace Corps Volunteer in Mexico, has been teaching women’s groups to use solar pots for cooking or for heating water. At right is Country Director Daniel Evans. Above is a closeup of food cooking in a solar pot.

project proposals, budgets, success stories, and lessons learned. Each of the kits is specific to the different regions of Mali. Volunteers will eventually be able to use portable video projectors to show a local community, in its own language, how better to address food security concerns.

Volunteers in Mali surveyed their counterparts, local leaders, government organizations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) about their needs. They used the responses as a guide to choose topics for the tool kits.

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## Moringa Association Takes Root in Benin

BY CHRISTOPH HERBY | PCV BENIN

An organization has taken root, both literally and figuratively, in Benin to help the country fight malnutrition.

The Moringa Association of Benin was recently created by Beninese and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to educate the public about Moringa oleifera—a fast growing tree that is known for its potential to alleviate malnutrition in tropical countries. Moringa leaves can be consumed fresh or turned into a dry powder to use as a health supplement.

As in much of West Africa, Benin faces high rates of infant mortality due to malnutrition. The country ranks 163 among 177 countries in the 2007/2008 United Nations Human Development Report. In Benin, 12.5 percent of children will die before reaching their



Peace Corps Volunteer Christoph Herby and members of his community in Benin transport young moringa trees for planting.

fifth birthday, with 53 percent of those deaths related to malnutrition.

While food itself is not scarce in Benin, families often rely on corn and mil-

let grains that lack adequate protein and vitamins for children. For countries like Benin, moringa offers hope as a cheap

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### A Living Collection —50 Years

Peace Corps invites all Volunteers and staff members to contribute to the digital library—a searchable collection of photos, stories, and documents about Peace Corps, the Volunteer experience, and the agency’s legacy of service.

As we approach our 50th anniversary, please help us reach our goal of incorporating photos and stories from the 139 countries Volunteers have served since 1961. Through our easy online process, you can contribute a story and up to 10 photos from your service.

Go to [peacecorps.gov/collections](http://peacecorps.gov/collections). For questions or suggestions, email [digital@peacecorps.gov](mailto:digital@peacecorps.gov).





and abundant source of essential nutrients.

While there are many moringa farmers throughout Benin, previously they had no national organization and their efforts rarely reached beyond their local villages.



Volunteer Christoph Herby, Moringa Association of Benin President Saturnin Houndji, and Benin Country Director Bob Friedman.

In August 2009, Peace Corps Volunteers organized a meeting of farmers, health officials, NGOs, and academics to explore the benefits and feasibility of a national moringa association. At this meeting, participants outlined how the association will promote moringa. This includes the following:

- Provide technical assistance to new plantations
- Establish a seed bank
- Develop promotional material and instructional pamphlets
- Structure a pricing model to facili-

tate a wholesale market and to assure growers a fair income

- Implement production standards and hygiene requirement
- Create a contact directory to facilitate commerce
- Host a conference with international experts
- Collaborate with academic institutions to advance research on moringa
- Exchange ideas with similar moringa associations in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, and Togo

An official charter for the organization was accepted and L'Association Beninoise du Moringa was launched at a general assembly in August 2010. The association is now a working NGO, supervised by an elected board that is headed by Saturnin Houndji, a nutrition researcher at Benin's premiere university, Université d' Abomey-Calavi.

The Moringa Association of Benin is an essential precursor to the widespread distribution of moringa for nutrition programs. This project empowers Beninese health workers to offer a local solution to malnutrition problems and helps reduce dependence on foreign aid and imported medicines.

*(Christoph Herby is an environment Volunteer who attended the University of Virginia. The Salem, Virginia, resident is scheduled to complete his service in December 2010.)*

## Why the Comprehensive Assessment Matters

For the first time in its history, the Peace Corps completed a major comprehensive assessment of its operations, surveying Volunteers, returned Volunteers, and Peace Corps staff in the United States and overseas. This assessment, which was submitted to Congress in June 2010, will serve as a blueprint for the future.

You may be asking yourself, "Why does this matter to me?"

You are the future of Peace Corps. Your work with local host communities is at the heart of Peace Corps' mission of promoting world peace and friendship.

The assessment team created six strategic strategies for the agency to pursue in the coming year.

**Strategy 1:** Target agency resources in countries with a strong commitment to the Peace Corps and where we can maximize impact toward our three goals.

**Strategy 2:** Focus programmatic efforts on evidenced-based technical areas that are of high priority to our partners and those we serve while identifying work assignments and placements that best permit productive Volunteer service.

**Strategy 3:** Develop a faster and more responsive recruitment model to attract the best, brightest, most service-oriented

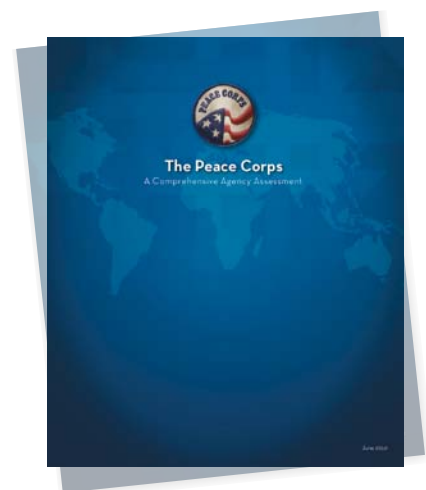
young professionals for Peace Corps service.

**Strategy 4:** Better utilize applicants with extensive professional and international experience.

**Strategy 5:** Strengthen and elevate our Third Goal to "bring the world back home."

**Strategy 6:** Strengthen Peace Corps management and operations across the agency, from headquarters to each post.

To read the assessment in full, visit [peacecorps.gov/open](http://peacecorps.gov/open).



The topics vary, much like the geography of Mali, and include tree planting, nutrition, soil and water conservation, gardening techniques, staple crops, bee-keeping, chicken keeping, solar projects, HIV/AIDS, youth activities, improved processing of shea nuts for higher quality shea butter, girls education and empowerment, moringa oleifera (see sidebar story), and more.

McClellan, who completed his Peace Corps Response term in November, said the pilot toolkits will soon be available and Volunteers will integrate feedback from initial uses to make a more complete toolkit in the next three to six months. They will be continually modified to include the most up-to-date sector-specific information. Additionally, they may post online versions to share with other PC programs and NGOs.

"All of the tool kits are across sectors, but all of the topics are interrelated to food security," McClellan said.

Mali, Senegal, and Ghana have established major food security projects, valued at more than \$1 million each, and are supported by PAPAs.

In August and September, Peace Corps/Kenya hosted a Portfolio Review to evaluate all of its projects and establish an over-arching Food Se-

curity Strategy for the post. The post also integrated food security issues across all of the sectors.

### A SUNNY OUTLOOK

What can a little sun, unsold food, and a good design produce? Nutritious food for a year.

Drying food allows people to save fruit long after the season is over. People can eat nutritious and healthy food year-round, without the burden of paying large sums at the market.

Elyse Petersen, a returned Peace Corps Response Volunteer from the Eastern Caribbean island of Antigua, helped her community with a solar dryer project. She applied for a Peace Corps Partnership grant for nearly \$1,000 that paid for materials to build nine solar dryers. She even solicited the help of students in wood shop and home economics classes at a local school.

Petersen's project has been so successful that the community has formed a cooperative and built five additional dryers. Others are being built to sell. The community is also selling the dried fruit, which is easier to transport because it weighs less than fresh fruit. Petersen noted that five pounds of mangos will lose 4.3 pounds of water—or retain only about 10 percent of their moisture content—upon drying. She has written

a project manual on solar drying. Like most projects, the most difficult aspect is gaining community respect and support. Petersen said the community had difficulty believing the project would function until they saw it in practice.



Elyse Petersen helped with a solar dryer project as a Peace Corps Response Volunteer.

Now a Master of Business Administration student at the University of Hawaii, Petersen continues her work in the United States by helping farmers in Hawaii preserve their food.

"It's really cool to hear people in the U.S. get interested in [the solar dryers project] in Antigua," said Petersen, who continues to support the dryers and their effectiveness in her host country.

In similar fashion, solar cooking was what caught Sonya Greigor's attention.

Greigor, a third-year Peace Corps Volunteer who supports women's

groups in central Mexico, realized that solar cooking could resolve more than just household concerns. The project uses the heat of the sun to help prevent deforestation and provide more time and money for business opportunities.

Early in her project, Greigor did some research and discovered an interesting design that was developed in 2004 by Solar Household Energy (SHE). The former teacher applied for grants through the Peace Corps and USAID and has since purchased 400 stoves for 11 communities. The municipalities determined who received the stoves based on their incomes and whether or not they used wood to cook.

Greigor requires women to attend eight trainings to learn about the solar pot, which she encourages the women to use to cook traditional Mexican dishes or heat water. Depending on the heat of the sun, Greigor says, beans can take anywhere from three to five hours to cook.

"I am delighted with the point this program is at right now. It's a good model for assistance in the community. It definitely saves money and reduces the time spent collecting wood," said Greigor, who surveys wood use before and after the project. "It can't do everything, but it supplements cooking."



*That Was Then ... This is Now*

## Q and A with Regional Director Helen Lowman

Helen Lowman served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand from 1988 to 1991. She earned her master's degree in international economics and development at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver. The following is an interview outlining her Volunteer experience and her current duties as director for the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region.

### *THEN...Cold Bucket Baths and Green Chicken Curry*

**What language did you speak during your service?**  
Thai.

**What were some of your projects as a Volunteer?**  
I was a TEFL crossover Volunteer. I taught English to junior high students and worked with my school agriculture department to do small husbandry projects (that was the “crossover”) with the ag students.

**What were your hobbies as a Volunteer?**  
Reading, going to the well to do my laundry, writing letters ... There wasn't really much more to do.

**How did you cook?**  
Luckily I didn't cook. I lived with two Thai women who were also teachers at the school. One of them was an excellent cook and she did all the cooking for the three of us.

**How did you bathe?**  
We didn't have running water in our house, but there was a “bathroom” (cement room with a squat toilet) under the stairs of the house that had a big basin in it. We paid a student to bring in water from the well to fill the basin. Like most Thais, I used a small plastic bowl to pour the very cold water over my head and body to bathe.

**How did you travel to the Peace Corps office?**  
By overnight train or bus.

**How did you communicate with your friends and family? How often?**  
I wrote letters all the time. The nearest phone was in a town about 30 minutes away. I might have called my mother once per year—once when I was in the hospital with dengue fever and on Christmas Day.

**What motivated you to become a Volunteer?**  
I'm not sure I really knew what I was getting into when I applied. I knew I wanted to do something different between college and graduate school, I loved international living, and I thought Peace Corps would be a good idea to marry those two ideas.

**If you were to describe your Peace Corps experience in one word, what would it be?**  
Significant.

**What meal is your signature dish in Thailand?**  
Green chicken curry.

**What did you do right after finishing your service?**  
I traveled in China—where I later returned as a Peace Corps country director—for many weeks and took the Trans-Siberian Express with my mother. I then went home and went to graduate school, as was the plan.

### *NOW... Service Continues to Impact Career*

**What foreign languages do you speak now?**  
Spanish, Thai, Mandarin Chinese.

**What was your job before becoming regional director?**  
I was vice president at AFS-USA. [Formerly known as the American Field Service, AFS-USA offers international exchange programs in more than 40 countries around the world.]

**How did your service impact your career and career goals?**  
Everything I have done in my career has stemmed from my Peace Corps service.

**What is your biggest challenge as regional director?**  
Time zones.

**How do you integrate your Peace Corps service into your current job?**  
When I visit Volunteers in the field, it is helpful to be able to say that I'm an RPCV. It gives me more cred-

ibility with them and gives us something in common from the beginning.

**What do you wish you knew as a Peace Corps Volunteer that you know now?**  
Two years is a really short period of time.

**What are the biggest changes in service now, from when you served?**  
The ability to communicate around the world with anyone in an instant. That change brings about the amazing increase in support that Peace Corps is able to provide, which is unlike anything that I experienced as a Volunteer.

**Have you been back to visit?**  
No, I haven't been back to my village.



Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Regional Director Helen Lowman enjoys time with her Thai colleagues when she was serving as a Volunteer.

**What career advice would you offer COSing Volunteers?**  
Hiring supervisors love to hear about your Peace Corps experience. They are looking for people who have something different on their resume, so flaunt it. Use the tools and benefits Peace Corps offers to RPCVs looking for a job and get into the Peace Corps network. Talk to anyone and tell everyone you are looking for a job because you've just returned from being a Peace Corps Volunteer.

**What are your hobbies now?**  
Reading, cooking, eating, travel, hiking, biking, and being with friends and family.

**Do you stay in touch with your host community?**  
Unfortunately, I have lost touch.

## The Everyday Nuances of a Peace Corps Volunteer

By GREG VIOLA | PCV LESOTHO

This morning, as I left my hut to start the day, my cheerful 84-year-old nkhono (Sesotho for “grandmother”) greeted me with her usual question, “U robotse joang, abuti?” (How did you sleep?) Like every morning, I smiled and told her I'd slept very well, much to her giggling delight.

Later, I strolled through my village, past a cluster of idle herd-boys who were picking at the grass and lazily watching their flocks. They called to me, demanding cigarettes, but alas, I responded, “I don't smoke.” I reached the main road and soon a decrepit kombi, or mini-van taxi, bound for the capitol and blasting techno music, pulled alongside me. The conductor, dressed in his finest

taxi gear, tried to hustle me despite my protests. He would not take “no” for an answer...at least not until I explained that I did not have any money. Once we got that straight, he left without another word.

Continuing toward the school where I work, a girl in her late-teens or early-20s, whom I'd never seen before, boldly approached and informed me

that she was in love with me. Coming a bit too close for comfort, she suggested that we get married and that I take her back to America. I demurred, explaining that I was already married to a beautiful woman in America; she left to nurse her broken heart.

Finally, I reached the gates of the school. The little darlings, who had just

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## RVS Expands Reach to Help RPCVs

Are you nearing the end of your service and already thinking about searching for a job once you return to the U.S.? Well, you are in luck. A Peace Corps career and transition support event is coming to a city near you!

Returned Volunteer Services (RVS) already offers RPCV career conferences and workshops in Washington, D.C., and online. However, the Peace Corps now offers one-day career events in nine cities with Peace Corps regional recruitment offices.

Such events are smaller versions of the comprehensive four-day conferences that take place three times a year in Washington, D.C. RPCVs learn to position themselves strategically in the job market, while they also learn how to tell their Peace Corps stories in a way that highlights their professional qualifications. Participants also take part in hands-on workshops and interact with



potential employers.

This summer, workshops and career fairs were offered in Chicago and Los Angeles.

Philip Schaffer (Thailand, 2008-2010) called the workshops “extremely informative and helpful,” while Jan

Carmichael (Tanzania, 2007-2009) stated, “The information [RVS] provided was meaningful and extensive. ... As an older RPCV, I am very appreciative of my Peace Corps experience and the exposure to the needs of so many. ... [The career event] opened a lot of opportunities for me to pursue.”

A regional career event was held in Boston in November 2010, while similar opportunities will be available through all of the regional offices in 2011. For more information on career events in Washington and other cities, as well as online, visit [peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events](http://peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events).

If you're a first-year Volunteer, never fear! RVS career and transition support will be there for you when you complete your service. Until then, make the most of your remaining Peace Corps service and continue to hone the skills you've gained in the field.



### RPCV Career Conference in D.C.

Do you want more practice telling your story as a tool to help find employment? Consider attending a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) career conference, hosted by Peace Corps' Returned Volunteer Services. Our next conference will be February 22-25 at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. This four-day event includes interactive sessions on networking, interviewing, resume writing, and opportunities to put into practice what you've learned. You will also be able to connect with employers.

For more information, visit [peacecorps.gov/rpcv](http://peacecorps.gov/rpcv).



### Director Commemorates JFK Speech, Visits Universities

Fifty years ago, then-Sen. John F. Kennedy gave a historic campaign speech at the University of Michigan, leading to the creation of the Peace Corps. Director Aaron S. Williams joined University of

Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman in Ann Arbor on October 14, 2010, to celebrate the event.

To commemorate the exact time and place of the speech, Williams joined former U.S. Sen. Harris Wofford—an architect of the Peace Corps—and 1,500 students for a 2 a.m. rally on the steps of the student union. The rally included remarks by University of Michigan alumni who were present for the speech in 1961.

A day earlier, Williams visited the Fletcher School at Tufts University to host a roundtable discussion with returned Volunteers from that university. He later participated in a panel discussion at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Other Harvard panel participants

included former Peace Corps Directors Elaine Chao (1991-1992), Mark Gearan (1995-1999), and Gaddi Vasquez (2002-2006). The panel was moderated by Harvard Kennedy School Academic Dean Mary Jo Bane, an RPCV (Liberia, 1963-1965).

### Volunteers Return to Colombia

Peace Corps Response Volunteers enjoyed a swearing-in ceremony in Colombia in September 2010. Nine PCRVs began their service and a second group of 18 PCRVs was scheduled to arrive in January. The first group of two-year Volunteers are to arrive in September 2011.

Over 4,600 Volunteers served in Colombia between 1961 and 1981. The program was re-established following

an invitation from the government of Colombia, and Volunteers are currently being partnered with English teachers in primary and secondary schools, as well as teacher training and vocational schools.

### Cambodia Welcomes Largest Group of PCVs

Forty-nine Americans were sworn-in as Peace Corps/Cambodia Volunteers by U.S. Ambassador Carol A. Rodley on September 23. This is the largest group of Volunteers to serve in the country.

Of those sworn-in, 17 are community health educator Volunteers. This new project was launched this summer after the Cambodian government requested health education outreach professionals.

## Volunteer Life

# Martial Arts Helps Girls Defend Themselves Against HIV

By KATIE SCHARMER | PCV BOTSWANA

Not long after working as a health Volunteer in a rural Botswana village, I started to hear stories of young women who became pregnant because their partner refused to wear a condom. That is when I decided to focus my work on preventing the transmission of HIV in an area where one in four adults is HIV positive.

Without control of their sexual health, many women were at high risk of economic dependence and HIV infection. I wanted to change this routine and give girls a more hopeful future.

I decided to tackle the problem through martial arts.

With eight years of competitive high school and college wrestling and a blue

belt in jiu-jitsu, I am familiar with being the only girl in a world of men. Through these experiences, I have gained respect for myself, as well as from coaches and opponents. With my husband, who is serving with me, I began planning a mixed martial arts (MMA) after-school club for girls at the local junior secondary school.

By teaching these girls mixed martial arts, I wanted to build a sense of respect both from their peers and for themselves. As a result, they would delay sexual debut or demand equality in their relationships (i.e., the use of condoms during sex). My plan was to focus on girls ages 11 to 30 years old, but particularly girls who suffer from low self-esteem because they are more likely to

partake in risky behaviors, such as unprotected sex.

Since most of the girls in my village were unfamiliar with mixed martial arts, I planned a weeklong MMA camp during the school break to introduce them to the club. Amazingly, I managed to acquire all necessities at no cost. I obtained the use of the community hall, borrowed gymnastics mats from the junior secondary school, and even used a scale from a clinic to weigh the girls.

We limited the camp to two hours a day to avoid any mealtimes, but we did offer drinking water to keep the girls hydrated. We posted fliers advertising the camp and made sure to use word-of-mouth in our small village.

The language barrier posed a bit of a

problem since our Setswana studies never expanded to instructing mixed martial arts. However, we managed to communicate by mimicking actions. We covered moves such as various boxing punches, wrestling takedowns, jiu-jitsu rolls, and defense. We played games to improve arm strength, balance, and reflexes.

I was shocked by how quickly the girls learned the sport. I could see skills building in them after just a few days. At the end of the week, we had 30 participants and recruiters for a mixed martial arts club for the upcoming school year.

*(Katie Scharmer is a health Volunteer who attended the University of Minnesota, Morris. The Seven Devils, North Carolina, resident is scheduled to complete her service in July 2011.)*



# Camp LEAD Improves English, Inspires Pride

By FRANK KERSTING  
AND ANDREA ZIMMERMAN | PCVs UKRAINE

The swelling of pride mirrored the swelling of numbers as Camp LEAD (Letting Everyone Achieve Dreams) in Ukraine celebrated Independence Day this summer. Songs and poetry highlighted the importance of independence for both the United States and Ukraine.

“The Volunteers have given something precious to our students; you have given them pride in their country,” said Oksana, the mother of a camper and Volunteer Dr. Frank Kersting’s fellow faculty member at the Kryvoy Rog Institute of Economics, where the camp was held.

This year, Camp LEAD doubled in size from its inaugural camp in 2009. Two-hundred students made it one of the largest summer camps in Peace Corps’ 17 years of participation.

Peace Corps Volunteers from different cities brought students from their institutes. Many were so moved by the camp that they wrote an essay for the camp’s newspaper, *The Leader*. Volunteer Christopher Lowe’s students

wrote, “We think that Camp LEAD provides a great opportunity for students to improve their English speaking skills and leadership qualities. We have an amazing chance to discuss the important problems of our time and to think about our own roles in this world.”



A student at Camp LEAD in Ukraine shows the U.S. flag during activities in August.

Pride in one’s country was an unintended camp benefit, as Camp LEAD’s



Camp LEAD students and Peace Corps Volunteers prepare for a leadership activity during the August camp.

focus was to improve teachers’ and students’ English while focusing on leadership, civic engagement, and personal goal development for Ukraine’s future leaders. The intensive English language camp was designed for college and high school students and local teachers. All classes helped students improve their English in four skill areas: listening,

writing, reading, and most importantly, speaking.

*(To bring Camp LEAD to your community or for more information, Frank Kersting welcomes you to contact him at [frank.kersting@wku.edu](mailto:frank.kersting@wku.edu) or visit the website [camplead.webs.com](http://camplead.webs.com). A camp manual, photos, and newspaper are also available online.)*

## NUANCES FROM PAGE 3 ■■■■■■■■■■▶

finished their mid-morning break, ran up and showered me with hugs and handshakes. They begged me to “shoot” them with my digital camera, which, I told them, was impossible since I had again forgotten to charge the battery.

That’s five “little lies” I had told. And it wasn’t even 10 a.m.

The truth is that I’d slept terribly because nkhone’s roosters started crowing outside my window at 2:30 a.m. and didn’t stop until well after dawn. I did indeed have cigarettes in my backpack, as well as enough money to go to Maseru and back. I have never been married and my camera was fully charged and ready to shoot, just as it had been for weeks.

It wasn’t the white lies themselves that caught my attention, but rather the frequency and ease with which they seemed to spout from my lips. It’s not like I’d never told a lie before I came to Lesotho—I’m no George Washington—but I had always considered myself honest.

It’s not like I’m lying to Congress about nonexistent weapons of mass destruction. I lied to brighten a sweet old lady’s morning. I lied because I don’t have the money to satisfy the nicotine

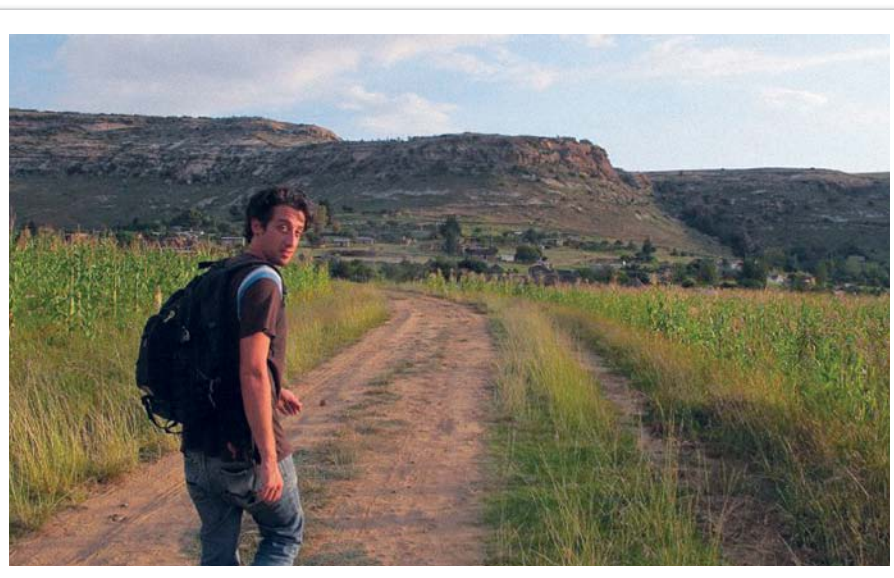
habit of my village’s herd-boy population. I lied because saying “I have a girlfriend” simply isn’t good enough for bo ausi (Basotho girls), just as saying “I’m not going to Maseru” isn’t good enough for a persistent taxi driver.

My lies are innocent and harmless, aren’t they?

Well, it depends who you ask. Philosophers from Socrates to Seinfeld have wrestled with the morality of lying.

There are obvious differences between tall tales and little white lies. I don’t imagine many PCVs run around spreading misinformation about health or business for the fun of it, but suppose a host country national approaches you with a question about HIV and you simply don’t know the answer. Making something up, or lying, could breed more misconceptions about an already confusing subject, while also fostering mistrust of you, Peace Corps, and of all Americans. Not to sound grandiose, but lies like this can undermine all development work.

Still, there are the little lies that help get us through the day. Some village girls saw me writing last week and asked what I was doing. The truth is that I was preparing a fax with my credit card



Lesotho Volunteer Greg Viola takes a walk through his village, pondering what tales will be told on this day.

information to secure a reservation for my annual leave at a hotel in South Africa. But I told them I was doing something for work. It’s not that I enjoy fooling 10-year-olds, and I certainly wasn’t worried that these girls would steal my credit card info. I just wasn’t sure the girls would know what a fax is/or a reservation. And I didn’t know the word in Sesotho for “credit card” or “annual

leave.” But I do know how to say “work.” So I saved us all a little time. I lied. They smiled and I fetched my cards and we played Crazy Eights until it got dark.

Was it moral? I don’t know, but I’ve decided to stop listening to philosophers for awhile and start listening to the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Truth is beautiful, without a doubt; but so are lies.”

In 2011, the Peace Corps marks 50 years of promoting peace and friendship around the world. This historic milestone is an opportunity to honor Peace Corps’ past and inspire the next generation of Volunteers. A variety of events will utilize the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a platform to support the agency’s mission and legacy by honoring our past, demonstrating our effectiveness, and inspiring the next generation of Volunteers through education and engagement.

For more information on 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities, go to [peacecorps.gov](http://peacecorps.gov).





# NOTES *from the* FIELD

## *A Brief Look at Posts and Projects*

### CAMBODIA

#### Rural Students Learn About Educational Opportunities

More than 550 high school students joined the First Annual Kampong Cham Education Fair in June. The event was organized by Peace Corps Volunteers, with support from the Kampuchea Action for Primary Education (KAPE) and the Kampong Cham Office of Education.

Over 90 percent of the participants were from rural areas where information about universities is often difficult to obtain. The fair provided an opportunity to meet academic advisers, professors, and current university students from 15 major universities and organizations. Students also participated in a series of panel discussions led by current university students.



Potential university students meet with representatives of various schools during the Kampong Cham Education Fair in Cambodia.

### GEORGIA

#### Writing Olympics Encourages Creativity

Volunteers Jessica Childers, Thomas Gagnon, Katelyn Finley, Paula Schmid, Krisanne Post, TaChalla Ferris, Kyle Mueller, Ashlie Sandoval, Shawn Basey, Brian Gillikin, Katrina Myers, and Alene Hendricks and a local nongovernmental organization organized the International Writing Olympics 2010 Georgia competition.

The Writing Olympics allowed students to compete with peers from within their region, as well as those from Georgia and neighboring countries. The event was judged solely on creativity, not English language abilities or grammar. Awards and recognition were given to the most creative writers.

### MICRONESIA

#### Boys to Men Camp Promotes Healthy Relationships

Twenty-two eighth-grade boys from four islands in the Federated States of Micronesia completed the first session of Camp Boys to Men from June 16-19, a project spearheaded by Volunteer Alex Plum (2008-2010). Participants gathered for four days to make friends

and learn about the importance of attending high school and related study skills, HIV/AIDS education and healthy relationships, and substance abuse and mental health awareness.

The camp was co-facilitated by fellow Volunteers Trevor Ramsey-Macomber (2009-2011) and Dan Lebednik (2009-2011), along with four other camp counselors.



Volunteers Trevor Ramsey-Macomber and Dan Lebednik join participants at the Camp Boys to Men in Micronesia.

### TOGO

#### Products, Skills Showcased at Exposition

Volunteers Michael Kim (2008-2010) and Matthew Tedder (2008-2010) implemented the First Annual Artisanal Trade Exposition of Lomé, showcasing products fabricated by small enterprise development counterparts throughout Togo.

Products ranged from handcrafted jewelry to T-shirts that were dyed with organic dyes. Participants represented a diverse group of organizations, such as a handicap cooperative, an orphanage, a reforestation association, and other artisans.

While the exposition netted over \$5,000, its real success was in the transfer of skills. Working with their respective Volunteers, participants learned how to adhere to strict presentation standards at trade shows, how to meet production schedules, and how to price a product, among many other lessons. Hopefully, in the future, this annual exposition will be operated by the artisans themselves.

### NICARAGUA

#### Nicaragua Stove Project Reduces Health Problems

Volunteer Joanna Miller (2008-2010) completed a Partnership Project that provided 62 improved stoves. Forty-four community members were trained in improved stove construction. A local health center nurse, one of the trained recipients of an improved stove, reported that respiratory health problems had decreased in the community as a result. Other community members testi-

fied that they now use less wood.

USAID Director Norma Parker attended the inauguration with Country Director Carol Barrick and Felix Cardoza, agriculture project specialist for Peace Corps/Nicaragua.

### MOROCCO

#### Amjag School Wall Helps to Assure Safety

Forestry Volunteer Steven Fosher (2009-2011) joined his counterparts, a community association, teachers, and over 40 students to build a wall for Amjag School in Morocco. Fosher says the wall protects the school, its garden, and fruit trees from vandalism and animals. Sustainable sports and environmental projects can now be implemented safely.

The construction provided work for five community members and created a job opportunity for a community member who will be the guard for the school. In addition to the wall, the community association helped to install water and electricity for the school.

Fosher also conducted an environmental field trip for students. The trip was meant to teach them about climate change and its affect on the world.



Villagers in Morocco plant a garden in the courtyard of their local school. Volunteer Steven Fosher helped build a wall to protect the school from vandalism and animals.

### JAMAICA

#### PCV Helps Teach Victims of Human Trafficking

Volunteer Yvonne Cleary (2008-2010) worked at the Theodora Foundation, mentoring young men and women who are victims of human trafficking. The foundation offers classes in reading, math, business, computer science, and life skills and provides accommodations to six girls to escape human trafficking.

### TONGA

#### Primary School Students Share Postcards

Volunteer Farfum Fred Ladroma (2009-2011) conducted a postcard project at a school in his village in the Kingdom of Tonga. The school has received over 350

postcards from over 30 countries, and in return the students personalize Tongan postcards to be sent around the world with information about their school and Peace Corps/Tonga.

If you'd like to send and receive a postcard, contact Ladroma at farfum.ladroma@gmail.com.



Volunteer Farfum Ladroma and his students show postcards they've received.

### UGANDA

#### PCV Helps Community Stay Clean and Green

The "Keep Kiboga Clean and Green" initiative is being led by David Matusek (2010-2012). The Volunteer enlisted the help of New Forests Company, which donated 800 trees and seedlings. On September 22, community members, students, and 20 Peace Corps trainees helped New Forests plant the trees. Environmental awareness meetings are now being conducted by local government leaders and a cleanup day was slated for early November.

## PEACE CORPS | Times

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