

PEACE CORPS

W I T N E S S

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 10



Peace Corps . . .

The Next Generation

Peace Corps on the Move

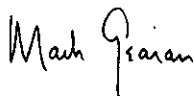
As I write this note, it's clear that 1998 is going to be an exciting and important year for the Peace Corps. In January, President Clinton used his first radio address of the year to announce an important initiative: the President urged Congress to join him in a bipartisan effort to put the Peace Corps on the path to 10,000 Volunteers by the year 2000. This is one of the biggest developments in the Peace Corps' recent history—and it's evidence that the extraordinary work all of you are carrying out in the field is not only making an enormous difference in the lives of many people overseas, it's also being recognized more and more here at home.

The new initiative comes at an already dynamic time for us. Over the next year, Volunteers will begin serving for the first time in our new programs in Bangladesh, Mozambique, and Georgia. More Volunteers are participating in Crisis Corps projects, and we intend to host a second Conference on International Volunteerism later this year to encourage greater cooperation among volunteer organizations that operate in developing countries. We are receiving more requests for Volunteers from our host country partners than we can meet. And here at home, we are witnessing a resurgence of interest in Peace Corps service—more than 150,000 people contacted our recruitment offices last year seeking information about how to become a Volunteer.

If Congress provides funding for this initiative over the next three years, more Volunteers will be serving overseas than at any time since the 1960s. I want to make sure, however, that this growth is matched by our ability to support, train, and develop rewarding jobs for Volunteers. But I believe we should meet this challenge with enthusiasm.

I hope that you will see this renewed interest in Peace Corps for what it really is: a strong reaffirmation of the contributions that you are making to progress and peace around the world. As we approach the beginning of a new century, our goal is to make it possible for more people to take part in the Peace Corps experience and build on your success. We will keep you posted on the President's initiative. In the meantime, I thank you for your service and hope to see some of you in the months ahead.

Best wishes,



Mark Gearan



Tonga PCV Keith Bonar and members of his community treat me to a Tongan lunch.

PEACE CORPS TIMES

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PEACE CORPS

T I M E S

A publication for Peace Corps Volunteers
serving worldwide



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Letters

Get Real

I REALLY ENJOYED YOUR ARTICLE, "It's the Real Thing," (Number One, 1997) with everyone's stories of having it "bad." However, it made me think of a PCV friend who always says, "But I don't have it bad, I live in Nepal's second largest city. I can buy anything I want." She is always saying that her experience isn't as tough as other PCVs when compared to a thirty-hour bus ride and four-hour hike to a remote village. Whether you have an hour plane ride or thirty-hour bus ride, I'd like to remind everyone that all experiences are the "real thing." Also, every post has its hardships: We're all living in a foreign culture, speaking different languages. We are all spending two years away from our family and friends. I guess it's all relative to what you're used to.

Kieran Joshi
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal

Life-Long Friends

YOUR ARTICLE, "FINDING FAMILY Away from Home," (Number One, 1997) caused me to reflect upon one of my relationships as a primary school teacher in Kiribati. During the first week at my site, a Kiribati man wearing dark sunglasses came up to me, held out his hand, and proclaimed, "I want to be your life-long friend." I was suspicious, but excited about the possibility of making a new friend.

Over the next few months my friend, Kaltire, and I got together to practice language and sing. I learned he wore sun glasses because of an eye disease.

One day Kaltire announced he was leaving our island to live on Tarawa. At first I was sad because I thought I was losing my friend. But when the

time came for our PCV conference in Tarawa, I was able to spend a lot of time with Kaltire. Our reunions every three months are a special time for us to get together, sing, and tell stories.

After a difficult past, it seems Kaltire's life has taken a turn for the better. His eyes have gotten better, he is the leader of a youth group, and he now has a job as a preschool teacher. It's truly



Eric with Kaltire and a friend in Kiribati.

gratifying to watch our individual personal growth and the growth of our friendship. Kaltire has definitely achieved his goal of making a life-long friend.

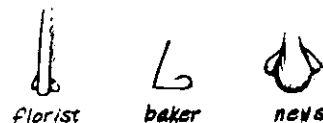
Eric Kroetsch
Bilenbeu, Tarawa, Kiribati

A Special Request

PLEASE PRINT THIS THANK YOU to whomever dedicated Frank Sinatra's "I Did It My Way" to all Peace Corps Volunteers on the BBC program, "Anything Goes." Today marks the four month countdown to my COS date, and this song—played full blast on my short-wave—was a fitting salute. It was yet another bittersweet Peace Corps moment as I waltzed in my kitchen with my baffled cat and was spied on by my amused neighbors. Thanks from Cameroon!

Kristie M. Hall
Extreme Nord, Cameroon

Got A Nose for News?



Peace Corps Times Is Looking for Correspondents!

Have you ever considered what it would be like to live abroad and, in the manner of Hemingway, Thoreaux, or Amonpour, report on the mysterious and exotic land that surrounds you? Well, you're already abroad, now's your chance to get your name in the byline.

Peace Corps Times wants Volunteer correspondents to keep us up to date on what's going on out in the field. Maybe you've heard of a really cool project, or know of something interesting going on in your host country, or maybe you're not half bad with a camera and would like to see your pictures in print. File your stuff with *Peace Corps Times*! We're changing to a shorter, news-oriented format so that we can get the *Times* to you more frequently, and we want your articles and photos to fill our pages.

Interested in the job?

Start sending your reports to *Peace Corps Times*, 1990 K Street, NW Washington DC 20526 or pctimes@peacecorps.gov.

Editorial Policy: Letters and photos are always welcome, but for space reasons, we cannot print all that we receive. Preference will be given to letters that address the contents of the magazine. We request that letters be limited to 200 words, and we reserve the right to edit for style, clarity, and length.



Crisis Corps: Responding to Needs

Things are bustling for the crew in Crisis Corps. Since the programs inception, 65 Volunteers have provided relief in the aftermath of natural disasters and humanitarian crises. In the Czech Republic, six Volunteers worked on projects in response to the floods that swept across Moravia last July. The Volunteers also worked closely with the Bohemia Corps, a domestic volunteer corps directed by former Peace Corps Czech Republic APCD Lida Horakova. In Chile, four Volunteers worked in December to assess damage of residential homes resulting from an October earthquake. Crisis Corps Volunteers are also working with refugees in several countries, which, according to Crisis Corps Advisor Mary Jordan, will be at the top of the agenda in the coming months. In Guinea, Volunteers are helping refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone via projects in partnership with the United Nations World Food Program, the American Refugee Committee (ARC), and the International Rescue Committee. Recently, a Crisis Corps Volunteer headed out to Thailand to work with Burmese refugees along the Thai-Burma border. Volunteers are also working in Paraguay on disease prevention in flood relief camps. COSing Volunteers interested in Crisis Corps should complete the application received at your COS conference and return to your country director.

10,000 by 2000!

It looks like Peace Corps is going to be busy over the next few months as the agency moves to increase its numbers—not only its budget numbers but a Volunteer corps of 10,000 by the year 2000. The Peace Corps received a big boost when President Bill Clinton announced in his first weekly radio address of 1998 that he would ask Congress to increase the Peace Corps' budget to \$270 million in fiscal year 1999, an increase of \$48 million. "Strengthening the Peace Corps, giving more Americans the opportunities to serve in humanity's cause is both an opportunity and an obligation we should seize in 1998," the President said. The agency is more than up to the challenge, said Director Mark Gearan. "In recent years we have seen a significant resurgence of interest in Peace Corps service. Last year, more than 150,000 Americans contacted the Peace Corps expressing interest in serving as Volunteers." The six RPCVs who serve in Congress have already endorsed the initiative.

You Say Goodbye, I Say Hello

Over the next year Peace Corps Volunteers will be forging partnerships with the peoples of three more countries. In September of 1998, Volunteers are expected to arrive in Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest and most densely populated countries. Volunteers will help Bangladesh's teachers improve their English language proficiency. As the program expands over the next few years, Volunteers will be placed in rural primary schools. PCVs will head to Mozambique in late 1998 and will focus their efforts on education. And Volunteers will also be making their way to Georgia this year. Within the past year Peace Corps Volunteers departed Botswana, after 31 years of service, Fiji, after 30 years, and Tuvalu, after 24 years. Peace Corps will also be saying farewell to Chile in September of 1998. Volunteers and staff have been helping Chileans set up their own domestic volunteer organization, Servicio Pais. The Peace Corps will close its office in Costa Rica in June of 1998, but will maintain a limited Volunteer presence over the next five years through a partnership with the National Institute for Child Welfare.

Celebration in Atlanta

The Peace Corps hosted a celebration in Atlanta, Georgia, to mark the departure of the second group of Volunteers to South Africa. "The exciting thing about our work in Africa is the partnerships we enjoy with our African

counterparts. Our Volunteers go to promote peace, friendship, and understanding," said Director Mark Gearan. Former President Jimmy Carter gave a special farewell—his grandson Jason (both are pictured above) joins the new group of trainees. President Carter reminded the audience that Jason follows in the footsteps of his great-grandmother, Lillian, who served as a Volunteer in India over 30 years ago.



Former President Jimmy Carter with his Peace Corps-bound grandson Jason, in Atlanta.

NOTES

FROM AROUND THE WORLD



If You Build It...

IF THE POPULARITY OF BASEBALL CONTINUES TO SOAR AS IT DID this summer in Penza, Russia, borscht at the ballpark may not appear such a

RUSSIA

far-fetched concept. Thanks to efforts of a few plucky Volunteers and Little League Baseball, kids in a small region of Penza, called Montazhy, have caught baseball fever. More than 50 kids participated in the first ever season of Little League ball and formed four new teams (with pretty intimidating names): Powerful Dinosaurs, Black Sharks, Sea Monsters, and Tigers. Because of a generous donation by Rawlings, the baseball equipment company, the rookies had brand new gloves, bats, balls, and catcher's equipment to play with. PCV organizers



Batter Up: PCV Joe Murray gives tips to eager hitters.

Murray Davis, Mary Francis Muzzi, and Joe Murray were on hand to give tips on catching, hitting, and throwing. The kids took to the sport like naturals, after a few new-to-the-game gaffes, like putting the glove on the wrong hand and running into centerfield in search of second base. (Hey, it's

not like we all haven't been there!) It wasn't long before shouts of "*Ya hochu otbeevaht*" were heard, that is, "I want to hit!" The Tigers ended up taking the final championship series—lead by captain Maxim Fillippov. Said Maxim, "I love sports, so its nice to come out in the evening to watch or play. It's an interesting game. You really have to think during the game." Some advice we might want to pass on to the Yankees.

Junior Entrepreneurs

PCV DANIEL O'NEILL SAW A quick turnaround on his investment in Guatemala. Daniel, who teaches with the Junior Achievement program in Sanarate, El Progreso, gave a course on business fundamentals to

GUATEMALA

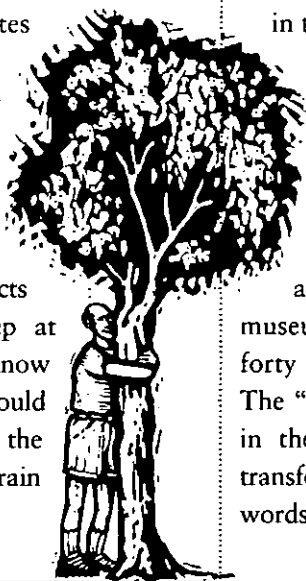
a sixth-grade school group in the small village of San Juan. At the end of the course, 10 students approached Daniel asking for advice: they wanted to continue their education, although their parents couldn't afford it. Their aim was to start a business so they could earn the tuition money themselves. Daniel helped the students get a small business off the ground selling food and fruit drinks. Plan International then gave the kids the opportunity to provide their products in some special events they organized with Junior Achievement. With their profits, the students can now pay for several months of schooling.

SMALL VISIONS

"IT STARTED OUT AS A LONELY plea to save some trees and it turned into a globally recognized national park," explains PCV Cyrus Brame, referring to roughly 1,800 acres of Ecuadorian rain forest that led to the creation of a 173,000 acre preserve. In 1993, PCV Rachel Werling waged a battle to save the area from logging companies who had already deforested most of the Ecuadorian coastline, and won by raising enough

ECUADOR

money to purchase the land. Cyrus and fellow PCV John Clark picked up the project and developed the Bilsa Biological Reserve, home to over 300 bird species and 25 mammal species, not to mention 25 previously undiscovered plant types. With the backing of some global environmental groups, the PCVs petitioned the Ecuadorian government to make an ecological reserve out of the area of the forest that surrounds the Bilsa reserve. The Mache-Chindule Ecological Reserve was declared. "The forest was saved," notes Cyrus. "The entire area is magical. The chant of howler monkeys wakes you in the morning and a chorus of frogs, birds, and insects escorts you to sleep at night. Little did we know the Peace Corps would have helped protect the last plot of coastal rain forest in Ecuador."



Crisis Corps in the Czech Republic

AFTER WORKING IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, SEVEN PEACE CORPS Volunteers returned as Crisis Corps Volunteers to help the country recover from last year's devastating floods. CCV Paul Dowling created a unique project to help children deal with their emotions following the floods in Moravia: art therapy. "The art therapy project is one way for children to actually learn something from the recent floods, such as how to be prepared for disasters. It may also provide a chance for them to grow up understanding that problems in life can be faced without hiding feelings," said Paul. With the help of Czech pediatrician Alice Nováková, and Czech teachers Miroslav Landa and Iva Burdová, Paul devised an instructional art therapy packet to be distributed throughout Moravia. The art therapy sessions, patterned after a similar program for California earthquake victims, have been incorporated into nursery and elementary school curricula and encourage victims of disaster to express their experience through art—to get it all out. The children seem to be responding. Notes art teacher Jaroslavá Vyhnaneková, "The children are highly motivated during the exercises. They really want to draw about the flood and talk about the experience."

CZECH REPUBLIC

MALI'S CULTURAL BANK

AT THE HEART OF WEST AFRICA, MALI IS HOME TO ONE OF THE continent's greatest historical and archeological traditions. But due to the urgency of meeting basic needs, cultural preservation has remained a low priority. "Often a villager has little choice but to sell his family heirlooms in order to purchase food or medicine for his family," says PCV T. Vincent Crosby. So Aissata Ongoiba, the president of one of the Fombori village women's groups, began developing an exposition in the Fombori women's center to house the region's artifacts and women's handicrafts. When a second group became involved, the women soon realized what they needed was a proper museum. And that's what they got. With the help of PCV Felix Cross and his replacement, T. Vincent, the women secured a small grant and constructed a five-room mud and brick building dubbed the Dogon Museum of Fombori. It showcases ceremonial objects, such as fetishes, masks, and local artisans' jewelry and clothing. What is most remarkable is that the museum also operates as a local bank—villagers qualify for loans of five to forty dollars when they put a family heirloom in the museum as collateral. The "culture bank" provides an incentive to villagers and keeps the museum in the black. "It protects and preserves the village's cultural resources by transforming them into tangible economic resources," says Vincent. "In other words, the culture bank inspires people to take charge of their own development."

MALI

Building the Technology Bridge

SOON AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN the northwest Ghanaian city of Wa, PCV Tod Bruning realized that what local entrepreneurs wanted to learn from him most was how to use computers. "In the business world," he says, "my students' co-workers will be coming to them for answers about computers, and I want to make sure that they are well-equipped."

So Tod set up computer training courses for the Weaver Women's Guild of the Upper West Region and helped them get wired. The women are now better able to communicate with each other and share their marketing ideas across villages. By offering affordable computer education to local artisans, Tod is "making computer literacy available at a local level." With the help of Peoplink, a marketing group founded by RPCV and former Country Director Dan Salcedo and RPCV Ted Johnson, Tod's next plan is to set up an Internet web site for local artisans. "I want to use the site to market the women's textiles and gradually bring in other local crafts." By using the Internet to link buyers with sellers, Tod hopes his project will help boost the economy in what is the poorest region of Ghana.

Me and the Mayor

WITH THE RETURN OF THE PEACE CORPS TO EL SALVADOR, THERE was universal interest in helping communities support local governments and decentralization initiatives. In response, the Peace Corps launched a municipal government development project to focus on working with local officials and strengthening their ability to deliver services. PCVs are already having an impact. Volunteer James Seidl teamed up with the mayor of Apastepeque, Jose Alfonso Pacas, to develop a federation of rural community groups, called ADESCO, which helps communities address their needs and find solutions through the municipality. The federation is the first of its kind in El Salvador. Says James, "I'm told that in the past people would go to the mayor for answers. Today, they know they can come up with their own solutions." PCV Gregory Kimmitt also worked extensively with his mayor and local groups to develop a guide explaining ADESCO regulations. Gregory has also been active in helping his municipality form a strategic plan, which is very important considering some of the increases in municipal budgets for 1998 are 1,000 percent!

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

PEACE CORPS TONGA RECENTLY CUT A RUG CELEBRATING ITS 30TH anniversary. The bash drew such notables as the outgoing U.S. Ambassador to Tonga Don Gervitz, representatives from the Tongan Prime Minister's office, local High Commission and Consulate representatives, as well as PCVs, and loads of Tongan friends. The highlight of the celebration was a string of *Tau'ulunga* (traditional Tongan dances) performances by the Ohonua youth group. The non-religious village youth group, a first in Tonga, was formed with the help of Youth Development PCV Rodney Collins. "I was so proud of them. The Ambassador was stoked and told me he liked their war dance the most!"



Shaking it up: Members of the Ohonua youth group after performing *Tau'ulunga*, with PCVs.

gushed Rodney. He and his youth group travelled by boat from the southernmost island of Tonga, Eua, for the party. But it was only a brief stay since they had to get back to work on their latest project: building and running a small-scale eco-tourism resort.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

THE SURVIVAL RATE FOR breast cancer in Poland is half



of what it is in the United States. Because of the lack of preventive care, tumors often aren't discovered until late stages of development, when there is little doctors can do.

"Although a nationwide awareness campaign is underway, most doctors and nurses in my area of Blazowa in

POLAND

southeastern Poland have never been specifically taught how to do breast exams," says PCV Tracy Gordon. In collaboration with a local radiologist, Tracy set off on a multi-faceted breast cancer awareness campaign in the towns of Rzeszow and Blazowa. It included self-examination workshops for women's groups and nurses, resource packets for nurses and members of the medical community, and the dissemination of more than 1,000 breast self-exam "how-to" flyers to five area pharmacies. Says Tracy, "The women who did come to the workshops see the value in this and want to continue the process."

Kids Helping Kids

THREE PCV TEACHERS LEARNED THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE "secondary project" when they put together a volunteering effort at a local children's home. The Volunteers wanted to do something special with their free time and decided to focus on the Belevodskiya Children's Home in Belevodskiya, Kyrgyzstan. Their goal was to relieve some of the bleak conditions at the school and, at the same time, engage the local community in the needs of the mentally and physically disabled children there. "We wanted to promote awareness that would lead to the empowerment of communities, to affect positive change at institutions throughout Kyrgyzstan," says PCV Catherine McNab, who devised a project with Lori Vos and Lisa Vassau. They came up with the concept of "Kids Helping Kids," which placed high school students from all over Kyrgyzstan at the children's home for a week. The project culminated in a roundtable discussion with NGO and government representatives, during which the students addressed improving conditions at the school. Notes Catherine, "Their experience with the kids gave them the confidence and ability to initiate further projects and create awareness in their communities."

KYRGYZSTAN

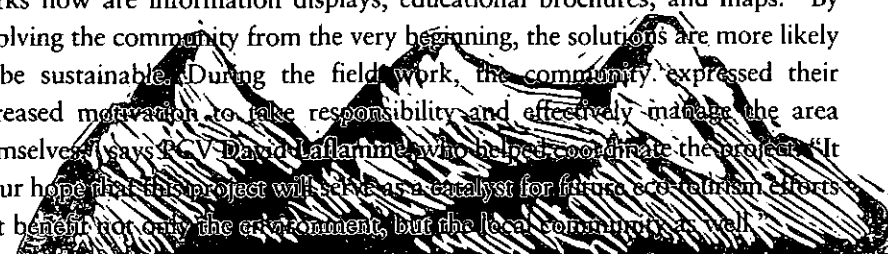


Students of the Belevodskiya Children's Home

CLEANING UP THE TOP OF THE WORLD

AT 21,825 FEET, MERA PEAK IS ONE OF NEPAL'S HIGHEST TREKKING peaks, and it is increasingly attracting campers, hikers, and thrill-seekers. With the increased traffic have come concerns about proper resource management of this once seldom visited area. To nip the problem in the bud, PCVs in Nepal got together with members of the local Lukla community and staff from the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee and devised an action plan for cleaning up the park and maintaining it as an eco-tourism site. At major campsites the group picked up trash, built latrines and trash pits, and addressed other environmental and sanitation problems. In the works now are information displays, educational brochures, and maps. "By involving the community from the very beginning, the solutions are more likely to be sustainable. During the field work, the community expressed their increased motivation to take responsibility and effectively manage the area themselves," says PCV David Laflamme, who helped coordinate the project. "It is our hope that this project will serve as a catalyst for future eco-tourism efforts that benefit not only the environment, but the local community as well."

NEPAL



Peace Corps:

The Next Generation

BY A. EMMET LEADMAN

THE PEACE CORPS HAS come a long way since the days when Sargent Shriver articulated the three goals and a vision to help educate—and inoculate—its worldwide partners. Back then, the agency sent out hordes of teachers to Brazil, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Colombia, to name a few of the posts where Peace Corps has since said good-bye. Back then, Volunteer numbers were astronomical. As a matter of fact, the program in India had over 1,000 Volunteers serving at one time.

In the 1970s, the agency kept on truckin' and despite a reduced budget, the Peace Corps continued to provide Volunteers in education and agriculture. In the economic boom years of the 1980s, a period of opportunity and advancement for American women, the Peace Corps amended its charter and instituted 'women in development' initiatives so Volunteers could provide opportunities for women everywhere. And most recently, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening of Eastern and Central Europe, Peace Corps Volunteers set out with calculators, laptops, and MBAs.

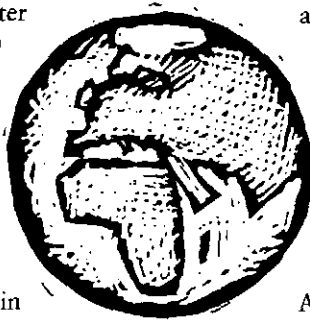
Now that the agency is approaching the year 2000, it's reviewing its accomplishments and finding its place at the head table of international development. When the agency was founded in 1961, the world was an entirely different place. Few could forecast then that Peace Corps Volunteers

would one day share ideas and meals with Russian, Chinese, and South African colleagues and friends, as they do today.

Still a trailblazer, Peace Corps stands out as one of the largest international volunteer organizations working to protect the environment. From Mali to Bolivia to Nicaragua

and Nepal, Volunteers work to educate communities about ways to re-establish and protect forests, promote eco-tourism, and incorporate environmental education into grade-school curriculums. When Peace Corps Volunteers went into the nations of the former Soviet Union such as the Kyrgyz Republic, they were often the first Americans ever met by the local population. And Peace Corps Volunteers are still the only Americans in the South Pacific island of Niue.

With rapid expansion in technology and a few innovative new programs, it looks like the Peace Corps will remain on the cutting edge. One shining example of the agency's ability to adapt and change is a short-term humanitarian response program made up of returned Volunteers, aptly dubbed the Crisis Corps. The Crisis Corps has sent technically-skilled and language-savvy Crisis Corps Volunteers to Antigua, Côte d'Ivoire, and Tajikistan. Last fall, the Peace Corps sent out Crisis Corps Volunteers to the Czech Republic to assist in the



reconstruction following last summer's flooding.

And being the ever egalitarian agency with roots in the village meeting, the Peace Corps sent out a survey to Volunteers last spring asking them to chip in their two kopecks, thebes, dinars, and centavos on where they think Peace Corps should be heading in the new century. Some interesting trends emerged from the results. Many Volunteers noted that massive changes due to technological advances and increasing urbanization have actually increased the need for Peace Corps Volunteers, but Volunteers say the changes beg for a revised approach to the way the Peace Corps determines Volunteer jobs. Here's a look at us and where we're going.

New Directions

Peace Corps was poised to start work in Eastern Europe in 1989 after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the gradual opening to the West. Volunteers went in with the three goals and the desire to help under a pre-established and abbreviated time-frame. In less than 10 years, the Peace Corps is ready to step aside and let the local population take the lead in the redevelopment of their nations.

"I think the single most important issue Peace Corps will face in the following years is how to effectively close down programs in different countries. I believe that this is a difficult thing to do but one which must be done with wisdom and timing," wrote one Volunteer.

This sentiment is not lost on the decision-makers. A thirty-four year old program in Tunisia was closed in August, 1996. Since 1962, Volunteers had worked in architecture, health, education, youth development, and more. It was time to go. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Botswana and Fiji offices closed last year, and several long-term Peace Corps offices in Uruguay and Chile are preparing for closure.

In Thailand, a reduction in Volunteer numbers is representative of new directions the Peace Corps is taking in determining Volunteer jobs. The Volunteer population has been reduced from 148 in 1995 to less than 40. Volunteers with liberal arts backgrounds, a.k.a. "generalists," who bring skills and interest in education, the environment, and health, work closely together on community outreach and community education projects.

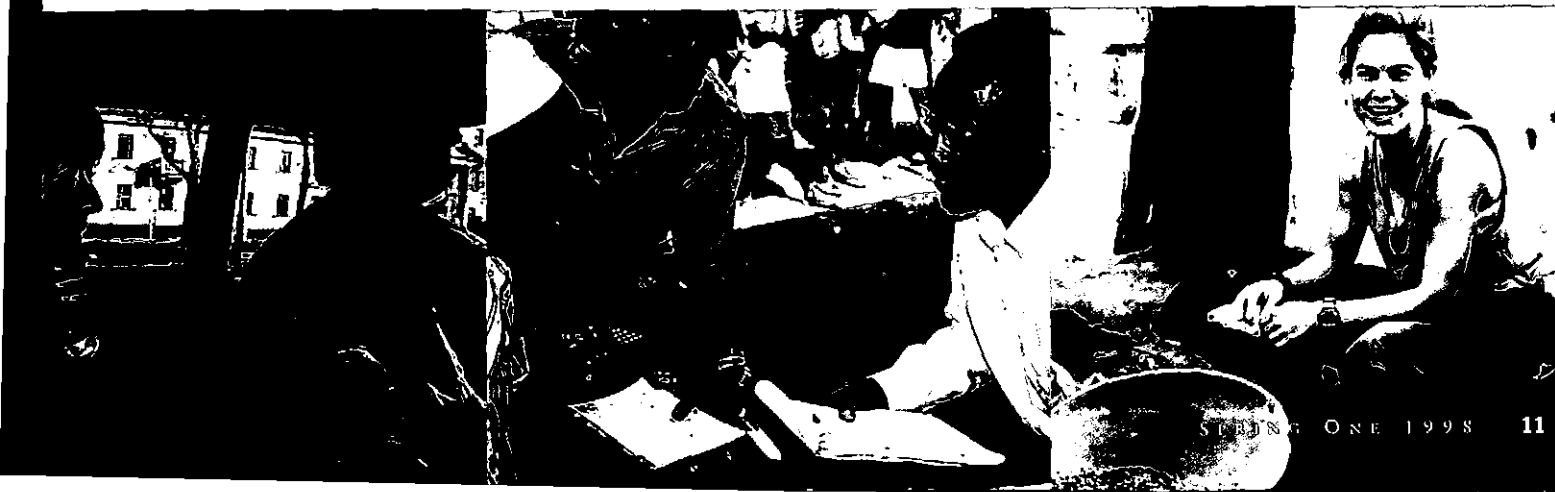
"Most Volunteers note that massive changes due to technological advances and urbanization have actually increased the need for Peace Corps Volunteers."

Two new Peace Corps programs opened in South Africa and Jordan. Discussions of going into Mozambique and Bangladesh have also taken on the glow of a "new country entry" for 1998.

As these new Peace Corps programs get started, the agency is looking at innovative ways to collaborate with other organizations. One way to increase effectiveness is through collaboration with in-country non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. Prior to the closure of the Peace Corps/Czech Republic office, the Peace Corps provided assistance to an emerging Czech-run organization called "Bohemia Corps." The Bohemia Corps' primary mandate is to attract native-speaking English teachers to Czech universities. It's relationships like this one that enable Peace Corps Volunteers to work their way out of a job so local organizations can flourish.

The Farmer and Her Family

Peace Corps Volunteers have traditionally acted as trainers, advisors, and catalysts for change. This is still true. But now, since women members of communities are uniquely positioned to teach their children and bring about change within the home, Peace Corps Volunteers increasingly target women in their efforts. This type of innovative work in health, education, and the environment with an emphasis on strengthening the roles of women and girls helps Volunteers better address the most pressing needs.



"To the many computer literate Volunteers of today line to hook a computer to the vast amount of

Recent studies by the United Nations Development Program and vocal support by prominent movers and shakers like Hillary Rodham Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright have helped bring international attention to a fact of which most Peace Corps Volunteers have long been aware, that investing in women is the surest way to economic growth and overall development.

The new Peace Corps program in Jordan was designed to target women. Volunteers were specifically recruited for their skills and interests in working with women entrepreneurs in rural settings. The focus of many in the group is helping women's cooperatives gain access to credit and improve their marketing skills.

Michelle Lefebvre, a member of the

Jordanian women, I hope to help them raise the quality of life for their children, their families, and their communities."

Bringing the World Back Home

Michelle Lefebvre, having pledged to all three goals of the Peace Corps, will also have a role within her community back home in Colorado when she returns. Like most Peace Corps Volunteers, the first thing she'll probably do on the ride home from the airport is launch into a long, detailed story about the amazing sights and sounds of her Jordanian village.

Sharing wisdom and tales from the Peace Corps road has always been a by-product of service. These days, the Peace Corps is formalizing ways to harness the worldly skills of Volunteers so they can carry their unique experiences into their post-Peace Corps lives. Of late, the agency is seeking to better institutionalize third goal activities by integrating them into the real time of Peace Corps service. Rather than waiting until Volunteers return home after two years, the Peace Corps is looking at

ways for Volunteers to share their knowledge and educate Americans while sitting in their yurts, huts, and 10-story walk-ups. Many are already doing this through pen-pal correspondence

with classrooms in the United States. All of this is a testament to what Sargent Shriver, the first Director of the Peace Corps, once said:

"the greatest impact of the Peace Corps will be felt not overseas, but here at home."

Peace Corps encourages RPCVs to continue working in their American communities, as teachers, and volunteers. Steve Betzner, who served in Nepal from 1988-90 works for the Tibetan Refugee Committee in Chicago, where he started as an interpreter. He assists refugees to complete their taxes, go grocery shopping, and adjust to life in the United States.

Tradition and Technology: Bridging the Gaps

Computer technology may turn out to be the best way to bring the world home and vice versa. It's unlikely the Peace Corps Volunteers of the 21st Century will be arriving with hardware, software, and cables—people will always be the primary resource provided. However, the people signing up for service these days are already arriving better equipped to help their counterparts gain access to the online universe.


The classic notion of a Peace Corps Volunteer is an eager college graduate hunkered down in a remote village with a good education and miles of goodwill. To the many computer literate Volunteers of today, the word "remote" only means there's no phone line to hook a computer to the vast amount of information available on the World Wide Web. From



Education Volunteer Betty Rosentrater teaching a science lesson to primary school students in Honduras.

first group of Volunteers to Jordan, defined one of the trends at Peace Corps when she spoke of her goals at a White House send-off event hosted by Hillary Rodham Clinton. "By working with

, the word 'remote' only means there is no phone
information available on the World Wide Web."



what Volunteers say, this is changing quickly. Thirty-nine percent of the Volunteers who responded to last spring's survey said they have access to a computer at their work site, and forty-two percent have access to a phone. One Volunteer nailed the trend plainly when he wrote, "Spreading peace through development needs an electrical outlet."

As developing nations leap-frog into the computer age, local communities are able to log on and forge ahead. In the past, a typical Volunteer may have helped fund, build, and stock the first community library in some hard-to-reach outpost. Today, communities can get access to every on-line library of the international university library system.

"The majority of Peace Corps

"Few could have forecasted that PCVs would one day share ideas and meals with Russian, Chinese, and South African colleagues and friends."

Volunteers are recent college grads who are computer literate. "For the first time in the history of the agency, we have a group of people arriving with expertise that doesn't exist at this level in most parts of the world," says Bill Piatt, the Peace Corps' Chief Information Officer.

"We can help close the gap in the flow of information."

Ghana is a nation that has embraced technology wholeheartedly. By the end of 1998, 130 schools will be on-line. Peace Corps Volunteers are already teaching in many of those schools. As Piatt explains, "The Peace Corps Volunteers serving in those schools can bring their computer

know-how to get teachers and students in touch with the rest of the world."

"When a Volunteer working in an NGO helps a counterpart access a university-based American professor of agriculture via the Internet, the Volunteer is fostering development and helping the professor get a better understanding of people in other countries," Piatt says.

Twenty-six year old Nathaniel Halsey of Wellesley, Massachusetts, is training Senegalese women credit union members in the village of Nganda. Once a week he creates a computer lab at the nearest electrical outlet. The Peace Corps office in Dakar has lent him a Powerbook, a Dutch development organization provides a place to plug in, and Nathaniel provides his computer spreadsheet know-how.

Nathaniel's credit union project targets women and is funded by the non-governmental organization, Catholic Relief Services. By helping the women manage their books on computer instead of by hand, he is helping them free up time to educate



Senegal PCV Nathaniel Halsey creates a computer lab once a week at the nearest electrical outlet.

other Senegalese women about obtaining small-business loans.

Nathaniel completes his tour in June 1998, but he's proof that the Peace Corps Volunteer of the new millennium may already be here. It's safe to say that the Peace Corps has been doing it right by remaining as flexible an organization as it expects its Volunteers to be. As needs change, Peace Corps changes. And Peace Corps Volunteers, with goodwill, skills to share, and a desire to go remote remain the core of the Corps.

A. Emmet Leadman worked as Publications Manager in the Office of Communications. She was a Volunteer in Botswana from 1987-89.



USING YOUR FRIENDS

By Jamy Bond



What can a Business Volunteer
Learn from a Natural Resources
Volunteer? The Benefits of
Crossing Projects

At her site in the Nepali village of Bagdula Pyuthan, Community Health PCV Vicki Fochs wanted to participate with her host family in cooking the evening meal, but found she couldn't stay in the kitchen long enough to help. "At meal-time, my host mother would build a fire in the small mud enclosure that functioned as a stove, then place an iron rack on top to hold the pots and pans," Vicki explained. "There was no chimney and therefore no way for the smoke to escape. Thick black smoke would fill the hut and everyone would start coughing. I could barely breath and I'd have to run outside for relief." It quickly became clear to Vicki why the families in her village, tucked deep in the midwestern mountains of Nepal, were plagued with health problems from lung disease to eye infections. "Everyone seemed to have a hacking cough," she observed, "especially the children."

A registered nurse with a background in community health, Vicki decided to use what had been an integral portion of her 12-week training program: instruction on how to build a chulo, a small mud stove that channels smoke up through a chimney built of cow dung, sheep hair, and rocks.

But before she got started, she decided to contact a fellow PCV,

Patrick Rebman, to see if he just might be interested in the project. A first-year Forestry Volunteer who was living two hours north of Vicki in the village of K h a l a n g a , Patrick's primary assignment was educating villagers on

farming productivity. Chulos, which are virtually smokeless, use a lot less wood. They got to work immediately. Together, Vicki and Patrick designed workshops that explained the benefits of using the mud stove. They taught villagers how to build, clean, and maintain them. They took their project on the road, travelling to neighboring villages where families would gather to listen and participate. "People came from the surrounding areas, saying they

had heard about the workshop and wanted to learn." Vicki was able to finish out her service knowing that Patrick would stay in Nepal to develop it even further. "When I left Nepal, a large portion of the surrounding villages had already converted to using chulos as their primary source of cooking," she explained. "Now Patrick is travelling across the country and continuing to spread the word."

Vicki and Patrick's project is a good example of something Peace Corps programs around the world are increasingly trying to encourage: cross-sectorial collaboration. The success of cross-sectorial projects in addressing complicated community needs has allowed the agency to reinvent its programming this way and expand its approach. Where the Peace Corps once sent only one Volunteer, they're now sending teams. In many Peace Corps countries, program managers are now strategizing site placements in order to make collaboration more probable and



Nepal PCV Vicki Fochs with her host country family and their new chulo mud stove.

actively coordinating site teams to include Volunteers from a combination of different sectors, including Health, Environment, Business and Education.

The shift in programming focus from the individual Volunteer to Volunteer teams is in line with a growing trend in organizations nation-wide, according to Ava Allsman, Programming and



Training Officer for the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (the Center) at Peace Corps headquarters. "Just as corporations are re-evaluating their hierarchical structures and reorganizing to incorporate production teams rather than individuals, Peace Corps is doing the same in its deployment of Volunteers," she explained. "Whether you're running a corporation or transferring skills at the grassroots development level, team efforts are more efficient."

The Peace Corps Health Sector, for example, has found that sustainable solutions to complex health problems require a number of responses. Combining PCV skills enables health projects to have a greater impact by taking advantage of natural links between health and other sectors. More and more, Volunteers are incorporating HIV/AIDS community outreach into their education, business and agricultural projects. In Chad, Volunteers collaborated with the Ministries of Health and Education to publish the country's first scholastic guide focused on HIV/AIDS. The guide helped teachers integrate AIDS education into their existing curriculums.

Many Peace Corps countries are taking advantage of Community Content Based Instruction (CCBI) methodology. CCBI allows classroom teachers to use community development processes to facilitate a community

definition of problems and design community-based intervention methods. In Eritrea, for example, Education Volunteers include water sanitation and health topics in their English lessons, making those lessons relevant for each student and their community. In Morocco, Environment Volunteers spend time working with Education Volunteers during pre-service training on the incorporation of environmental awareness into lesson planning; the Volunteers are then placed in close proximity to one another in order to stimulate further collaboration. In Guatemala, where many farm families have poor diets in micronutrients and animal protein, Peace Corps has responded with an integrated project that includes agricultural technicians, 4-H Clubs, and rural school teachers in promoting crop diversification, small animal husbandry,

"It would be counter-productive to limit the Volunteer's perspective to a single sector."

nutrition education, and environmental sanitation.

According to Martin Shapiro, Peace Corps' Programming and Training Adviser for the Europe, Mediterranean and Asia region, cross-sectorial integration creates a broader perspective and allows for greater impact worldwide. "It would be counter-productive to limit the Volunteer's perspective to a single sector," he explained. "We send highly capable people into the field, each with a well-rounded set of skills to contribute to the host country. Our objective is to provide the framework that lets Volunteers integrate those skills into multi-dimensional projects."

PCVs have not limited the benefits of working together to their primary



Education Volunteer Genevieve Hale and Small Business Volunteer Tony Kingsley joined forces to reinstate a school lunch program in Abovian, Armenia.

projects. Summer camps designed as secondary projects, often revolve around a common theme, such as ecology, that allows several Volunteers from different sectors to get involved. In Ukraine, for example, Education Volunteers Rory Finnin and Christopher Long recently initiated the Earth Sport Project, a secondary project designed to educate students on the importance of a clean environment. Every Saturday throughout the month of May, a group of 60 school children and students joined forces with Volunteers to clear towns of trash and debris. Faced with statistics which suggest that seventy percent of Ukraine's

population live in environmentally hazardous conditions, the project hopes to instill in young people a lasting understanding of the environmental problems faced by their nation.

While Volunteers are often recruited based on their skill in a single sector, pre-service training is designed to encourage Volunteers to keep in mind the skills of their peers, and keep open the possibility of collaborative projects once at site. Genevieve Hale, an Education Volunteer serving at a secondary school in Abovian, Armenia, took advantage of this possibility when she found herself contemplating a problem that faced her everyday in the sea of school children she tried to teach. "My

students were going all day without eating," she explained. "They couldn't concentrate, they were malnourished, and many would quit half-way through the day and go home early."

Under the former Soviet system, lunches had been provided by the schools, but after independence and the resultant economic collapse, schools throughout Armenia were left with no resources to provide such a service. Genevieve went to her school director and presented her idea to reinstate the school lunch program. Knowing that what she needed most were resources, Genevieve turned to Tony Kingsley, a Small Business Volunteer, at the start of his service in Yerevan.

"Tony was working in the capital and familiar with the organizations I thought would be willing to back the idea," she observed. "He also had the business skills we would need to manage such a large effort." Tony visited aid organizations in Yerevan and found two willing to donate commodities: Fund for Armenian Relief and United Nations World Food Program. Together, both organizations offered a total of over 5,000 kilograms of food staples, including flour, rice, beans, butter,

oil, sugar and powdered milk.

With these commodities in hand, Geneviev and Tony returned to the school to make a call for community support. "One of my criteria for the project," Tony explained, "was that the school offer its own form of resource, if not money or commodities, then perhaps in terms of labor." They first organized a volunteer effort to clean, equip, and staff the school's kitchen. "The kitchen was in awful shape," Geneviev explained, "and we were worried that with the random power outages that are characteristic of daily life in Armenia, we wouldn't have the adequate electricity to cook." Geneviev's counterpart, Nora Minacian, was assigned to the task of coordinating the volunteers,

and a meeting was held to drum

up support

and community spirit. At the same time, Geneviev paid a visit to the electricity company to explain her project. The company agreed to run a cable from the school to a local factory so that there would be sufficient power, and the town's cable factory offered to donate two hundred dollars worth of cables for the project. Nora was able to secure the help of Luba Markosin, who had once held the position of head cook in the former system. Luba brought with her Zhanna Hachoyan and Zvart Vanyan. The three volunteered eight hours a day to do all the cooking and cleaning for the program.

Eager to get the project underway, Geneviev and Tony still faced the problem of having to pay for the program's electricity costs. Tony came up with the idea of charging the students money. "We knew that these families didn't

have a lot of money, but at the same time I thought it was important that they make an investment. I didn't want them to expect such things to be free." Each child whose family could afford it



Joint ventures: Patrick and Vicki are a good example of what can happen when you put your skills together.

was charged 100 drum (25 cents) a month for 20 meals. Nora was put in charge of the accounting. At the end of each month she collected 40,000 drum. Twenty thousand was used to pay the electric bill, and the remainder was put back into the program.

"The system worked extremely well," Geneviev explained. "Nora did an excellent job of calculating the costs and maintaining a record of exactly how much food was used and how many kids were served. She would meet once a month with Tony in order to go over the accounting, but she truly took care of all the paperwork herself."

The project was successful well beyond what Geneviev had imagined. "I found that the students were no longer going home early or lacking the concentration needed to perform in the classroom. This made teaching much easier, and though it's difficult to measure intangibles, over time I could really feel a difference in

school and community spirit."

At the end of the year, Geneviev finished her service and returned to the United States, but she was confident that Tony, with a second year still ahead of him, would be able to sustain the program along with Kirsten Benson who replaced Geneviev at her site. The project has produced more than 119,000 school lunches in eleven schools throughout Armenia. "It's speaks to what one person can do with an idea," Tony commented, "especially if that person is smart enough to access the resources of others."

Collaborating with someone else not only gives the strength of a support network and the advantage of accomplishing more in a shorter time-frame, it can also expand the scope of a project beyond the limits of a single sector and a

single Volunteer.

"The most important factor in any project is sustainability," Tony reflected, as he brought his second year of service to a close. "We can make a project work for one year, but if there's no one to keep it going when we leave it becomes a futile effort. What made the school lunch program in Armenia work so well was that we not only crossed sectors, we crossed Volunteer groups as well. Geneviev and I did the ground work, then passed it along to other Volunteers who will continue the trend. If it works the way we hope, the project will become a finely tuned machine that continues to run in schools throughout the country without the help of a PCV."

Jamy Bond is a Country Desk Assistant in Peace Corps' Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region. She served as a Volunteer in Bulgaria.

Peace Corps Get-Ups

BY PATRICIA CUNNINGHAM

Fashion plate or fashion victim? Does it matter? A few days in the field and you are beyond caring. But many PCVs do admit a certain fondness for those old PCV duds. And dressing the part does help smooth the transition into a community. It's been said that costume is the most pervasive human expression—the following stories and photos illustrate just how far some PCVs will go to express themselves!

I recall one particular day, when I was feeling rather bohemian and creative, I put on an attire that caused heads to turn in the streets of Quito, Ecuador. On my feet, I had a pair of Ecuadorian, hand-crafted, cowboy-style, black leather boots which were no big deal, except that I had them on with a lavender, feminine looking cotton skirt. Around my waist, I wrapped an embroidered sash created by Indians in Ecuador. I wore a white blouse with an

embroidered panel in the same native style. To top it off, I placed a black felt hat on my head. It had a narrow brim and looked like a man's hat and was generally only worn by indigenous people in that country. As I strutted about downtown Quito, (nearly two inches taller than most men) I was approached by a man who tentatively asked if I was from Argentina. Apparently, I looked like a cowgirl of sorts and it seemed natural that I be associated with the country of the gauchos! I never wore that outfit again.

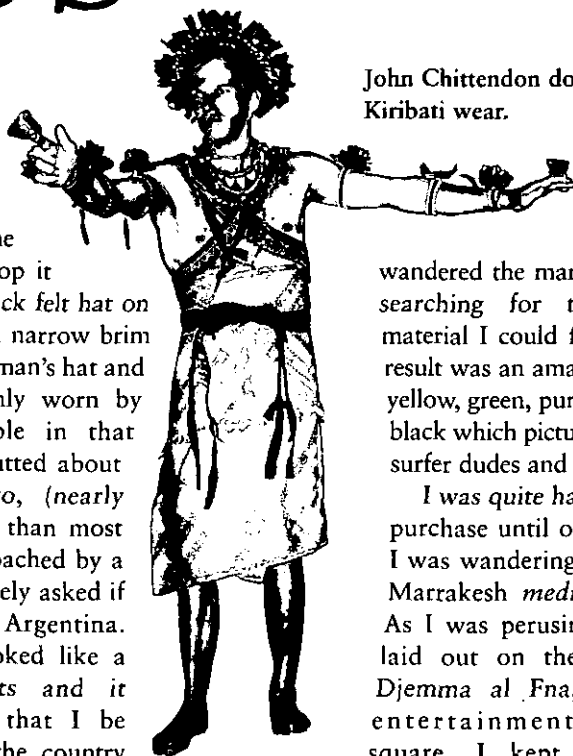
—Rosa Fuller, Ecuador (1982-85)



As a Morocco Volunteer, I felt out of sync with my fellow PCVs. A year and a half into service and I still did not own a "frump" dress. A frump dress is a loose-fitting, comfortable jumper type of dress which you can wear over a t-shirt. This meant you only had to wash t-shirts and could go months (okay, weeks) without washing the dress.

So I set off to have a frump dress made by a tailor in Rabat. Being cheap, I

John Chittendon dons traditional Kiribati wear.



wandered the market for hours searching for the cheapest material I could find. The end result was an amazing fabric of yellow, green, purple, blue, and black which pictured miniature surfer dudes and palm trees.

I was quite happy with my purchase until one day when I was wandering through the Marrakesh *medina*, my site. As I was perusing the wares laid out on the ground in Djemma al Fna, the major entertainment/shopping square, I kept noticing a familiar bit of cloth. It seems that my cheap fabric had been made into a multitude of little boys garments: shorts, shirts, pants, and even sneakers! My feelings for my beloved frump dress were never quite the same.

—Jennifer Fry, Morocco (1989-92)



As a PCV in Nepal, I often wore a traditional skirt called a *lungi*, (it's known as a *sarong* in other Asian countries). I remember an amusing incident which happened to me soon after I arrived in my village. To try to blend in with the neighbors, I wore a colorful *lungi* most of the time. One day a friend invited me on a bus trip to the nearest city, Birgunj, a large bazaar town on the Indian border. I went along, happily wearing my *lungi*. After I came back to the village, the neighbors



Morocco PCV Jennifer Fry (far right) in her well-worn "frump" dress.



Dressed to kill: Western Russia PCVs Marian Hurley, Kristin Laurente, and Tina Kluetmeier all decked out for frigid temps.

smiled and expressed surprise that I would wear a *lungi* to a big city. I realized that a *lungi* is mostly worn around the house and in the field—it would be like wearing a bathrobe to New York City!

—Cathy Marona, Nepal (1985-87)



In Burkina Faso men and women traditionally wear distinctly different types of clothing. I had long admired the traditional-style work pants worn by men who were farmers and herders. These pants were one-size-fits-all, almost six-feet wide, and cinched in at the waist with a drawstring. The best part was the crotch, which was sewn with a huge gusset and hung down almost to the knees of the wearer.

One day, I decided to get myself a pair of these pants. Assorted chuckles and wisecracks echoed through the open air market as I browsed discerningly. I bargained a pair of maroon twill pants with light blue embroidery around the hem and walked home with my new wardrobe addition.

One cloudy but sweltering afternoon, I put the pants on, grabbed

my hoe, and went out into the yard to hoe some weeds in my fledgling vegetable garden. A crowd of children began to gather before my gate, peering into the yard. "Look at Mademoiselle Marcia! She's wearing men's pants!" an older girl said loudly, as she beckoned more children to come. Older children were holding up the younger ones so they could look through the grille of the gate and see a remarkable sight: a woman in men's clothing!

It wasn't long before I got tired of being the town spectacle and changed. There were no T.V.s or videos in my town. The people of Koupela relied on "live entertainment," which I, unwittingly, provided that day.

—Marcia McKenna-Inti, Burkina Faso (1980-82)



Whenever I traveled from place to place in the local bush taxis, I used to dress as a *Turaeg*, a desert nomad. With my turban wrapped around my head, my goatee, and one-piece shirt, I disguised myself as a *Turaeg*. It was nice not be picked on by everyone since I wasn't wearing my regular clothes. Dressed as I did, I had the opportunity



Chad PCV Bill Barnes displays flair on Women's Day.

to experience the travel from a perspective different than a foreigner's point of view. It was very interesting. I enjoyed it, and wore the turban and dress often. My fellow Peace Corps friends never recognized me whenever I walked up to them dressed that way. I would trick them and ask for money or just follow them closely. It was fun.

—Hassan Baroudy, Niger (1993-96)



Niger PCV Hassan Baroudy disappearing behind *Turaeg* garb.



The best thing about dressing in Morocco was that it didn't matter if things "matched" (by our definition), it only mattered if the clothing was very colorful. I started to buy colorful leggings—stripes, plaids, flowers, any design you could think of. I branched out with my skirts, too. I started to buy the stretchy nylon dresses that all the women wore—my favorite was brown with bright yellow and orange flowers. Oh, the compliments I received! I had truly "gone native."

—Amy Gambrill, Morocco (1993-95)

Patricia Cunningham is Editor-in-Chief of Peace Corps Times.



Inventive use of resources: In El Salvador, native dyes are used to detect water contamination.

BEFORE LEAVING FOR service, many Volunteers daydream about their site as being remote, cut off from civilization, with no electricity or running water. They imagine themselves doing without nearly everything, eking out an existence on the shampoo and Power Bars they've packed. For many, the remoteness of their site proves to be true. The spartan accommodations, however, can often be an overstatement. It is a fact of human nature that people, like birds, feather their nests. Host country nationals who live in villages where Volunteers are posted are no exception. Their resources are often scarce, yet they make use of what is available. Inventions by host country nationals are a real perk of Peace Corps service.

Seeing the ways people around the world make use of available material and how they tailor their environment to suit their needs can be eye-opening. Host country inventions PCVs have

"Seeing the ways people around the world make use of available material can be eye-opening."

encountered on their journeys range from the simple to the fantastic. In the south of Nepal, where temperatures can hover around 105 degrees, there often is no electricity; you won't find a GE refrigerator there. Cathy Morona, an RPCV from Nepal, noticed how her Nepali neighbors were keeping their drinking water cold. Inspired, she adopted the typical Nepali "refrigerator." By pouring cool drinking water into large clay urns and storing them in a dim corner of a house, water will be kept cool even on hot days. Without electricity for a standard refrigerator, the simplicity and efficiency of this invention is critical. Other Volunteers in Nepal observed their Nepali friends using this same principle to store eggs and even butter, immersed in cool water they can stay fresh for days.

In the mountainous regions of northern Nepal where temperatures reach a high of about 70 and lows of below freezing, RCPVs Charlie Souvannavong (1992-94) and Jim Duffy (1993-95) witnessed several cold-dispelling inventions. "The trekking lodges in

Mustang (a region of Nepal) often had heavy metal pots filled with hot coals under the tables in the dining area. Thick felt covered the tables down to the ground so your legs wouldn't get too hot." Jim added that a trick in the traditional houses was to have a log carved with a narrow trough along the length. One end of the log was inside the house, the other outside. This gave the man of the house the convenience of an indoor bathroom on those long, chilly nights.

Often what inspires inventions in the developing world is the need for quick action in an emergency. Many host-country mechanics are magicians when it comes to making use of local materials for repair jobs. Ellen Paquette (Liberia 1972-75) once rode

InGe

The creative inv host country frie

BY ADRIENNE BENSON

on a truck carrying mangos through the desert from Timbuktu to Gao, Mali. Both spare tires were used after the first couple of punctures. Then there were five more flat tires. In order to limp along to the nearest repair station, the driver melted down plastic bags and molded them onto the inner tubes to cover the holes. "The repair job lasted only a few feet," Ellen recalls, "but it was creative." A former Volunteer in Kenya wondered aloud about who first came up with the practice of pouring cornmeal into the cracked radiator of a truck. The cornmeal cooks inside and plugs up leaks. Although this might give an

American mechanic chills, apparently it did the trick.

The beauty of many of the inventions Volunteers see in their host countries is their simplicity. Villagers in Asia and Africa use ashes and sand rubbed into dirty cooking pots to scour out burnt rice and blackened beans. This technique has been adopted by many an RPCV on camping trips in the United States. And how about the leaf umbrella? During the monsoon in Asian countries from the Philippines to Sri Lanka, children who don't have umbrellas delicately grasp giant leaves

ious!

ventions that your nds come up with.

from native plants above their heads to deflect the rain. Newspapers clutched above the heads of unprepared Americans are not nearly as efficient. Nor are they as pretty.

Seeing the opportunities in locally available resources is key to all these inventions. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, has devised several particularly African concoctions for common everyday needs. In his striving to develop small businesses and local enterprise in his country, he has convinced businessmen from Egypt to manufacture toothpaste made from locally available muteete grass. This strong stem-like grass keeps the teeth

clean and cavity free when chewed. The grass freshens the breath and works as a toothpick as well. Museveni has also encouraged South African investors to contribute to a banana-juice factory he hopes to begin.

Josh Henson (Tanzania 1994-96) observed an African approach to the issue of disability. As a geography teacher in a small town, Josh had no electricity or running water, let alone paved roads. For one of Josh's fellow teachers who was afflicted with polio, transportation to and from school could have been a real problem—wheelchairs and wheelchair parts are hard to come by in Tanzania. The teacher, Mwalimu Mazigo, was a reggae singing Rasta who always wore a colorful beret and Bob Marley medallions. "His means of transportation was a shining example of African ingenuity and resourcefulness. His chariot was hybrid: part wheel-chair and part

"The beauty of many of the inventions Volunteers see in their host countries is their simplicity."

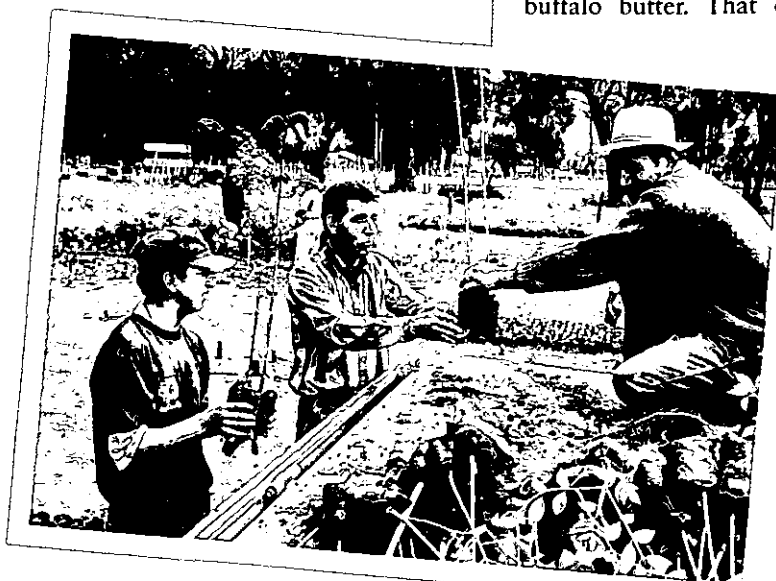
bicycle. The engineers responsible for the creation made a seat that is supported by two bike tires on each side. Once in the chair-like seat, Mwalimu Mazigo holds with both hands a crank attached to a bicycle chain that drives the front single wheel, about one fourth the size of a regular tire. If Mwalimu needs to slow down or stop for an

errant goat or a running child, he pulls the lever, which is attached to the left wheel, to grind to a halt."

It has been said that necessity is the mother of

invention. In the villages and towns of the less industrialized nations, perhaps garbage is the father of invention. As every Peace Corps Volunteer can attest, one person's garbage is another person's gold.

In villages across the globe where tupperware and ziploc are unheard of, the hunt for containers to store everything from grain to betel nut is constant. Your old peanut butter jar is perfect for holding fresh water buffalo butter. That old make-up



Creativity and good old fashioned practicality: Ecuadorians make use of local seeds in PCV Isidrio Casteneda's reforestation project.



Bright ideas: Jen Gibson's host country family in Palau cut the tops off aluminum cans and used them for drinking cups.

compact? Palauan Islanders would love it for keeping handy the lime they mix with chewing tobacco. Volunteers often begin hoarding containers, too. In village homes where bugs and mice are often daily companions, a glass jar will do wonders to protect edibles. Joe Zadrozney (Mongolia 1992-94) found himself picking up this habit at post. "I learned to save any and all containers. I would always find a great use for that old can or bottle. To this day, I can't bear to throw out even an old salad dressing bottle because it might be useful for something. It drives my wife crazy."

Cliff Robertson (Sierra Leone 1992 and Poland 1993-95) served in two countries in which old bottles were recycled. "In Poland, they reused bottles to store their homemade brandy. Some of the bottles had been reused for so long that they had become antiques—they had the thick necks of really old bottles and cork stoppers instead of caps." His experience with recycled bottles in Sierra Leone was not as quaint. "The beer bottles in Sierra Leone were often used by people to store their kerosene in at home. The bottles would eventually find their way back to the beer-bottling plant. I don't think they were cleaned out very well because sometimes you'd

"How about a mini mortar and pestle to grind coffee beans?"

get a beer with heavy kerosene overtones."

Not every invention that Volunteers notice bears the grace of a leaf umbrella or the genius of plastic baggie tire plugs. Some inventions by host country nationals demonstrate the same degree of inscrutability as stuff you might find on the back tables of the flea market. The "chicken-foot back-scratcher," as seen by Kelly Theisen (Sierra Leone 1979-81), is a perfect example. "The movement of the chicken foot is controlled by the combined action of three tendons. So what you do is attach three strong threads to each of these tendons. Then tie the chicken foot to a stick, about a foot long. This is attached to another stick at a 90-degree angle, which acts as the handle. Ideally, there is a spool at the intersection of the two sticks to allow the threads to pass

easily. On a deluxe model you could even have a system of pulleys. Anyway, the back-scratcher is used by holding it over one shoulder and pulling any or all of the threads to achieve the desired back scratching relief."

Watching how your host country neighbors make use of every scrap reminds many PCVs that recycling was necessary to most of the world's population long before it became vogue in the United States. Many RPCVs say they gained more from their Volunteer experience than they feel they gave. Part of what many gained is an ability to look upon stuff with new eyes.

A Volunteer who is lucky and somewhat observant can glean all sorts of useful information and tricks from his or her host-country neighbors. How about a mini-mortar and pestle to grind gourmet coffee beans when there is no electricity for the grinder? Or perhaps you can remove the tops of aluminum cans and use them as drinking cups like Jen Gibson's (Palau 1993-95) host family did. Or the most useful invention of all: the ubiquitous *sarong* or *pagne*, *lungi* or *kanga*. Whatever it goes by in your country of service, there's no substitute for that large piece of cloth that's tied into anything from a skirt to a basket. With few pre-packaged "household helpers" to be had at site, it only takes a little ingenuity and some spying on your clever friends to come up with a wealth of ideas.

Adrienne Benson is a Country Desk Assistant in the Africa Region. She was a Volunteer in Nepal from 1992-94.

The Student's Home



Huang Xiaoqiang doesn't care much about U.S.-China relations. There is meat frying on the wok, and noodles in the pot; he is busy. And anyway for him it has no *guanxi*, no connection. "Jiang Zemin is very big" he says. "And I am very small."

I am sitting in Huang Xiaoqiang's noodle restaurant, "The Student's Home." Across the street is the small teachers college where I've taught English for the past year. The restaurant has *guanxi* with the college because it is close, and because a bowl of noodles costs less than twenty cents. Students are always here, as well as other locals—bus drivers, shop owners, fruit sellers.

And it is true, 26 year-old Huang Xiaoqiang has little obvious connection with what happens in Washington, or even Beijing. His restaurant is in the outskirts of Fuling, a small city that is isolated on the upper Yangtze. There are no trains or buses that go to Chongqing, the nearest big city. To go anywhere you take the boat, but mostly you don't go anywhere.

That's what I like about Fuling—it's an average city in the interior of China, the sort of place where you slip easily enough into the local routines. And of all these routines I'm most fond of life at the noodle restaurant, because it reflects a face of China that is already fading among the dazzle of the booming coastal cities.

The routine is simple: the restaurant opens at six a.m., and closes at eleven p.m. "*Hen xinku*," Huang Xiaoqiang often says, "very difficult." But I know he's not serious, because he has so much help; his wife, his father, his mother, often his sister are there. Usually they have other workers, cousins, or friends. And his 20 month-old son, Huang Kai, is always at the restaurant. I saw him take his first steps there, and now he is learning to talk. Already he can say my Chinese name, He Wei.

With so much help Huang Xiaoqiang can always take a break, and after I ask him about the summit he comes over to where I

am sitting. He looks at my book, Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*, and he recognizes the cover picture of Mao Zedong.

"Mao Zedong was our leader", he says. "During the Revolution he was a great man, but afterwards..." He shakes his head. And then comes one of those stories I so often hear, the stories that remind me there are aspects of Chinese history I will never understand.

It's a short story, really. Huang Xiaoqiang's grandfather had been a landlord, and during the Cultural Revolution he was executed. Huang Xiaoqiang shows me how they shot him—in the back of the neck—and then he laughs. But it is the unsettling Chinese laugh that has nothing to do with humor. It simply takes the place of words that aren't there.

I ask him about today's policies, and he responds quickly. "Everything's better," he says. "In the past you couldn't speak freely, but it's not like that now. Since Deng Xiaoping was the leader, everything has been fine. The living standard is much higher, you can have private business. We're the same as landlords, really."

This causes a brief debate in the restaurant, where the customers begin arguing with Huang Xiaoqiang in the lilting tones of the Sichuan dialect. The debate doesn't last long; none of them cares much for politics. And, anyway, they are all essentially like Huang Xiaoqiang. They just want to work and carve out a good living, and if, like him, they can work with their family, their happiness is doubled.

Of course, I don't agree with Huang Xiaoqiang. China's relationship with the U.S. certainly affects the lives of the common Chinese, just as it affects my own life. And as a teacher it's harder for me to ignore politics, because the study of English in China has always been political.

Less than three decades ago, students of the language were persecuted as "bourgeois elements," but today the government is training thousands of

English teachers as a key component of its increasingly open policies.

It's an enormous project, and although Peace Corps' role is relatively small, we nevertheless have a unique perspective on this educational campaign. There are 36 Volunteers, all in small to mid-sized cities in Sichuan Province and Chongqing District, and nearly all of us work at three-year teachers colleges. Our students are drawn primarily from the countryside, and after graduation they return to teach English at rural middle schools. Many of these students are from the poorest peasant families. It reveals the degree to which China, after centuries of looking inward, is seeking to understand the outside world.

When I'm asked about the U.S. and China, I think about my students and the students they in turn will teach, all of them struggling bravely to learn a foreign language. I find it hard not to compare with America, where there seems to be little effort to understand China.

I also think about people like Huang Xiaoqiang, the "small" people who remember the China of their grandparents. To them it's puzzling that, despite China's enormous improvements, the country is still the target of American criticism. When asked I respond with a *chengyu*, a four-character idiom that is a standard of the Chinese language. My favorite is *qitong cun yi*: "We must seek common ground while reserving differences."

I don't know exactly which differences we should reserve. I only believe it is something that must be done. And every day I see my students working to bring that common ground closer, in a small way, and in routines like Huang Xiaoqiang's I see few differences from the values and dreams of most Americans.

Pete Hessler is a Volunteer in China. This article was published in the Los Angeles Times.

FieldBook

Tips for Making the Most of Your Tour

Where Do We Go From Here?

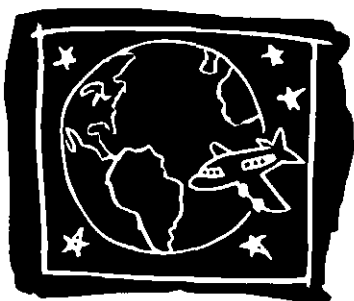
Calling out all Volunteers nearing COS! As the date gets closer, are you wondering what's in store for you when you reach your long-lost home? If you'll be able to make the transition to automatic doors and fast food? Have no fear: the Office of Returned Volunteer Services has recently published "Peace Corps Odyssey: The Voyage Home" to help you handle your impending readjustment. The Peace Corps' first book on coping with re-entry gives Volunteers lots of tips on dealing with the transition. What follows is an excerpt from RPCV Craig Storti (Morocco 1970-72) on what you can do before you leave. Look for a copy of "The Voyage Home" in your COS packet.

Before you leave your post, be sure to do all the things you always wanted to do and never got around to doing. Buy the carpet, crystal, or sweater you have been eyeing for months. Take the trip you have been putting off. Also, be sure to visit favorite places and indulge in favorite pastimes one last time. Go to the restaurant that was the scene of so many good memories. Have the dish no one else prepares quite as well as they do. Maybe there is a view of your village or city you want to see one last time, a park you want to go to, a walk you want to take.

In the same way, visit all the people you want to see before leaving and say a proper thank you or a proper good-bye. This can

take some advance planning and should not be left until the last week or even the last month. Some of these people may be in other parts of the country, or they may be nearby, but are going to be away on vacation or on business the week you are leaving. If you wait until then to contact them, it may be too late. You may think you do not need to say good-bye to some of your PCV friends, that they will be back in the States, too, and you can always see them there. The United States is a big place. You may be in California and they may be in Ohio, whereas now they are only a day's bus trip (and \$1.50) away.

Another thing you should do while you are still in country is to get your expectations about going home out on the table where you can see them. What kind of reception are you expecting? Do you assume people are going to be interested in what has happened to you? Are you expecting to be able to pick up where you left off in your key relationships? Do you assume people will realize you have changed? Do you expect them to like the new you? How are you going to feel about living back in the land of 50 channels and grocery stores the size of your village? Take a long look at your assumptions. Some of them will turn out to be quite shrewd, others will be optimistic, and still others will be downright amusing.



You know your standards have changed when...

- ▣ Day after day of relentless nothingness can become almost enjoyable.
- ▣ You have no qualms about cutting your hair with the scissors on your Swiss Army knife.
- ▣ You watch as the ants dismember and dispose of a bug carcass rather than saying "EEK!" and sweeping them away.
- ▣ You actually take comfort each night as you drift off to sleep and hear the distinct sound of bugs eating your house.

By Anna Prow. Reprinted from "Still Life with Omby," the Volunteer newsletter of Madagascar.

Hemingway Juniors

*Creative Writing
Projects for Kids
and Grown-Ups Alike*

If you're pulling your hair out over the fact that you can't get those students of yours to engage in the joys of reading and writing, stop tugging. There is a simple solution—subterfuge! Yes, sometimes you have to trick them into learning and the best way to do that is usually to make the learning experience fun, as PCV Kathleen MacVean discovered when she went and got creative with her students:

With a fourth-grade class at the school in my barrio, I recently initiated a creative writing project. It involved activities to get the kids to think of reading as a fun activity, rather than a tedious chore. I think it worked. Try it for yourself.

First read them a story or poem, then have them do one of the following activities:

- Write a letter to one of the characters;
- Do a dramatization or play of the story;
- Write a new ending to the story;
- Design the wardrobe for the characters;
- Write their own story or poem using the same theme;
- Have them pretend they are newscasters covering the events of the story.

Since the kids were not used to doing creative work, some of the exercises took a while. But as we persevered, I noticed a significant improvement in the quality of their work. Maybe more importantly, they began to get excited about reading and writing, and the number of students who wanted to share their work with the rest of the class grew with each new exercise. We finished out the year with an anthology of the students' work. They were all proud to be published authors!

By Kathleen MacVean. Reprinted from "La Cadena," the Volunteer newsletter of Costa Rica.

Morphing

Go through that big stack of magazines or newspapers and cut out pictures having no particular theme in mind. Take your big stack of pictures to school, give each student two or three, and have them write a story that links the pictures together. If they're stumped, have them write something about each picture separately and then "morph" them together. Students may glue pictures to bond paper and rewrite the story to flow around pictures. You can assemble the stories into a collage to display on the wall.

Bonus: This exercise gives kids the chance to associate multiple ideas through writing and it lets grown-ups relive their childhood fondness for Elmer's glue.

Budding Pundit

Have students write letters to the editor to your local newspaper. First read a few editorials. Brainstorm ideas as a class about school issues or current events, then narrow your ideas down to four or five. Write a first draft directed to principal or newspaper editor. Edit with a partner or in a group. Write a final copy. Share with the class. It's probably best if you make the decision regarding whether to send or submit letters to the principal or newspaper.

Bonus: This lets kids incorporate their writing skills with an awareness of public issues and it lets grown ups blow off some steam.

Hieroglyphics

Use this as a part of a project on Egyptian or other civilizations that used hieroglyphics for written communication, or just as an introduction to such. Locate, if you can, some books referencing hieroglyphics as an introduction. Instruct students to make a list of words or phrases that could be drawn as symbols (i.e. apple, bird) and have them draw the symbols. Have them construct sentences or paragraphs with the hieroglyphics. They can start by making sentences from the list of words, then drawing the symbols above or below the sentence. Have students share their work with the class.

Bonus: Kids get to translate words and ideas into pictures. Grown-ups get a much-needed refresher in post-structuralism.

Q & A: Test Your Sunsetivity

Maybe you stick to your sunscreen like glue or maybe you take cover under a sombrero, but do you know how much sun is too much? Test your sun-savvy with this quiz, courtesy of PCVs in Uganda. Dispelling myths now can protect your skin later. (Each correct answer is worth one point, and each incorrect answer is worth ten.)

The Q's:

1. Skin cancer affects men and women differently.
2. You should apply sunscreen only to parts of your skin that will be exposed to sun.
3. Certain types of foods can make you more sensitive to the sun.
4. Intense exposure, such as a day at the beach, does the most damage.
5. Some medications can make you more sensitive to the sun.
6. Your hair needs sun protection to prevent damage.
7. Opaque fabrics will minimize sunburn.



The A's:

1. True. Slightly more men develop melanoma than women, although women under 40 are more susceptible than their male counterparts.
2. False. Apply sunscreen evenly before getting dressed.
3. True. Parsley, figs, carrots, celery, and limes contain psoralen which acts as a photosensitizer in sunlight.
4. False. Skin damage can result as much from repeated incidental exposure as an intense day at the beach.
5. True. It's not just vegetables—some medications can also induce photosensitivity.
6. False. The best way to protect your hair from sun damage is by wearing a hat—especially if your hair is chemically treated.
7. False. Opaque cotton fabrics will not protect you from the sun.

7 points

Cool and collected You're toast!

70 points

Learning to Iron

In the U.S., you iron so your clothes look good. But in Cameroon, you iron to stay healthy. We have Tumba flies here, which can lay eggs in wet clothes hung out to dry. When the eggs hatch, the larvae burrow into your skin and grow into what we call a mango worm. To remove a mango worm you have to suffocate it with vaseline, and take it out when it comes up for air. Fortunately, ironing kills the nasty little eggs.

At first, I thought this was a horror story told to trainees by sadistic Volunteers. But the trainee who lives closest to me picked up a mango worm in her first month here. So, to limit the number of worms crawling through my body, I iron all my clothes.

The first time my Cameroonian "brother" watched me iron, he pointed out everything I was doing wrong, even down to how my t-shirt should be folded after ironing. It was embarrassing. He kept having to correct me, showing me that if I ironed like I was, I would leave creases and so on. I wondered if I had a single useful skill. What good does it do me to know how to drive a car, buy a newspaper, or factor a binomial if I can't cook, wash or iron?

I received a care package from home on my birthday—two new shirts. The next day, being behind on my laundry, I donned one of the shirts, said good-bye to my "mother," and proceeded to walk to school.

"Wait!" I heard her say. "You must iron that shirt!"

"That's not necessary, it's new," I said. "There's no way it has Tumba fly eggs!"

"Look how wrinkled this shirt is!" my mother persisted. "You cannot teach in a wrinkled shirt. You are a professor."

I looked at my shirt. She was right. Six weeks of sitting in an envelope doesn't do much for a shirt. My students would lose all respect for me if I showed up for class like that. So I took off my shirt, grabbed the iron, and reminded myself that I came to Africa to teach, but first I have to learn to iron.

Glen Tolbert is a Volunteer in Cameroon.

A Sort of Homecoming

Some of life's experiences fail to impact you immediately. Instead, they nag steadily at your heart until they've finally made a full impression. Yet other experiences strike you from the start. They instantly scream, "I'm going to be with you for the rest of your life!" And that's what happened when I met Mr. Bitterman.

Last summer, I set off for a secondary project in Spisské Podhradie in Slovakia. There, a small number of Volunteers and I began to clean up the town synagogue. Our work began with a full day of sweeping, and even that was not enough to erase years of neglect. Clouds of dust swirled around us as we worked in silence. It's hard to talk in the synagogue because it's crowded with the presence of people who once worshiped there. I listened for the women upstairs hushing their children and the whispers of old men discussing a point of service. But one thought haunted me more than any other: not one Jew lives in Spisské Podhradie today.

That first day of sweeping I took special care to clean the *Aron ha Kodesh*, the Holy Ark. I felt a little uncomfortable about standing up on the most holy place in the synagogue, the place where the Torah had been kept. Amid the dirt and debris inside the Ark, I found a shiny piece of metal with Hebrew written on both sides. I was stilled. Then I found a second plate. I learned that the small plates were inscribed with the names of Jewish holidays and used on the Torah shield.

Remnants of the original occupants were not all I found. Anti-Semitic graffiti surfaced in places where I hadn't noticed it before. A swastika scratched into the metal doors covering the women's entrance caught me by surprise and left a dull ache in my stomach.

After a weekend at home in Levice, I took another long train ride across the country and back to Spisské Podhradie. After arriving and meeting up with another Volunteer, we went to the town hall to pick up the keys to the synagogue. While we waited in the hallway, we could see the vice-mayor meeting with an older gentleman. I realized he was speaking English.

The man and I introduced ourselves. His name was Emanuel Bitterman. He had grown up in the town and attended the synagogue and Jewish school there as a boy. He left Spisské Podhradie before the deportations by the Nazis

of the Jewish community had begun. The intensity of the moment nearly incapacitated me. I wanted time to stop so I could take it all in. I wanted to remember every story he told. I was in the midst of the one thing I hadn't envisioned happening: a visit with a former Jewish resident of Spisské Podhradie.

I told Mr. Bitterman that we were there cleaning up the synagogue and that I would be honored to show it to him and his wife. Before long Mr. Bitterman and his wife, Fay, pulled over to the side of the road in their Buick and picked us up. They were driving "cross countries" from Israel home to Belgium.

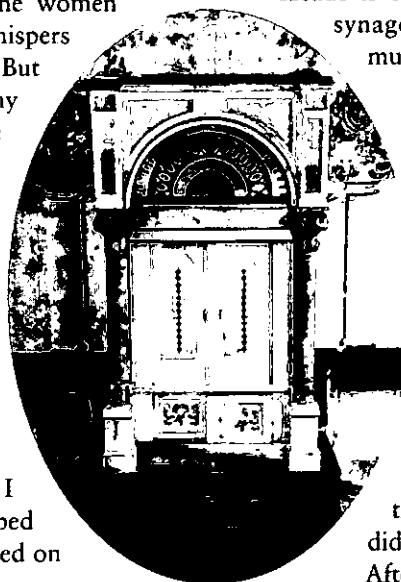
When the synagogue's gate is first opened, it's always shocking. The synagogue is an amazing structure, but its facade is crumbling. I wanted to assure him that the synagogue's dignity would be restored. He muttered to me, "It's not all we lost."

I watched Mr. Bitterman journey back to his youth. "We used to have weddings here." His voice faded. As I stood in front of the synagogue, I couldn't believe that I was about to open it to a man who hadn't been there in more than 50 years.

I unlocked the metal doors and hesitated at the entrance. At that moment with the Bittermans, the room was no longer just a future museum but a living building where a people once worshiped. Women had their own entrance that led upstairs to the women's gallery. "Maybe I should go there," I thought, feeling out of place. I just didn't know.

After getting an okay from the others, I stood with Mrs. Bitterman in the back of the room and silently watched Mr. Bitterman approach the Ark, open his prayer book and look up—a 78-year-old man, praying in the synagogue of his childhood. I heard him utter ancient Hebrew as he quietly wept. I felt both blessed and embarrassed about sharing such a personal moment with him. Mrs. Bitterman translated a little of what he said: "I have prayed this prayer before but never thought I'd be here to pray it again."

Before parting, Emanuel Bitterman gestured at his heart and told me that no one could know the feelings inside of him. I wanted to thank him, but I, too, had no words.



The Aron ha Kodesh: the synagogue's Holy Ark

April Brooks is a Volunteer in Levice, Poland. Reprinted from "Kapustnica," the Volunteer newsletter of Slovakia.

Naturally Inclined

Priscilla Wrubel and The Nature Company are a perfect example of the Peace Corps' domestic dividend.



The Nature Company founder Priscilla Wrubel

BY PATRICIA CUNNINGHAM

WAY BEFORE ECO-FRIENDLY BECAME A household word, before recycling bins became as ubiquitous as the

"golden arches," before Ted Turner bought half of Montana, there was a little storefront in Berkeley, California, that went by the name of The Nature Company. The brainchild of two returned Peace Corps Volunteers, the store was one of a kind, even in progressive Berkeley, singling itself out as a haven of the natural world, carrying not only plants and pottery but field guides, telescopes, and science books in a setting that bespoke tranquillity, à la Walden Pond.

One hundred and twenty stores later, The Nature Company stands representative of how mutually rewarding the marriage of commerce and environmental consciousness can be—and shows just how much of an impact the Peace Corps' "domestic dividend" can make.

"[The Nature Company] really has had an impact on environmental issues, especially with young people, young kids and parents," says Priscilla Wrubel, the guiding force behind The Nature Company and a Liberia RPCV, who founded the store along with her husband Tom, now deceased. "And the Peace Corps experience that

allowed us to start something as crazy as The Nature Company!"

To Africa With Love

It all starts back in 1963.

After attending a campaign rally and being swept up in John F. Kennedy's call to service, Priscilla, a young teacher from Geneva, Illinois, made her way to lush Monrovia, Liberia, as a Volunteer. In her training group was a dashing young architect named Tom. It didn't take long.

"We realized we wanted to get married, and we went and told the Country Director," says Priscilla, "so he sent me way up in the bush and left Tom in the capital!" But love prevailed.

While Tom was teaching architecture at the University of Monrovia, Priscilla was 150 miles up-country in the village of Ganta, teaching English to first-graders. She recalls her service as a time of forging new encounters between peoples, opening doors, and pushing boundaries. For Liberians, it was a first sight of foreigners who weren't part of a government aid project or mission—

young, fresh-faced Americans—and they welcomed it.

"Liberians were so warm," says Priscilla. "During one Christmas vacation, we went far into the bush and helped to build a school. That was very special to the townspeople there because they had never had any white people living in their town. The local chief would come walking by our little house and we'd say, 'Good morning, Chief.' It just seemed to me absolutely wild to be in that kind of situation. It was really so special. They had wonderful dancing and festivals."

It was in the rain forests of Liberia that Priscilla Wrubel's love affair with Africa officially began, and, though she always had an interest in the natural world, it was also in Liberia that her environmental consciousness was born. "I had been interested in natural history before I went over, but definitely everything in the rain forest was just so new and so amazing. It really broadened my perspective on the environment."

As a Volunteer, she watched in dismay the strip mining of iron in northern Liberia and deforestation of the rain forest along the coast.

"That was really upsetting. I know that had an influence on me, even though nobody seemed concerned about it at the time," she says. "All that crystallized my feelings about

natural history.”

Tom and Priscilla married and finished their tours. They spent two years in Los Angeles while Tom earned his master's degree in African studies. They then headed straight back to Liberia. Tom ran the Fulbright Foundation there. They stayed another three years before settling in Berkeley.

A Bright Idea in Berkeley

Berkeley is a place that prides itself on being one step ahead of the rest of the nation, but the self-described “nature buff,” Priscilla, was having a hard time finding nature-oriented toys, books, or games in Berkeley for her kids. “The only option we had was to go to a museum and look at things behind glass,” she says.

At the same time, she was making a

supremely enthusiastic teacher who snatched up a field guide. “We sold \$52 worth of merchandise the first day and thought we were really doing great!” Priscilla jokes.

The Nature Company gradually became one of the best kept secrets of the Bay Area. Over the next ten years, the Wrubels opened four more stores and managed a thriving catalogue business. It wasn't long before corporate America came knocking. When they did, the Wrubels were as surprised as anyone. “I mean, nobody knew the word environment or ecosystems or anything at the time.”

A venture capitalist firm bought The Nature Company in 1983 and gave Tom and Priscilla the financial backing to grow. Though Tom and Priscilla separated in 1985, they

beauty of nature and providing people with a sanctuary from modern life—a fact that anyone who has visited one of the stores can attest to—there's the soothing rush of the fountains, the lyrical cacophony of rain forest sounds, the exotic toys. “We originally wanted to help people understand and enjoy nature and give them a choice so that they could go out with their families and really explore,” she says.

But in the late eighties, as serious environmental concerns rose, Priscilla says, The Nature Company realized they'd have to become more active. “It wasn't enough just to understand and appreciate nature, people had to become stewards of nature and protect the environment.”

Priscilla took the philosophical lead and steered The Nature Company not only to educate, but to intervene. What resulted was a series of corporate programs that read like an environmentalist's wish list.

The Nature Company is the sole sponsor of the five-million acre Pacaya-Samira National Reserve, a crucial wetland in the upper Amazon. From “Conservation Parking Meters” throughout its stores, The Nature Company collected one million quarters (\$250,000) for the preservation of the rain forest. The money enabled the reserve to hire and train 25 rangers and construct control posts.

“The ability to take risks was one of the big things we learned from Peace Corps.”

name for herself locally as a potter, and the Wrubels were on the verge of opening a plant and pottery shop near the University of California at Berkeley campus. But a San Francisco chain struck first, opening a large nursery just up the street from the Wrubels' yet unopened store.

“We realized that we weren't going to be able to compete with them at all. We had already rented the space so we decided ‘let's do something else with it then, let's sell something else in our store.’ And that's when we came up with the idea of nature and kids and education.” The Nature Company. It was 1973.

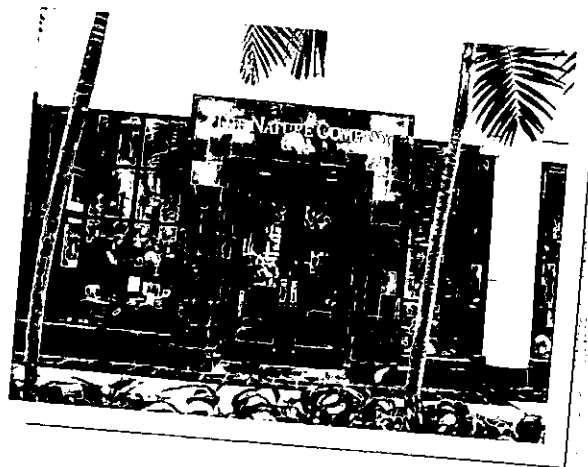
Tom used his architecture and design background to give the store a unique, welcoming look, and Priscilla went about filling the place with what has become The Nature Company's trademark stock: binoculars for bird-watchers, telescopes for star-gazers, books for the scientifically-curious and, she adds, “anything we could find with a picture of a plant or animal on it.”

The store's first customer was a

continued to jointly run the company until Tom died of cancer in 1988. By 1993, The Nature Company had firmly planted itself in 120 stores throughout the country, riding the coattails of the green revolution and providing the growing number of “environmentally-enlightened” consumers with alternative, earth-friendly products, like fossils and minerals, discovery tools, and fieldbooks.

Becoming Stewards of Nature

The Nature Company had always supported the efforts of non-profit organizations devoted to the environment, indigenous cultures, and the education of the sciences. But for the first ten years of its existence, the company stayed in shopping centers and out of politics. As Priscilla explains it, the company was more interested in promoting the



Where the environmentally enlightened shop.

REMEMBRANCES

Beth Livingston

After teaching for over twenty years, Beth Livingston decided that Peace Corps service would be an exciting way to continue her work with children while teaching in a different cultural setting. "We are all interconnected," she wrote, "and whatever I can do to help others, relieving their own suffering helps relieve mine." In Escazu, Costa Rica, she taught pre-school children and visited community homes to teach other members of the community about health and the environment. "Beth used nature to teach people, especially the children in the communities," said Deputy Director Charles Baquet. In her school, she organized nature walks and "eco-camps" to demonstrate to young children the relationship between humans and nature. An avid hiker with a deep love for nature, she often rose for early morning hikes in the beautiful, steep hills of suburban San Jose. She died on March 27 of 1997 after falling into a ravine. Having reached the end of her two-year service, Beth had recently requested to extend her service for another year to finish a family education project in her community. The principal of her school in Costa Rica affirmed that Beth "left a small flame burning in our hearts and minds that will be there always."

Jeremy Rolfs

"I have come to view my own worth not by what I am able to accomplish for myself, but rather what I am able to do for others." This statement summarizes Jeremy Rolfs' motivation to become a Peace Corps Volunteer. Experienced in television broadcasting, Jeremy seized the opportunity to use his skills by serving as a television controller Volunteer in Lesotho. In his 15 months of service, Jeremy helped to improve the overall performance of Lesotho Television as the operations manager—creating original programs, administering staff training sessions, and producing news bulletins. During training, the Oak Park, IL, native wrote that he wanted to create programming that was "uniquely African, a place where African stories are told for all to hear." He also served as a telecommunications adviser to the Ministry of Information and taught at the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies in the Mass Communication department. Jeremy's father remarked that "he always had the wish to put his knowledge to the maximum use possible. He always wanted to travel, and it was his dream to live in another country, in another culture." Jeremy's dream was cut short in a car accident on March 31 of last year. He was accompanied in the car by his mother, who was visiting and survived the accident. Jeremy has been missed greatly by his fellow Volunteers and his co-workers. According to his recruiter, "there are those who make a lasting impression. Jeremy was one of them."

Chad Nettesheim

Health Extension Volunteer Chad Nettesheim undertook one of the most critical assignments in the developing world. Interacting directly with the community of Nizao in the Dominican Republic, he worked to reduce infant mortality and promote health to adults in the community. Chad made home visits and gave instructional talks to encourage health practices such as breast-feeding and diarrhea prevention. Chad also organized a regional conference in AIDS prevention and planned a training workshop for community health workers. According to his father, he "loved working with people, and he loved kids." On August 6 of 1997, Chad, a lifetime asthma sufferer, died of a severe asthma attack while vacationing with an old friend. Just a few months before his death, he had been visited by his family from Waukesha, WI, who discovered that he had been virtually adopted by his host family in the Dominican Republic. When asked if he had any regrets about being so far away from home, Chad replied, "Absolutely not. I love it here." Diane Partl, Acting Country Director in the Dominican Republic, said that Chad's energy, motivation, and dedication made him a "dream Volunteer." "If I can do my little part," Chad wrote in his motivation statement, "then I will feel as though I have achieved something by contributing to the betterment of humanity."



Jeremiah Mack

Enthusiastic to immerse himself in a foreign culture and broaden his knowledge of the world outside of the United States, Jeremiah Mack, a native of Raynham, MA, adapted instantly as a Volunteer in Niger. According to fellow Volunteers, "he had the incredible gift for communication that enabled him to cross huge cultural gaps and reach true understanding." For 21 months, Jeremiah worked with local masons building new homes and clinics with mud, adobe, and bricks to minimize deforestation. His work in woodless construction and training of Nigerian masons provided him the opportunity to travel all over Niger and neighboring countries. Having mentioned to a friend that he was "happiest on a construction site," Jeremiah had requested to extend his service for a third year. On May 12 of 1997, Jeremiah died in a car accident, accompanied by a close Nigerian friend who survived the accident. Fellow Volunteers remembered that "Jeremiah, was one of the most generous persons we knew. He touched the lives of everyone in a way that no one can forget." Said Country Director Jane Bonin, "He earned the love and respect of his colleagues,

neighbors in his village, and any place throughout the country. I saw him laying bricks in 110-degree heat, laughing and joking with his friends. He was serious about his mission but his big heart was light."

Kevin Leveille

As a Municipal Sanitation Volunteer, Kevin Leveille was assigned to an urban environmental management project in Tanda, Cote d'Ivoire. A fellow Volunteer in Cote d'Ivoire recalled that Kevin's dream as a Volunteer was "to integrate himself fully with the community and to work as an engineer for the benefit of the people." His dream became reality in January 1996, when he began to work closely with the mayor of Tanda on clean water and sanitation issues in the community. "Kevin was self-motivated, proficient, and innovative. He inspired his host country co-workers to be more pro-active," said Country Director Sachiko Goode. While building latrines for a local school, Kevin went on vacation for one week, and returned to discover that the school had all but completed the latrines. "I cannot begin to tell you how happy Kevin was," said his site partner Gaylea Prichard. On February 6 of 1998, Kevin was killed in his home in Tanda. Four men are currently being held in custody for this horrible crime. His family held a ceremony in celebration of his life in his hometown of Ventura, CA. Volunteers in Cote d'Ivoire expressed how their lives were touched by Kevin's "genuine innocence and loving kindness," and remembered how he often "described his pleasure in cooking dinners for his neighbors, donating his home-grown vegetables, and volunteering much of his time to tutor junior and senior high-schoolers in English."

Joie Kallison

"Iwant to open my eyes. I want to appreciate. I want to give," wrote Joie Kallison in her motivation statement. A native of Buffalo Grove, Illinois, Joie arrived in Namibia in October of last year and was sworn in as a PCV in January. Joie was assigned to Namibia's Ministry of Basic Education and Culture and hit the ground running, working with a cluster of four schools on teacher-training projects while travelling with a fellow PCV in the northern part of Namibia. On March 13 of this year, Joie died in a car accident. She lived on the traditional homestead of Olivia and Abosalom Hamukwaya. Although she had been at her site only a few months, Joie was involved in setting up a valuable resource center for her community. Dr. Colden Murchinson, Peace Corps Country Director in Namibia, said Joie was a dedicated Volunteer whose cultural sensitivity and commitment to helping others embodied the best ideals of Peace Corps service.

continued from Page 29

The Nature Company donates a percentage of sales on selected products to various non-profit groups. A recent alliance includes Earth Force, the largest non-profit environmental organization in the country. Another includes the National Audubon Society, whose membership packages are available at stores. Its stores are stocked with rain forest products and develops clothing and other products made of recycled materials.

What is also remarkable is that The Nature Company practices what it preaches, bringing its earth-friendly practices home to bear in its corporate offices in Berkeley. In fact, it's got to be the only retail chain anywhere to have a full-time naturalist on the payrolls. You won't find an energy-sucking light bulb left on in an empty office or reams of wasted paper there, and that is due primarily to the work of the E Team. "E" as in, you guessed it, "environmental." Comprised of representatives from every department of the company (Priscilla herself is a member), the E Team monitors efficient use of paper, advises on environmentally sound product packaging, and sponsors a variety of annual Earth Day projects. The naturalist guides the efforts of the E Team and advises buyers on products.

One Step at a Time

A hundred and twenty stores, rain forest preserves, strategic alliances, the E Team. Pretty impressive for an off the cuff upstart of two former Volunteers. Priscilla says they could never have taken the risk without the experience they gained in the Peace Corps, where they learned the meaning of the phrase "winging it."

"The ability to take risks was one of the big things we learned from the Peace Corps. We were able to take risks and try something new, something really crazy. Neither of us had any idea how to run a business, and we just sort of played it one day at a time the way we did when we were Peace Corps Volunteers—you don't come in with big guns and try to change things overnight. You take one step at a time and you'll get to the end of the year, and you'll have an impact and make an impression on people and change things slowly."

Priscilla Wrubel is just now beginning to realize The Nature Company's impact. "I'm pretty modest about that but when I go out into the world and people ask me where I work, I say 'The Nature Company' and they go 'Ooh, The Nature Company!'"

An unscientific, but nevertheless pretty clear indication that she's done something good.

Patricia Cunningham is the Editor-In-Chief of the Peace Corps Times.

The Global Classroom

World Wise Schools introduces kids to the world.

BY THEODORE EISENMAN

WHEN KATIE LESHOCK arrived in a Sri Lankan village as a Peace Corps Volunteer, she understood

that the people and experiences of the next few years would mark an important chapter in her life. She didn't know, however, that her correspondence with students at home in the U.S. would figure so prominently in her overall Peace Corps experience.

"My interaction with students in the United States has enhanced my service abroad. It is no longer my Peace Corps experience, but rather *our* Peace Corps experience," said Katie of her participation in World Wise Schools, the Peace Corps' innovative global education program.

Katie is one of more than 3,000 currently-serving Volunteers who participate in World Wise Schools (WWS) each year. It allows U.S. students to share and learn from the overseas experience of PCVs around the world. It also provides Volunteers an excellent opportunity to pursue the Peace Corps' "Third Goal" of bringing the world back home.

Throughout their overseas service and upon returning to the States, Volunteers want people to understand and appreciate their newfound culture. World Wise Schools provides a vehicle for doing just that. Since 1989, the

program has brought the Peace Corps experience to hundreds of thousands of students. Through exciting resources and correspondence with Volunteers, participating students get an understanding of other cultures—a mind-broadening experience.

Perhaps President Clinton said it best when, during a speech on his goals for the new millennium, he stated "World Wise Schools is a great example of Peace Corps' commitment to creating the conditions for peace, overseas and at home. By increasing awareness of cultural diversity around the world, World Wise Schools students also come to value the rich heritage and broad representation of peoples within their own classroom and community." The Peace Corps hopes to triple the number of WWS educators by the year 2000.

Here's how the program works. Participating Volunteers are matched to correspond with students in a U.S. classroom. World Wise Schools then sends Volunteers a handbook, and the corresponding teacher receives introductory materials and information on accessing WWS' videos, teacher guides, and educational materials on the Internet. From there it

is up to the Volunteer, the teacher, and the students to develop the scope of the correspondence relationship.

Most PCVs begin by writing letters to their WWS students. Soon, they may want to send pictures, music, or recipes. Katie Leshock, for example, developed an illustrated book with Sri Lankan students and exchanged it with a similar book created by her WWS classroom in Neenah, Wisconsin. Their correspondence was so fruitful that they even produced audio cassettes and video tours of their respective towns.

"By exploring and responding to the students' questions, I found that I was learning new things about my local community. Our correspondence provided a constructive outlet for the many insights and lessons I was learning from my Sri Lankan neighbors and friends," said Katie.

To facilitate communication between Volunteers and their U.S. students, each country post has now designated a "WWS country contact" who will interact with WWS at Peace Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Volunteers should ask their Country Director or Associate Peace Corps Director for information on country contacts and joining World Wise Schools. Don't forget, Peace Corps provides Volunteers a postage stipend—one letter per month—included in the monthly living allowance!

Any questions? Contact us here at World Wise Schools: Peace Corps Office of Domestic Programs, 1990 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20526. Or e-mail: <dpinfo@peacecorps.gov>.

Theodore Eisenman is a writer in Peace Corps' Office of Domestic Programs. He was a Volunteer in Senegal from 1991-93.

Working Partners

The Office of Private Sector Cooperation and International Volunteerism makes links that count.

BY PATTI MADIGAN

IN BARRETTO HIGH SCHOOL IN THE Philippines, a Volunteer requests microscopes to enhance her students' understanding of science. In Ndooro,

Senegal, a Volunteer searches for funding to purchase sheep for an income generating project. In Turkmenistan, the country's only medical school needs mannequins for teaching CPR and other medical procedures.

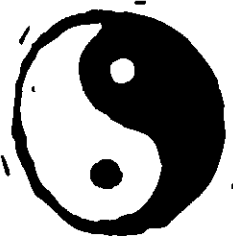
Identifying needs and helping secure funds or materials is a growing role for Peace Corps Volunteers, one which increasingly puts them in contact with the crew at Peace Corps' Office of Private Sector Cooperation and International Volunteerism (that's OPSC/IV for short).

Patricia Garamendi, Associate Director for OPSC/IV, says that the efforts of the office—tracking down funds or materials—are really about customer service for PCVs: "Our job is to support and complement the work of Volunteers. To that end, we are working on improving the whole support process, putting grant applications online, for example, so that projects are identified, funded, and completed all during a Volunteer's normal tour."

Patti's office sifts through the requests it receives from Volunteers and overseas staff to first determine if the requests are appropriate to the host country, if they have the consent of the Country Director, and if they are appropriate to the Partnership Program or the Gifts In

Kind Program. (The Partnership Program is funds-based, while the Gifts In Kind Program provides materials not available in the host country.)

The Partnership Program, while administered by HQ, is field-driven and a reflection of current PCV projects. Projects respond to the broad needs identified by Volunteers and their



communities—from a water system in Nepal to mid-wife training in Guinea.

A proposal submitted to Partnership must have community support to the tune of 25 percent. "Their support will more likely lead to a project's success and its sustainability," explains Partnership Program Manager Eric Hornberger. The remaining 75 percent of a project's cost comes from traditional foundations, families, and hometowns of Volunteers, RPCV groups, and school and church groups. In 1997, more than 400 groups contributed \$549,592 to 158 small scale development projects.

The Gifts in Kind Program was started in 1983 to provide material support to Volunteers and their host communities—things like books, microscopes, sign language dictionaries.

The common denominator sought by the Gifts in Kind Program is whether the plan is sustainable after the Volunteer has COSed. In Mongolia, for example, a group of Volunteers living near Uvs Lake were alarmed at the number of drownings each summer due to inadequate water safety. A proposal was sent to Gifts in Kind, and a Rotary Club in Oregon donated life jackets, kick boards, and other water safety equipment. With these materials in hand, a Volunteer with a background in emergency medical training taught swimming lessons, first aid, and water safety to more than 100 Mongolians living near the lake, and plans to train Mongolians to take over.

The transfer of information to host country nationals is critical to OPSC/IV. In fact, OPSC/IV has been charged with fostering international volunteerism as a strategic priority in the coming years, both through promoting the development of indigenous volunteer organizations and expanding Peace Corps ties with other international volunteer organizations.

Patti Garamendi cited the Bohemia Corps, in the Czech Republic, as a good example of a homegrown volunteer organization. Botswana and Malawi are also working on developing their own version of a volunteer corps.

Perhaps Peace Corps' greatest legacy will be these new Volunteer programs that evolve or are strengthened as a result of the presence of the Peace Corps. If so, OPSC/IV will be there to make sure there's a working relationship.

Patti Madigan is a Public Affairs Specialist in the Press Office. She was a Volunteer in Morocco from 1991-92.

After the Flood

Last Summer, the Paraguay River reached a critical level, flooding many towns in the north and spilling into the Bañado communities of Asunción. My site, Bañado Tacumbú, was the hardest hit, with over 300 families forced out of their homes and more than 3,000 people affected.

The water was up to my doorstep when I moved out of my house. Two days later, the water in my yard and inside my house was almost knee-deep. Watching friends and neighbors pack up their things and disassemble whatever they could of their houses was followed by the heart-wrenching sight of people and all of their belongings passing by in over-stuffed cargo trucks and horse-drawn carts.

At this point, reality should have set in. When the river is rising at almost ten centimeters per day and your neighbors are buzzing about where to go and what to do, you should at least have a plan of action. Many of us did not, and it seemed as though our collective hope that the water would stop rising before reaching our homes would have prevented it from coming. We did not want to face the inevitable.

For most families, the inescapable reality was a dreaded flood camp on its property which overlooks the low-lying Bañado and the Rio Paraguay. Although only about a one-mile move for most, the camp was despised for its unsanitary and inhumane living conditions. Each family is distributed one 5m x 5m plot, and everyone was on their own to find building materials and construct a little shack. Fortunately, the NGOs Corposana and ANDE came and installed water, twelve community faucets, eight showers, electricity, several strategically located street lamps, and access for about three-fourths of the "houses" in the camp. However, many families continued to go without electricity, and the lack of access to clean latrines poses a serious health threat.

To date, there have been only a dozen Port-a-Potties delivered to help alleviate this problem. Incidentally, my friends and I have yet to observe anyone cleaning or emptying the portable toilets, and they are beginning to emit an odor that will soon deter everyone from using them.

There is also an insufficient trash disposal and pick-up system which has resulted in a huge increase of dumping in the Arroyo Mburicao which borders the camp.

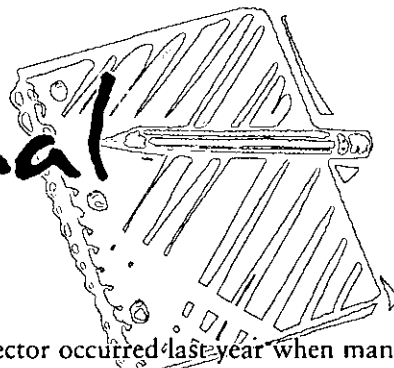
Physically and emotionally, the flood of 1997 has been my greatest challenge yet as a Peace Corps Volunteer. I have been in my site for 10 months, and before the flood, I had just reached the point where I felt very well integrated and adapted to my environs. My work was going relatively well, and I was finally feeling a sigh of relief. Then almost overnight, half of my community was uprooted. All of our projects, groups, and plans are now up in the air. I am back at ground zero, surveying the situation, and seeing what I can salvage.

As for the community of Bañado Tacumbú, their lives have become a whole lot harder and more unpleasant. Although the Rio Paraguay usually has a cyclical flood pattern of every other or every two years, this is the first major flood in almost three years. Nearly half of the male population abandoned their jobs along with their homes. Carpenters, brick-makers, masons, gardeners, and plumbers who had had work in Bañado now have none.

Nevertheless, I feel a new sense of worth and utility amongst my community. They have observed me working like a dog to help out in any way possible over the critical moments of the emergency. Living this experience with the people of Bañado Tacumbú has brought me even closer to them; I am now a fully-initiated Bañado dweller. It has been a terrible, painful, uncomfortable, sad, learning, growing, sharing, enlightening, compassion-filled experience. On the one hand, I feel stronger. On the other hand, I feel fragile and defeated. My community is a tough bunch, but they have a marvelous ability to laugh at themselves, their situation, and their country. They are human beings fighting to survive in the only way they know.

Maureen A. Herman is a Volunteer in Paraguay. Reprinted from "Kuatia Ne'e," the Volunteer newsletter of Paraguay.

Director's Journal



The Results Are In...

One of most informative experiences of my tenure as Director occurred ~~last year~~ when many of you responded to a comprehensive survey about your service in the Peace Corps. Nearly 70 percent of you answered a wide range of questions, such as: Why did you join the Peace Corps? How well are you integrated into your community? How would you rate the support you receive from staff at your post? How safe and secure do you feel? Do you have access to a phone? A computer? And what do you think will be the single most important issue that will confront the Peace Corps in the next century?

The answers you provided were enormously important to my understanding about what's on your mind and how we can make your experience in the Peace Corps a rewarding one. I was especially pleased, however, by your comments about Peace Corps service in general, and by how many of you would recommend service to others. Ninety-three percent of you reported that you intend to finish your Peace Corps service, and 97 percent of you rated your own performance as adequate to excellent. Eighty-seven percent said you would still probably or definitely join the Peace Corps, and 88 percent of you said that you would probably or definitely recommend serving as a Volunteer to others.

If you haven't seen all of the survey results, you can find them in a special notebook that I sent to your post earlier this year. Another survey is in the works. So please keep on the lookout for the next one and take a few minutes to respond. We want to hear from you.



PCV Sascha Lamstein (far right) and her host country mother give me some pointers during a tour of Sascha's hillside farming project in Honduras.

On the Road

Visiting Peace Corps Volunteers at their sites is definitely the best part of my job. Since I became Director in August 1995, I have traveled to see many of you in more than 20 countries. Whether I'm touring projects or just getting to know Volunteers and listening to their concerns, it's always enlightening, inspiring, and a lot of fun.

In Central America, I traveled for a week in a four-wheel drive truck through four countries to view first-hand Volunteers' water and sanitation projects and talk about safety and security issues. In the South Pacific, I took a boat to remote islands to meet a Volunteer who has set up a community garden and another who is helping small businesses market coconut oil. In Eastern Europe, I shared some excellent Mexican food with 20 Volunteers in a high-rise apartment building.

Each day in Washington I draw upon the experiences of those trips and the conversations with Volunteers around the world. Whenever we think about how we can improve Volunteer support, training, programming or recruitment, I always try to test our plans against what I learned from you in the field.

My wife, Mary, and I just had our second daughter, Kathleen, who arrived on March 14, so I hope to be on the road later this year, and I'm looking forward to meeting more of you.



PEACE CORPS' MISSION

The Peace Corps was created to promote world peace and friendship.

Our goals are:

To help the people of interested countries meet their needs for trained men and women;

To help promote a better understanding of the American people on the part of the people served; and

To promote a better understanding of other people