

KHOTSO

September 2010



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Message from the Country Director

Of course the highlight in August was the swearing in of the new CHED group. Twenty-seven trainees became Volunteers on August 11th at the US Ambassador's residence. Matt Deakin, Grant Comstock and Jesse Schofield gave great speeches in Sesotho! Some of the new Volunteers left for their sites that same afternoon and the rest left the next morning. All seem to be settling in well; one even met Jacob Zuma a few days after arriving at site! Once again thanks to all of the staff and Volunteers who contributed to PST.

This was Ambassador Nolan's last swearing in ceremony as he departs from Lesotho on September 2nd after 3 years. He has been a great support to Lesotho and we wish him well.

Speaking of departures, we all know that Rich is leaving Lesotho on September 2. This will surely be a sad day. Rich is off to exciting new adventures in Moldova but will be missed by staff and Volunteers alike. His happy disposition, hilarious Peace Corps Micronesia stories and ability to "hide" money in our budget will not easily be replaced. Thanks, Rich for all your hard work, friendship and, of course, the Gateway Buns!

On August 31st Dr. Tanaka completed his one month temporary assignment here in Lesotho. I heard a lot of great feedback from Volunteers about Tanaka and am happy he was able to help us out. Unfortunately, the next temporary PCMO signed up to assist us was unable to come at the last minute. PC/Washington has arranged for a series of temporary PCMOs to fill in until our permanent PCMO Katherine Kyle arrives on or around September 20th. The first one should arrive on Monday, 9/6. In the meantime, any Volunteer needing medical assistance should call the medical duty phone (6285-1003) and we will put you in contact with a local doctor on call.

Another Katherine arrived yesterday to help us out at temporary AO. Her name is Katherine Fertakis and she is the Admin Officer in the Office of AIDS Relief in Washington (my old office). Katherine has never been to southern Africa and is looking forward to meeting Volunteers and seeing a bit of the Mountain Kingdom. Welcome, Katherine!

Two apparently very successful Diversity Camps were held last month – one in Mokhotlong and one in Quthing. Several Volunteers and staff

worked hard to organize these camps. Peace Corps once again partnered with Lesotho Durham Link who facilitated the camps. Matrix and other local organizations also sent speakers for various panels. Ntate Peter, 'me Lebohang and nate Tsatsi who participated from the staff side reported that they thoroughly enjoyed the camps and felt like the kids got a lot out of them. Kudos to all involved!

I was pleased to be able to attend going away parties/feasts for Merrill Nosler and Maya Washington and to visit Kristan Reed before they recently COSd. All three made very positive impressions on their communities and counterparts and will definitely be missed.

Finally, I've been asked to remind all Volunteers about etiquette in the VRC. Several Volunteers and staff have worked hard over the past few months to clean up the VRC, organize resources and generally make the space as usable as possible. Within a short period of time, however, the VRC starts to look a bit "pig sty-ish" (was the term used). Please remember that the VRC is not a place to store personal items, and food is not allowed. Especially now that it's starting to get warm again, Volunteers should use the rondavel in front of the office if they'd like to eat while they're at the office. Also, don't forget to check out resources that you take from the VRC and return them when you're finished. This helps us keep track of what's being used and what we need to replenish. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Khotso Pula Nala.

Kathy Jacquart
Country Director

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From the Editor's Desk

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 1st of each month. Please make sure that your email address is on file with Peace Corps.

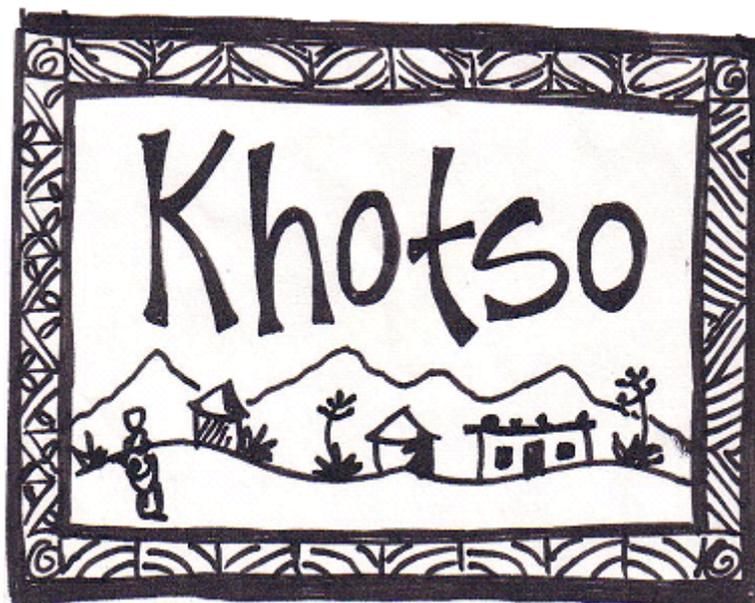
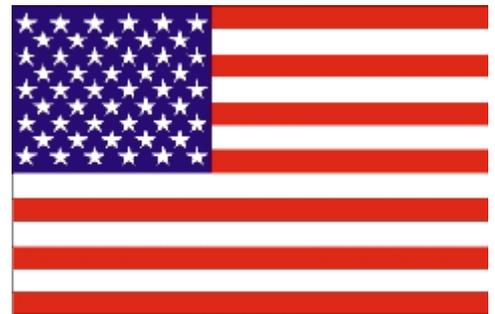
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you as to whether the information contained in this newsletter met your needs.

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 Birthdays

Birthday greetings go out to the following PCVs. The Peace Corps Lesotho staff sends you greeting and hope that you have a very prosperous year.

Happy Birthday PCVs**September**

McClaine, Ryan	September 1
Libero, Sonny	September 8
Jones, Christopher	September 9
Wade, Cullen	September 10
Kelly, Megan	September 25
Schofield, Jesse	September 30

October

Jimenez, Violeta	October 2
Lindquist, Karen	October 7
Liggins, Chante'	October 12
Helm, Brandi	October 19
Salen, Leeza	October 23
Milloy, Erin	October 25
Shepard, Kathleen	October 26

November

Pierce, Eric	November 6
Rossi, Erica	November 9
Philips, Shanthi	November 19
Simons, Ariel	November 20

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Full name: Margaret Malebona Putsoa aka "money Margaret"

Job title: Cashier

I work as cashier, I do travel paperwork
I reconcile the purchase card
Assist PCV's with banking problems
Any other duties assigned by the AO or CD

How long with PC:

Beautiful twenty years and I am in the 21st year.

Job prior to PC:

Accountant at National Abattoir and Feedlot Complex

Family status (married? kids?):

Married with three kids, handsome two boys one beautiful girl and adopted one

sister

Where you grew up:

I was born in Qacha's neck where my father was an inspector of police; I went places with my dad through his official transfers before we could settle in Mophale's Hoek where my fathers home is.

**Favorite part of your job:**

The favorite part of my job is "to do things the right way". "Ke nepe" Like balancing at the end of every day and finding faults early enough

Least favorite part of your job:

Making non emergency payments after cashier hours

Hobbies:

I like music and singing, I like reading, going to church, jogging, face to face discussions over a topic and watching talk shows

If you could meet anyone, who would that be?

President Obama.

Advice for PCVs in Lesotho:

Lesotho is small but it needs someone who is wise with integrity. Peace Corps is famous name be good to reserve the good name it has. Try to focus on what you are here for, anything good, go for it! Do not be extravagant. Save as much as you can. Above all try to "do things the right way" le nepe"

PCV News Corner



Staff Birthdays



September/ October
No staff birthdays.

November
Eunicia Nkoro November 3
Lebohlang Ranooe November 20
Clement Lephoto November 22

Peace Corps Lesotho Holidays

September
September 6— Labor Day (US Holiday)*

October
October 5— Independence Day (LS Holiday)*

November
November 11— Veteran’s Day (LS Holiday)*
November 25—Thanksgiving (US Holiday)*

*PC Lesotho remains closed on this day.

Admin Corner By Rich Carlson

Do You Need An Increase In Your Living Allowance? It's time for another Living Allowance Survey. Attached is the form you should fill out and return to 'M'e Malisema. You may also fill out the form electronically on the computers in the VRC. Your current Living Allowance is M1,991.80. If an increase is to be considered, Peace Corps/W requires at least a 75% response rate. Be as complete on the items you purchase as possible. Once we reach 75%, staff conducts a market basket survey to validate Volunteers' responses. If the two pieces of data warrant an adjustment in the Living Allowance, we make a proposal to Peace Corps/W. Should you have any questions 'M'e Malisema or 'M'e Victoria can help you.

Education Corner By Malitaba Hlabana

Wishing you well as we get into Spring! We are welcoming new members of our PC family in the form of three Peace Corps Response Volunteers due to reinforce our efforts at the National Health Training Centre. The trio arrive around 9/12 and will be here for next ten teaching physics, biology and chemistry and nursing.

STAFF SCHEDULE

9/1: ED PAC Meeting
 9/2-4: ED 09 COS Conference (Training Ctr off limits 9/3-4)
 9/5-7: CHED 09 Mid-Reconnect (Training Ctr off limits 9/4-8)
 9/7-16: Clement on leave
 9/13: VAC Meeting (Training Ctr off limits September 12-13)
 9/17: DAR Meeting (Training Ctr off limits September 16-17)
 9/23-10/5: Masechaba on leave
 9/30-10/10: Kathy at Country Director conference in Ghana
 TBD: DSR Training
 10/1-8: 'Malitaba on leave
 10/9: World Habitat Day in Nazareth
 10/13-14: Clement on leave
 10/18-24: Training Design and Evaluation and TOT workshop for ED 11 PST (Training Ctr off limits 10/17-24)
 10/25-29: Clement on Site Assessments – Mafeteng, MHoek, Quthing, QN, Mokhotlong, TT
 10/27-11/4 Masechaba at Training Manager conference in Zambia
 11/3: Arrival of ED 11 trainees (Training ctr off limits 11/2-6)

(Share Point also has travel details for Clement and 'Malitaba)

Duty Officer Schedule

September 6 – 12 Charles
 September 13 – 19 Kathy
 September 20 – 26 Deepak



*Staff Corner,
Admin Corner &
Education Corner*

Random Submission by Michael Dill (Kathy's husband) Peanut Butter Bar Recipe

This is a no-bake recipe that can be made with fairly common ingredients, and I am sharing it along with gratitude to all the brave Peace Corps Lesotho trainees who were subjected to the testing phase. (For those of you keeping track of such things, this is version two. Reduce the peanut butter and melted margarine by one quarter cup each for version one.) For the crispy rice cereal, I use the Snap, Crackle, Pop variety; and the first time I made this, I used a mortar and pestle to crush the cereal, and that worked quite well. Melt the chocolate-margarine topping slowly.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups crispy rice cereal, crushed
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 cups peanut butter
- 1 cup vegan margarine, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup chocolate chips (vegan or otherwise)
- 4 tablespoon margarine

Directions:

Combine the first five ingredients well in a large mixing bowl; press mixture into a 9 in. by 13 in. pan. (I think that is about 22 cm by 33 cm.). In a saucepan or double boiler over low heat, melt the last two ingredients together, stirring often. Spread this chocolate mixture over the peanut butter mixture and put aside for an hour or two to set. Enjoy!

The New Face of GAD

By Erica Rossi, ED10, GAD Committee Member



The Women In Development/Gender And Development (WID/GAD) Committee, formerly known as simply the GAD Committee, met for the first time in over a year in August. Not only do we now have a new mission statement and goals (as seen below), but we also have a new co-chair, ED 10 Rory Pulvino! As the committee that focuses on gender-related topics, it would be wonderful if we had both genders equally represented on the committee. Male PCVs – we need more of you!

GAD Committee Mission

Peace Corps Lesotho, through the GAD committee, works to increase the level of awareness regarding gender issues amongst Peace Corps Volunteers, project partners and our Peace Corps communities.

GAD Committee Goals

- To promote gender awareness for men, women, and youth as it relates to the development within the framework of Basotho culture;
 - To promote education of host country nationals that demonstrate community leadership potential;
 - To develop and promote community activities focusing on increasing awareness of gender equality issues;
- To ensure that WID/GAD is incorporated in Peace Corps programs and trainings.

Below are some creative WID/GAD activities that Volunteers could implement in their communities:

- Create a newsletter on gender-related issues
 - Hold a Speak-Aloud in your village or at a local high school
 - Do a Men As Partners (MAP) workshop
 - Implement a poetry, art, debate, or essay competition involving gender-related topics
 - Create an agricultural project that includes and teaches women
 - Hold a workshop for teachers on how to encourage gender-equity in classrooms
 - Have a girls' soccer match to build self-esteem
 - Start a girls'/boys' group at a local school and discuss relevant gender-related issues
- Work with your local clinic to promote PMTCT awareness and get both men and women involved!

PCV Life



Are you doing any WID/GAD related activities? If so, let us know! Also remember to report on your WID/GAD activities in your VRT. There's a special tab for Agency Initiatives, including WID/GAD. Don't forget to get credit for your activities.

An Optimistic Look Ahead: World AIDS Day in Lesotho By Erica Rossi, ED 10, DAR Committee Member

Sometimes the fight against HIV/AIDS seems hopeless. I know that here, in Lesotho, it is difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, many of our fellow Peace Corps Volunteers are doing great work associated with the epidemic. ED 10 Volunteers Kimiko Ebata and Ariel Simons, collaborated with Kick4Life to organize a testing day at their respective high schools in Moyeni, Quthing. Over 1,000 students participated in activities concerning HIV/AIDS and about 60 students were tested. In Mokhotlong, CHED 09 Volunteer Kristine Movalli conducted a workshop on sexual reproductive health that included lessons on human anatomy, puberty, and sexual behavior. Furthermore, she utilized a pre/post test to assess the effectiveness of the lessons taught.

All this hard work may be paying off, too! A recent article from The Washington Post ("UN: HIV among young people going down in Africa", July 13, 2010) reports that "the number of young people infected with HIV in Africa is falling in 16 of the 25 countries hardest hit by the virus" and "the number of young people infected with HIV dropped by at least 25 percent in a dozen countries." What is the cause of this decrease? UNAIDS says that the drop coincides with a "change in sexual behavior, like having fewer sexual partners or increased condom use."

In Lesotho, many Volunteers target youth when implementing HIV/AIDS awareness activities and it seems that we are on the right track. With World AIDS Day (December 1st) right around the corner, we have a perfect opportunity to involve youth in a day completely dedicated to raising awareness about HIV and AIDS. Whether you are teaming up with other Volunteers in your district or doing an activity in your community with your counterparts, here are some ideas from Peace Corps Volunteers in the Republic of Kiribati (adapted for Lesotho) for activities to implement on World AIDS Day:

- **Have everyone wear red** - and explain why they are doing so.
- **Candlelight Vigil** - Community members/church group/student or women's group/etc. meet and walk through community/village singing songs with candles lit. Walkers in front of moving vigil could hold a banner with World AIDS Day written on it and a subheading reminding people to be safe, use condoms, get tested, not to discriminate against people living with HIV/AIDS, or some similar message. At the end you could hold a small talk maybe on the steps of the church, school, clinic, or chief's house and speak about AIDS, what it is, and how it can be prevented.
- **Construct A Timeline** - A good way of illustrating the history of AIDS is to involve students, community members or other individuals in constructing a timeline on the wall for all to see. This helps put into perspective the devastating toll HIV has wreaked in such a short time.
- **Create an AIDS Quilt** - A good way to use those old scraps of cloth lying around. Groups or individuals could be as creative as they wanted to be. Instead of it being a memorial quilt, the quilt could address anything to do with HIV. Once the quilt is assembled, it could be displayed in school, church, or the clinic.
- **Present a Play** - This is a good way of involving everyone, as participants in the play or in the audience. There could also be a Q & A following the play. Lineo's World (a puppet show written by an RPCV) would be great!
- **Have a Contest** - Poster, essay, speech or poetry competitions could help to find out what people know, or how they've applied and shared their knowledge about HIV and AIDS.
- **Form a Human Red Ribbon** - This could build on Number 1, provided you have enough "red" participants. If not enough people with red, you could do the same during a candlelight vigil.
- **Show a Video** - Show a video in which one of the characters has AIDS. This is a great preface for a discussion about HIV and AIDS. Sesotho Media (2232-1446) has some great videos about people living with HIV in Lesotho.
- **Classroom Lessons On AIDS** - Check out the Life Skills Manual for some great ideas for lesson plans and games. You could also plan a classroom/school debate on whether or not students who have HIV or AIDS should be allowed to attend school -or- a debate on whether everyone in Lesotho should be tested or not.
- **Education through Sports** - You can capitalize on sports functions as opportunities for sharing information, or you can create your own sports function such as a World AIDS Day soccer/netball/volleyball tournament. Or you can simply hold an AIDS fun run to raise awareness about AIDS and how many who are living with AIDS are too weak to run or stay fit and healthy. Kick4Life



PCV Life

is a great organization to collaborate with if this interests you.

Form a Chain – This would be a great activity for a classroom in that it helps students to visualize the impact AIDS has had on humanity. Each child can make one “link” in the chain and write the name of a person who has died of AIDS. The links are then glued together and can be placed in the classroom. Once your class has constructed the “chain of remembrance” you can talk about AIDS and how it has taken many more lives.

If you have a good World AIDS Day idea, tell your District AIDS Representative.

DAR Update

By Megan Kelly, CHED PCVL



To begin, a very warm welcome to the newest members of our Peace Corps Family: CHED 10. We look forward to getting to know each of you and seeing you thrive over the course of the next 2 years in your respective placements.

Updates and News:

- A new version of the HIV/AIDS (DAR) Manual is now available. Speak with your DAR representative if you would like the latest edition.
- Many Volunteers enjoy working with each other on various projects. Despite rumors, staff does not discourage collaboration but reminds us that the focus of Peace Corps is to train Basotho counterparts. If there is a project you would like help with, contact your APCD and let him know that you need a specific skill set from a specific Volunteer. *Unfortunately, Peace Corps can not pay for transportation for these types of activities.*
- Who is eligible for PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) in Lesotho? According to the MOH, only victims of sexual assault or occupational exposure will be given medicine. Still encourage others to seek medical attention, as some clinics are lenient regarding this rule. PEP is effective within 72 hours of exposure. The earlier someone initiates on treatment, the less likely HIV will develop. Congratulations to our newest members and officers:

Erica Rossi (Quiting) – New Member, Co-Chair Elect
Shanthi Philips (Leribe) – New Member
Tom Maresco (Thaba Tseka) – New Member
Nathan Birhanu (Mafeteng) – New Member
Kristine Movalli (Mokhotlong) – Friends of Lesotho Liaison
Aaron Laufman-Walker (Mohale’s Hoek) – Executive Assistant

Congratulations to the following Volunteers who made our “Best Practices” list. Remember, if you do something significant in the realm of HIV/AIDS, report it to your District AIDS Representative.

- **Maya Washington** organized and carried out a successful Diversity Camp for youth in her locale. In return, the kids shared the received lessons, including HIV/AIDS messages, with youth groups and schools in the area.
- **Erica Rossi** initiated a series of Life Skills workshops that, instead of being geared towards students, predominantly targeted resource teachers. She distributed and taught relevant information and games in the spirit of capacity building. Her teachers are now equipped to teach independently to their students and various community members.
- **Dustin Tamsen** is utilizing the *Sara* book series. The *Sara* books are a chain of comic books produced by UNICEF in Eastern and Southern Africa on the adventures of Sara, an adolescent girl who is gradually emerging as a role model for girls’ empowerment. Stories address a host of issues, including HIV/AIDS, sexual harassment, risky behavior.
- **Tom Maresco** has incorporated one-minute dance parties into his HIV/AIDS-related Life Skills classes. This tends to rejuvenate his students so they are eager to learn about the importance of positive decision making and healthy behaviors.
- **Mike Dissen** researched and obtained HIV/AIDS-related books for schools. He then helped develop and organize a series of workshops where he taught school representatives how to properly utilize the books and prompt discussions following each reading. Others assisting included Meg Orazio, Joey Lehnhard, Leeza Salen, and Haley Waggoner.
- **Megan Kelly** worked with 4 social workers at Baylor Clinic to identify common characteristics of children who have been neglected and/or physically, emotionally, or sexually abused. Characteristics of neglectful and abusive caretakers were also noted. Subsequently, the social workers designed and presented a PowerPoint presentation for the caregivers of HIV positive children at Baylor’s annual Caregiver Day.

PCV Life





PCV Life

Kristine Movalli conducted a workshop on sexual reproductive health, which included lessons on anatomy, puberty, and sexual behavior. Furthermore, she utilized a pre/post test to assess the effectiveness of the lessons taught.

Our next national DAR meeting is September 16 at 4pm and the 17th. If you have any questions, concerns, or best practices please forward them to your District AIDS Representative. They will be sure to discuss it at our next meeting.

Peer Support Network Update

Lesotho's Peer Support Network held its annual training at the end of August. Thank you to all Volunteers who nominated their peers and congratulations to new members! We have a wonderful, skilled, and diverse group of individuals who are all available to any Peace Corps Volunteer, at any time, with a friendly (and CONFIDENTIAL) ear.

Each Volunteer will have one member of PSN who will occasionally check in with you, but Volunteers are encouraged to contact any member of the network with whom they feel most comfortable. No reason is too big or too small to contact a PSN member; we would love to hear from you!

Stay well,
Your Peer Support Network

PC/Lesotho PSN Mission Statement

To empower Volunteers by supporting their emotional needs in a non-judgmental, confidential, and safe atmosphere, while offering information and resources to enhance their Peace Corps experience.

PSN Members and contacts

- Emily McKeen, Mafeteng, 59 541 464
- Ed Griffin, Maseru
- Elissa Kaufman, Mohale's Hoek, 59 519 645
- Karen Lindquist, Berea, 59 114 838
- Adam Santos, Butha Buthe, 59 707 654
- Ryan McClaine, Leribe, 59 707 646
- Shanthi Philips, Leribe, 59 707 665
- Rusty DeLucia, Leribe, 59 707 635
- Jackie Tipsworth, Maseru, 59 167 853
- Megan Kelly, Maseru, 59 054 564
- Gwen Kehr, Quthing, 59 466 855
- Jack Murphy, Thaba Tseka 58 812 734

TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) Update **By Karen Lindquist, ED 09, TAP Committee Chair**



Thank you to the Volunteers who have sent along their student thank you letters, photos and school receipts following the issuance of checks from Friends of Lesotho (FOL). Letters and photos are sent to FOL in the USA to (1) show PCV and student appreciation for their financial support of this program and (2) for FOL to use in their efforts to raise additional funds through the Lesotho RPCV community.

We look forward to hearing from all twenty-seven (27) Volunteers who have student awardees this year. **Just a reminder that we need from each of you:** a thank you letter from each student recipient,

a photo or photos of your awardees and
a receipt from each school to whom money was paid.

Please place your letters, photos and receipts in the large brown envelope that sits in the TAP box in the VRC. Our next TAP Committee meeting is September 24th and we hope to hear from everyone by that date.

FOL has sent their sincere apologies to all TAP program participants for the unfortunate check issuance problems. **Please...be assured** that TAP checks from FOL can now be returned to Leso-

tho Standard Bank for clearance. Overdraft fees will, of course, will be covered by FOL. The FOL Board of Directors is working to ensure that this situation does not recur.

In a recent e-mail from Kathy to TAP, DAR and VAC members, she explained that the FOL board will be changing how it operates in Lesotho. When procedures are in place, updates on future processing will be communicated to all Volunteers.

Questions or suggestions? Kindly text, e-mail or call any of your TAP Committee members: Kali Bechtold, Parker Bryant, Melissa Hill, Nate Landrum and Karen Lindquist.

Book Review **By Gwen Kher, ED 09**



The Invisible Cure
Helen Epstein
Picador 2007

In this seat-gripping, sci-fi thriller HIV has morphed to produce a race of short-living super humans who have the ability to rearrange molecules with their minds, and scientists are racing to find a vaccine for the rest of the human population to catch up.

Well...not quite, though, that would be a cool book. The Invisible Cure by Helen Epstein is neither fictional nor does it involve super humans. What it is is a well-researched (literally, there are 39 pages of notes and citations following the text) account of "why we are losing the fight against AIDS in Africa." Central to Epstein's argument is the African cultural norm of multiple concurrent partners and how that sexual practice has led to the high rate of HIV in some African countries. She focuses specifically on Uganda, where HIV infection rates have fallen, and on southern African countries where HIV rates have increased alarmingly in the past two decades.

Her interviews, particularly with two Eastern Cape high-school girls, hit close to home (Chapter 4: The African Earthquake) for this Peace Corps Lesotho Volunteer. When asked why they put up with men who are unfaithful and who physically or emotionally abuse them, both girls answered, "Because I love him." I have often gotten a similar response, usually accompanied by a shy giggle and telling eyes, from young women in my community.

Her take-home message: As exemplified in Uganda, when HIV is openly and readily discussed, when AIDS sufferers are acknowledged and cared for, and (most importantly) when the movement to curtail HIV infection comes from the country's people itself (not good-intending NGOs, charity or aid organizations), then rates will decline.

If you can get your hands on a copy while in country, The Invisible Cure is worth the read.

What's the Point? **By Merrill Nosler, RPCV, CHED 08**

My last day in Peace Corps was August 6, 2010. 2 years to the day that I swore in. I "finished" my service. What does that mean?

Throughout my entire service there have been 2 questions that constantly repeat themselves: "Why am I here and, "Is there any chance of making any kind of difference...really?" I've been home for 12 days. I've enjoyed so many things that I haven't had for 2 years. At this moment, I'm at a perfectly manicured soccer field watching one of my favorite kids in America at her practice with about a dozen brand new soccer balls on the field. As I sit here listening to these kids talk about their classes, computers and cell phones, I'm thinking about Lesotho. I ask myself, did I do anything to improve the quality of life for people in Lesotho. Now that I'm gone, can anyone in my village flip on the light switch when it gets dark? Do any of the kids have their own text books? Can they flush the toilet (and pay for toilet paper to use), play soccer with a new ball or enjoy java frappacinos? (Which I'm convinced would bring civilization and development to Lesotho) No. I've been there for 27 months and have accomplished absolutely nothing in the way of improving the quality of life. So, "why was I there? Did I make a difference?"

A very wise Peace Corps staff told me once that the best we can really hope to do is to pour ourselves into one relationship at a time...and maybe one of those people will change things in their country. At the time she told me that, I thought that maybe this is just one of those trite things you say to someone to encourage them, but maybe its not really so true. Here's a relationship story from my service that sums it all up for me:

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When asked what the biggest challenge has been for me during my Peace Corps service I have to say that it's been dealing with a culture who solves their problems by beating. Men beat the woman, woman beat the kids, kids beat the animals...ok, everyone beats the kids and the animals. I've seen some terrible instances of kids being brutally beaten, both by teachers, parents and random, drunken Ntate on the street. As I've watched some of this, and even occasionally gotten involved, I've asked myself..."why, why am I here? Why am I here in a place where I can't even help defenseless children know that they are human beings who aren't punching bags, but have value, maybe even a future?"

This last May, I came home one day to find my normally happy little 8 year old ausi withdrawn, depressed and with a few bruises. After getting past several of the "what's wrong?" "Nothing!" conversations, my ausi told me her teacher beat her because she forgot to bring something to school. I know, I know, this is the way it is. It's the culture. You can't do anything. (Which much of the time is true... I've tried before and failed) But sorry, but this was my ausi. So after calming down for a couple of days, I went to the primary school to talk to the teacher. The principal was there listening. The teacher's response was, "you're right, but I don't know what else to do.: The principal joined in the conversation and told me that she knows there may be better ways to discipline besides beating, but none of them have been taught how. The principal asked me to do a workshop there. They initiated it and 12 teachers actually showed up during the winter break. Leeza and Rusty (a couple of really fabulous volunteers) came to my village during their breaks to help with a classroom management/life skills workshop

This is a school that has a library, a school that I've taught life skills at, and a school where I've spent many, many hours just hanging out with teachers and kids. This school was not part of my primary job. They didn't ask for this workshop because they think I'm an incredible trainer or such a great PCV. They asked for this workshop because they knew me. Because after almost 2 years, we finally had some relationship... and they trusted me. The results of the workshop... none. For now. But maybe one of the teachers will use what they learned in their classroom. And maybe one of their students will be taught that they can ask questions, they can try new things. They have value. And maybe one of those kids will grow up to be an innovative leader and change things. Maybe. Is maybe enough? For me it is. I couldn't bring about any of those measurable spectacular changes that we'd all like to see at the end of our service. But I stuck with it and poured into one relationship at a time. And somewhere down the line, maybe that will make a difference.

For those of you who are in that time in your service where you are wondering "what am I doing here?"....don't give up. Chances are that you have made an impression on some Basotho that you know, whom you have spent some time with, And maybe they will someday feel confident enough to go on in school or work for change in Lesotho. And that will be because of the time you spent with them. What's more sustainable than that?

By now, most of you know why I left Lesotho. Back in March, I was sexually assaulted. I received excellent support from Peace Corps. I was med-evac'd to Washington and got great counseling. I came back to Lesotho and everything was going really great in my village, with my youth and with my NGO. But stuff happens. They caught one of the guys that assaulted me. (Yea!!!) The trial began and some safety and security issues came up. Peace Corps felt that the best thing to do for me would be to send me home. I'm in California, enjoying the summer, great food, friends who speak English...and wishing I were back in Lesotho. As I've been processing all of this, I'm realizing that I've had the opportunity and privilege to work with some of the highest quality people I've ever met. I've been thinking of advice I'd like to share with all of you...take it with a grain of salt. We are all different.

1. If something happens to you that shouldn't (assault, robbery, pickpocket, etc.) tell Peace Corps. Don't worry about how it happened, what Peace Corps will think, what your friends will think... just tell them. Peace Corps can help. They can help you deal with police, other volunteers, HCNs.... they will get you the support that you need. It's hard enough living in a different culture so far away from your normal support system. Don't try to suck it up. It takes courage to seek help.
2. If you are considering going to the police, think hard about it. Ask Peace Corps if they can help prepare you with what to expect. Talk to Peace Corps. Make sure they go with you. And if possible, bring a Basotho speaker. This goes for any follow up trials and meetings with the police. If you were in America, you probably wouldn't want to be alone. In Lesotho....
3. Know that with a sexual assault/rape, you don't have to go to the police in order to get the support and counseling from Peace Corps you may need. The decision to deal with the police is a difficult one. There are reasons for and against. Talk to Peace Corps and process as much as you can... then make the decision!
4. Being med-evac'd isn't the end of the world! I was convinced that if I were med-evac'd, I wouldn't be allowed to come back. Not true. Over 50% of med-evac'd Volunteers get to return to their

posts. I received fantastic care in Washington while I was there, and good follow up care from Washington when I returned. It helped so much!!!

5. Stand up for yourself. Be a good advocate. For many Volunteers, some of the things that happen may be their first time in dealing with that particular issue. It is a learning curve for Peace Corps staff, other volunteers and yourself. Ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask for what you need. From my experience, I can tell you that the PC staff in Lesotho care deeply and want to help in whatever way they can. But there is a saying. "You don't know what you don't know." As we've all been working together (myself and PC staff) and it has helped...haholo!!!

The trial is still continuing for one of the guys who assaulted me. Hopefully, he will go to jail and justice will be served. But there are no guarantees. One thing that helps me while I'm so far away is knowing that PC Lesotho is doing everything they can on their end to help see this through to the end. Thanks.

People ask me if after knowing everything that happened, would I do it again. YES!! In a heartbeat. Peace Corps was the best decision I have ever made. It has helped me to grow in so many ways. And part of the great part was being able to work with all of you. Thanks for everything! Salang Hantle!

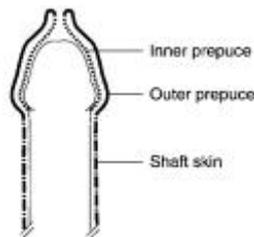
COOKBOOK

Attention! The Cookbook Staff is calling for new recipes and cover designs for the next edition of the Cookbook! To submit new recipes/cover designs, please email Eric Pierce (elpierce6@gmail.com) or Ro Gluck (globalgluck@gmail.com), or put a hard copy the Maseru mailbox, addressed to Eric or Ro. Submissions due October 1.

Male Circumcision and HIV Prevention in Lesotho

Report on Lesotho Male Circumcision Situational Analysis: Maseru: Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Government of Lesotho, 2008.

Submitted by Majimisi Machai, HIV/AIDS Coordinator



Male circumcision (MC) is the surgical removal of the foreskin, the tissue covering the head of the penis. Several biological factors explain how removal of the foreskin can significantly reduce sexually transmitted infections (including HIV).

Firstly, the area immediately under the foreskin is a warm, moist environment, which as studies have shown, has a tendency to promote the replication of bacteria and viruses, especially when penile hygiene is poor.

Secondly, the inner surface of the foreskin is less protected and so especially during sexual intercourse is more susceptible to suffer minor trauma, abrasions or inflammation which can facilitate sexually transmitted infections.

Thirdly, the tissue on the inner surface of the foreskin is rich in HIV target cells (Langerhans and other receptor cells). In fact, there are more HIV target cells in the foreskin than elsewhere in the human body. In vitro evidence shows that the foreskin absorbs HIV nine times more easily than other genital mucosa. During sexual intercourse this inside surface of the foreskin is directly exposed to vaginal fluid and the possibility of infection from STIs or HIV.

Through the removal of the foreskin these possible routes for STI and HIV infection are removed. Studies have demonstrated that those who had the foreskin fully/completely removed through circumcision experienced significantly lower risk of:

- Urinary Tract Infections
- Sexually Transmitted Infections especially Chancroid & Syphilis
- Penile Cancer
- Human Papilloma virus (HPV) - which can then reduce the risk of cancer of the cervix in their sexual partner.

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, research has demonstrated that MC reduces sexual transmission of HIV by 60%. In Lesotho, however, circumcised men had significantly higher HIV prevalence (22.8%) than uncircumcised men (14.2%) (Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey, 2004).

What explains this?

Approximately 48% of Basotho men have been circumcised. An estimated 15,000 circumcisions

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occur every year. The majority (2/3) of these men are circumcised in their late adolescence (16 - 20 years) as part of the traditional initiation process of *lebollo*, which does not necessarily provide the same level of protection as a medical MC due to the type of procedure.

This other 1/3 of circumcised men are circumcised at health facilities. In the past year each district hospital performed 40 to 80 male circumcisions, typically 1 to 2 per week. This current level of MC provision is inadequate to achieve the national coverage needed to significantly reduce HIV infection rates.

Currently only medical doctors are authorized to perform male circumcisions in Lesotho. The availability of MC is confined to district hospitals, filter clinics and private surgeries where doctors operate. For many in the rural highlands, access to district hospitals is limited, often involving several hours of travel at a cost many low income groups can seldom afford.

In order to scale-up the provision of male circumcision, Nurse Clinicians would need to be given the authorization and training to conduct MC. 75% of health workers surveyed said that they would need additional training before they could conduct male circumcision procedures. This would require an extensive program involving not only the initial training but also ongoing mentoring and supervision to minimize the occurrence of surgical complications and adverse effects from procedures. While the equipping of Nurse Clinicians could greatly extend the provision of MC to clinics in the rural areas, many of these facilities would also need upgrading.

Currently two-thirds of health centers surveyed reported that they do not have the capacity to perform male circumcision procedures given the lack of facilities, equipment, and staff shortages. **Because of this, MC could not be rolled out to every health facility in Lesotho.** Rather it would need to be concentrated in the larger health centers which have the facilities for minor surgical procedures, reliable supplies of water and electricity and enough staff to conduct the procedure and follow-up counseling.

For these reasons and the social and cultural implications, the Government of Lesotho has voiced concerns about their readiness to roll out a large scale MC campaign. In addition, traditional leaders are worried that medical circumcision would conflict with their traditional circumcision initiation rites.

What is the Volunteers' role in MC?

As PC Volunteers, your role in MC is limited. Because of the GOL's present stance regarding the health system readiness and the socio-cultural issues surrounding MC, you should not promote it one way or the other. If asked, you could provide correct information to community members on MC's protective benefits, and explain to them (as simply as you can) that "MC has been shown to reduce men's risk of becoming infected by HIV through heterosexual intercourse by at least 60%, but doesn't provide complete protection from HIV infection." You should also direct people to health clinics if they want more information.

Please let 'Me Jimi know if you are interested in learning more about MC in Lesotho.

*News from around the
Peace Corps World*



Peace Corps Hosts Young African Leaders for a Forum on Civic Engagement

WASHINGTON, D.C., August 4, 2010 – The Peace Corps welcomed 115 young African leaders from 46 African nations to its headquarters in Washington, D.C. today as part of President Barack Obama’s Young African Leaders Forum. This presidential initiative is designed to help such leaders exchange ideas and engage U.S. citizens and government officials concerning issues key to Africa’s future.

Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams convened “Ubuntu: Partnering for Development in Africa” with the forum participants, returned Peace Corps volunteers from Africa, and partner organizations focused on promoting innovative partnerships for civic engagement and development.

“Throughout Peace Corps’ history, a central mission of our volunteers is to serve alongside our host country partners as they work to meet their own development priorities,” Director Williams said in his address to forum delegates. “Peace Corps volunteers have learned that one way we can add value to community development efforts is to help support local young leaders as they learn to become the catalysts of positive change in their communities. This is at the core of our service model.” Director Williams’ remarks may be read in their entirety here.

Sandra E. Taylor, president and CEO of Sustainable Business International and former Starbucks senior vice president of corporate social responsibility, joined Director Williams at the event. Taylor moderated a social entrepreneurship and civic engagement panel with Frederick Swaniker and Virginia Emmons McNaught. Swaniker is founder and CEO of the African Leadership Academy, while Emmons McNaught is the founder of Educate Tomorrow and served in Niger as a Peace Corps volunteer.

In addition to the panel session, the Peace Corps facilitated a peer-to-peer exchange that focused on how to mobilize youth leaders and communities toward meeting development needs. Participants shared promising practices from their experiences and learned about Peace Corps and other partners’ tools that can help support and promote effective youth leadership to build capacity and infrastructure. All participants received a copy of Peace Corps’ V2 Volunteerism Action Guide .The booklet provides ideas to facilitate service-learning activities in communities worldwide and is translated in Spanish, French and Portuguese here.

Peace Corps Partners with the Department of State to Tackle Energy and Climate Issues at the Grassroots Level

WASHINGTON, D.C., August 19, 2010 – In support of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), the Department of State will provide \$1 million to fund Peace Corps volunteer efforts that increase rural access to energy, mitigate the effects of climate change, and support the use of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies in Central and South American communities.

“I am pleased that the Peace Corps will play an active role in ECPA,” said Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams. “Peace Corps volunteers have been innovators at the grassroots level for nearly 50 years. This agreement will provide the support for our volunteers to work with international experts and local organizations, businesses, and community members on the ground to create efficient and green solutions to energy challenges in the Americas.”

Under the partnership, Peace Corps volunteers will work with members of local communities to build infrastructure to support environmentally-friendly energy and educate communities on climate change and energy conservation. Volunteers will train host-country citizens to install, operate, and maintain energy-efficient technology including the use of alternative fuels, biodigesters, solar water heaters, photovoltaic devices, solar and fuel-efficient stoves, and wind or mini hydroelectric power generation. These efforts will make clean energy more accessible to rural communities, reduce carbon emissions, improve public health, and provide opportunities for individuals and small businesses to generate income.

In April 2009, at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, President Obama invited all countries in the Western Hemisphere to join ECPA to promote collaboration on renewable energy, energy efficiency, cleaner fossil fuels, and energy poverty. Peace Corps’ initial ECPA-related efforts will be implemented in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and Suriname.

37 Americans Sworn-in as the 1st Group of Peace Corps/Sierra Leone Volunteers since 1994

WASHINGTON, D.C., August 17, 2010 – Thirty-seven Americans were sworn-in on August 13 as the first group of Peace Corps/Sierra Leone volunteers to serve in the West African country since 1994.

Mitchell Benedict, a returned Peace Corps/Belize volunteer and Charge d’Affaires for the U.S. Embassy in Freetown, swore the volunteers into service at the Methodist Youth Resource Center in the city of Bo. Local, district, and chiefdom leaders and guests attended and welcomed the volunteers

in their remarks.

“The United States Peace Corps has a long and proud history in Sierra Leone,” said Benedict in his remarks at the ceremony. “With us here today is the first group of new volunteers, who arrived in Sierra Leone on June 4th and will be assigned in the field of education to address critical needs for teachers of math, science and English. The volunteers were greeted with warmth and hospitality and have come to know the kindness and generosity of their host families.”

Peace Corps/Sierra Leone was first established in 1962 when 37 Americans served as secondary school teachers. Between 1962 and 1994, more than 3,400 Americans served as Peace Corps volunteers in Sierra Leone.



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