

# KHOTSO

February 2012

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## Message from the Country Director



ED12 Heather Mangan giving a tour of the Lerotholi HS library.

Dear Volunteers,

I hope you all are doing well and enjoying the waning days of summer. In February, I had nice site visits with nate Nthoalo to CHED 10 Delia Helie's and with nate Clement to ED 12 Heather Mangan's. In addition to working on life skills at the primary and secondary schools, Delia is assisting a support group with a gardening project. Heather has jumped right into teaching and other community activities, including holding an evening English class for young women and helping staff at a local clinic further their training at the health center in Nazareth. Great job, Delia and Heather!

At a recent VAC meeting, we shared highlights from the 2011 Annual Volunteer Survey Report, which can be found on Share Point (Shared Documents/PCV Resources/2011 Annual Volunteer Survey Results). As staff we were pleased with many of the results as well as the chance to see where we can do better. Following are a few of the areas where we saw improvement between 2010 and 2011.

- ◆ In terms of how well Volunteers said PST prepared them, in 2010, 64% of Volunteers said that they felt PST adequately prepared them to work with counterparts. That percentage increased to 78% in 2011. The percentage of Volunteers expressing that PST adequately prepared them to conduct PACA increased from 51% in 2010 to 59% in 2011. And we saw an 8 percentage point increase in Volunteers reporting that PST adequately prepared them to work on their project's goals and objective, from 75% to 83%.
- ◆ Satisfaction with support from Peace Corps staff increased in the following areas: feedback on reports, job assignment, site selection, technical skills, administration and cross culture.
- ◆ In 2011, a higher percentage of Volunteers found their experience adequate or better in terms of their overall Peace Corps service, experiences with other Volunteers, work with counterparts and community partners, primary assignment and secondary activities.

Some areas where we saw lower ratings compared to 2010

include the following:

- ◆ How effective PST was in preparing you to use language in work and socially, perform technical aspect of work, and maintain physical and emotional health.
- ◆ Satisfaction with emotional, language learning, medical and S&S support from PC staff.
- ◆ Feeling safe at home, in Maseru and while traveling in country.

We are currently developing our strategic plan for the coming year and have used the AVS results plus other information gathered from a management assessment we conducted, an audit that was performed last year and our 2011 annual report (compiled from your VRFs) to prioritize the following post management areas (defined by PC/Washington) on which to focus: health, safety and emergencies; Volunteer support; and administration and financial management

Continuing to improve training and finalizing the revised frameworks for the ED and CHED projects are also areas where we will place significant emphasis. Our strategic plan outlines ways we will address each of these areas, and we are certainly happy to hear your recommendation

At the meeting the other day, VAC members also shared that a particular training group felt that their PST had not prepared them to manage being in Maseru. I told the VAC members that we have essentially had the same safety and security training in relation to Maseru for all the Volunteers currently in country, and that there are always some Volunteers who feel adequately prepared to navigate Maseru while others do not. We want to provide Volunteers with knowledge of the risks in Maseru and skills to deal with them. This is why early in PST we have a session on Maseru and transportation and then the next day have trainees travel to Maseru on public transportation with their LCFs and tour Maseru in small groups. Unfortunately, we have seen that many trainees make a beeline for the mall or another store to purchase cell phones rather than take the opportunity to explore Maseru and get more comfortable with being here. For future PSTs we will look for ways to ensure that such trips to Maseru are optimized and welcome any suggestions you might have.

Keep up your great work!  
Kathy

## Editorial Staff

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## From the Editor

Articles must be received by the 4th Monday of the month to be included in the following month's edition of the Khotso. **When submitting articles, please provide the name of the person making the submission and a contact person for follow-up questions.** The Newsletter will be emailed and a hardcopy made available in the office on or about the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Please make sure that your email address is on file with Peace Corps. Remember that it is your responsibility to read the Khotso Newsletter for updates from Peace Corps Lesotho.

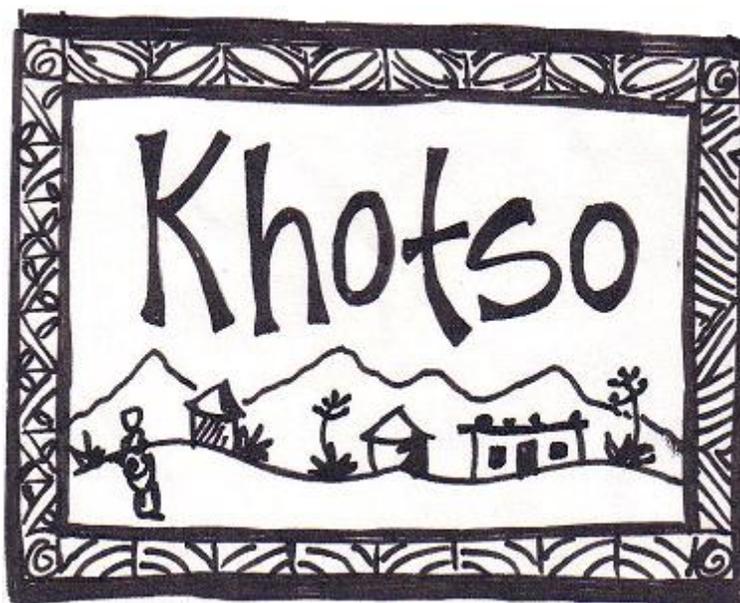
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you.

By submitting articles, you are providing Peace Corps Lesotho with the right to reprint your article in full or part in any publication.

Deepak Pullanikkatil, Editor



Editorial



## PCV & Staff Birthdays

*Birthday greetings go out to the following Volunteers and staff!*

### March

Letsella, Bernard (Gardener) – 15  
Chaille, Lyndsey – 21  
Anderson, Kelly – 24  
Brewer, Anne – 30

### April

Dold, Lisa – 2  
Severson, Teresa – 4  
De Lucia, Rusty – 7  
Deakin, Lauren – 7  
Vincent, Caitlin – 7  
Hood, Norma Lyn – 14  
Sefefo, Tsatsi (General Services Assistant) – 19  
Fisher, Caitlin – 21  
Selloane, Pitikoe (CHED P&T Specialist) – 22  
Fulton, Juliana – 23  
Forte, James – 26  
Simmons, Lewis – 30

## Peace Corps Lesotho Holidays (Office closed these days)

### March

Moshoeshoe Day (LS Holiday) – 11

### April

Good Friday (LS Holiday) – 6  
Easter Monday (LS Holiday) – 9

## Calendar of Events and Staff Travel

Feb 27 – Mar 3	'Me Selloane out for site identification
Feb 25 – Mar 6	Charles facilitating Gay Straight Alliance Training in Togo
Mar 5 – 7	'Me Malitaba on site visits in Berea, Leribe & Butha Buthe
Mar 7 – 21	Jim on leave
Mar 16 – Apr 14	Charles on leave
Mar 19 – 23	Nt. Mohale on leave
Mar 29 – Apr 4	ED12 Phase III Training in Berea
Apr 5 – 10	'Me Selloane on leave
Apr 10 – 13	'Me Victoria on leave
Apr 10 – 13	'Me Malitaba on leave
Apr 22 – 28	CHED 12 TOT
Apr 30	Nt. Clement on leave

## Duty Officer Schedule

Mar 5 – 11	ITS
Mar 12 – 18	FA
Mar 19 – 25	GSO
Mar 25 – Apr 1	CD
Apr 2 – 8	AO
Apr 9 – 5	APCD (ED)
Apr 16 – 22	APCD (CHED)
Apr 23 – 29	TD
Apr 30 – May 6	HIV Coordinator

## STAFF OF THE MONTH

The Staff Member of the Month award for February 2012 goes

to the members of the 2012 Staff Retreat Logistics and Planning Committees:

Mohale Letsatsi  
Malisema Makhele  
Mamokola Matlanyane  
Jeanett Mosae  
Itumeleng Notsi  
Maggie Putsoa  
Tsatsi Sefefo

For their hard work in planning, organizing, and implementing an excellent staff retreat in Ha Lejone on February 21-22, 2012. Their creativity, thoughtful ideas and efficiency led to a productive retreat, which resulted in the development of a strong foundation for post's Integrated Planning and Budget System submission and a strengthened Peace Corps Lesotho team.

Congrats to all of them!

## ADMIN CORNER by Jim

I hope everyone had a Happy Valentine's Day! These types of holidays certainly take on a different significance here, but it is still a good time to reach out to someone and tell them how important they are to you. I would suggest, however, that we leave Groundhog Day alone... I want to let everyone know that I will be taking leave in the States (to visit my collegiate daughter) March 7-21. In my absence 'M'e Victoria, will be acting Director of Management and Operations.

**Living Allowance Survey:** Hopefully by the time you read this you will have submitted your Living Allowance Survey. Appealing to PC HQ for an increase doesn't always guarantee that we will get it, but I do know that we have no chance if we don't have at least a 75% response rate. If we reach 75% and are able to conduct the required market basket survey before April 1st and both justify an increase, we may be able to request one in our mid-year review. Otherwise it will not likely be possible until October 1st.

**Taxes:** Just another reminder that help with your federal income taxes (if you choose to file) is available via [tax-help@peacecorps.gov](mailto:help@peacecorps.gov).

**Travel Reimbursement:** I really wish it wasn't necessary to bring this up, but since it is a subject that affects all of us one way or another I feel I must. It has come to my attention that some Volunteers are claiming reimbursement for transportation for which they did not pay or for which they paid less than they are claiming. We have always worked on the "honor system" when it comes to claiming travel reimbursement because requiring Volunteers to obtain receipts for every single ride would put an unfair burden on those who do their best to complete the forms accurately. Let me just say this. If you get a free ride from anyone (PC, another organization or a private individual) to your destination, you may not claim a travel reimbursement. It isn't ethical and it is also fraud. If I become aware of any such situations in the future, I will have to address it with the Volunteer in question and it could lead to some unpleasant consequences so please, follow your conscience and "do the right thing." Enough said about that.

**Living Allowance:** Below is a schedule of Living Allowance payment dates for the balance of 2012. These dates represent the date that PC HQ has committed to depositing your LA in to your account. The good news (as well as the problem) is that PC HQ has been depositing the money anytime up to a week before the scheduled dates so when they get busy and revert back to the scheduled dates, it can create a bit of a hardship for some Vol-

unteers. Try and stay focused on the dates below and hopefully they will continue to surprise us with slightly earlier deposit dates.

Mar	28 <sup>th</sup>
Apr	27 <sup>th</sup>
May	28 <sup>th</sup>
Jun	28 <sup>th</sup>
Jul	27 <sup>th</sup>
Aug	27 <sup>th</sup>
Sep	28 <sup>th</sup>
Oct	26 <sup>th</sup>
Nov	27 <sup>th</sup>

**Voting:** Have you registered and requested an absentee ballot to vote this year? Go to the website of the Federal Voting Assistance Program at <http://www.fvap.gov> for online registration and absentee ballot request assistance. Click on the following link to watch a video of the Overseas Voting Foundation on the online voter registration services available to you now: [U.S. Overseas Voter Registration](#). Have a voting question? Contact [US-ConsularMaseru@state.gov](mailto:US-ConsularMaseru@state.gov)

**Free Books:** Peace Corps staff and a few Volunteers recently cleaned out the library in the Training Center. Several "dime" novels and travel guides have been removed and put in a box and a large bo-m'e bag. The books consist of mostly mystery novels and old sci-fi trilogies, along with older Lonely Planet travel guides (very good for geography and history lessons). The box and bag are under a table in the room directly adjacent to the library.

Instead of having an old fashioned book burning, it was decided that the books should be given to Volunteers for more practical purposes. So if you have time, please stop by the Training Center and grab some books to take back to site. At the Training Center, inform the security guard your purpose for entering, and he will alert 'me Eunicia, the Training Center Manager, to let you into the library room. Again, these books can be put in libraries or given to anyone at your site who it is interested. Please note that books on the shelves in the library are also for Volunteer use but should be circulated in the Volunteer community and not donated to school or community libraries.

### **EDUCATION CORNER by Nt. Clement & 'M'e Malitaba**

Lumelang Baithaopi Kaofela,  
We hope you all had a positive start this new academic year. We have already done a few site visits and from what we have seen and heard, most of you are as expected doing a fantastic job out there. With the PCVL on board, we are also busy preparing for your phase III training coming at end of March. Please note that the arrival day is March 29, 2012. If you are planning to take a vacation immediately after phase III, please fill in the leave request form and ask your supervisor to sign because if there is no supervisor signature on the form, it will not be approved. Thanks again to those who have send topics that they need us to address during phase III.

Thanks also for submitting your VRFs on time. This helps us to give you all the feedback on your report on time too.

### **LANGUAGE & CROSS CULTURAL CORNER by 'M'e Mamokola**

*Lumelang kaofela baithaopi ba Lesotho. Ke lumela hore le ntse le phela hantle haholo. Khoeli e fetileng ke ile ka chakela baithaopi ba Katse, Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong le Butha-Buthe. Ke lakatsa ho le chakela kaofela.* While visiting ausi Katie Beuchel (ED 12) at Malefiloane, I saw this typical Basotho

kitchen with a tin-stove called "paola" for cooking and warming the house. On one side there is a kitchen wall-unit made up of soil to display and pack plates, bowls, and all the other kitchen utensils. This unit is called "mohoolaona". Ausi Katie and her host mother are sitting on wooden benches though typically Basotho women and children would be seated on the floor around the "paola". This house is called "mokhorro", Basotho kitchen. Besides being used as a kitchen, this house is mostly used as a bedroom for *nkhono, bana kapa balisana*. It is the most important house in the family compound. I'm sure there are lots of houses like this one at your sites and many other exciting observations, experiences and surprises you have for us and other Volunteers. Be prepared to share them during Ed 12 Phase III.



Katie Buechel and her host mother.

### **SAFETY & SECURITY CORNER by Nt. Nthoalo**

**Relationship Building Versus Safety and Security:** History would reveal that one of the strategies to increase Volunteers' safety and security in their communities is through better integration and establishment of friendships with people in communities. However much as this is beneficial, it should be done with utmost caution so that your safety and security and that of your property are not at stake. You are, therefore, earnestly advised against any practice of allowing or inviting people with no legitimate right into your houses. There have been situations where Volunteer's property was stolen as a result of this practice. Also it is rewarding to be picky when making friends; try to befriend people with a relatively acceptable reputation.

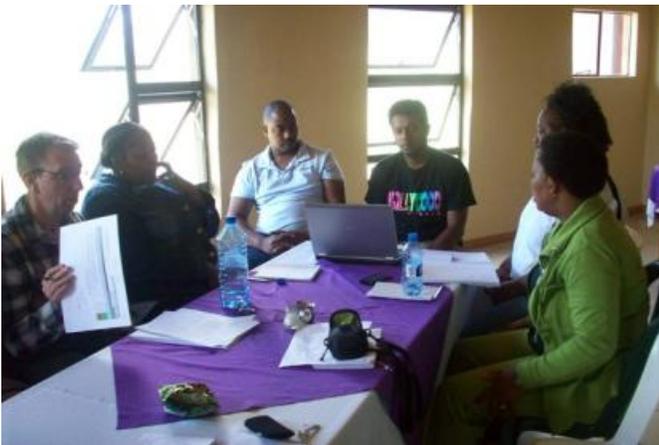
In an effort to mitigate risks of burglary into your house, it is with great emphasis that you are advised to ensure that your house is locked every time you leave your house. Also, when you have an overnight trip away from site, inform your host family to be on the lookout for your house.

**Security Situation in the Country:** Much has been happening in the Lesotho's government recently with the ruling party having two factions and tensions simmering between them. In February 2012, a motion of no confidence in the prime minister was collectively proposed in parliament by members from the faction opposing the PM and members of the opposition parties, wanting the prime minister to relinquish his powers. The motion did not materialize due to an unanticipated withdrawal of some parliamentarians. The prevailing factionalism continued in Lesotho's parliament on February 28, 2012, when the PM broke from the ruling party and formed his own party now known as Democratic Congress of Lesotho. The new party won a majority of votes and will continue to be in authority until elections (not yet announced).

There are no real safety and security concerns reported or observed as a result of these events. However, Peace Corps will carefully monitor the situation and keep Volunteers informed

about any developments. You are also advised to monitor media sources and stay vigilant. As part of preparedness and readiness for emergencies, you are once again reminded to keep R200.00 cash with you at all times.

### STAFF RETREAT 2012 IN PICTURES



### PCV CORNER

#### Changing the Volunteer Action Committee (VAC) Structure

Submitted by Ariana Berdini (CHED 10), VAC Co-chair



After conducting the recent VAC meeting, members have unanimously decided that the new structure of VAC has flaws that need to be corrected. The current structure, which was instated towards the end of last year, is set up so that 2 Volunteers from each training group, one in the north and one in the south, will represent that training group. However, we find communication challenges with this structure and feel that the previous structure allowed for more voices to be heard and for VAC members to distribute information more easily. Therefore, VAC has decided to revert back to the old structure of one member per district. Currently, we have Grant Comstock from Berea, Courtney Lane from Thaba Tseka, Ariana Berdini from Mohale's Hoek, Jenny Cain from Quthing, and Kelsey Marsh from Qacha's Nek. VAC requests that the remaining districts elect a Volunteer to represent their district. The districts needing a VAC rep include: Mokhotlong, Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Maseru, and Mafeteng.

Please elect your VAC representative by April to allow him or her enough time to collect feedback for staff (i.e., praises, concerns, complaints) from volunteers before the next VAC meeting in May/June. Once a volunteer has been elected from your district or if you have questions about what being on VAC entails, please email current VAC Co-Chairs Ariana Berdini ([arianaberdini@gmail.com](mailto:arianaberdini@gmail.com)) and Courtney Lane ([court.a.lane@gmail.com](mailto:court.a.lane@gmail.com)). We will then send nominations to Kathy for approval by staff. Please be aware that ED 12s cannot officially join VAC until after their Phase III training. (Normally all Volunteers must wait 6 months from the time they swear in to join a committee. An exception is being made this year due to the cancelled training group in November 2010.)

#### Tuition Assistant Program

Submitted by 'Me Malitaba and the TAP Committee

It's time for TAP! TAP is a program that enables Volunteers to help sponsor needy students' school fees. Please start thinking now about any students you know that would qualify for a TAP sponsorship. Information and instructions for filling out application forms were recently emailed to you earlier. If the instructions don't answer your questions, contact [tapleso-tho@gmail.com](mailto:tapleso-tho@gmail.com) or your TAP representative listed below:

- ◆ Adam Peel & Matthew Deakin: All extending volunteers
- ◆ Jessalynne Howard: CHED 11s in BB, Leribe and Berea
- ◆ Amanda Lawrence: CHED 11s in TT, Mafeteng, Quthing and QN
- ◆ James Forte: ED 12s in TT, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing and QN
- ◆ Lauren Parks: ED12s in Mokhotlong, BB, Leribe, Berea and Maseru

#### Year in Review of 2011 HIV/AIDS News

Submitted by Matt Deakin (CHED 10), DAR

The war against HIV has many battlefields: while you sit in your hut planning Life Skills lessons to empower young people, scientists tinker with cell membranes and researchers design ambitious trials. And since you just had to submit your VRF, we thought it might be nice to check in on how those guys in lab



coats are spending their time. So, in case you missed anything, here's a very short Year in Review of 2011 HIV/AIDS news:

#### **Closing in on a Cure?**

Last year marked some major strides in researching a cure for HIV, with two patients in particular grabbing the science headlines. A man known as the "Berlin Patient" was technically cured from HIV and leukemia through complete bone marrow transplants. The

procedure is obviously arduous, impractical and very expensive, but it was considered a huge breakthrough. The other man, the "Trenton Patient", underwent gene therapy and was able to control the virus for a period without the help of any antiviral drugs. The connecting and exciting factor in both these cases deals with disabling the CCR5 protein on the CD-4 cell wall—the door through which HIV enters the cell. Even a small percentage of humans are born without any CCR5 proteins on their immune cells and are thus "naturally resistant" to HIV. The challenge scientists are now facing is to decipher a practical way of disabling CCR5 on a wide-scale, and last year's protein success-stories may offer major clues.

#### **African Contraceptive Risk**

The most common contraceptive in Eastern and Southern Africa is a 3-month hormonal shot—it is quick, easy and doesn't require a doctor. However, a new study reveals that the hormonal contraceptive can greatly increase women's susceptibility to HIV/AIDS. The numbers show that women taking the shot double their risk of infection, or if already infected, are almost twice as likely to transmit the virus to their male partners. Researchers are trying to pinpoint the reason for the increased risk and suspect that the hormone shot may cause biological changes in sexual organs and fluids. These findings are troubling because cheap and easily administered contraceptives are critical for African women planning for children and a family. Until the results are better understood, policymakers are trapped in the middle ground between the worrying evidence and premature overreaction.

#### **Scientific Breakthrough of the Year**

"HIV Treatment as Prevention", as the study has been nicknamed, has measured the effect of early ARV treatment in preventing transmission. Selected by *Science Magazine* as the "Breakthrough of the Year", the study looked at over 1,700 heterosexual couples with one HIV-positive partner and found that when the infected partner began ARV treatment early on, the transmission rate dropped by a staggering 96%. This evidence poses big implications for possibly seeing ARVs as a form of prevention, rather than just treatment. Major players in the global epidemic including the World Health Organization, PEP-FAR and UNAIDS are starting to integrate this breakthrough into their worldwide strategies.

#### **Failed HIV Research**

A vaginal gel that prevents HIV transmission but also allows pregnancy has been long sought, especially for women to protect themselves in situations when male partners refuse to use condoms. Unfortunately, a recent study on such a gel has been stopped midway through because of discouraging results early on. Of the 5,000 participants in Southern Africa, the women using the gel showed no statistical difference with the placebo group—new HIV infections occurred in 6% of each group. Although the results are disappointing, developing a successful gel is still a major aspiration, and experiments with others are underway.

#### **What is going on here? Lesotho's economic situation and why it matters for your service.**

Submitted by Jess Wilhelm (CHED 11)



Macroeconomic situations in Lesotho will affect your service no matter your program or field of work. Volunteers need to be aware of economic trends in Lesotho to know how national level circumstances will affect their communities and host organizations. When your school is suffering financially because students cannot pay fees, when counterparts leave for better paying jobs, when once viable IGAs fail, macroeconomic conditions in Lesotho (and South Africa) are often the cause.

In recent decades, Peace Corps has moved away from having volunteers in positions of direct responsibility for Lesotho's economic development. In prior decades, PCVs have had a mission that was much more closely linked to the economic development of host countries, including Lesotho. Nonetheless, current PCVs in the CHED project [and sometimes the ED project] frequently advise groups on IGAs that aim for small-scale economic development at the grassroots level. ED volunteers work to improve educational system that has the goal, among others, of developing a skilled workforce for economic development

So, what has Peace Corps' impact on economic growth been? ...Um, what growth? According to certain indicators, Basotho are poorer on average now than they were in the early 1980s. Real Income per capita has been around M6,500 for the past decade when measured in 2004 Maloti. In the early 1980s, income was above M7,000. Given this downward trend, what has gone wrong?

This is a legitimate question; however, before discussing it we need to look at what has happened to production within Lesotho. Lesotho's GDP growth over the last 30 years has been impressive for a country in Sub-Saharan Africa. GDP per capita has more than doubled over that period. While that is slow progress for a poor developing country, growth has been steady in a way that it has not in other parts of the continent. More significantly, despite the severe economic impact of HIV/AIDS, Lesotho's per capita GDP growth rate has risen slightly from 2.6% (1982-1999) to 3.2% in 1999-2008, during the peak years of the epidemic. Thus, even though Basotho are poorer than in the past, it is not because of economic decline within Lesotho.

What has caused this contrast between rising GDP and declining income? The transition to democracy in South Africa and the decline and modernization of mining in that country has resulted in the retrenchment of the majority of Basotho miners. In 1976, 50% of Basotho men worked in the mines. By 2000, that proportion had declined to 14%. There was a slight uptick during the commodities boom of 2007-2008, but the numbers have come back down. Additionally, with the end of Apartheid, many of those who could remain in South Africa have settled there and have thus remitted less money back to Lesotho. With declining remittances, Basotho have less income, even though they create more goods and services (GDP) in Lesotho than ever before.

Since the 1980s, the big drivers of GDP growth have been manufacturing and construction, which has been driven by the United States' willingness to import clothing from Lesotho with trade preferences under AGOA and the construction of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, which generates electricity and diverts water to Gauteng Province in South Africa. As the GDP

contribution of AGOA and LHWP begun to decline, diamond mining has risen to take its place. Existing mines in Mokhotlong are beginning to export diamonds of high price and a new mine is planned for Kolo in Mafeteng district. Another major growth sector, though one much smaller than manufacturing, is the health/education/and social welfare sector, which has expanded in response to the demands placed by the HIV/AIDS crisis and free primary education, with the resources coming in part from donors. Though Basotho are much more self-reliant than when the majority of their national income came from miner remittances, their key economic drivers have been in sectors with considerable dependence on aid or trade preferences.

Agriculture is unique among economic sectors as it has been shrinking over the last 30 years. Agriculture's share of GDP has declined from 22% in 1982 to just 7% in 2008. Per capita agricultural production has declined from M515 in 1982 to M339 in 2008. Considering that 41% of the labor force is employed in subsistence agriculture and many more people depend on agriculture as a supplementary livelihood source, the decline has had a serious impact on the majority of the rural population.

Furthermore, new sources of income, such as mining and the expansion of the LHWP to include more dams and wind power, generate relatively few sources of employment. It is not surprising then that "jobs" remains a persistent concern for most of the population. This is not likely to change in the immediate future. Employment will need to come either from an increase in labor-intensive sectors (e.g., light manufacturing, commercial agriculture, construction), or from a major increase in the employment multiplier of revenues coming from exports of diamonds, water, and electricity. Neither of these is likely to be on the horizon.

Volunteers in Lesotho will continue to encounter economic changes that have a significant, though indirect, impact on their work. By understanding the economic situation in Lesotho and in their communities, they can be better prepared for these impacts and be ready to assist their organizations to take advantage of new opportunities. PCVs wishing to learn more about economic trends in Lesotho can consult the statistical reports of the Government of Lesotho and local newspapers. I also feel that a short session on recent economic trends should be included in pre-service training.

#### **SADP: The World Bank-Lesotho Smallholder Agricultural Development Project**

Submitted by Jess Wilhelm, CHED 11

#### **Q.) What is SADP?**

A.) It is a World Bank project designed to assist Lesotho to increase market outlets of smallholder agricultural products, improve productivity and marketability of these products, and improve project management among beneficiary groups.

#### **Q.) What the #\*&I does that mean?!**

A.) Imagine you work with an aquaculture group. The group harvests fish irregularly because there is no storage and transport is often lacking. This affects the quality. Immediately after harvesting, the product must be taken and sold off quickly. Consumers in your camp town aren't interested in the fish unless you can supply them gutted and filleted and they only buy a few. When you tried taking them to Maseru, they had deteriorated and only some of them could be sold. There you learned that you could sell lots of fish, if only you could deliver them fresh every two weeks, otherwise the purchaser will just buy from South Africa. SADP grants could assist your group to conduct market research to determine what form of the product is most accept-

able. It would enable the group to establish a sanitary filleting facility with an icemaker or deep freezer and to package for shipment and resale. It would allow for partitioning the fishpond to harvest more frequently and for trainings to grade and sort fish. This is just an example, but it illustrates what a difference that processing, packaging, storage, and marketability can have for Income Generating Activities (IGAs).

#### **Q.) What does SADP provide?**

A.) SADP supplies grants to cooperatives, associations, and corporations on a competitive basis. The grants are intended to allow these organizations to improve handling, storage, processing, packaging, or marketing of products. The recipients are intended to demonstrate innovative solutions in processing of agricultural products. Grants can vary from \$1,000 - \$25,000. With small grants (<\$5,000), 20% of the total must be supplied by the organization, half of which can be "in kind" contributions of labor, land, or materials. The other half must be cash. With large grants (\$5,000-25,000), 40% must come from the organization, half of which can be in-kind. For example, for a project costing \$10,000 in total material and services, \$2,000 in cash would have to come from your group while another \$2,000 could be supplied in the form of labor for construction of storage facilities, owned land, or other materials. Even if your group has far more than half the required amount of self-contributions, they still must be able to supply half in cash.

#### **Q.) Where does SADP operate?**

A.) SADP will be in 4 lowland districts of Lesotho: Berea, Butha-Buthe, Leribe, and Mafeteng.

#### **Q.) Why should PCVs in the CHED program learn about SADP?**

A.) Those PCVs in the CHED program who work on IGAs should learn about SADP as a potential source of grants for their organizations. SADP grant applications are complicated and frequently require assistance to compete for successfully. SADP requires that applicants designate a consultant to assist in completion of the grant application and monitoring and evaluation of the selected project. PCVs can either assist their organizations in this role, or they can assist the organization to find competent consultants.

#### **Q.) What can't SADP do?**

A.) SADP is intended to empower groups already handling agricultural products to increase the value or market acceptability of their products. It is not intended exclusively to increase production of agricultural products. Using the example of an aquaculture group, SADP could enable them to freeze and package their fish for longer storage life. Some of the grant could be used to improve the quality of the fish produced through improved production techniques and conditions. However, a grant would not likely be provided for a group to construct a fishpond where none existed before. It is important that groups understand the role of SADP before seeking assistance.

#### **Q.) Where can I learn more?**

A.) SADP is just beginning in 2012. You can learn more about it from the MoAFS or MoITCM office in your district. If this fails, you can contact Nte Pheko Resilitso (5841-4422) and request the information and application packet.

#### **Q.) Great! How can I get started?**

A.) Before diving head first into the application, it is important to remember that a SADP project is a complicated processes requiring months of preparation and planning before even applying. Groups need to have an active bank account and meet a list of requirements. They must also have the capacity to manage and implement the project being carried out, which is often where previously successful groups fail. SADP is scheduled to be a six year project; therefore, a PCV can help their group now to lay much of the groundwork to apply a few years down the road. First, you should talk to your group about what it is doing currently and see if they have ideas of how to improve their process or products. Then, you should help them to assess their needs to improve their organizational capacity. Only then should you consider applying.

**5 Things about Lesotho that They Didn't Tell You (But Are Actually Pretty Cool)**

Submitted by Nathan Birhanu (ED 10 and the future most awesome PCV PC/Ethiopia has ever seen!)



It only seems like it was yesterday that I was nervous to join Peace Corps in the country inside of a country called Lo-So-Toe, mostly out of fear of diarrhea, separation from taco bell, missing new episodes of *Jersey Shore* and diarrhea. Like most PCVs, most of these anxieties stemmed from family and friends who were trying to deter me from leaving for two years - Americans hate drinking alone.

Out of all the awful things that ran through my head, it would have been nice for someone to let me know to look forward to little things that I may have not expected, like . . .

**5) Burning Trash:** I remember when I first burned by bag full of



used matches, family photos, rolled up toilet paper and empty long-life milk cartons (with a little dab of paraffin of course). The kerosene smell filled the air as little children gathered to

“Burn! Burn! Burn! Burn!.....Ntate.” witness my ritual of environmental damage.

When I was in America, I would just throw my *Men's More Action for Building Muscles on Top of Your Muscles* magazine in the trash, because, you know, I can only build so much muscle. I wouldn't have given my disposal a second thought; but in Peace Corps, I have become more aware of every insignificant object that goes in my bin, knowing that I will eventually have to dispose of it (by sweet fire) later; making me more conscious of excessive waste.

But have you burned trash at night, with animals around, in the winter? It. Is. Awesome. When it's dead at night, with a dark moon and blistering cold temperatures, there is nothing like the scene set from lighting up a Shoprite bag full of disgusting objects. The fire crackles, along with shattered glass, and the entire night comes alive, and it's just the light gleaming off of you



“One day we will overthrow these disgusting humans and take our rightful place. For now, let's enjoy the heat.”

and a throng of sheep feverishly approaching.

The fire lights up the surrounding area and you feel truly alone, serene and warm - and all of this from burning trash. If you stand back

and try to think of a time ever in your life where you will get such an experience from trash, you can't, probably because you won't. And it's trash.

**4) Latrines:** The simple yet mind-blowing latrine took no time to grow its charm on me. The latrine was invented to help prevent the spread of disease from . . . well, you know. But yet, its appeal stretches much farther from its inventor's original intention.

Of all of the items on this list, this is probably the one that no matter how much rhetoric I present, very few will be persuaded or even want to read this section. So I will make the case point by point:

a. No flush: the environmentalist in me cringes knowing how much water I waste every time I flush. I am no tree hugger (I



“We like to think Einstein did his most arduous proofs on the toilet.”

prefer high-fives), but I am cognizant of the little gluttonies of my life. The latrine is pretty much a black hole, but instead of being made of supernovas and dense stars collapsing on them-

selves, it's made of sewage; where the other side of the black hole goes is not my concern. All I know is that my daily bodily routines have a diminished effect on the world

b. You don't have to blame it on the dog: I know that most of us have been in the unusual circumstance where we are at a boyfriend's or girlfriend's house and we use the toilet, only to



“Really? Again? I haven't even eaten today.”

be filled with trepidation in thinking his or her dad will walk in soon after. You spray aerosol, flush three times but know that you will be thought of as a festering derelict with poor to no hygiene. The latrine nullifies all of this, because the blame goes to everyone. And you know what? - that is liberating. Oh ya, no need of a plunger or

fears of “backing up,” which has also never happened to me.

c. The entire bathroom experience is altered: the latrine offers an enclosed space where you know people won’t come knocking because they need to “use the shower” or “brush their teeth.” It’s just you, three-ply toilet paper (we can dream), your favorite magazine and the tin enclosure.

d. No maintenance or “out of order” concerns: we all know the experience of a broken toilet or having to get up and jiggle the handle because the water won’t stop filling and/or flowing. This edifice of excretion will not only quash the previous troubles, but it’ll withstand any barrage, be with from Mother Nature, human beings or black widows. In the end, no matter what, I know I won’t need to call a plumber or do laborious home improvement on my latrine, because it’s that awesome.

**3) Taxis:** Now I know what you’re thinking: taxis are hot, uncomfortable, confining and slow. The amount of bizarre and interesting experiences I’ve had on a taxi are incalculable.



“This can’t be! Space-time is breaking down in Southern Africa, in a mountain . . . in a taxi? What is a Le-so-toe?”

I can legitimately say that I have seen the laws of physics crumble in a kombi. A fundamental rule that governs the entire universe is that two points (pieces of matter, such as living organisms) can’t occupy the

same space at the same time. Yet I’ve sat in the back of kombis with two other humble bo-ntate with about 1/4<sup>th</sup> meter of space left – basically enough to sit a small toddler. Somehow, somehow, space-time folds on itself and a ‘M’e, encompassing at least half a meter, is able to squeeze in the back seat. I deserve at least one Nobel Prize in Physics for my experiences, or least to get published in a reputable peer-reviewed journal (did I mention I love the *Khotso*?).

Besides the scientific aspect, the interactions I’ve had with people and their belongings are phenomenal. Here are just a few



“Canned peaches, again? Can I have the mystery box with the musk instead?”

items I’ve been privileged to hold in my grubby, sweaty hands while on a taxi: a baby, a baby who needed changing, a baby that resembled Michael Jordan, a baby that was me, a chicken, mystery box with a pleasant smell, mystery box with an unpleasant smell, peaches and, of course, a small sheep. I feel like I am entering *The Price is Right* every time I get on a taxi; but instead of Bob Barker, my host is the Candy Man; and instead of watching me in the mirror of my bedroom, he’s holding a microphone in the rearview mirror, telling me he knows what I did last

night and to enjoy by canned peaches as my consolation prize.

All in all, I am able to get from point A to point B without having to stress about the burdens of owning a private vehicle. When I am at home in the U.S., I have to pay for gas (petrol), car insurance, oil changes and car maintenance to name a few. By the



“What the \*@#S!!! I can’t believe this \*%#@!!! Dieeeeeeeeeeeeeee.”

end of the month, I barely have enough money to buy bootleg DVDs and comic books (yes ladies, I am single). Yes taxis can be a hassle and frustrating, but leaning back, listening to an iPod and reading a book utilize my time

much better than honking my horn in rush hour traffic, while I say despicable, unforgivable things about the mother of a stranger who didn’t use signal lights properly . . . and I die a little inside.

**2) Blankets:** My small, circumscribed view of blankets once consisted of seeing them as bed accessory, padding for pro-



“Blankie, promise me we’ll always be together . . . forever . . . in Lesotho.”

wrestling and the occasional Halloween costume of an obese Casper the Ghost. Lesotho dropped the blanket knowledge bomb on me from day one.

From my first step out of the airport, I saw so many people strutting around the Mountain Kingdom wrapped up in colorful, warm and intriguing blankets. Of course, my first ignorant thought was how silly it is to use bed accessory for clothing – I ditched my Freudian attachment to blankets at the age of five (or fifteen, I can’t recall; yes, I am still single, ladies) and vowed to never return again. That is, until I joined Peace Corps. (Ten years of therapy down the drain.)



“Wait, what?”

Lesotho has added a new lease on my life and blankets, especially in the winter. Often time people struggle to get out of bed when it’s cold because it’s so warm from insulated body heat. The idea to simply take the bed and format into an apparel is so simple – yet genius! The versatility of the blanket is limitless: it works as a jacket, cape, baby-holder (definitely popular), wedding gift, circumcision gift. Those are just a few ideas from the top of my head. Either way, my appreciation for this fabric of clothing has sky rocketed. I should write a book or something.

**1) Celebrity Status:** One thing about living in Lesotho for two years that I can’t say is that people don’t care about me. Not the caring for an injury or genuine concern (although they do, I think), but the “paparazzi I’ll get the last shot so I can get out of my mom’s basement” kind of concern. In Lesotho I am pretty much like a celebrity.



“Hello, I am a Peace Corps Volunteer.”

cord, but it’s praised in high adulation on the scale of childbirth. I feel like I am walking on a runway every time I go to my latrine.

People want to know my story because they feel like I might actually have something cool to say, or they can learn something from me that no one else can teach them, or my shirt is blue that day, and dang it, that is interesting enough – because I am wearing it.

Yes, unwanted attention can be annoying at times and personal time can be relaxing, but in America, you are back at the status of a regular



“Celebrity PCV today (hooray!), unemployed RPCV tomorrow (what?).”

nobody: no glances, warm greetings, enthusiastic questions or even inquires of your genealogy. For two years I felt how Will Smith and Gary Busey feel every morning they wake up and walk outside: like a celebrity.

In the U.S., I could be wearing parachute pants while playing the accordion and there is a sizable amount of people that wouldn’t raise an eyebrow. Here, not only does every move I make in public qualify for a Guinness World Re-



“Please, no autographs.”

answer the following question: **What are your top two favorite recipes in the volunteer cookbook at this time, and your two least favorite?** Please submit your contributions before April 15<sup>th</sup>. We really appreciate your taking the time to give us this feedback. Many volunteers depend on the cookbook, and it is an important tool for keeping us happy and healthy. We’d love to keep improving it so that it can better meet our needs and so the next generations of volunteers can reap the benefits of our experiences. Thank you for your participation and happy cooking!

**NEWS FROM AROUND THE PEACE CORPS WORLD**

FROM: Aaron S. Williams, Director  
 SUBJECT: National African American History Month

I am pleased to designate February as National African American History Month at the Peace Corps. During National African American History Month, we celebrate the vast and varied contributions of African Americans to our nation’s history and identity.

This year’s national theme is “Black Women in American Culture and History.” From their contributions in the antislavery and civil rights movements to their involvement in art and literature, Black women have played a significant role in the creation of this unified nation. The strength, courage, and leadership displayed by Black women, not only during times of oppression, but in their communities as well, have and continue to enrich our nation.

During this month and throughout out the year, let us reflect on the words of Maya Angelou, who said: “You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, and how you can still come out of it.” Join me in recognizing the generations of African Americans who have overcome many defeats and have come out of it to contribute immeasurably to the Peace Corps, our nation, and the world.

**Call for Material for the Cookbook**  
 Submitted by Carol McFarland (CHED 11)



As the ED 12’s are getting settled in, I am reminded that this time last year us CHED 11s were just starting to get our invitation packets. I’m sure that very soon a new group of Peace Corps Lesotho Volunteers will be showing up on Facebook as the CHED 12s receive their invitation packets. One thing that we are starting to think about in preparing for their arrival is fine tuning the volunteer cookbook. I would like to extend an invitation to any interested parties to contact me ([carol.r.mcfarland@gmail.com](mailto:carol.r.mcfarland@gmail.com) 57033742) with a cc to Chanté Liggins ([cmliggins@gmail.com](mailto:cmliggins@gmail.com) 59869098) if you have suggestions, contributions, or interest in joining the committee. I also ask that everyone get in touch with one of us by email or SMS to



Receptionist M’e Lebohng had the opportunity to visit Hannah Campbell (above) & Maria Bruno (below) with Nt. Clement.

