



FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

METSOALE ea LESOTHO

Second & Third Quarter 2016
Newsletter

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Drought Retains Stranglehold

With rivers reduced to mere trickles, crops barely pushing from cracked ground, and rib cages showing in wandering sheep, cows, and goats, Lesotho's worst drought in decades continues without respite. The Government of Lesotho declared a state of drought emergency in December 2015, appealing for assistance to the international community. A third of the population, about 700,000 people, are estimated to need food assistance, and Lesotho's coffers will cover only about 25% of what is needed. With soaring food costs, urban dwellers are affected alongside subsistence farmers in the villages. The El Niño weather, with reduced rainfall over seven countries in southern Africa, is blamed for Lesotho's two successive years of crop failures.

Lynn Minderman, RPCV 2008, gives first-hand impressions and photographs from her annual visit to Likoting Orphanage in Leribe in May 2016:

Qholaqhoe, (Leribe, Lesotho) has been struck by a perfect storm of drought, political instability, lack of jobs, hunger, and inadequate health services. In a land of subsistence farming carried on by mothers, grandmothers and children, the rain has been gone for two years; there are no crops or food now and no food reserve for the cold, snowy winter ahead.

Life has always been difficult and fragile in Qholaqhoe with no electricity, no clean, running water and only small inherited family fields for maize, but there has always been rain. The people made storage tanks, created roof gutter systems, gathered and saved the water. They worked hard at conserving water for themselves, their animals, and their gardens. The rainy season was always a time of hope, promise and joy. With the police, the army and the government now in political chaos in a time of great need, social services are at best unhelpful. The national slogan, "Khotso, Pula, Nala" (Peace, Rain, Prosperity) sounds bittersweet.



Fields lie fallow at base of Qholaqhoe Mountain, Leribe

Weather forecasts predict that El Nino weather conditions will persist for more than another year. Subsistence farmers eat only what they are able to grow. When the land does not produce, there is hunger. We saw the evidence in the distended stomachs and patchy, yellowing hair on the orphans.



Emaciated cow eats peaches off a tree

Our priority this year is a food supply for the 100+ orphans who depend on Likoting Orphan Village. With a generous donation from Friends of Lesotho we have arranged for the grandmothers to be able to purchase propane for the

next six months, plus maize meal, dried peas and sugar beans, flour, all at inflated cost. All hope for rains in 2017 to be able to regain food sustainability and independence.



Photo courtesy: Linda Sofia Rosen

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Who Stole Lesotho's Water?

Radio producer Robert Smith narrates an excellent, 12-minute podcast, *Water's Worth*, on National Public Radio's *Planet Money*. He covers the worsening drought and reviews the history of how South Africa high-jinxed the Highland's Water Project, Africa's largest and most successful transfer of water from one country to another. Your listening time will be well-spent:

<http://one.npr.org/?sharedMediaId=482459498:485745950>



Photo by: Robert Smith



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Beauty Pageant

by Yolanda Wilson – Peace Corps Volunteer Lesotho 82



Planning what event to do for 2016 World Aids Day, I had a meeting with my counterpart and the principal at Peka High School. As we were brain-storming, the principal suggested having a beauty pageant. To be honest, I did not want to take on this event because of the time and preparation needed, but I had to keep in my mind anything is possible. So I took on the challenge.

My organization was able to get a donation from Hippo Transport which went towards paying for school fees as the prizes. We created applications which required a small fee to enter the contest. We decided to approach high schools about the pageant and everyone was excited. Even some of the teachers were nice enough to assist in paying for the entry fees for contestants who were struggling to pay school fees and were in good academic standing. The entry fees covered transportation to get clothing fitting for the fashion show sponsored by Express in Maputsoe.

We scheduled rehearsals for the pageant. All of the contestants appeared very confident and talkative, except one young lady, Limakatso, who was sponsored by the teachers at Saint Rose High School. She was very shy, had a voice super low--a cricket could scream louder--and she looked down all the time. When she had some down time from school, I would meet with her to journal the "I am" confidence building exercise, which she read out loud in front of the mirror. Encouraging her to do the exercise was like pulling teeth. She looked up, down, rocking it up, but she finally got comfortable after many practices. I gave her another assignment, to practice in front of few strangers. She would always give a long "siiigh" and give me the evilest glare, then she would look at the strangers but finally spoke about herself. The more she spoke in front of people, the more comfortable she got.



Finally, the big day of pageant came on December 3, 2015, at Peka High School. My counterpart and I gave all of the contestants a word of encouragement. Everyone was nervous, but very excited. I was worried about Limakatso on the first round, which was the fashion show and self introductions. Limakatso was looking down as she was walking towards the stage. Half-way through, as people were cheering for her, she looked up and put her right hand on her hip. On the microphone, she was shaking at first, but she lifted her voice just a bit and proudly said who she was. Even though Limakatso won third place in the pageant, she was able to speak in front of the audience about who she was, she was able to dress in her original style, and most of all, she was able to gain confidence in who she is. 🏠

Lebohang Honored



Photo contributed by CD Wendy Vandamme

Mme Lebohang Ranooe was honored May 2016 by US Ambassador to Lesotho, Matthew Harrington, for 25 years of work with Peace Corps Lesotho. As Peace Corps Lesotho receptionist, 'M'e Lebohang's face often the first and last one seen by arriving and departing Peace Corps Volunteers as they enter the Peace Corps administration building. 'M'e Lebohang's warm smile, friendly greetings, quiet competence, comprehensibly slow and patient Sesotho sentences, and generous, loyal outreach to Volunteers and staff alike have earned her a permanent place in the hearts of hundreds over the decades.



Introducing Grassroots Soccer



By Adrian Hernandez – Peace Corps Volunteer Lesotho 83

Introducing Grassroots Soccer (GRS) to my school was one of the most exciting things to ever happen. My counterpart, M'e Libuseng, is an extremely hard worker and always happy about everything. When we attended the GRS Workshop, I had my doubts about her, though. Her English is not the best and she could not follow most things the American facilitators were saying. When we practiced a session with the other attendees, she got very shy and was unable to translate some of the words into Sesotho.

Despite this, she has been a rockstar teaching GRS to our Standard 7 learners. Every Thursday, we sit together at lunch and plan our lesson for the following day. The other teachers help M'e Libuseng translate some of the words into Sesotho and even participate in the practice lesson. The other teachers find it so entertaining and have asked to help co-facilitate next quarter when we continue GRS with Grade 6.

The learners in Standard 7 already had an interest in HIV prevention from my Lifeskills class, however their interest grew even more when we introduced GRS. Most students actively participate, enjoy the energizers and have grown comfortable talking about HIV with another Mosotho . The fact that it's all done in Sesotho also helps. I thought that I would have to help M'e Libuseng through many of the lessons, but the truth is, I stand to the side and don't ever say a word. She takes full control. There have even been a few lessons where she has started without me and the learners were fully engaged by the time I came in to join.

One thing I especially like about GRS is the idea of an open space. Many of my female learners are too shy to speak up during my Lifeskills class when it comes to sex. I thought GRS would create the same behavior, but I was wrong. Having a young Mosotho female lead the GRS lessons make the girls more comfortable and confident to speak up. There have been some lessons where the learners have gotten into a debate about gender issues, and M'e Libuseng, professionally and effectively has been able to solve each issue with an empowering answer that both sides accept. She is a wonderful facilitator.

The results of GRS are astounding. My Standard 7 learners are learning more about HIV than they ever imagined and they are spreading knowledge by telling their friends outside of school what they are learning. My counterpart is teaching the other teachers how to teach these lessons and they are eager to facilitate in the future. The students who are not participating in the lessons now continue to ask when their turn will come. With the excitement of playing soccer to learn about HIV and having eager teachers to facilitate, I have no doubt that this will continue long after I leave my school.



Taipei American School Circles the Track for Lesotho



Update by TAS Walkathon Teacher-Coordinator,
Mr. Huy Hoang, hoangh@tas.tw

Seventeen years of consistent devotion and inspiration not only of the entire seventh grade of Taipei, Taiwan's American School, but also its the seventh grade faculty, give Peace Corps Leostho's Tuition Assistance Project its major support. This past year participants included 192 students and 12 teachers. The

Walkathon is preceded by five days of instruction about issues in southern African and Lesotho, complete with slides and a memorial bio of 1972-74 RPCV and former TAS art teacher, Sandy Puckett. 192 students and 12 teachers walked laps around the school's track, and this year the top student walked 36 laps in 55 minutes.

The first year the 7th grade participated, 1991, they raised \$2,500 for Basotho students. In 2008, they raised their top amount, an amazing \$16,172. Three different years, including this year, they raised over \$10,000. The total has passed the \$115,000 dollar mark. Each grade at the school takes on an annual service project, and Friends of Lesotho is thankful to be recipients of this energy and generosity.





Litaba tsa Lesotho (News from Lesotho)

Compiled by Ella Kwisnek, RPCV 1992-94, Lesotho Agricultural College, ekwisnek@msn.com

Cross Drought Relief Efforts

The drought has resulted in a 70 per cent reduction in maize production. The Lesotho Red Cross began relief operations in the worst affected areas, Mafeteng, Qacha's Nek and Thaba Tseka, in February 2016. Volunteers distributed maize meal, cooking oil and pulses (dry beans and peas) to 9,000 people. They then switched to cash transfers as a means of empowering families to decide for themselves what food they would like to purchase. They estimated that 550.00 Maloti (\$38 US dollars) is sufficient for a month's supply of food for each household. Households will also receive vegetable seeds and gardening tools, with hopes that there will be sufficient rains to support the subsistence crops. In January 2016, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies launched an emergency appeal for 736,000 Swiss francs to reach 9,000. The appeal, which lasts through December 2016, is currently 82 per cent funded. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201608291288.html>.

Lesotho: Summit Looks to Consolidate Peace

Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders met recently in a continued effort consolidate peace and security in Lesotho. Following the political violence, including an attempted coup and the assassination last year of Maaparankoe Mahao, the former Lesotho Defense Force commander, the SADC Double Troika summit held in June 2016 mandated South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa help Lesotho consolidate peace and security.

Motumi Ralejoe, spokesman for Lesotho's prime minister, said the Lesotho government has initiated constitutional, parliamentary, judicial, and public service reforms. But Samonyane Ntsekele, the secretary general of Lesotho's main opposition party, the All Basotho Convention, responded that the government is not serious about introducing meaningful political reform.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201608300544.html> and <http://amabhungane.co.za/article/2016-08-29-toothless-outcome-expected-after-ramaphosas-lesotho-intervention-for-sadc>.

Rescue Trip to the Highlands

Hundreds had to be rescued after heavy snowfall in August 2016. Dozens of families were assisted and only one death was reported. http://www.publiceyenews.com/?p=article_details&category=news_local&topic=Mjc3

King Lights Independence Jubilee Torch, China Donates

King Letsie III, government ministers, the army and the public gathered at Makoanyane Square along Kingsway to mark 50 years of independence. Lesotho Defense Force officers marched while the army band played. The King then lit the torch that symbolizes peace, which will go around all 10 districts of Lesotho before October 4, 2016, when the country officially celebrates the independence anniversary. As a sign of patriotism Basotho are encouraged to dress in traditional attire every Friday until October 4.

The Chinese Embassy donated M600,000 in support of the upcoming 50th independence anniversary celebrations. http://www.publiceyenews.com/?p=article_details&category=news_local&topic=Mjg4

Lesotho Improves Quality of Education and Student Retention

The World Bank Group's Board recently approved \$25 million for the Education Quality for Equality Project to help Lesotho support its teachers and improve the learning environment in rural and hard to reach mountainous regions.

The five-year project will target 300 of the poorest-performing primary schools and 65 junior secondary schools in rural area, benefitting a total of 84,500 students. Basotho students' level of learning in primary school is the third lowest in the southern African region. The quality is equally low at the junior secondary level where only one-fifth of students pass Mathematics and Science in the end-cycle examination. In addition, only about 62 percent of the cohort that enters Grade 1 completes primary and 42 percent completes junior secondary school. Details at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201605270636.html>.

Lesotho: AU Alarmed at Developments in Lesotho

After a May 6, 2016, attack on the home of Professor Mafa Sejanamane, senior academic and former Acting Vice Chancellor at the National University of Lesotho, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, expressed concern about the deteriorating state of human rights, rule of law and constitutionalism in the Kingdom of Lesotho. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201605190880.html>.

New Top Gear to feature Sani Pass

The television program Top Gear will include an episode to feature Sani Pass, showing a team trying to maneuver their vehicle over the Pass, on the road between Underberg and Mokhotlong. <http://www.topix.com/world/lesotho/2016/05/new-top-gear-to-feature-sas-sani-pass>.

Meshu Records Life Story

A recently published biography of Meshu Mokitimi, Lesotho's most renowned artist, is entitled, "A Life Lived in Love ~ Meshu Mokitimi: How I Remember My First 90 years, As Told to Gerard Mathot." http://www.publiceyenews.com/?p=article_details&category=feature_profile&topic=MTQz.

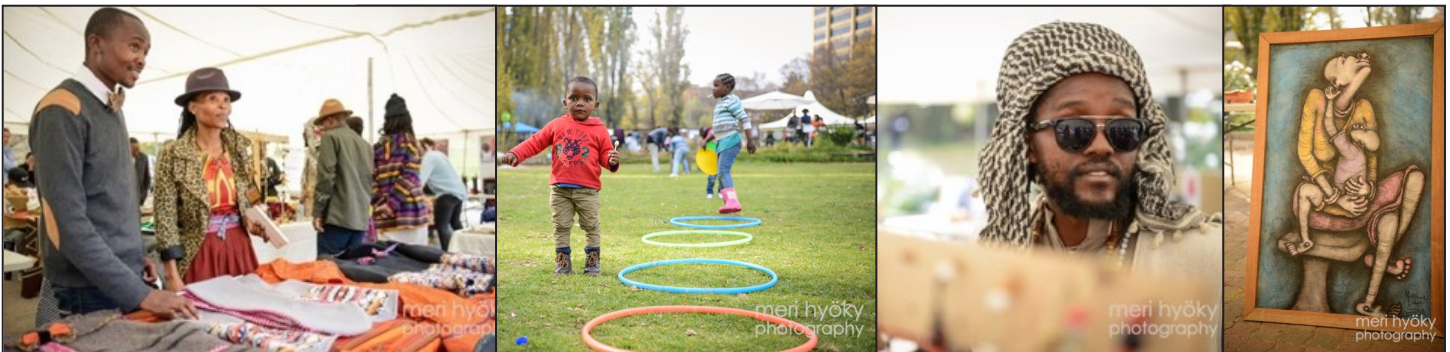


Monthly Nala Market

Thanks to Zach Rosen, RPCV, zach.rosen@gmail.com

Nala Market Photos Meri Hyöky Photography

Look in Maseru for the Nala Market, a fun blend of crafts, art, performance and other creative products. With dates announced on its Facebook page, this market has become a great space for hip young Basotho to perform poetry and sell their wares. Click on Nala Project: <https://www.facebook.com/NalaProject/?fref=ts>



A Peace Corps Teacher Thanks Her Students

By Chelsea Wilson, Peace Corps Volunteer Lesotho 83

During the past school year, the majority of my time was spent with 7th graders. Over the year I got to know all 41 of them as individuals and built personal relationships. They made my first year of Peace Corps service unforgettable. I wanted to do something special to thank them for these lifelong memories I will cherish.

On the last day of their exams, all of the students came to our house for a farewell party. To reflect on the year and show my appreciation, each student received a handwritten letter along with photos. After their initial excitement, it was wonderful to watch as a lull of silence came over them when they settled down to read their letters. Each letter expressed my happiness for them, commended them on their hard work, recognized something unique about them, emphasized their strengths, and encouraged them to shoot for the moon. I imagine some of the letters will be kept for a long time. The money from pens which they'd sold during the school year was used to buy treats, which they loved. It was a great celebration and reflection of the year.

A month later we found out their exam results. In English 35 of the 41 students achieved 1st class, four achieved 2nd class, two achieved 3rd class, and there were no failures! Many students who were failing English at the beginning of the year achieved 1st class. Their excitement with their accomplishment was so gratifying. I'm glad I grew so close to these 41 students. I'll remember them forever, and I am thankful I was their teacher.



Holiday Shopping?? Please use FOL's link to Amazon.

Amazon donates a small percent of purchases made by Friends of Lesotho year round, with no extra charge to the customer, if you access their site through [Friends of Lesotho's Web page](http://FriendsOfLesotho.org), <http://FriendsOfLesotho.org>

One extra click by you enables FOL to send hundreds of dollars of donations to Lesotho each year.



LeBoHA Digs Deep Into Community Health

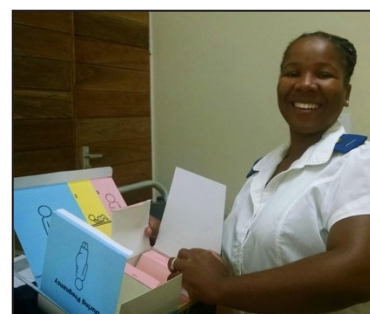
Submitted by Kristin Shaw at keshaw@bu.edu

The Lesotho-Boston Health Alliance (LeBoHA), one of the programs of Boston University Medical Campus, continues its 15-year dedication to building capacity in Lesotho's health sector. LeBoHA directs three main programs to strengthen Lesotho's physicians, nurses, and civil society leaders:

Physician Training: In January 2016, the Family Medicine Specialty Training Program (FMSTP) became the first and only higher education program in Lesotho to receive full accreditation from the Lesotho Council on Higher Education (CHE). This landmark achievement is the result of more than 10 years of partnership between LeBoHA, Boston University, and the Lesotho Ministry of Health. The FMSTP is a 4-year specialty training program designed to recruit Basotho physicians home to Lesotho and provide them with high quality clinical, management and public health training to enable them to serve as leaders in Lesotho's district hospitals and to successfully manage community-orientated practices. The first graduate of the program, Dr. Sebaka Malope, is now the FMSTP Deputy Director and provides both didactic and clinical training to the registrars. The FMSTP currently has five second-year registrars and four first-year registrars enrolled in the program.

Nurse Training: LeBoHA continues to provide in-service education to nurses working in the 28 health centers throughout the Leribe District. Over the past 18 months, the program has focused on training health center nurses in obstetric and midwifery skills in an effort to strengthen the capacity of nurses to deliver babies at the newly-renovated health centers, combining didactic training with hands-on clinical training and mentorship on-site at the community health centers.

Civil Society Strengthening: With support from the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), LeBoHA has partnered with civil society organizations to create Lesotho's first-ever civil society coalition. This coalition brings together representatives from the Lesotho Medical Association (LMA), Lesotho Nurses Association (LNA), Pharmacy Society of Lesotho (PSL), Association of Medical Laboratory Scientists in Lesotho (AMLSL), and Qiloane Nursing Assistants Association (QINUASA) to identify health sector challenges and develop inter-professional action plans.



Moleboheng Mofolo, LeBoHA's lead nurse educator, evaluates midwifery kits at Seshote Health Center in the Leribe District.



Honorable Minister of Health, Dr. Manamolela Pinki, holds hands with Dr. Jane Hale, Bicknell's widow, while cutting the ribbon on the Bill Bicknell Academic Center in Leribe, January 2015.

Bill Bicknell Academic Center: In addition to LeBoHA's programs, it also opened the Bill Bicknell Academic Center in the Leribe District in honor of Dr. Bill Bicknell who founded LeBoHA and had dedicated much of his life to assisting the Ministry of Health to build the capacity of Lesotho's health workforce. The Center provides housing for both Basotho and international students and faculty working at Motebang District Hospital.

To read about the fascinating contributions to international health and to Lesotho by Dr. Bicknell (1936-2012), see <http://www.bu.edu/sph/2012/06/06/william-bicknell-iconoclastic-ih-professor-dies-at-75/> and the link to his final lecture at Boston University, specifying lessons learned in International Health. Early in his career, 1963, Bicknell was named Senior Physician for Peace Corps Volunteers in Ethiopia, as part of his appointment to the US Public Health Service Commission, and his concern and achievements spanned many developing countries following that.



Lesotho at 2016 Summer Olympics

Thanks to RPCV Kevin Freer and Wikipedia

Though they came home with no medals, eight top Basotho athletes carried the Lesotho flag at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from August 5 to 21, 2016. This was the nation's eleventh appearance at the Summer Olympics.



Mosito Lehata, male, 100 m track, 10.25 (4th in quarter final)
Namakoe Nkhasi, male, 200 m track, 20.65
Tsepang Sello, female, 800 m track, 2:10:22
Lebenya Nkoka, male, Marathon, 2:25 (95th overall)
Inkululeko Suntele, Boxing, Men's Bantamweight, L 0-3
Moroke Mokhotho, Boxing, Men's Flyweight, L 0-3
A male marathoner and male mountain biker qualified but were not able to finish their events.



RPCV Jen Jiggetts Guest Blogs for Let Girls Learn

The following blog was excerpted from Happenings blog, March 7, 2016, <https://www.alexandani.com/blog/let-girls-learn/>, in a post written by Brenda Cunha, which featured the work of Jen Jiggetts, when she was in Peace Corps Lesotho.

In honor of the launch of the new ALEX AND ANI Kindred Cord Daisy supporting the Peace Corps Let Girls Learn Fund, we are excited to welcome returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Jennifer Jiggetts, as a guest blogger. In the story below, Jennifer discusses the importance of Peace Corps' community-led initiatives in creating lasting change for adolescent girls' education and empowerment. She also explains how her idea of a small jewelry business has had lasting impacts on a community in Lesotho, southern Africa.

"When I began teaching in Lesotho, I noticed that many of my students, especially girls, would disappear throughout the day. My fellow teachers noted that students had to trek half a mile up the mountain next our school to access potable drinking water. Fetching water is considered women's work in Lesotho, so instead of studying, the girls in my class spent hours carting water. I quickly realized that if there was a water pump near the school, the girls could easily fill their water bottles and be able to dedicate more time to their studies.



With this incentive, and my background in crafting, my students, fellow teachers and I created a jewelry-making business to raise money for a water pump. Every Tuesday and Thursday after school, my colleagues and I offered craft classes on jewelry-making and crocheting. Later on, we added classes on economic development and financial management to help strengthen the business management aspect of this income-generating activity.

Within a few months, we opened a bank account, created a Facebook page, and wrote a business plan. We placed our marketing materials all over the capital. We partnered with area businesses to increase sales, and used local and available materials to save money. Our team fashioned beads from clay, then made bracelets, necklaces, earrings and bookmarks, as well as jewelry from other locally available resources like safety pins and *seshoeshoe* – Lesotho's national fabric. As demand grew, we realized we needed more materials. With contributions from the community and support from the Peace Corps Partnership Program, we were able to purchase additional materials.

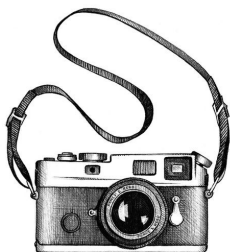
With renewed energy and resources, the team and I used social media to promote and sell the jewelry and within months, we met our objective of constructing a water pump to help girls stay in school. The girls also learned skills, like how to write a business plan, open a bank account, balance a budget, and market and sell products. They learned to set goals, apply for grants, and design and manage a project. More than that, they learned to use the talents and tools they already had to develop new skills, building their self-confidence to be catalysts of change in their own community.

With access to funding specifically dedicated to girls' education and empowerment projects through the Peace Corps' Let Girls Learn Fund, Volunteers like me will be able to make a sustainable difference in the lives of adolescent girls around the world."

~ Jen Jiggetts was an Education Volunteer in Lesotho 2012-13.



Photos for Lesotho's 50th



Peace Corps Lesotho is looking for photos and stories from all Peace Corps years, to celebrate Lesotho's 50th Anniversary, especially ones from PCVs who served in the 1960s and 1970s. Send your photos or story to Peace Corps Country Director **Wendy Vandamme**, wwandamme@peacecorps.gov

Job Opening: FOL Editor

Friends of Lesotho seeks a volunteer with excellent communication and writing skills and a strong interest in southern Africa and Lesotho to edit this newsletter, beginning March 2017. Interested individuals should contact FOL President Scott Rosenberg, rosenberg@wittenberg.edu





I Was Still Me

By Aparna Jayaraman, RPCV, 2011-13, (farthest right in photo)

Published on Peace Corps Blog Page, May 17, 2016, <https://www.peacecorps.gov/stories/i-was-still-me/>

The first time someone called me “white” was November 2011.

I was still in training but I was visiting my to-be site for a few days, getting to know my fellow teachers and such. It was finals week, and I was bored, so I offered to grade the vice principal’s poetry papers. And as I was, she took a long look at me and said, “Indians are the most beautiful white people.”

I was taken aback a bit. I wasn’t offended, more surprised; no one had ever called me white before.

“Um... Indians don’t really consider ourselves to be white.”

My VP thought a bit and casually said, “Oh, but you have the same hair and light skin. So you’re white.”

And there it was, my new race. I was white.

I wasn’t the only non-white Volunteer to get that label and we started using it quite liberally. In Sesotho, the word for foreigner and white person were the same, *lekhoa*. Basotho- and Sotho-speaking South Africans used it to describe Afrikaners and, in my case, Peace Corps Volunteers. And so, in true Volunteer fashion, it became a part of my vocabulary:

“I was in the taxi today and there was this child that couldn’t take his eyes off of me. Guess he’s never seen a white person before.”

“Someone asked me, the only white person, for money in the grocery store again!”

In fact, the terminology became so integrated into my language that after earning my “R” and returning to the U.S., I used it a few times when I talked to my friends about what it was like to live in Lesotho.

“You know, the hardest thing about being white in Lesotho...”

“What? You’re not white.”

(And at that point I wondered if I should explain why I was using the word “white” or if I should just correct myself and keep going. The latter ended up being the easier one.)

And there I was, back to being Indian again.

Race is a funny thing and I never realized how constructed it was until I was in another country. Whatever I knew about race in the U.S. didn’t matter anymore; I was in a new racial system. And so I adapted to it. Before Peace Corps, I would have rarely actively identified myself as “American” but in Peace Corps, where most Indians in the country were shop owners and quite wealthy, I emphasized my American identity as much as I could, so I would be grouped with a group of people associated with volunteering and providing aid.

The funny thing was, most Basotho recognized that I wasn’t *American-American*. You know, the stereotype of light skin, light hair, light eyes. And many Basotho would ask, “You’re Indian, how can you be American?” It was a good teaching moment, using their relationship to South Africa as a metaphor: just like Basotho go to South Africa to study and to get jobs, my parents did too in America. And many of them would have that “ah--ha” moment teachers strive for and continue the conversation by saying, “Yes! And their children are both South African and Basotho.”

There’s a lot I can say about being Indian in the Peace Corps, the complexity of race and self-identity. But in the end, what I found was that regardless of how others identified me, I was still me and my labeled race was a tiny, tiny part of that big picture. And so while being Indian undoubtedly impacted my service, the biggest impacts were my attitude, my actions and my relationships with the people around me. Being Indian or being white, I was still me.



Aparna Jayaraman served in Lesotho as an education Volunteer teaching chemistry and biology. Today she works for an education technology company and is one of Friends of Lesotho’s new Board Members.



THANKS TO NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

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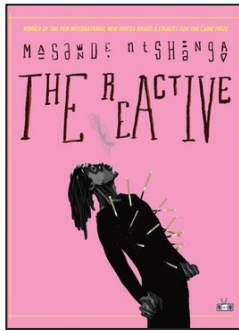
Literary Festival December 9-11, 2016 in Maseru

Contributed by Zach Rosen, RPCV and Friends of Lesotho Board Member

Ba re e ne re 4th Annual Literature Festival expects great local and international guests including award-winning African female novelist, short story author, and playwright Sindiwe Magona (*To My Children's Children*, *The Woman in the Moon*).

South African novelist Masande Ntshanga will share the stage. His break-out novel, *The Reactive*, elicited this review by Naomi Jackson, *Poets and Writers*. *The Reactive* is "a searing, gorgeously written account of life, love, illness, and death in South Africa. With exquisite prose, formal innovation, and a masterful command of storytelling, Ntshanga illustrates how some young people navigated the dusk that followed the dawn of freedom in South Africa and humanizes the casualties of the Mbeki government's fatal policies on HIV & AIDS."

The theme of the festival this year is "Find Your Voice" and the programme will feature a day of performance, a day of discussion and a day of workshops. A new story anthology, filled with writing by emerging Basotho writers, in Sesotho and English, will be launched on the first day of the festival.



"The Reactive"
by Masande Ntshanga



Sindiwe Magona



2017 Work Trip to Lesotho

Laptops to Lesotho (L2L) is planning a trip to Lesotho in early 2017. They are looking for volunteers to do fundraising and help with trip logistics prior to the trip and volunteers to go to Lesotho for 2-6 weeks to conduct computer training, teach lessons, do community organizing, and meet with government contacts. Contact RPCV Janissa Balcomb: jbalcomb@laptopstolesotho.org

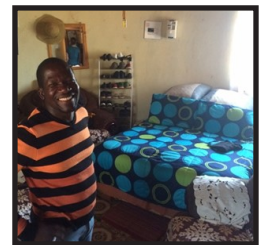


Laptops to Lesotho provides computer hardware, electricity, teacher training, customized lessons, and long-term support to remote primary schools. L2L's goal is to improve the teaching of standard subjects, especially math and English, and to enhance development of cognitive skills in both teachers and students. Samples of our customized lessons, which students can run without a teacher, are available at <https://scratch.mit.edu/users/L2L/projects/> and the main website is www.laptopstolesotho.org



Home Improvement

In December 2015, I visited my old site at Bokoro High School in Butha-Buthe seven years after COSing. I was in South Africa for a wedding and rented a car so I could drive to Lesotho. This is my old coworker Ntate Tlokotsi standing in what used to be my home. I have to say, I like what he's done with the place.
~ Graham Corridor, RPCV 2007-08, grahamcorridor@gmail.com



Mountains to Mountains

Pam Rogers & Casey Bischel, RPCVs Lesotho 07-09, traveled to Nepal early this year on a trip of a lifetime that was planned while they were both serving as Volunteers in the mountains of Lesotho. Photo taken at about 14,000 ft. near Annapurna, Nepal, enroute to 16,000 ft.

(Casey.bischel@gmail.com & ponderosapam@gmail.com)





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EU Supports Lesotho on Land Erosion Issues

Contributed by:
Kevin Freer, RPCV Lesotho Teachers College,
kfreer@cfl.rr.com

Losing an estimated 4,500 tons of fertile top soil per hour carried away in rivers flowing into South Africa, Lesotho faces immense challenges concerning land degradation and soil erosion. Overgrazing by livestock and uncontrolled gathering of woody biomass for fuel further contributes to these challenges. The EU is supporting Lesotho to address land erosion through Integrated Catchment Management.

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lesotho/index_en.htm



Museum Overview

Written by Morija Museum curator, Stephen Gill, *Museums Lesotho: Building Upon the Legacy*, “seeks to outline how different museums, archives and heritage sites in the country could be coordinated. Lesotho is the only country in the southern Africa region without a national museum and other cultural infrastructure such as art galleries, cultural centres, theatre and film studios, craft centres and amphitheatres.” Excerpt from Lesotho Times, <http://lestimes.com/new-book-charts-course-for-museums/>



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Newsletters Past and Present—The FOL Newsletter, *Metsoalle ea Lesotho* is posted on our website homepage (<http://friendsoflesotho.org>) each quarter of the year. The complete set of newsletters is available on our website from Issue Number One, Summer, 1987 to the present. Go to Membership >Newsletters for the archives.

Submit Newsletter Articles—Pass on RPCV updates. Recommend a Mt. Kingdom movie, music, book or Website. Share new or old photos. Been to Lesotho lately? Share it!

Submit articles, photos, or information of interest to our members to:

Madeline Uraneck, FOL Newsletter Coordinator (globalmaddy@gmail.com) or send hard copies to her at 2995 Gannon Street, Madison WI 53711, USA



FRIENDS OF LESOTHO

Making a difference at the grassroots level

4110 Denfeld Avenue
Kensington, MD 20895
(301) 942-2751

www.friendsoflesotho.org

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Newsletters will be sent by e-mail as part of FOL's "GO GREEN" effort. If you prefer postal service, check here .

FOL's Website Member Directory is accessible to members only by use of a secure ID and Password. The fields marked above with an * will be included in the directory. Check here if you do not want to be listed .

Privacy Policy: FOL will not release member information to any organization, except the National Peace Corps Association, upon implied consent when a member joins both FOL and NPCA. FOL will share membership information with other FOL members and prospective PCVs seeking information about Lesotho.

Friends of Lesotho (FOL) is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. A copy of the current financial statement of Friends of Lesotho is available by writing 4110 Denfeld Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895, or by emailing treas@friendsoflesotho.org. Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Solicitations Act are also available, for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis MD 21401, (410) 974-5534.

*FOL is affiliated with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). * If you choose to send your FOL dues directly to NPCA in response to their membership solicitation, you must specify FOL as your choice of affiliated group to receive the credit for dues.*

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Complimentary--PCVs during service up to 12 months after COS.

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**FOL will forward to NPCA for you.*

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Mail your check and completed form to Friends of Lesotho at the address above or pay by credit card by Clicking on Join/Renew from our website at www.friendsoflesotho.org and select JustGive or Razoo.

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Second & Third Quarter 2016
Newsletter



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[Picture your name here!](#)
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