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# WorldView

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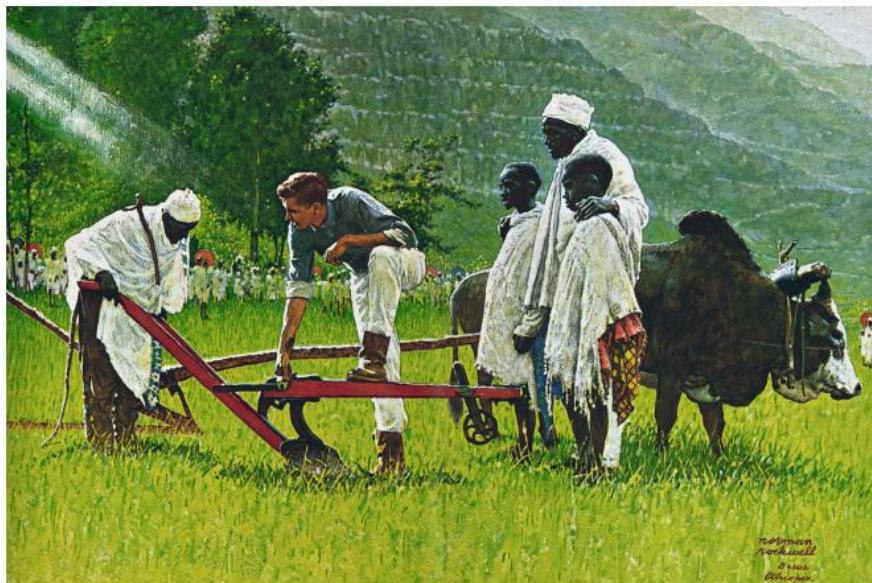
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# WorldView

A magazine for the greater Peace Corps community



**ON THE COVER** Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia, by Norman Rockwell. Front cover art courtesy of the Norman Rockwell Family Agency. The volunteer who served as a model for the painting is Marc Clausen, who taught agriculture at a secondary school in Dessie from 1962 to 1965. The painting is based on photographs Mr. Rockwell took during a January, 1964 trip to Ethiopia.

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## TRUE TO OUR ROOTS

This nonprofit embodies Sarge's independent, enterprising spirit

By Glenn Blumhorst

**O**n November 19, 1963, Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver addressed the YMCA of Greater New York annual dinner. Let me recycle from that evening his warning to the Peace Corps:

*"We must not be content to keep doing the same old things in the same old way. We cannot coast. Movements like ours have been known to go through three stages: (1) Inspiration. (2) Organization. (3) Fossilization. Institutional hardening of the arteries can be prevented only if our leaders keep abreast of contemporary trends. Our leaders must be innovators and agents of change—not just keepers of the institutional status quo."*

Sarge's words ring true today for the NPCA and for our greater Peace Corps community. Strong and vibrant after 55 years, our community continues to engage in creative disruption for the greater good.

Thanks to social media, we can follow the service of nearly 7,000 Peace Corps Volunteers in real time, as they live and work at the grassroots, helping communities find dignified solutions to local problems. Another benchmark is the burgeoning number of nonprofit and for-profit social enterprises founded by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

Some supply American markets with ice cream flavors made from organic ingredients and "superfood" Moringa powder that comes from women's groups in developing countries. Others distribute LED lights to low-income families around

the world and produce Oscar-nominated content about the deadly Ebola epidemic. Our community is out there, doing things that matter.

### Working outside of bureaucracy

NPCA embodies their enterprising spirit. As a lean nonprofit operating outside the strictures of government bureaucracy, we complement Peace Corps with creative thinking and frugal experimentation. Using skills honed during service, we identify Peace Corps community needs,

make your voice heard.

Let's make 2016 a banner year for Peace Corps innovation. NPCA will lead the way, releasing a new website and database system, built on a multi-chapter system for the seamless inclusion of affiliate groups.

With community support, our advocates will storm Capitol Hill and state legislative offices to increase the number of PCVs in the field and improve health services for PCVs and RPCVs. Building on successes like Let Girls

**"Strong and vibrant after 55 years, our community continues to engage in creative disruption for the greater good"**

we test offerings that address those needs, and we advance solutions that achieve the most momentum. The rudder of the Peace Corps community is our compass.

Last year, we distilled our mission into three priorities—connecting the community, advocating for a bigger, better Peace Corps, and promoting sustained impact through community-based development. We have democratized our membership model and helped secure the largest budgetary increase in the history of Peace Corps.

Our national, virtual workspace feels more like a social enterprise startup than a nonprofit. Ideas fly around the community, engaging RPCVs, group leaders, interns, consultants, and staff in lively debate over soon-to-be-unveiled offerings. We invite you to engage and

Learn, an exciting White House initiative promoting girls' education, we will enter into more strategic partnerships, strive to support the transition of returning volunteers, magnify the Peace Corps voice in popular culture, and foster village-level development impact. Stay tuned!

According to Sarge, "... Peace Corps is guilty of enthusiasm and a crusading spirit. But we're not apologetic about it." That will never change.

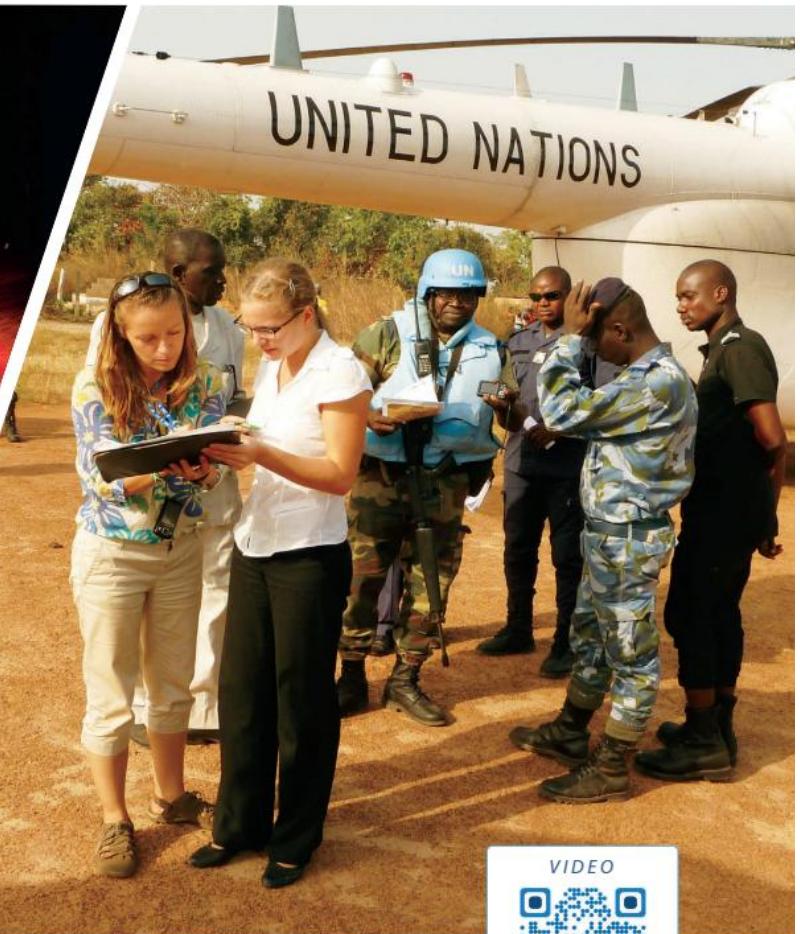
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*The author is president of the NPCA and served in Guatemala from 1988 to 1991. Contact Glenn at [president@peacecorpsconnect.org](mailto:president@peacecorpsconnect.org)*

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## STAY TUNED

For the 32<sup>nd</sup> season of the CBS reality television show, Survivor, the owner of an ice cream company has been competing on one of three B-teams. There are no A-teams on this reality show, just three B-teams: for brains, brawn and beauty.

Neal Gottlieb, the Petaluma, California ice cream maker and Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, is on the brainy team.

Check out one of his opponents on the beauty team: a former U.S. military prison guard in Iraq who is now an adventure hunting guide in Hopkinsville, Tennessee who hunts, fishes, rides horses and climbs rocks for fun. Can you imagine whose on the brawny team?

Gottlieb was creating a soap- and candle-making factory in Taroudant, Morocco when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and the Morocco volunteers were evacuated. We already told you in our summer issue about his post-service commercial success making and distributing Three Twins ice cream in half a dozen scoop shops in California and the nation.

But there's more to the story now. With a driving sense of ambition, Gottlieb opened his second ice cream factory in Sheboygen, Wisconsin to expand his organic ice cream elsewhere.

And with a commitment to social justice, Gottlieb climbed 16,763 feet to the top of Mt. Margherita in Uganda on April, 2014, to plant a gay pride flag on the snow-capped peak.

The flag was Gottlieb's message to President Yoweri Museveni that he opposed the anti-gay bill the president had signed into law that year. And to make the point clear, he posted an open letter to Mr. Museveni on Facebook and ended it with, "If you were born gay, would you deserve to be imprisoned?"

The Survivor series was filmed on an island off the coast of Cambodia last spring and the series started on February 17. The prize is a million dollars. Is Gottlieb surviving?

Then there's Bryn Mooser, who served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in The Gambia from 2001 to 2004. He is co-director of a short film documentary that was nominated for an award at the 88<sup>th</sup> Oscars Academy Award presented last month.

The documentary appears driven by Mooser's Peace Corps experience, a startling, gritty and dignified portrayal of Garmai Sumo, the only female on Body Team 12 whose job it was to collect for sanitary burial the corpses of hundreds of residents of Monrovia, Sierra Leone, who died of the Ebola virus last year.

Mooser and friend David Darg started making documentaries together several years ago. One of their early films, "Baseball in the Time of Cholera," premiered at the TriBeca Film Festival. They shot it while they were building a school and a cholera treatment center in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. His next project? Mooser says it's a documentary about astronauts in Uganda.

Like Gottlieb, Mooser doesn't stand still. In addition to his film work, he co-founded a media company in Los Angeles called Ryot. It's a web site where every news story posted by Ryot—breaking news or reporting on cultures or social justice gone awry—offers readers a tip on how to take action to remedy a problem in the world.

Ryot is looking for reporters to strengthen their coverage. Check out Ryot.org. And keep watching for more achievements from Gottlieb and Mooser, who continue to score on our Third Goal in interesting ways.

Clarence Fox

## THE RASSIAS METHOD

In 1965, I was accepted into a Peace Corps advanced training program for volunteers to teach English in French-speaking West Africa. I spent my first summer of training at Dartmouth where I benefited greatly from a method of language instruction created by a language professor at the college, John

Rassias. He died in December.

How greatly? Upon arrival at Dartmouth, I took a French language test and, even after 2.5 years of college French, I scored a 1. That's on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being a native speaker. But after just six weeks of instruction from John Rassias himself, I was up to a 3-plus.

How was this possible? It was because Rassias used what I call the direct method of language instruction, which, to simplify only slightly, imitates how we all learned to speak as infants. It is mostly oral, eschewing emphasis on grammar and structure in favor of simply repeating what we hear. All the volunteers in training were also obliged only to speak French—even to each other—during those six weeks. The Rassias method became the norm for Peace Corps language instruction before the agency began sending trainees to their countries of service to learn it from native speakers.

In his own words, Rassias said students succeed if they have empathy and self-esteem. The teacher uses "rhythm and music and emotion to induce people to remember, and then they come to the dance..."

I used the Rassias method for two years teaching English in a Senegalese secondary school and, later, while in graduate school, for two summers teaching English to foreign students in Washington, D.C. I think it worked well for my students in both locales and I know it worked well for me on at least one occasion.

During my second summer of teaching English in D.C., one of my students was a young lady from Venezuela who was on her way to the University of Missouri to get her Masters in anthropology. She was sitting in the front row and—true confession—I violated the student-teacher relationship. But it worked out well as she has been my wife for 44 years.

She still remembers one lesson from my class. It was pouring down rain

outside and I taught the students the expression it was "raining cats and dogs."

Je vous remercie bien, John Rassias.

Craig Olson

## DEDICATED DRAMA

Life after Peace Corps is a guessing game that haunts many a volunteer as they sip a warm Gazelle beer under the mango tree. Yet how many of them think "Playwright!" as a next career move? Not Rajiv Joseph. His was a circuitous path from Senegal to the stage—culminating in the February 4, 2016, production of *Guards at the Taj* at the Woolly Mammoth Theater in Washington, D.C.

In an age that demands global awareness, Rajiv comes by his naturally—his father hails from India, and his mother from Cleveland. When he joined Peace Corps Senegal in 1997, he was determined to keep a journal "because I wanted to be a writer," he says. "But soon, I was journaling furiously because it had transformed into a form of therapy." Among Rajiv's close friends in country was Anita Datar, whom he credits with always believing in him as a writer—both during and after their service. Rajiv returned to the States in 2000.

After Peace Corps, Rajiv ignored his father's advice to go to business school, and went to NYU, where he fell in love with playwriting. He was one of three playwrights selected for the competitive Mentor Project in New York City. "That's how I got my start," he says, and it gives him great satisfaction that "this year I am a mentor."

Rajiv's inspiration for *Guards at the Taj* grew out of the mythical stories he'd heard all his life. "I first saw the Taj Mahal when I was 10 years old," he says. Dazzled, "I went back when I was 22, and was fascinated by the mythology of the place."

That mythology infuses his play, which is set in 1648, before the Taj Mahal was to be unveiled. In constructing the Taj, Emperor Shah

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Jahan fulfilled his wife's request to build her a mausoleum "more beautiful than any the world has ever seen." Rajiv's story is told through the eyes of two guards, Humayan and Babur, who, though terrified, nevertheless obey a cruel and bloody order that will ensure that nothing more beautiful will ever be built again. Their dialogue before, during, and after this heinous fulfillment of duty is infused with what Rajiv calls "the political and primal forces" of man. Their voices are at once poetic, fantastical, desperate and brutally prophetic in their implications for the audience.

Although Rajiv has a comic side, he makes no apologies for the gruesome themes in his plays. "I think the world is a brutal place," he says. And while we have the luxury of turning a blind eye, "the stories that I'm compelled to spend two years on are stories that surround the danger and brutality and terror of being a human being on earth."

The February 4 performance in Washington was a special RPCV night. Rajiv was buoyed by the presence of many of his Senegal mates. But when he got up and welcomed his guests, his voice caught as he dedicated the performance to his friend, Anita Datar, who was brutally killed in a terrorist attack in Bamako, Mali, on November 20, 2015.

It was Anita's words that graced the program of *Guards at the Taj* that night. After attending an earlier play of his in 2012, she wrote to Rajiv that "throughout the entire play I could hear your voice in every line."

She is right. And that voice, the voice of Rajiv Joseph, is at once profound, scorching, comic, brutally raw—and sadly true.

Kitty Thuermer

## TIED TO CIVIL RIGHTS

Over 180 friends and colleagues of Harris Wofford packed the Celeste Bartos Forum of the New York Public Library on January 13 for a conversation

between Bill Moyers, one of the founders and former deputy director of the Peace Corps, and Harris Wofford, the first Peace Corps director in Ethiopia and later U.S. senator from Pennsylvania. The audience had also come to see a special preview of a documentary being made about Harris's life.

The producer and director of the film is documentarian Jacob Finkel. As a high school student Finkel was inspired by then-Senator Wofford. He later set out to create a film that explains Wofford's exceptional lifetime of service.

The library conversation focused first on Wofford's long involvement with civil rights and his friendship with Martin Luther King, but most of the hour dealt with how these two men met and worked together in Kennedy's campaign, and in establishing the Peace Corps.

Wofford recalled the vision JFK had for the Peace Corps. "When Kennedy sent the first volunteers off from the White House lawn, he turned to some of us who were helping Sarge and said, 'This will be really serious when there are at least 100,000 Peace Corps Volunteers overseas because then—after one decade—there will be a million Americans with first-hand experience in the problems of this world.'

Moyers alluded to the fact that many of Kennedy's advisors had been apprehensive about Wofford who they thought was too idealistic. This was during the days when a team of about 24 people were creating the Peace Corps in two hotel rooms of the Mayflower Hotel in downtown D.C.

Wofford then recalled that Bobby Kennedy always said Wofford was "slightly mad" with his enthusiasm for new ideas. But Wofford added that he thought Bobby Kennedy was even more far-reaching with his ideas about race in America by the tragic end of his life.

The talk turned back to civil rights when Moyers told of how Peace Corps Volunteers had affected Moyer's own life and said Wofford had asked him to fly out to Ethiopia in the summer of 1963. It was shortly before the Martin Luther King March in Washington. Wofford wanted him to talk to a group of about 20 African-American Volunteers who had told Wofford, "We don't belong here; we belong back home."

At the time, Moyers was the deputy director of the agency under Shriver. Moyers and Wofford traveled the



JACOB FINKEL

country meeting with these Volunteers and discussing the importance of their work in Ethiopia. Moyers remembers as he left the country, one of the African-American Volunteers came up to him and said, "Moyers, how come you came all the way to Ethiopia to tell me to stay here instead of going to East Texas to change the system that brought you up."

Moyers told the audience, "I thought about that all the way home on the plane and decided then to go to the Martin Luther King March that weekend because of what that young man said to me at the Addis Ababa airport."

John Coyne

# INVEST IN SUCCESS

We made history on the Hill this year. Now it's time to do more.

By Jonathan Pearson

**T**he odds were clearly not in Peace Corps' favor last fall.

Two congressional committees had recommended no funding increase for the agency, and in broader budget negotiations that were cautious to uncertain, some key people on Capitol Hill were telling leaders in the greater Peace Corps community that an upward bump in the Peace Corps budget would have to wait another year.

Rather than backing down, the National Peace Corps Association and a determined core of advocates decided to redouble our efforts and press ahead. We mobilized our grassroots supporters to grab the attention of members of

Congress when they returned home to their district offices and we launched our new click-and-send letter writing software to raise a loud and clear voice in the closing weeks of federal budget negotiations.

The voices of a chorus of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers served as a powerful backup to the highly passionate and personal advocacy of Congressman Sam Farr (Colombia 1964-66). No one in the House or Senate has matched his commitment to Peace Corps over the years. He button-holed his House colleagues at every opportunity as Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet and

her agency team met with lawmakers to make their closing argument for a funding increase requested by the President.

Our combined efforts turned the tide. The result? \$410 million for the Peace Corps for fiscal year 2016. That's \$30.5 million dollar more than last year's budget and the third-highest Peace Corps budget increase in the agency's 54-year history. It amounts to the highest appropriation Peace Corps has ever received.

As a new round of citizen lobbying begins, the NPCA is investing in our community so we can continue to grow our advocacy program and build on last year's victory.

## WELCOME TO THE NEW NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION!



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### Action Central

The NPCA acquired specialized software that allows you to contact members of Congress more quickly and efficiently.

During the final two months of 2015, more than 3,100 messages to Congress were sent. To paraphrase one advocate, taking action using the system is now "ridiculously easy." Not only that, this new tool also helps us strategically, as we are able to assess and respond to the number of actions being taken in congressional districts all around the country.

The strength of our Peace Corps constituency will grow significantly in 2016. With a full schedule of events this year—including the recent National Day of Action—we fully expect our Peace Corps community to generate more than 15,000 messages to Congress.

### New Blood

When the NPCA is able to invest resources to expand its advocacy team, good things happen. Peace Corps funding, reforms, and many more community concerns are best served by robust NPCA capacity. That capacity has now doubled, as we have hired J.M. Ascienzo (Thailand 2012-15) as our Government Relations Officer. With a focus on Peace Corps funding, J.M.'s presence is bolstering our energy and efforts on a broad spectrum of advocacy priorities.

### Storming the Hill

We're organizing two events this year to bring our advocacy corps to Washington to share Peace Corps experiences with members of Congress. The first event was our 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive National Day of Action when 122 returned volunteers, former staff and other supporters made more than 180 appointments on the Hill to campaign for a Bigger, Better Peace Corps. We have begun organizing a second, bigger come-to-Washington initiative for September 22. The second campaign will mark the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peace Corps. Strong Peace Corps funding and improving health support—especially for RPCVs dealing with illness

and injuries from their service—will be key focal points of these events.

### Health

Investing our energy on health-related policies for serving and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers will be on the rise in 2016. A recent report of the U.S. Government Accountability Office noted that between 2009 and 2014, more than 3,300 returnees received workers' compensation benefits for Peace Corps service-connected illnesses or injuries or for the aggravation of pre-existing injuries during service.

Meanwhile, the NPCA affiliate group Health Justice for Peace Corps Volunteers regularly highlights circumstances of RPCVs who are in need of support when it comes to adequate care for the illness/injury they incurred while serving our nation. Along with expected federal legislation in 2016, we are starting to pilot grassroots "support networks" among 2-3 affiliate groups, and establishing a benevolent fund that—once established—will provide modest financial support to RPCVs in need.

### Grassroots Leaders

Do you want to join us in advocacy? We are strengthening this grassroots network and as you see from the most recent budget, we are making headway in Congress. This is the year when we need your voice to build on our successes. We continue to recruit, train and strengthen our network with the assistance of 40 advocacy coordinators in 30 states. Learn more about our expanding advocacy network and how you can participate at [www.peacecorpsconnect.org/](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/).

You can also invest in these advocacy efforts by becoming a Mission Partner. You can ensure the future growth of your Peace Corps, of a vibrant NPCA advocacy program and the power of the greater Peace Corps community in today's challenging world.

**Jonathan Pearson** is director of advocacy for the NPCA and served in Micronesia from 1987 to 1989.

# FILLED WITH PROMISE

Carrie Hessler-Radelet charts a new path for Peace Corps

By Erica Burman

*WorldView last sat down for an interview with Carrie Hessler-Radelet in late 2013, while she was still serving as acting director of the Peace Corps and awaiting a confirmation to become the 19th director of the Peace Corps. In this, the 55th anniversary year of the Peace Corps, we wanted to check in with her again, to talk about how the Peace Corps is doing and what she sees in its future.*

**S**he came bearing coffee. “Sorry I’m late!” Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet exclaimed as she burst into the National Peace Corps Association’s reception area. To stave off a potential late afternoon slump during a jam-packed day, she had made a quick detour to the Starbucks across the street from Peace Corps headquarters and thoughtfully brought an extra cup for this writer.

Warmly greeting NPCA staff members with hugs—it was the first time that she was seeing many of them since the Peace Corps had secured the largest appropriation in its history, \$410 million, \$30.5 million over the President’s FY 2016 budget request—she voiced her gratitude to the NPCA for organizing and mobilizing the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer community.

Which was the natural jumping off point for our conversation: just how did the agency plan to spend this new money?

“We had to be very clear both with the Office of Management and Budget and Congress on how we are going to spend the money,” stated Hessler-Radelet. “First, we plan to grow our Volunteer force. We have a plan, as you know, to get to 10,000 Volunteers by 2018, so supporting additional Volunteers is a big priority.”

But not just willy-nilly. Each year the agency undertakes a rigorous country portfolio review process, weighing such factors as need (measured through the Human Development Index); perceptions of Americans and American perceptions of the world; host country contributions (not only in terms of monetary contributions but also ease of doing business); Volunteer satisfaction; and, of course, safety and security and availability of medical care.

In addition, said Hessler-Radelet, “We look at where we can work smartly with other partners. Partnership is an area that has really grown and is, I would say, a hallmark of this administration.” The result is that the Peace Corps’ footprint has changed quite substantially. “We are working in places of greatest need and in places where we really believe that by working in partnership with others we can have the greatest development impact.”

A few programs featured prominently in the agency’s budget request. “We really want to scale up and add more countries to Let Girls Learn, a U.S. government initiative to increase access to education for girls around the world, launched one year ago by the President and First Lady. Let Girls Learn also includes partnership with other private organizations, like NPCA,” said Hessler-Radelet. “There’s just tremendous interest on the part of our Volunteers and our posts to support Let Girls Learn because empowering girls and young women has proven to be so critical to development writ large.”



Carrie Hessler-Radelet on her March 2014 trip to Africa.

Expanding the TEFL language certificate program, a passion of hers starting from her Peace Corps years, was also on the wish list along with many other improvements and reforms like IT security and implementing electronic medical records to make sure that “our systems are really strong, so that we can be good fiscal stewards of U.S. government funds and best support our Volunteers.”

Accountability is clearly important. “Every single one of our sectors now has a logical framework that maps out how to achieve maximum impact in the key areas where Volunteers work,” stressed Hessler-Radelet. “If it’s a community economic development program, for example, there is a whole curriculum and indicators of financial literacy. So for each technical area we

have rigorous indicators for Volunteer progress that are then applied in training and program support at the country level."

### Changing the way in

A key part of growing the Peace Corps also means growing the applicant pool, and a reformed recruitment process is a signature accomplishment of Hessler-Radelet's tenure—it was the focus on her 55th anniversary speech at the University of Michigan in October, a place forever fixed in our imagination as the birthplace of that idealistic, pioneering first generation of Peace Corps Volunteers.

"There are three parts to our application reform effort," explained Hessler-Radelet. "The first allows applicants to choose to apply to specific countries and programs. Applicants can apply to three country/sector programs in a single application, or they can choose to apply for service wherever they're needed most. The second part of the reform focuses on streamlining the application process—substantially reducing the time it takes to complete an application (now less than an hour!) as well as the time between submitting an application and receiving an assignment. And the third is offering more transparency throughout the process, similar to a college application, with clearly stated apply by, know by, go by dates. And actually I would add a fourth and that is really trying to make sure that we recruit the best and the brightest of the American people and ensuring that our Volunteer force represents the incredible diversity of our nation."

And the results?

"The results have been historic," she said. "A 40-year high in the number of applications—last year we had 23,000 Americans applying for our two-year program. We had nearly 3,000 people apply for our 500 Peace Corps Response program (short term assignment) positions. It was also the most diverse applicant cohort, with 36 percent of our applicants this year self-reporting

as a member of an ethnic or religious minority."

When word first circulated in the RPCV community that applicants would be able to choose their country of service, there was some apprehension. How would "less popular" countries fare? Would some still choose the I'll-go-anywhere-I'm-needed option? More fundamentally, would the essential nature of Peace Corps service and the Peace Corps experience be changed?

Hessler-Radelet reports that these fears have proven unfounded. "We have had more than enough applicants for every single country, every single program. Nine out of ten applicants have been placed within their choice category. And we're hearing from the field that they are incredibly ready for service."

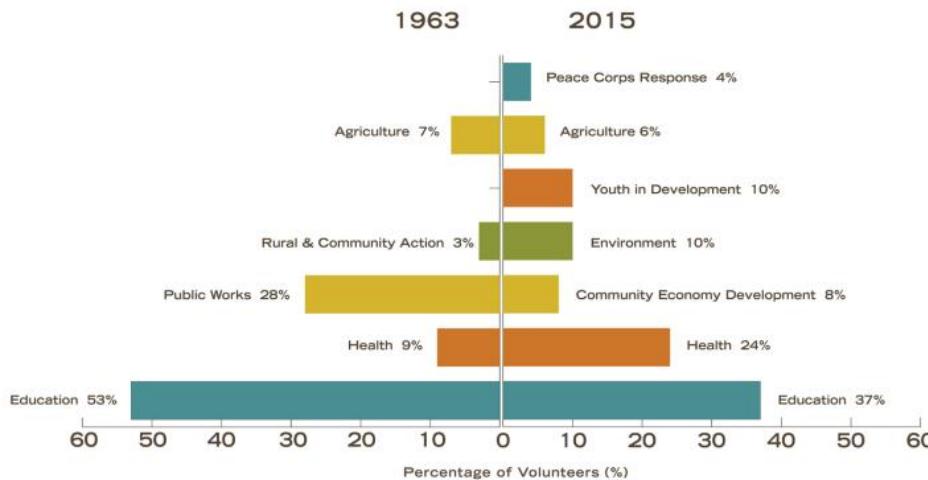
But anecdotes alone don't cut in today's Peace Corps; the agency is tracking whether this group of people stays longer, and whether those Volunteers whom they predicted would be most successful are those who actually are upon completion of service. The hypothesis is that when things get tough—"and they will get tough, they always get tough," said Hessler-Radelet—Volunteers who have choice will own their decision and therefore will end up staying longer, further reducing the already historically low early termination rates. So far that's been borne out. "We're trying to make sure that Volunteers are placed where they can be successful," she said. "We're very proud of that, actually."

### Learning to love tech

Meanwhile, the world in which the Peace Corps of 2016 operates is a very different place. Mind-bending technological change. Post-9/11 security concerns. As a "Boomer" in Samoa in the 1980s, she made one phone call home midway through her service. What has Hessler-Radelet observed in her visits with Volunteers?

"I think that when I came into the Peace Corps I also might have been a little skeptical about the impact of technology," she

## Peace Corps Programs



Source: The Peace Corps 1963 testimony before Congress and current data on the Peace Corps web site for 2015. Some of the regions and programs from 1963 do not exactly correspond to 2015 regions and programs, as agency directions have shifted over the years.

confessed. "But the truth of the matter is that this is the world now. Our host communities utilize technology as well—in fact, community members often have more advanced technology than our Volunteers! And there are some huge benefits to technology in terms of learning, sharing information, and communicating the impact of Peace Corps programs. So yes, I would say that I have completely turned around."

"At the end of the day," she continued, "even though Volunteers may have a phone and Internet access, they're still integrated into a community—they're still living there for two years.

"The basic Volunteer experience has not changed. And even though it's easier to pick up the phone, or connect through the Internet to home, I don't think that it has meant at all that the Volunteers are less connected to their communities. They are equally committed to our approach and our important work. The basics of the Volunteer experience are still the same. And of course our mission and three goals have never changed." According to Hessler-Radelet, Volunteers are still catalysts of community-led change, but today they can offer technology tools to help communities realize the change they want to make. If there is a downside to technology for the agency, it is that the pace of change is so fast. "It's a struggle to keep up," she admitted.

Nonetheless, Volunteers continue to push innovation. A new knowledge management system, PCLIVE, allows the agency to share huge volumes of information, ready for Volunteers when they need to use it. They can access webinars. They can share and adapt lesson plans across countries. Volunteers now regularly Skype into recruiting events.

"There are so many ways in which technology not only allows Peace Corps to be more successful in achieving our goals, but also communities to be more successful in achieving their goals," says Hessler-Radelet.

How to raise visibility and communicate the reality of this "new" Peace Corps—one where tech savvy Volunteers are tackling more nuanced problems like attitudes around gender roles—is something the agency is addressing.

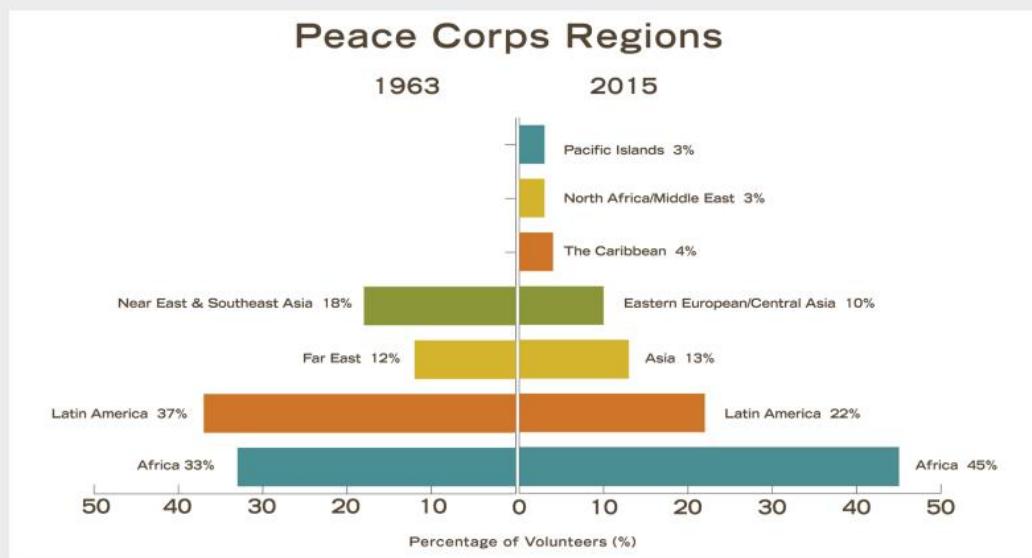
"Some people still think Volunteers are building roads or digging wells," says Hessler-Radelet. "Right now we're doing a complete rebuild of our website to show the authentic Volunteer experience of today in beautiful ways. It's already happening through YouTube, it's happening through blogs. Technology really makes it possible to bring that Volunteer experience into every home, office, and dorm room."

Of course if the good news of the Peace Corps can reach new corners of public consciousness, so, too, can the bad news of a seemingly ever-more dangerous world. What is the agency doing to make Volunteers secure and assuage the fears of Peace Corps parents and the public in general?

### Managing fear

"When we asked what made people nervous about the Peace Corps, the number one answer was terrorism," said Hessler-Radelet. "The threat of terrorism is frightening to people around the world. We work very, very closely in all of our countries with our own regional and post safety and security team, and also with the embassy, the regional security officer, and the security forces and police of our host countries. Each country has an emergency action plan, and each Volunteer has an emergency action plan. Volunteers participate in extensive safety and security training. We have really made a commitment to keeping our Volunteers as safe, secure and healthy as we possibly can, understanding that there are unique risks to serving in the Peace Corps."

Once again, data plays a role. "We can't eliminate every risk, but we can certainly manage many risks and we use data to inform our training and our placement of Volunteers," said



Hessler-Radelet.

"We have kept Volunteers in some countries where you might think we wouldn't be able to operate because we use country and community-level data to place Volunteers in those communities where they can be safe. The director cited the example of Guatemala, where data revealed that the capital and certain transportation routes were crime hot spots. Interventions in Guatemala—getting Volunteers out of the capital and instituting a Peace Corps inter-departmental shuttle for Volunteers—dropped the crime rate against PCVs from among the highest in the world to being in the lowest quartile.

All that said, she keeps a close eye on the news. "With any incident in the world, there's always a possibility that a Peace Corps Volunteer will be involved, even if it's in a country where we are not serving, because Volunteers travel on holidays."

As we wrapped up, we asked what she saw ahead for the Peace Corps. Did she see a day when the Peace Corps might work itself out of the job?

The short answer: Yes.

"We have historically aspired to work ourselves out of a job. South Korea is a perfect example; the government of South Korea directly attributes Peace Corps with development progress in their nation." She went on to mention Bulgaria, Romania and other countries in Eastern Europe, as well as Cape Verde and several countries in the Caribbean where Peace Corps has recently graduated. "It is always a happy occasion, especially if it is done in a planned and organized way," she noted. So Hessler-Radelet doesn't rule out closing countries even as she seeks to grow the Peace Corps. "We're going to have to continue to seek input from our host countries about their development priorities; and as their development priorities change, we also have to change."

That means programming innovations like the Global

Health Service Partnership (GHSP), in partnership with the NGO SEED Global Health. GHSP sends doctors and nurses to teach in medical schools and nursing schools in Sub-Saharan Africa to build human resource capacity and strengthen health service delivery. "It's a request the agency has been getting for decades," said Hessler-Radelet. "Sending doctors and nurses to Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda—and now a nurses program in Swaziland—has been enormously successful to meet the evolving health needs of those countries."

Likewise, she mused that in the next 55 years of the Peace Corps, Peace Corps Response could become a larger part of the agency's portfolio, as more countries develop and the need for technical assistance at the community level diminishes. "That could be a trend." The program in Mexico started out as a different kind of program, where higher skill level requests were met through Peace Corps Response, but now there is a two-year program as well. "We're going to have to continue to engage with our host countries and to make sure that we remain relevant to the achievement of their goals," says the director.

#### **Peace Corps' partner**

Finally, as the interview stretched over the one-hour mark, we asked, how does the director see the relationship between NPCA and the agency? What's ahead there?

"I have always been a big supporter of NPCA and am delighted that we finally have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). I have to say that when I came in to Peace Corps I was shocked and amazed that we hadn't had an MOU before."

The MOU is allowing NPCA and the Peace Corps to collaborate and complement each other's work in new ways. One initiative that particularly excites her is the NPCA Benevolent Fund to assist RPCVs with acute needs. "This has been a need for 55 years. It's something we can't do under the Peace Corps Act, but you can—and you're mobilizing the community. It's wonderful." Another example is NPCA's partnership with Water Charity and how, through NPCA's Community Fund, resources are being mobilized to support Let Girls Learn and Peace Corps Partnership Projects. "You're reaching out to the private sector and foundations to bring new resources to the Peace Corps community and helping us meet our three goals in a way that is new and exciting," said Hessler-Radelet.

Last words? "It's important to me that we work together effectively. We're still a federal government agency, which offers its own challenges but we're trying to figure out ways to be able to help each other be successful.. With each year, we develop a closer and closer relationship. I just want to give your team here a lot of credit for being strategic and innovative, actively reaching out to us, and really looking for ways to complement the work of Peace Corps to enhance our mission and to better support the RPCV community."

**Erica Burman** is the director of communications for the National Peace Corps Association. She and her husband, Eric, served in The Gambia from 1987 to 1989.



On June 7-14, 2015, Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet returned to Samoa where she and her husband, Steve, served as Peace Corps Volunteers over 30 years ago. During the visit, the Director was reunited with her host mother, Losa, and her host sister, Rosela.

# LOBBY IN THE HOUSE

Congressman Sam Farr on how to influence Congress

By David Arnold

**A**few days before Congress passed a federal budget that approved a historic \$30.5-million increase in the budget of the Peace Corps, Congressman Sam Farr of California was in his Longworth House Office Building office one late afternoon, explaining how to raise an even bigger Peace Corps budget next year.

The Congressman has spent 42 years in elective office, 23 of them here in the U.S. House of Representatives representing a solidly Democratic district on California's Central Coast. After 12 successful political campaigns to represent his district, he is ending a distinguished legislative career. "For years, my wife Shary has asked me to come home," Farr wrote last November. "She's right. It's time."

Farr has seen and led many debates over agriculture, affordable housing, clean oceans and Peace Corps funding. Soon after he returned from Colombia—where he worked in a poor barrio of Medellín from 1964 to 1966—he has regularly attended National Peace Corps Association annual events, hovering with his camera, gathering with strangers and old friends to tell stories about his days in Colombia and listen to the memories of others. Last summer, he took to the stage at the University of California at Berkeley summer gathering – sleeves rolled up and a conference program stuffed like this morning's newspaper in a back pocket of his jeans – and urged about 500 RPCVs to rescue the federal agency from a long history of Congressional under-funding. It was a lesson in effective grassroots lobbying.

As winter daylight begins to fade in the anteroom of his Washington office, Farr spends an hour retelling that lesson. First, he calls attention to one of the most efficient and effective of American lobbies, the National Rifle Association.

"**The one thing that I've learned** is that if you really get a community interested in something, the group that is probably the most affective is the gun folks," Farr begins.

"I don't mean your fathers and brothers and your uncles who just like to hunt. I mean those passionate members who say, 'Don't take away my gun.'

"The reason the NRA lobby is so effective is that they have a membership list—probably a lot smaller than the Returned Peace

Corps Volunteers list—but it's well financed. They have the gun manufacturers who are also the weapons manufacturers. They put tons of money into their lobbying efforts, and then they say let's go out and poll our constituency and find out who are the people who feel passionate, the ones that if you really ask them they'll really talk to their legislators.

"They send out a member alert to, say, Sam Farr's Congressional district in the central part of California, and tell their most passionate members, 'Sam Farr's going vote on this bill tomorrow. You get to him. You call him. Don't write letters. E-mail him or if you know him, make a personal phone call.'

"The timing is perfect..." because the NRA tracks their bills and calls are made across America the night before.. "and every member of the House will know that there was a gun issue on the floor the next day.

"We ought to admire them because they get everything they want and they're able to stop anything they don't like," the Congressman declares, "But I have to tell you, I still get an F-rating on my voting record - which I'm very proud of because I don't support their cause."

**Passion is the essence** of the Congressman's advice about how to succeed in the democratic process of influencing votes. He returns repeatedly to 'the Peace Corps story' and how it can persuade the legislators in these corridors. But it's discipline that takes the day and it's crucial that you follow through and take the action, Farr warns. Just thinking about it won't work.

"I just don't think many people follow through in American society when someone tells them to call their Congressman. First of all, they don't really know how; they haven't been trained." We rely on the old civics lesson, he says, "but you don't know what that means because you don't know how to do it. And frankly, you don't really think it counts. And that's the tragedy."

**The Peace Corps Caucus** is 73 members of Congress – four of them RPCVs who regularly have breakfast together: Farr, John Garamendi (Ethiopia 1966-1968), Joe Kennedy (Dominican Republic 2005-2006) and Mike Honda (El Salvador 1965-1967), who serves with Farr on the House Appropriations Committee where all federal budget discussions begin. Each year the caucus writes a letter asking each member of Congress to sign on to that



Congressman Sam Farr testifying at a December 2015 hearing.

letter requesting a Peace Corps budget increase. Each of the 535 letters includes the number of RPCVs who live in their member's district and the countries where members of their constituencies now serve as Peace Corps Volunteers.

"So what makes a difference is not how many people in Washington go around talking about it because we've sent letters," Farr says. "We've done all the internal stuff." Frustrated as a general who doesn't feel he has yet taken the field of battle, Farr admits, "We just still don't get a big boost."

In the midst of the interview, the Congressman and his communications director, Adam Russell, toss back and forth some of the ways RPCVs can boost the 2017 budget. Targeting members of the appropriations committee. Recruiting every last one of the 3,500 Peace Corps Volunteers who close service each year.

The NRA doesn't produce as many fresh advocates, Russell says. But in the end, Farr says, no, the best way to make a pitch for Peace Corps funding is to wait for the members of Congress to come back home on recess.

The very room brightens with Farr's next words. "Even better, next year is going to be a campaign year. They'll be out and around having town hall meetings and candidate nights. They're even going to have fundraisers and I've told people, 'If you can go to a cheap fundraiser—it'll cost you five bucks or ten bucks—go and shake their hands.'

"Tell them, 'I was a Peace Corps Volunteer. It changed my life. And right now there are thousands of people just like me that are trying to get into the Peace Corps and you haven't put enough money in the Peace Corps budget.'"

The pieces of a plan fall into place. "See, they don't know how much is in the budget and they don't care. They'll come back and ask their staff, 'What do we need to do?' And the staff who keep their fingers on the pulse of these corridors will lead their members into the hands of the Peace Corps caucus. "And the caucus will be sending our letters around to each member to get more money for the Peace Corps."

**At a recent Aspen Institute conference** in Panama, Farr did his own recruiting. He asked for some serving Peace Corps Volunteers in the country to come and meet some of his Congressional colleagues. "They couldn't believe it when the volunteers spoke the language and that it took some of these Volunteers seven hours to get there by bus. And no, they don't have any plumbing in their houses.

"Wow. The members were really impressed." It was a version of Farr's attempt to take a page from the Defense Department's overseas advocacy when the military offers an escort to three members of Congress to spend Christmas at a forward base in Iraq or Afghanistan. Farr can picture it. "Could you imagine three members of Congress wanting to spend Christmas with some Peace Corps Volunteers?" In Guinea, someone says. The strategy collapses in the laughter, and Russell reminds us that his father served in Guinea in the Peace Corps from 1964 to 1966 until the agency was asked to leave the country.

Those who lobby—or advocate, as some prefer to call it—are few.

But the NPCA counts no more than a few hundred of the 220,000 who know the value of their overseas Peace Corps work. But Farr wants hundreds more of those 220,000 who served to be exposed to the naked truth of how easy it really is for a small agency to insinuate itself into the State Department's giant budget.

**"It isn't money,"** Farr says as he reveals a shortcut through the deep woods of politics, territory and accounting.

"It's columns. It's just like items in the grocery store. Just think about your family budget. You're going pay your garbage bill and your electric bill and your mortgage and maybe a car loan.

"Well, Peace Corps is just one of those columns. Only there are hundreds of other issues in that 150 account that funds the State Department and AID and Radio Marti. See, I'd like to take it from there, but then you've got the Cuban Americans ...

"We're living in times now where it's all cut, squeeze and trim. If you say, 'Let's boost a bunch of programs,' when you live in a zero-sum game you have to cut somebody else in order to get money for yourself.

"We've been putting pressures particularly on this budget right now as we speak. I've been trying to get as much money for the Peace Corps as the President has asked for. And this is the first time in Obama's eight years that he has asked for an increase, a good increase in the Peace Corps budget. About \$30 million more than last year."

Another option for the advocates to pitch is Farr's jobless-in-America argument, which should work well these days. "We have 23,000 Americans out there who have jobs waiting for them. The supply is there. The demand is there. It's Congress that is holding its tight fist around the budget while we can't place 23,000 Americans in 23,000 jobs."

The Congressman alluded often to the Peace Corps story but offered no coming of age experience or personal reckoning from his years in Colombia. But he has a story to tell.

If, when he retires, he buttonholes the member of Congress who takes his place, Sam Farr will talk about poverty and how he discovered the relentless power it has over millions who live in crowded ghettos and remote villages in the poorest unlighted corners of the world.

"The problem in poverty is that you do not have choices. My story is that I learned that people in poverty don't have choices. You have to give them access to education and access to public health so that when they have an injury they have a choice."

It is an enduring argument for the mission of sending Peace Corps Volunteers all over the world. The Congressman tells it with passion and there is the sense that he has passed this lesson on to many members of Congress.

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**David Arnold** is editor of *WorldView magazine*. He taught social studies, math and English as a second language in a secondary school in Asbe Teferi, Ethiopia from 1964 to 1966.

# NEW IDEAS AT 55

The federal agency turns language-learning into a game the world can play

By Michael Buckler

In the collective imaginations of 60s-era Peace Corps Volunteers, the agency embodies innovation. During its frenetic genesis, Peace Corps was forced to improvise around political and philosophical landmines in pursuit of its bold, brash vision for a better world. Notwithstanding the shrewd agendas of its Cold War creators, Peace Corps was the federal government's version of a Silicon Valley startup. With Sargent Shriver at the helm, it must have felt electric.

Oh, how things have changed. While, in spirit, it retains a modicum of creative disruption, today's Peace Corps operates in a vastly different political and information ecosystem than its predecessor. Since the 50th anniversary, media outlets have skewered Peace Corps with claims of preventable volunteer deaths, shaming of sexual assault victims, and neglect of volunteers who return home with Peace Corps-related illnesses. With aggressive oversight from Congress, and in-house pressure from a tireless inspector general, it is easy to understand why leadership might think twice about channeling Sarge.

Yet, innovation at the agency is blossoming again. To be clear, it has always flourished in the field, where each Peace Corps Volunteer is a social entrepreneur tailoring an offering of goodwill and technical assistance to a host community. Now headquarters is showing willingness to change. And the press has improved, at least for now.

In 2015, DC-based nonpartisan, nonprofit Partnership for Public Service ranked Peace Corps the most innovative mid-sized agency in the federal government. Thanks to a bold initiative to attract and retain volunteers, Peace Corps applications are at a 40-year high. In a rare showing of bipartisan support, Congressional funding for Peace Corps jumped \$30

million in 2016, to \$410 million.

This trend delights Patrick Choquette, director of the Peace Corps' Office of Innovation. An affable Iowan and second-generation Peace Corps Volunteer who served in Ghana from 2005 to 2007, Choquette has spent the last four years quietly resurrecting innovation in this federal agency.

President Barack Obama famously tapped Silicon Valley whizkids to salvage Healthcare.gov when he said "ask ourselves every day, how are we using technology to make a real difference in people's lives." After working for then-candidate Obama, Choquette held out for his Peace Corps dream job and hasn't looked back.

Choquette's timing was auspicious. Unlike when he served, now more than 65 percent of Peace Corps Volunteers have local access to the Internet, many from their villages. Smartphones link Volunteers to the broader world via Skype, Google hangouts, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Many country directors require Volunteers, on a weekly basis, to submit electronic reports of what they are doing in the field.

## New ideas in bureaucracy

Yet, headquarters is not the field. Innovation always attracts headwinds, as most of us don't embrace change gracefully on a personal or an organizational level. Under Choquette's tutelage, the Office of Innovation has certainly faced its share of challenges.

For example, a pilot test of cloud-based Google e-mail at the agency fell flat, despite 400 satisfied users. After eight months of good performance, Peace Corps administrators shut down the project, citing a memo from Peace Corps' inspector general

claiming that the agency had improperly relied on GSA's determination that Google apps were secure, instead of performing a separate cyber security evaluation.

Choquette attributes the decision to well-intentioned status-quo group think, not a legal barrier. He describes the fallout that ensued as "a low point" and "learning experience."

His office has drawn praise, however, for fulfilling its core mission of targeting intra-agency problems, experimenting with fixes, learning from mistakes, and identifying viable solutions. Surely, Shriver would be proud of what the office has achieved operating on a shoestring budget—map-



Students at a hackathon in Lusaka, Zambia with Robert Kent, Jr.

a-thons that help relief agencies reach rural communities after natural disasters and crowdsourcing 3-million cartographic data points so that Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts can improve grassroots work.

Likewise, Shriver would swoon over a hack-a-thon-inspired app allowing Peace Corps Volunteers to order medical supplies from their phones, as well as internal nudges aimed at empowering Peace Corps managers to give employees more latitude to experiment with problem solving.

**A leap for language learning**

The latest initiative from the Office of Innovation is a collaboration with Duolingo, a language learning startup based in Pittsburgh. Last year, Choquette and his staff experimented with ways of showcasing Peace Corps' exceptional

cultural and language training to the world, to elevate the agency's profile and to provide a learning resource for volunteers.

After building a rudimentary Peace Corps language app of their own, the office approached Duolingo, whose innovative platform sources language learning modules

from the public, much like Wikipedia crowdsources encyclopedic information.

By gamifying the language learning experience—points for correct answers, races against the clock, and level-by-level advancement—Duolingo strives to make language learning “sticky.” As Peace Corps Volunteers know from experience, volunteers with sticky language skills tend to excel in the field.

According to Choquette, “Duolingo is an amplifier, not a replacement, for Peace Corps’ unparalleled language training. It combines our immersive language model, such as small classes with native tutors, with a scale and efficiency achievable only with technology. Until now, folks had to join Peace Corps for this knowledge; now anyone can get a taste of the Peace Corps experience.”

The partnership is already bearing fruit, foreshadowing long-term success. Working with Peace Corps language trainers in Kiev, Duolingo released a Ukrainian for English speakers module that now boasts 276,000 learners and an English for Ukrainian speakers module that serves 248,000.

Another milestone for Duolingo was working with Peace Corps staff to support the platform’s first indigenous African language—Swahili—and first indigenous Latin American language—Guarani. Imagine a world where all languages spoken in Peace Corps communities, no matter how remote, lived on Duolingo, accessible to the masses, all thanks to Peace Corps—the premier organization for amateur anthropologists.

That sounds like a lovely world—and one within reach, thanks to the innovators among us.

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**Michael Buckler** served in Peace Corps Malawi from 2006 to 2008. He consults on technology issues for NPCA and is the founder and chief executive officer of Village X, a nonprofit that crowdfunds direct donations for small-scale, village-led projects in developing countries and rewards donors with a stream of same-day pictures of their grassroots impacts.

# GROUP NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

A look at what NPCA affiliate groups are up to

By Jonathan Pearson

## SOUL OF CUBA

Jesus Puerto is the owner of two successful Soul de Cuba restaurants, one in New Haven and the other in Hawaii. For many years Puerto donated beans with rice and Cuban sandwiches to the **Connecticut RPCVs** who sold Puerto's food as an annual fund raiser for poor communities in Nicaragua. Maureen Shanley says as the group's president she had never met Puerto. "Email has been the only means of communication between us." A year ago Maureen realized Puerto was also an RPCV. When he came to the group's December party they met for the first time. "I was overjoyed to finally meet the generous donor who always supported our requests to help others."

## JOB SHOPPING IN D.C.

An estimated 90 people turned out for a careers discussion featuring a panel organized by **RPCVs of Washington DC**. The panelists represented the State Department, the Inter-American Foundation and the Millenium Challenge Corporation. The nation's capital is a job-seeking magnet for many just returning Peace Corps Volunteers and ground zero for employment with the federal government and non-governmental organizations focused on international development. The group's Washington activities include career planning and networking. The group worked with the Peace Corps Office of the Third Goal in hosting a panel on careers in foreign relations and diplomacy.

## PLUNGE INSIDE FUSS

For six years the **Friends and RPCVs of Guyana (FROG)** has supported small development projects in Guyana through a small grants program. They embody the spirit of a popular phrase from Guyana:

"When you want fuh swim river yuh gat fuh plunge inside fuss." Members say that means, "You have to take risks when you attempt new ventures." So FROG has begun marketing and selling tote bags produced by the Ituni Women in Action Group (IWAG), a Guyanese organization formed 16 years ago to reduce community dependence on jobs in chainsaw lumbering. The 25 current

at a Malian refugee camp in Ayorou where 30 women receive training in the production and selling of liquid soap. "The women are fast becoming self-sufficient because they can take care of their needs without depending on others." Other past and current women's empowerment BFR projects supported by FON fundraising have included a peanut oil extraction project and a women's sewing project.



Maureen Shanley meets Jesus Puerto

members of IWAG have been involved in training exercises to develop skills in craft production from non-timber forest resources. They worked with group to design and provide the first shipment of 200 bags. With this start-up support the partnership provides employment for the women of IWAG, while some of FROG's tote bag sales will also establish small grant programs in Guyana. More at [guyfrog.org/totes/](http://guyfrog.org/totes/)

## THE BEAUTY OF LIQUID SOAP

The **Friends of Niger** and Bien-être des Femmes Rurales (BFR, Well-Being of the Rural Women) continue a working partnership with a six-month program

## DOZENS OF SCHOLARS

Since its founding in 1983, the **Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development** has raised approximately \$700,000 in individual contributions to offer scholarships to promising students with financial needs. 2015 was another strong year for the group. They selected twelve new scholars and celebrated the graduation of 13 scholars in fields ranging from social work to electro-mechanics technician. Last year the board focused on strengthening the sustainability of the Foundation. Two new partnerships with organizations in the Philippines will provide additional support and possible employment to PCAFPD scholars and graduates.

## MIDWEST TO THAILAND

Many affiliate groups across the country support development projects of currently serving Peace Corps Volunteers, and often bring the world home by financing the projects of serving volunteers from the same city or state. The **Kansas City Area Peace Corps Association** is teaming up with former resident and Thailand PCV Jim Damico who is reviving a community library and building an outdoor classroom that will serve as an adult learning center. Jim received \$100 from KCAPCA

**Continued on Page 24**

## ACROSS THE STREET

Untitled, 1964/66 is Martin Puryear's view across the street from his house in Segbwema, Sierra Leone, where he taught art as a Peace Corps Volunteer. The work is in pen and ink on tan wove paper courtesy of the Matthew Marks Gallery in New York. In Segbwema, Puryear studied the work of master joiner James Garner and of roadside weavers, blacksmiths, potters and woodcarvers. He returned home and in decades of seclusion in an upstate New York studio - with study in France, Sweden and Japan - he became one of America's finest sculptors. The artist's abstract and sometimes massive steel, mesh-tar and wood sculptures are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim and the Whitney in New York and in the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. where he grew up. The Art Institute of Chicago exhibition, "Martin Puryear: Multiple Dimensions," will be showing from May 27 to September 5 at the Smithsonian's American Art Museum. The exhibition book, "Martin Puryear: Multiple Dimensions," is published by the Art Institute of Chicago and distributed by Yale University Press. ©Martin Puryear, courtesy Mathew Marks Gallery





grass-roof & corrugated iron "pan" roofs  
across street from our house

M. Purey-Jean

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The Fletcher School's breadth of coursework and customizable curriculum allowed Huria to explore her passions while sharpening her skills. Her multidisciplinary training from Fletcher provided the ideal preparation for a flexible, long-term career with the United Nations.

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Continued from Page 21

members and about \$400 from the **Central Missouri RPCVs** for his outdoor classroom project.

## COTTONWOODS IN SPRING

As many as 15 to 20 RPCVs have been volunteering with spring tree plantings in Albuquerque for nearly a decade. While the first months of the year bring snow-covered cold to much of the nation, it's tree planting time in much of New Mexico. At the start of 2016, members of the **New Mexico Peace Corps Association** helped with the city of Albuquerque's planting of native vegetation in open spaces. They joined other community volunteers to conduct planting and canopy restoration within the bosque area along the Rio Grande. Original native vegetation—primarily cottonwoods and willows—are planted in areas that have burned or been cleared of non-native plants.

## ART AT BROOKLYN WORKS

More than 150 people attended the showing of works of 20 RPCV artists on exhibit last December at a third annual Peace Corps Art Show in New York City. The shows are organized by the **RPCVs of New York City**. Some of the art is based on or shaped by the Peace Corps experience, with several pieces created by the RPCV artists during their service. The exhibition is held at the RPCV-owned Brooklyn Works at 159, a co-working space serving many communities across Brooklyn.

## NOW MORE THAN 150 GROUPS

The National Peace Corps Association's board of directors is pleased to welcome three new organizations to our Affiliate Group Network which now numbers 151: the **Southern Oregon RPCVs, RPCVs at the Department of Transportation and Friends of Mozambique**. Congratulations and we look forward to highlighting your group achievements.

ESA / VALENTINI



Brother Guy Consolmagno demonstrates the use of a historic telescope on the roof of the Pope's summer home at Castel Gandolfo for amateur astronomers from the European Space Agency.

## THE POPE'S ASTRONOMER

Science and religion with a long view

By *Brother Guy Consolmagno, S.J.*

**O**ne of my best Peace Corps experiences was working with some of Kenya's fantastically gifted students. The University of Nairobi was the only university around, in those days; we got the top fraction of the top one percent of all the kids studying in Kenya. But most of these students had passed their high school leaving exams by memorizing the "right" answers. Our challenge was to teach them how to think beyond getting the right answer.

My office mate, a Kenyan with a PhD from Boston College, lamented to me one day, "I had three students here earlier; they complained my homework was too hard because they'd looked through every book in the library and couldn't find the answer!" They were hard workers; but they hadn't learned yet what all good physicists know: hard work sometimes means that you haven't thought through the problem well enough.

And so I would end every physics lecture with a logic puzzle from one of Martin

Gardner's books, puzzles that he used to run in *Scientific American*. We would go over the answers at the next class. They loved the challenge. And it got them to really think.

One day a PhD student in psychology asked permission to test my class for the ability to understand, rather than to regurgitate. One question was a true-false question: "The length of a pendulum depends on the period of time it takes to oscillate." If all you know is the equation, you'll say, 'True'; if you understand the difference between cause and effect, you'll

---

realize that's just backwards. Unlike most of the other physics classes he tested, mine really understood the material.

It made me happy for my students... and it also told me that maybe I wasn't so bad at this teaching stuff. I've been doing it ever since.

### The telescope's attraction

Even more important than teaching physics in Nairobi were the days when I went upcountry to visit my fellow Peace Corps Volunteers. Everyone in their villages wanted to look through my telescope. Seeing their reactions while looking at the sky was when I finally understood why I do astronomy.

I had already learned, after five years as a lecturer at Harvard and MIT, that I did not want to be a big-time professor. It's not just that I wasn't hungry enough, or good enough; I just didn't want to live that life. This was the early 1980's, the start of the high-tech world. Software companies of Cambridge and Route 128 were getting big. I had a job offer from the people who invented the very first spreadsheet program for personal computers: VisiCal. Never heard of it? The company went belly-up while I was in the Peace Corps because the spreadsheet idea was swiped by bigger players in the field. Just as well I turned them down.

My sister had been in the Peace Corps in Senegal, and the woman in Cambridge who I was dating at the time had talked about doing the same some day, herself. She never did; but I applied, not quite knowing where I would end up.

I counted on travel, adventure, and teaching. And maybe I would finally shut up that conscience of mine, I thought. Conscience...my good Catholic upbringing in Detroit had left me with that unfortunate thing, a conscience. It would bother me at three in the morning, asking me, why should I spend my life studying the moons of Saturn when there were people starving in the world?

It was in upcountry Kenya that I finally understood why we do astronomy, even in the face of starvation. They were curious to know about the moons of Saturn as much as I was! All human

beings share a hunger to know about how we fit in the universe, and a delight in seeing and understanding the stars. That hunger is an essential part of what makes us human. We don't satisfy all our hungers by bread alone. But if we deny that hunger, we deny our humanity.

### Science, God and the universe

Being in the Peace Corps in Kenya also taught me an important lesson about how God acts in our world.

One of the challenges we all faced in the Peace Corps was that we came into a host country with all the unearned advantages we have, from being born in a place where we could have good health care as children, a good education, the self confidence to accomplish things; advantages that we now recognize as "privilege." It was always a temptation to use that privilege, to rely on it, when we were working in our host countries. It was hard not to; it was hard not to just go in and "fix things ourselves." But it also wasn't the right way to behave.

The goal of a Peace Corps volunteer is not to be the outsider who messes around with the local culture in the name of "fixing things," but to be someone who enters into the local culture, at least partially, and who enables others to be really themselves, without trying to replace them or control them.

That is just a very faint echo of what I see in the bigger universe: God enables us, but lets us learn how to do things for ourselves. What I see in how the universe works is that God doesn't act like a god. And that's pretty amazing.

And one of the things we are enabled to do, as human beings, is to study that universe with the tools of science. The instructions I received when I joined the Vatican Observatory more than twenty years ago are exactly what I pass on to the rest of the staff today, as the new head of The Specula: Do Good Science. That's it. (The whole point of the Vatican Observatory is to show the world that we support good science, so we have to be doing good science or else what we do is pointless.)

We have eleven active full-time researchers on our staff—an expert on quantum gravity and string theory, another on galaxy clusters and stellar evolution, on the theory of timekeeping, on the search for extra-solar planets. Two of our astronomers in Tucson use our telescope there to measure the compositions of stars in our own Milky Way. Two of us measure the physical properties of meteorites in the lab here in Rome; another observes the near-earth asteroids that we think were the sources of some of those meteorites. And we all collaborate on research with colleagues all over the world.

### Science and the fundamentalists

We all love the universe, and we all love science. Even the so-called creationists call what they are doing, "creation-science"—that means that even they want the cachet of the word "science." But I think there's a basic misunderstanding of what science is.

Actually, speaking to "creationists"—whose ideas of science and religion are very, very different from mine—I have come to realize that a lot of the bad reputation science has gotten among those on any given side of a political or social issue comes when people see their opponents using "science" to justify stuff that they think is horrible. And I have to admit that science is abused in this way by lots of people, including people whose goals I agree with.

Fundamentalists of any stripe—including those who I would call "science fundamentalists" who read this week's latest science as their gospel - are often acting from fear. And often the fears are legitimate, even if I disagree with the actions that come from such fear.

The irony is that using science in such a way is unscientific; it misrepresents the nature of what science really is. Science is not a big book of proven facts. It's a conversation about what each of us sees in the universe, with the goal of helping all of us see things more deeply. But the conversation is never ending; that means

that no one ever has the last word—though some ideas will be closer to reality than others—and we can learn even from people we strongly disagree with.

Isn't that what we learned to do, living in different cultures with the Peace Corps?

#### **Looking beyond Galileo**

We all grew up with these ideas of the Great Men and Women of Science. But it's something else to realize that you're expected to walk in their footsteps.

On the other hand, the more you read about them, the more you can recognize in people like Kepler and Galileo the same hopes and fears and ambitions... and mistakes... that we see in ourselves and in our colleagues. It makes them more human, more accessible somehow.

It also reminds us that no matter how profound our work is or how much it changes

**"We honor Copernicus and Galileo—and rightly so—but no scientist actually reads their work to learn science from it anymore."**

the way we all see the universe, none of it stays up to date. We honor Copernicus and Galileo—and rightly so—but no scientist actually reads their work to learn science from it anymore. The field has moved on.

Contrast that with the literature or philosophy of their contemporaries; after all is said and done, we still read Shakespeare and Descartes.

My religion gives me the courage,

and the motivation, to do my science. I could not do science if I did not believe in a universe that works according to logical rules. The ancient pagans didn't believe that; they explained everything they saw in nature as the whims of some unpredictable nature deity. You have to reject such a belief to begin to start looking for logical reasons for why things work the way they do.

It's even more amazing that we puny humans can figure out some of those rules, imperfect as our knowledge is. I have to believe that that is possible, or else I'd just throw up my hands in despair.

*Brother Guy Consolmagno taught physics and astronomy at the University of Nairobi from 1984 to 1985 and now serves as director of the Vatican Observatory in Rome.*

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# THE FOREIGN AID TEST

Success does not mean fully eliminating poverty. It's more complicated than that.

By Steven Radelet

## **Three Red Herrings**

There are many criticisms leveled against aid, some of which are valid. But there are three common misleading arguments that distract attention from far more important issues.

First, many critics claim that aid flows have been massive (with the implication that they should have had more impact), when in fact they have been quite modest. In 2012 sub-Saharan African countries received \$30 billion in aid from all donors. With a population of around 930 million people, this works out to around \$33 per person per year, or less than ten cents per person per day. It isn't much, so we should hardly expect miracles.

From the donor's point of view, the amounts are also small. Across all major donors, official (government) development assistance is the equivalent of less than one-third of one percent of national income. In the United States, foreign aid accounts for less than two-tenths of one percent of national income, and about 1 percent of the federal budget. Yet multiple surveys show that most Americans believe that aid amounts are huge and account for 15-30 percent of the federal budget. When asked how much the US *ought* to spend on aid, they say it should be much lower—only around 5% of the budget. In other words, Americans think they should be spending 5 times more than they actually do, while believing they are spending 15 times more than they do.

The second red herring is the claim that aid should completely solve global poverty by itself, and if it doesn't, it's a failure. This criticism often appears as the second half a statement that begins with the claim that aid amounts are huge: "donors have spent \$3 trillion over 60 years and there are still one billion people living in poverty." Or "there are still people dying of malaria." Or "most

Africans are still poor." The faulty logic is clear: problems still exist, so aid has obviously failed.

Princeton economist Angus Deaton, whose work I admire greatly, recently relied on this line of reasoning to attack aid. He criticized what he called "...the aid illusion, the erroneous belief that global poverty could be eliminated if only rich

poverty, or that the total elimination of global poverty is the appropriate standard against which aid should be judged. There is no silver bullet for development, and no single approach that can solve global poverty—not trade, foreign investment, a better business climate, improved health, better education, democracy, better governance, or lower population growth.



Engineers install power lines on the Matebe hydroelectric project in the Virunga National Park in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

people or rich countries were to give more money to poor people or poor countries." He goes on to show, in some detail, that aid alone cannot possibly solve global poverty on its own. That conclusion is no surprise—of course it cannot. The real illusion is the idea that anyone claims that aid—by itself—can eliminate global

The wrong standard is whether aid alone can eliminate poverty. The right standard is whether aid is helping countries achieve tangible progress (more on that point later).

The third red herring goes back to the British economist Peter Bauer in 1971, who famously wrote:

DOMINIQUE KESSER FOR VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK

"If all conditions for development other than capital are present, capital will soon be generated locally, or will be available to the government or to the private businesses on commercial terms from abroad....If however, the conditions for development are not present, then aid... will be necessarily unproductive and therefore ineffective."

This is a beguilingly seductive line of thinking: if the conditions are right, aid is not needed; if the conditions are not right, aid is a waste. It's a great line that typically elicits knowing nods and approving applause from the skeptics.

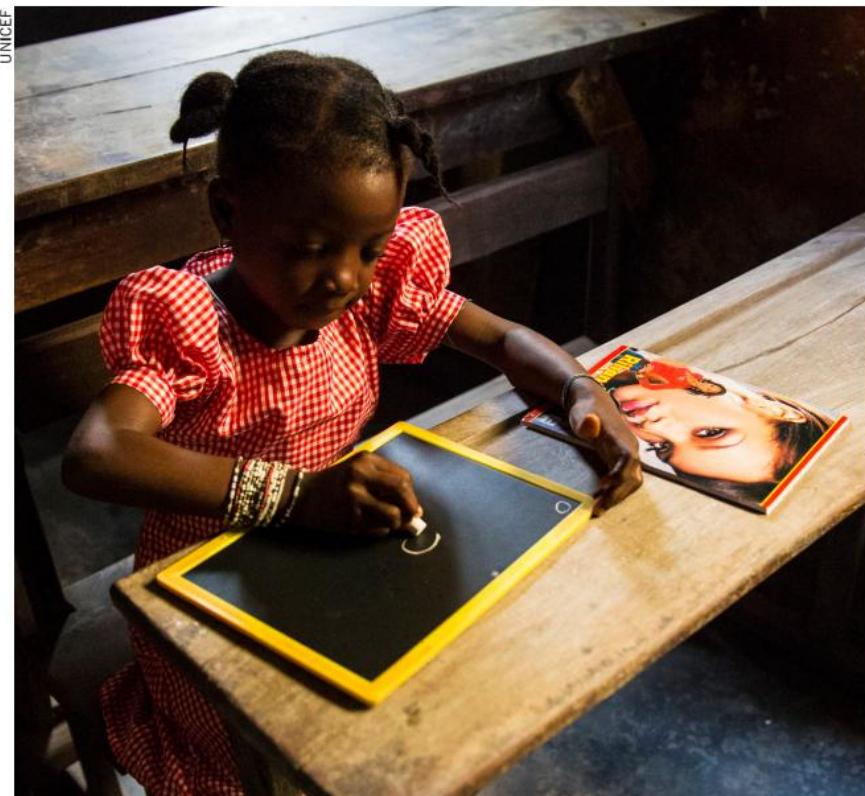
conditions for development are favorable. There is little private capital available in post-conflict countries that beginning to move forward, such as East Timor or Sierra Leone, and the private companies that are willing to make investments in these countries usually demand government subsidies and guarantees. Private markets will not fund investments in social sectors that are important to development but provide little cash return, such as vaccination programs, anti-retrovirals, or agricultural research stations. So let's not claim that capital markets are perfect, and that the private

has helped that country make significant progress in health, education, and economic growth, and the same is true in many other countries. Conditions for development are not right in Zimbabwe. It is correct that large amounts of aid aimed at triggering broad-based growth and development would be a waste as long as Robert Mugabe remains in power. But that does not mean that all aid is a waste. Aid given through non-governmental organizations is helping to fight HIV/AIDS and malaria, and is helping individual Zimbabweans despite their government's dysfunction. When circumstances are adverse for broad-based development, it typically means that smaller, more narrowly-targeted aid programs might be appropriate. It does not mean that aid can't be effective at all. So let's put Peter Bauer's overused platitude to rest.

#### **Criticisms of Aid**

Putting aside the broadsides, there is no question that aid programs do not always work, and there are many shortcomings in aid management and delivery. The critics make several valid points, and donor organizations have plenty of room for improvement.

First, some aid programs are poorly designed, with little input from local citizens and others with knowledge of local context. They may overlook obstacles, ignore underlying incentives, or otherwise design programs in ways that undermine results. Second, sometimes what donors want to fund does not match the community's highest needs (a common challenge for many charities and philanthropies). Third, since money is fungible, aid directed at a commendable goal can allow governments to divert money elsewhere. Aid financing for vaccination programs could allow governments to spend less on vaccines and more on limousines. Fourth, some donor programs are expensive to manage, with layers of bureaucracy, contractors, and others between the original funders and the intended beneficiaries. There are good reasons for some of these functions, such as



A student practices her letters at the Coteyah Centre Primary School in Conakry, Guinea.

But it's not accurate. The first half of the statement claims, in effect, that capital markets operate perfectly: if the conditions for development are right, private markets will provide all the financing poor countries need. But of course capital markets are far from perfect. They are reluctant to provide funding to poor countries, even when the

sector will provide all of the necessary financing. It just isn't so.

What about the second half of his statement—that if conditions are not right, aid is a waste? This claim is at best partially true, but as a blanket statement it is incorrect: it depends on the purpose of the aid and how it is delivered. Mozambique is far from perfect, but aid

ensuring financial oversight so that funds are less likely to be stolen. But at the same time, there are far too many cumbersome processes and layers of bureaucracy which add costs, create inefficiencies, and reduce the impact of each aid dollar. Fifth, donors do not always monitor and evaluate their programs. Targets and goals are sometimes poorly specified or nonexistent, making it more difficult to understand what works.

Despite the shortcomings and the big room for improvement, the bulk of the research evidence shows that overall, aid has helped support development progress. Aid is *not* the main driver of development success—of course not—but on the whole it has helped countries advance education, increase agricultural productivity, and accelerate economic growth.

And it has saved millions of lives. Donor-financed programs have helped increase the number of children receiving basic vaccinations from 20 million in 1980 to 200 million today, and infant mortality rates have fallen faster than any time in history. In just the last 15 years malaria deaths have fallen by half, tuberculosis infections have dropped 25 percent, and AIDS-related deaths have fallen by more than one-third, all supported by donor programs. Smallpox—one of the world's greatest killers—was completely eradicated through a global effort partly financed by foreign assistance in developing countries, and the world is close to eradicating polio. Diarrhea killed five million children a year in the early 1990s, but today the number is below 800,000, due in large part to donor-financed programs that helped develop and distribute oral rehydration therapy.

Aid has also supported progress in education, especially girls' education. In Afghanistan, less than one million children attended schools in 2002, and almost all of them were boys. But since then, the Afghan government and international donors have built 13,000 schools, recruited and trained more than 186,000 teachers, and increased net enrollment rates for school-aged children to 56 percent. Just one decade later in 2012, there were 8 million children in school, including 2.5 million girls.

### **Modest positive effect**

Much of the debate on aid effectiveness swirls around the relationship between aid and economic growth, with critics claiming that there is no effect. But a growing body of recent research in leading economic research journals—almost never mentioned by the skeptics—shows that overall aid has a modest positive impact on growth

estimate is that over the last thirty years aid has added around one percentage point to the annual growth rate of the bottom billion.” Former Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence Summers says that “It makes fiscal sense to support smart and effective foreign aid programs that are saving millions of lives.”

Then there is the political argument that aid keeps bad governments in power.



Raising chickens in Kampong Thon, Cambodia.

on average. More and more leading economists are concluding that overall, aid has helped spur progress. Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz states that “Foreign aid...for all its faults, still has brought benefits to millions, often in ways that have almost gone unnoticed.” Georgetown’s Martin Ravallion, one of the world’s foremost experts on poverty, concluded that “the recent macro evidence is more consistent with the claim that sustained aid commitment to poor countries is good for their economic growth over the longer-term.” Oxford’s Paul Collier found that “A reasonable

There is no question that over the years—especially during the Cold War—rich countries provided large amounts of money to some of the world’s nastiest dictators, including Mobutu Sse Seko in Zaire, Papa Doc Duvalier in Haiti, and Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. In these countries, the objective of donor governments actually *was* to keep the dictators in power. The practice continues today with funding that goes to authoritarian governments that are fighting terrorism, combatting drug trafficking, or are otherwise aligned with the priorities of rich country governments.

CHHOR SOKUNTHEA, WORLD BANK

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**"The wrong standard is to test whether aid alone can eliminate poverty. The right standard is to judge whether aid is helping countries achieve tangible development progress."**

These are legitimate concerns. However, at their core they are less about aid *per se* than the policies and intentions of rich world governments wanting to keep their allies in power. The United States, European powers, the Soviet Union, and China today use a wide range of tools to keep friendly dictators in power: diplomacy, trade preferences, military support, private investment guarantees, loans, information campaigns, and—yes—foreign aid. Aid is a tool, and like any tool, it can be misused. Since the purpose of aid in these situations is not development, it should be no surprise that it fails to spur development. It is valid to criticize the rich countries for

using their powers to prop up dictators, but that does not imply that foreign aid is a failure across the board, any more than it implies that trade preferences, diplomacy, or loan guarantees are failures because they have been used to keep dictators in power. Private investment has been at least as powerful in propping up dictators—United Fruit Company across Latin America, timber companies in Indonesia, oil companies in Equatorial Guinea, and many other examples—but that does not mean private investment has been a failure.

Today, some aid still goes to countries run by autocrats, but more aid goes to support legitimately and democratically

elected regimes in countries such as Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, East Timor, Indonesia, Mongolia, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. Empirical research suggests that the relationship between aid and democracy changed after the end of the Cold War. Since then foreign assistance appears to have helped support democratic transitions by reinforcing broad development progress in these countries and by supporting civil society organizations, stronger judicial systems, and multiparty elections. For example, Simone Dietrich at the University of Missouri and Joseph Wright of Penn State University researched the relationship between aid and democracy

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A photograph of a street food stall. In the foreground, there's a barbecue grill with several pieces of meat cooking. Behind the grill, there are various kitchen items like a green bucket, a blue cloth, and some containers. A person is visible in the background, working at the stall. The overall atmosphere is that of a busy outdoor market.

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in Africa and concluded that “economic aid increases the likelihood of transition to multiparty politics, while democracy aid furthers democratic consolidation by reducing the incidence of multiparty failure and electoral misconduct.” Other research has reached similar conclusions.

As a recent example, donor pressure in Senegal—in support of the majority of local voices—had a major impact in thwarting former president Abdoulaye Wade from changing the constitution and seeking a third term in office in 2012. Far from supporting dictatorship, donor pressure helped the citizens of Senegal achieve an open and fair election for a new president. In 2012, Russia banned U.S. assistance to a wide range of pro-democracy civil society groups because of what it saw as American “meddling” in its internal affairs. Vladimir Putin clearly did not see these programs as supporting dictatorships—he saw them as strong voices for democracy and accountability, and he wanted to squelch them.

There are myriad challenges—and no easy calls—in determining where and when to provide development assistance. A legitimate critique of current aid allocation is that more aid should go to countries that are democracies, and to supporting civil society voices in non-democracies. Doing so would make aid more effective in achieving development goals, help support democracy, and improve its legitimacy. But the strong claim that, at a broad level, aid’s main impact is to keep autocrats in power and undermine democracy doesn’t hold up.

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**Steven Radelet** is an economist and director of Georgetown University’s Global Human Development Program at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. He served in Samoa with his wife, Carrie, from 1981 to 1983. This article is adapted from a chapter in his recent book, “The Great Surge: The Ascent of the Developing World,” published by Simon & Schuster and reprinted with their permission.

# HONORED BY COLOMBIA

## What makes Maureen Orth run?

By Kitty Thuermer

**I**t's 1964 and you've just boarded a sleek Pan Am jet that will whisk you from San Francisco to New York. As you settle in your seat, a stewardess dressed in a blue pencil skirt and sporting an attractive pixie cut leans over and flashes a killer smile. "Hi, I'm Maureen," she says. "Coffee, tea, or soda?"

Except it didn't happen that way. Maureen Orth decided she'd rather be a passenger, so it was she who fastened her seat belt and left the country for the first time—flying 3,600 miles high over the Andes and into the heart of Medellin, Colombia.

"Women did not have a lot of choices then," says Maureen, who was 21 and fresh out of the University of California, Berkeley, when she eschewed traditional female paths of nursing or teaching to join the Peace Corps.

She describes her first view of Colombia as landing in a country that was "lushly tropical, with hundreds of shades of green that left an indelible impression." Two years later, she herself left an indelible impression—and little imagined that 50 years later the president of Colombia would honor her with the Order of San Carlos.

When the president of Colombia gave her the Order of San Carlos. The award was presented by President Juan Manuel Santos at the New York residence of Colombia's ambassador to the United Nations.

Yet for those who know Maureen—the award was not a surprise.

"Maureen was a whirling dervish during her days in the Peace Corps," says her friend and fellow Colombia volunteer, Congressman Sam Farr. "One

moment she was on horseback with *campesinos* who wanted a school, the next moment she was in the mayor's office seeking support for a project, followed by dinner that evening in an upper-class home to raise funds for yet another project."

How did she do it? How was she—a young *gringa*—able to engage different strata of society to help solve community problems?

Maureen credits her father on this score. "I never grew up being fearful

the extra horse they had brought, and never looked back. By the time she left Colombia, the school was named in her honor, the Marina Orth Escuela.

For many Peace Corps Volunteers, leaving their country of service marks the end of a chapter. But not for Maureen. As her son, NBC News correspondent Luke Russert, will attest, she "is not content with a simple ribbon cutting and a pat on the back. She wants lasting results and will do what needs to be done to achieve them."



Schoolchildren of Medellin surround Maureen Orth.

of authority and those above me," she says. It also helped that she has an outgoing personality. "When I arrived, I was somewhat of a novelty—a young woman living all by myself in a big bad barrio, pretty unheard of—so people were naturally nice. I always strive to make connections," she says, "to be friendly and seek what we have in common, so that helped too."

And when five men showed up on horseback and asked her to help build a school, she jumped on the back of

### After the terror

But achieving results in Colombia over several decades was tragically challenging, due to the political turmoil fueled by the notorious drug wars. And there were other obstacles, as well. "I knew how hard it was going to be to really effect permanent change there because of the rigid class system and built-in inequality," Maureen says. "I was not convinced by the time I left that permanent change would occur without a violent revolution." She is angry to this day over "the absolute refusal of U.S. consumers to take responsibility for their consumption (of cocaine) and the consequences and terror in Colombia spread by the creation of the vast U.S. drug market."

Although Maureen returned to Colombia several times over the years, she wasn't able to seriously re-engage until 2004. In 2005, she founded two non-profit foundations—the Marina Orth Foundation in the United States and the Fundacion Marina Orth in Colombia.

Today, the Foundation serves eight

public and charter schools serving 4,200 students with a full complement of enrichment programs. These include: laptops, a tech and an English instructor for each school, native English-speaking volunteers, after-school activities, scholarship programs, a chance for teachers to be trained and parents to learn both computer technology and English. One of the three of the schools added in January of this year is Progreso, a rural school in El Carmen de Viboral outside of Medellin. A magazine for educators has cited it as a school transformed from one of the nation's worst to one of the best.

"In addition, we use our graduates to service contracts from other institutions," Maureen says. "We empower them to use our model."

They began by adding one school at a time but this year they added three. I asked Maureen how the school program evolved, and whether there was a plan. "Like anything," she said, "I started one step at a time, hiring a creative and hard working director and the two of us mostly kind of figured out how to do it along the way."

They now use their graduates to service contracts from other institutions. "We empower them to follow our model," she says. One of those partners was Microsoft. The company awarded the foundation a contract to train 250 people—youth who are unemployed and not in school—in five basic tech skills in order to make them employable or motivated to go back to school.

In addition to Microsoft, Maureen is proud of other public-private partnerships: Intel and Chevron donated the first computers and Seagate Technology gave restored models. Other companies who helped included General Mills and Proctor and Gamble, Hewlett-Packard and Coca-Cola. And, as she notes in her blog on the Peace Corps web site, "Thanks to Motorola, my old Peace Corps site became the first wifi village in Colombia, and the first to have families on Facebook!"

### 'Her motor never stops running'

I asked Maureen how she managed to accomplish all this while traveling the globe as a *Vanity Fair* special correspondent, having a full family life, not to mention being involved in a myriad of other volunteer causes.

"Juggling is the middle name of all professional women," she says. "Luckily, as a journalist/writer, I do not have to report to an office every day so there were times of intense activity and quieter times."

"Maureen runs on her passion," says Sam Farr. "A passion for fairness and justice, especially for those living in poverty. Maureen will speak out against poverty to anyone willing to listen, at any time."

Many who have worked with Maureen would agree with Congressman Farr—



Boys repairing their One Laptop Per Child computers.

and with her son Luke—that the one undeniable characteristic of his mother is that she is driven. "Her motor never stops running," Luke says. "Whether it's going to the ends of the earth to cover an important story or throwing together a benefit for a worthwhile cause, my mother approaches everything she does with unyielding energy."

He says a lot of that energy is fueled by her Catholic faith and her experience in the Peace Corps in Colombia. "She knows first-hand that a single individual can make a significant difference. Couple that with an endless curiosity that always

pushes the central tenets of journalism in all aspects of life: Who? What? Where? When? Why?" Luke could equally be talking about his late father, the highly regarded NBC News giant Tim Russert of NBC News. Maureen and Tim shared both a strong Catholic faith and journalistic chops.

Over the years, Maureen's dogged persistence in giving back to Colombia did not go unnoticed. It was still a shock to her, however, when in September 2015, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos awarded her the Order of San Carlos at the New York residence of Colombia's ambassador to the United Nations.

It's Colombia's highest honor, awarded to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the nation—particularly in the field of international relations.

Although Maureen received the medal for founding the Marina Orth Foundation, she thinks "they also gave it to me because I am kind of a tireless cheerleader for Colombia wherever I go." For so long she says Colombia has been unfairly labeled as an unsafe, or even pariah state. "It has come such a long way and has miles to go—but it is a vibrant, dynamic country today."

In 2015, Maureen was also awarded the McCall-Pierpaoli Humanitarian Award from Refugees International for her work with the Marina Orth Foundation.

Maureen's deep belief in her host country is only rivaled by her fierce loyalty to the Peace Corps. When I asked her about the relevance of the agency in today's terror-stricken world, her response is immediate: "Are you kidding me? Peace Corps today is the most relevant it has ever been. We need to do everything we can to build bridges and celebrate our common humanity."

She is saddened, however, by a constricting bureaucracy that both Peace Corps and the volunteers face in today's 24/7 environment. On a recent trip to Colombia with Peace Corps director, Carrie Hessler-Radelet, she thought it was a shame that Peace Corps/Colombia's

number one mission was "safety and security." Nevertheless, she agrees with her friend Sam Farr who flatly calls Peace Corps the most effective agency involved in American foreign policy. "It's the best job in America," he says.

During the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps Maureen was interviewed on MSNBC's Morning Joe show during which host Joe Scarborough commented about the difference between the military and the Peace Corps: How America praises Seal Team Six while Peace Corps is often forgotten.

Maureen responded by pointing out the gross funding inequities between the military and Peace Corps—and how Peace Corps' budget equals five days in Iraq.

"I would never take away anything from the U.S. military," she says, "but we also serve and nobody seems to consider that in a parallel way—that we are serving and sacrificing for our country too, but with the difference: *we serve for peace!*"

Loved or not, every year Congress loses out on 18,000 potential American jobs due to insufficient funding of the Peace Corps. Wherever she travels, Maureen exhorts people to let Congress know how important Peace Corps is, and how great its scaled-up potential could be.

It's 2016, and Maureen Orth is not slowing down. "As I get older," she says, "I feel a deeper obligation to be able to justify whatever gifts and talents God gave me by trying to do some good. You know the old Peace Corps/Kennedy adage that says, "One person can make a difference and everyone should try."

Maureen Orth tried. And by anyone's definition, she has made a difference. But fasten your seatbelts, folks—for there is no doubt that she will try again.

**Kitty Thuermer** grew up in India, Ghana and Germany and served in the Peace Corps in Mali from 1977-79. She later worked for the National Peace Corps Association, Catholic Relief Services, Population Services International, Crossroads Africa, PSI and Creative Learning.

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For MPH student Elizabeth Toure, the word "community" conjures an unlikely picture: a bowl of rice with sauce. When she shared the dish with a group of women in Guinea, as a Peace Corps volunteer, she felt welcomed into their community.

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Elizabeth joined the Peace Corps to challenge herself and help a community. Now she's earning an MPH from the Bloomberg School to change the world.

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# THE MIDWIFE'S RETURN

## Crossing the Gambia River at Farefenni

By Joshua Berman

We arrived in Farefenni via a precarious river ferry in a long, canoe-like boat. In the market, we fended off flies as we picked up a few last gifts and supplies, then walked to the corner where the leaning, broken *moto* to Sara Kunda was parked.

Sara Kunda is a north bank village, located not quite halfway up the Gambia River. My wife, Sutay, had been taken in by an extended family there for two years. During her Peace Corps service, Farefenni was a crossroads town on the north bank and the closest place where she could get a cold drink or a warm beer, news from the outside world or the Peace Corps office

in Banjul, fax a letter to her mother, and maybe converse in English with a fellow *toubab* if any international volunteers also happened to be in town.

For me, an Africa travel rookie, everything in The Gambia was new—every moment a raw, exciting discovery. For Sutay, it was complicated. Ten years before, when she moved into her mud-and-stick hut in the Sabally family compound, she was dubbed "Sutay Sabally," the adopted daughter and personal guest of the head of the family, Sarjo Njara Sabally. Sutay called him "Baba."

Baba gave her the name in a traditional Mandinka naming ceremony,

or *kulio*. It had actually been a double *kulio*, to name both the foreign volunteer and the baby who had been born the day she arrived. Everyone in the compound dressed in his or her finest, brightest outfits. Food was prepared, music arranged.

Baba whispered to her, "Sutay Sabally." And so she was. The name means "recognize." Sutay was the only foreigner to ever have lived in Sara Kunda—she was easy to recognize.

Baba then shaved a piece of hair from the baby's head and cut a piece off of Sutay's braid. He and other elders made pronouncements and read from the Koran. Baba poured a few drops of water on the girls' foreheads and asked the village oral history keepers if they'd heard what these two new children would be called. They answered, "Yes, and our lips are sealed."

**As we climbed onto the last vehicle,** I watched Sutay retreat further behind her *tiko* and shades, her thoughts spiraling as we drew even closer to Sara Kunda. So much had changed in her life since she'd left. But what had changed in Sara Kunda? Had it been modernized? Had it gotten worse?

Baba could be gone, she feared, the family moved; her dog, Danjung, surely hadn't survived... They had no idea we were coming, and Sutay had had no way to communicate with them. If nobody recognized her, where would we sleep?

Two months after her *kulio*, Sutay's initiation to the village continued when, on one clear, warm night, Baba's daughter, Fatou, went into labor in the hut next to hers.

Sutay was still a new, doe-eyed volunteer who barely understood the language. But she understood that Fatou's mother, Nkombe, the village midwife,



When Sutay Berman walked unannounced into the Gambian village where she lived eight years ago, Baba and the family immediately called out, "Sutay Sabally."

wanted to play the role of mother for this birth. Sutay, the knowledgeable *toubab*, would be the midwife, they decided. They didn't know, nor did they care, that Sutay had zero training or experience in delivering babies—nor that her participation in a birth totally violated Peace Corps policy.

Sutay's first instinct was to take Fatou to Ngen, the nearest village where there was a clinic with electricity and a nurse. Baba summoned a donkey cart, and the three women—Fatou, Nkombe, and Sutay—climbed aboard to ride eight miles or so, in the light of a full moon, to cricket chirps and hyena howls, bouncing over the rutted path as Fatou's contractions grew closer.

When they arrived, finding neither electricity nor nurse, they entered the dark clinic and Sutay positioned Fatou on the concrete birthing slab on her back, as she'd seen on television, her only reference. She lit two candles to place between Fatou's knees, and after some pushing, out came the baby—both Fatou's and Sutay's first. Sutay continued with her TV nursing; she held the baby upside down and spanked her bottom before tying and cutting the cord with a razor from her med kit, then placing the baby on her mother's chest. After a while, they rode back to Sara Kunda with the magic of new life bundled between them as the sun came up.

At the old Sara Kunda bus stop she recognized so well, we got down, shouldered our bags, and walked from the traveling tree on the edge of the village.

Children saw us and arrived first, helping with our bags even though they had no idea who we were; our group grew as we rounded each corner. Both our hearts quickened as we got nearer the compound. Finally, with about 20 or 30 people in tow, Sutay and I marched unannounced and unexpected into the Sabally compound.

"**Sutay! Sutay!**" they cried out.

They hopped up and down and hugged her as chaos reigned and more people appeared.

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Sutay sat in the family home with Konko, her Gambian "brother" in Sara Kunda, to talk in Mandinka about their life together.

"Sutay Sabally!"

The shouts were as much exclamations of disbelief as they were of affection. At home, in the United States, her name was anything but convenient, drawing puzzled stares, uncomfortable silences, and mispronunciations. But here in Sara Kunda, "Sutay" was *who she was*. And seeing her in a place where people knew her name, how to pronounce it, what it meant, where it came from, was like watching a mysterious piece of my partner click into place.

"Sutay! Sutay!"

She responded with rapid Mandinka greetings, surprising herself as forgotten responses bubbled up from her past while dozens of women grasped her and held her and continued crying her name.

I stood to the side, filming and snapping until Sutay yanked me into the knot of people and introduced me by interlocking her index fingers together, declaring our matrimony. New cheers

erupted along with claps on my back and smiles! Tears streaming from behind Sutay's sunglasses and from the eyes of those clutching her mixed with the dirt at our feet.

Someone led her to Danjung. Her old, white *wuolo* dog was living the royal life on Baba's porch. In a society that mistreats animals as a national pastime, people were boasting to Sutay that they had fed her dog while she was gone and allowed him to sleep on their porch. Seeing Danjung always made them think of her, they said (because he'd belonged to her, but also because he was white).

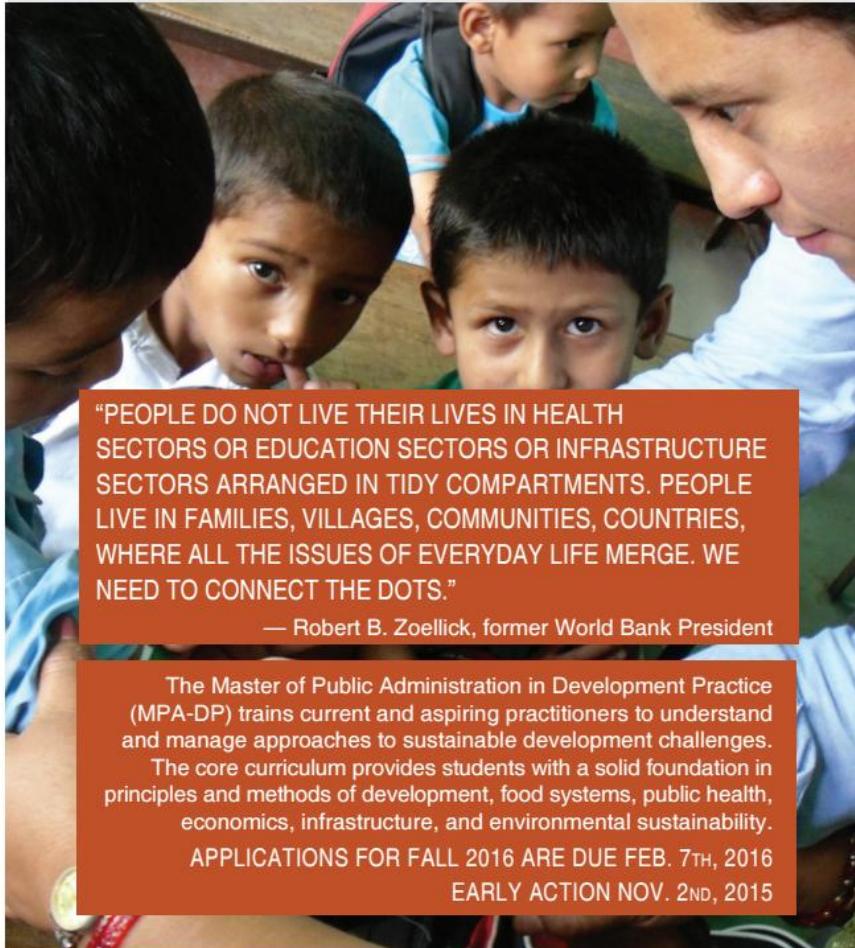
Baba appeared and the crowd parted. He greeted Sutay formally as he held her hand and the family watched. Baba was a serious, 68-year-old Mandinka man of few words and innumerable folds carved into his masklike face.

"Asalaam aleikum," she said.

"Aleikum salaam," said Baba. They both touched their own chests.



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**Joshua Berman** is a travel writer and columnist for *The Denver Post*. His book, *Crocodile Love: Travel Tales from an Extended Honeymoon*, is excerpted above, and is available at [JoshuaBerman.net](http://JoshuaBerman.net). Berman served in Nicaragua from 1998 to 2000.

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# TINKERING WITH THE FUTURE

A pharmacist crowd-sources for a shipping container

By Brian Forde

**F**or more than a decade, I've watched and read countless stories about security, terrorism and the politics of Iraq. It's the narrative that makes front-page headlines and lights up the evening news. It's an important narrative that needs to be told.

But it's not the only story about Iraq.

I recently travelled to Basra with the newly launched PeaceTech Lab to participate in a PeaceTech Exchange (PTX). I met people with an incredible thirst for knowledge, particularly about technology. People who were doing something about it.

I watched as two college seniors worked together to build a wireless robotic arm at one of the country's first makerspaces. I met a recent materials science graduate who timidly shared his brilliant business plan to create an artificial-intelligence editor for journalists to report stories more accurately.

I connected with a young Iraqi Facebook engineer who helped me teach an impromptu workshop on bitcoin. I shared stories with government officials and innovative civil-society organizers about how to build technology tools that increase communication and transparency between local residents and their government.

This is the Iraq we can also talk about and cover. 3D-printing, bitcoin, start-ups and open government could be the next story of this country. The Iraq I witnessed left me hopeful and inspired.

## Inspiring stories to tell

On the first day, I met a man called Nawres Arif, a pharmacist by day and passionate tinkerer by night. Hoping to provide a space to work on his ideas with others, he crowdfunded \$25,000, converted a shipping container into a

makerspace, and imported 3D-printing and electronic equipment. He opened the first makerspace in Basra, in his own backyard. Catch a glimpse of his creative power and drive with the motion-capture glove he built and unveiled at TEDx Baghdad. Yes, TEDx made it to Baghdad. Why? There are many inspiring stories to tell.

So I asked Nawres who else was tinkering in his makerspace. He mentioned two women who were building a wireless robotic arm as their senior thesis. When the students demoed their work, I was impressed and told them their parents must be so proud. They looked at me quizzically, as if this is what is expected from their parents. Yet I was thinking about how proud *any* parent would be to have their children building

**"Expecting a few people to attend, we were overwhelmed when more than 30 people showed up ... downloading wallets, and immediately exchanging bitcoin."**

robots, especially in Iraq. I was wrong.

The expectation that Iraq is downtrodden and hopeless is unfounded. The talent says something quite different.

When we talk about Iraq, we talk about our hope for a stable government. What we don't talk about—what gets lost—are those hopes that we also have for the United States: STEM-educated women addressing the gender gap in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths.

## A country of entrepreneurs

I also discovered Iraq's potential as a country of start-ups. One night, one of the Iraqi tech moderators, Ali Ismail, asked if I could give him feedback on his

business plan. Curious, I took a look. I was quickly impressed. His idea was to create a tool that instantly improves writing and reporting by journalists and students, by leveraging artificial intelligence, open data and other sources of information. It's a pain point he learned about as an intern at Agence France Presse while translating Iraqi news between Arabic and English.

Digging a little deeper, I discovered that this 22-year-old entrepreneur also created the first hackerspace in Baghdad. Ali has trained hundreds of Iraqis to code and build start-ups. He's also hosted several Start-up Weekends in Basra and Baghdad.

Caught up in the narrative of war and poverty, sometimes it's easy to forget the brilliant minds that are potential leaders to come. He has now been accepted to

Singularity University on NASA's campus in Silicon Valley.

As the director of digital currency at the MIT Media Lab, I often think about the global impact of bitcoin, especially in emerging nations. I met Murtadha Al-Tameemi, an Iraqi-born Facebook engineer at a dinner. Curious about bitcoin, he prodded me with questions. After several hours of discussion, we asked a few people if they might be interested in a 30-minute workshop on the subject the following day.

Expecting a few people to attend, we were overwhelmed when more than 30 people showed up—all excitedly asking questions about this tech, downloading wallets, and immediately exchanging

bitcoin. Iraqis immediately saw it as a technology that can solve problems I couldn't have thought of—such as a reverse remittance, where they would send money from Iraq to elderly family members abroad.

### A wealth of opportunities

Finally, what I saw when it comes to digital government, open data and civic technology was just as exciting as everything else. I came to Basra at the invitation of the PeaceTech Lab at the US Institute of Peace to work with civil-society organizations and the provincial government. My aim was to develop and train organizations and the provincial government on tech that would improve civic engagement.

While I was at the White House, I had the opportunity to work with hundreds of civic technologists. These were people fuelled by a passion to fix their cities and

improve the lives of their neighbors by building the kind of tech that is powered by open data. They make an impact, but the delta between most American cities and Iraq is much greater.

I saw such opportunity in Iraq – a young woman who wanted to use open data to track water pollution in her community, a deputy governor who wanted to discuss what we had done to build a 21st-century government at the White House and in Detroit, and how he could learn from that.

As a result, the PeaceTech Lab is now funding participants to work on projects including the electronic issuance of ID certificates. They aim to develop a process, using open data and maps, to address unauthorized housing development, and build tools that improve transparency and communication about the maintenance of roads and other critical infrastructure.

While there's a lot of room for improvement, countries that are in the process of rebuilding have the opportunity to leapfrog developed nations. They aren't burdened with legacy systems.

It's important to see Iraq from a different perspective. Yes, it's far from the country it hopes to be. Yes, there are real issues with security, stability, and terrorism. But if the inspirational people I met are an indication of its future, I'm excited to support their efforts as they strive to build the promising country they deserve.

---

**Brian Forde** is the director of digital currency at the MIT Media Lab. He was a senior advisor on mobile and data innovation for the White House Office of Science and Technology. He served in Nicaragua from 2003 to 2005 and now serves on the NPCA board of directors.

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Operational Information Management Officer • UN World Food Programme  
Cornell University Photography



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## IN MEMORIAM

We remember those within the Peace Corps community who passed away in the last several months, and thank them for their service to our nation. For a more extensive list of those lost in recent years, visit <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/>.

We welcome you to send information on additional members of the Peace Corps community by sending a message to [obituary@peacecorpsconnect.org](mailto:obituary@peacecorpsconnect.org).

### STAFF

Peter I. Burr, 11/21/15  
Robert Calvert Jr.,  
6/11/15

Anthony Donato  
DeAngelo, 12/16/15  
Alfredo Perez,  
12/18/15  
James M. Pines,  
1/10/16  
Charles L. Plante,  
12/21/15  
John B. Shlaes,  
11/26/15  
Grover A. Smith,  
11/6/15  
Jonathan Steinberg,  
12/21/15

### MULTIPLE COUNTRIES OF SERVICE

Nancy Balliett Adam,  
Costa Rica, Thailand;  
1/3/16  
Evelyn M. Shifflett  
Barnes, Micronesia,  
Ethiopia; 11/19/15  
Milford Randy Cowley,  
Malawi, Burkina Faso,  
Philippines; 10/8/15  
Ferran Daniel Renzulli;  
Zaire, Gabon, Congo;  
11/11/15

Robert St. John,  
Ethiopia, Morocco;  
1/10/16

Glen Wersch;  
Dominican Republic,  
Argentina; 11/7/15

Peter Yurich, Liberia,  
Kiribati, Namibia,  
Lesotho; 8/20/15

### AFGHANISTAN

Paul Littman, 3/17/15

### BRAZIL

Joan Amelia Finger,  
12/30/15  
Pat Kling, 11/19/15

### BULGARIA

Dr. Patricia Boughton  
Palmer, 12/24/15  
Walter Silge, 1/18/16

### BURKINA FASO

Anthony Simeone,  
11/9/15

### CHILE

Jeff Matthew Reece,  
12/26/15

Linda Marie  
Schwebke, 11/1/15

### COLOMBIA

Thomas Bentley,  
12/18/15  
Dana Seaton, 11/3/15

### COSTA RICA

Sondra Lynn Elizondo,  
12/10/15

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Stephen Pulaski,  
12/10/15

### ETHIOPIA

Maurice H. "Peter"  
Basquin, 11/16/15

Karen A. Kennedy,  
Ph.D., 12/19/15  
Neil Gene Kotler,  
Ph.D., 01/13/16

Edward John "Jack"  
Prebis, 11/22/15

### GHANA

David Carisch,  
1/16/16

Mark Hector, 1/4/16

### HONDURAS

Ernestine Abbruzzese,  
1/6/16

Mary Theresa  
MacMullan, 10/22/15

Dianne McMain,  
10/12/15

### INDIA

Jane M. Bullock,  
1/11/16

Dede Muhler,  
12/11/15

### IRAN

Phillip Doub,  
11/12/15

### NEPAL

James Dowling  
Sexton, 12/29/15  
Conrad G. Tessier,  
7/22/15

### JAMAICA

Jane McRae, 11/23/15

### JORDAN

Janine Deloris Snead,  
12/29/15

### KAZAKHSTAN

Eli "Les" Combs,  
10/21/15

### KENYA

John Walsh, 10/18/15

### KOREA

Larry Don Black,  
10/9/15

### LESOTHO

William Arthur  
Roberson, 11/29/15

### LIBERIA

Betsy Young,  
11/24/15  
Jill Zarchin, 11/20/15

### MALAWI

William I. Beliveau,  
12/17/15  
Lauren Griffith  
Johnson, 11/22/15

### MALAYSIA

Judy Folkmanis,  
1/9/16  
Mark Intino, 1/18/16

Michael James Kelley,  
1/14/16  
Raymond Lum,  
11/14/15

### MEXICO

Jose Sandoval,  
11/15/15  
George Deihl, 10/26/15

### MICRONESIA

Beverly O'Hara,  
11/21/15

### NEPAL

Anna Anderson,  
11/8/15

### PAKISTAN

Earl W. Bauer,  
12/12/15  
Len Samuel Burton,  
11/6/15

### NIGER

Ann Radcliffe Evans,  
12/20/15  
Gary A. Grandusky,  
11/10/15

### PAKISTAN

Christine Frances  
Leister Ladd, 11/26/15

### PANAMA

Robert G. Stillmack,  
Jr., 1/9/16  
Betty Ann  
McCormick, 12/16/15

### PERU

James Gail Ashcraft,  
11/24/15  
Jean Margaret  
Matthews, 12/16/15

### PHILIPPINES

Robert Porter  
Brackett Sr., 12/20/15

### SWAZILAND

Lula Bess Carey,  
1/12/16  
Catherine B.  
Kreitinger, 11/27/15

### YEMEN

Joseph R. Krepel,  
11/9/15  
Ann Lee Walter,  
11/22/15

### YUGANDA

Bernadette Scarani  
Mahfood, 12/10/15

### VENEZUELA

Lucretia Parsons  
Markham Jones,  
12/17/15

### PERU

James Gail Ashcraft,  
11/24/15  
David Legacki, 12/5/15

### YEMEN

Patrick John Kane,  
12/22/15

### COUNTRY OF SERVICE NOT SPECIFIED

Walfrid "Wally" Bjorn,  
1/10/16

Lena Carline, 11/9/15

Edward William  
Coffey, 10/31/15

Ricardo Alfredo  
Davison, 12/13/15

Edna Elizabeth Diallo,  
11/23/15

Robert Frary, 9/15/15

Beatrice W. George,  
1/25/16

Davidson H.  
Humphreys, 11/2/15

Sharon Montgomery,  
11/11/15

Ofelia H. Nickel,  
10/26/15

Pauline O'Dell,  
1/13/16

Beverly J. "Bevy"  
Jane" Reid, 1/9/16

Patricia J. "Pat"  
Schnur, 1/5/16

Thelma "Coco"  
Whelchel, 12/12/15



## Legacy of Peace

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# RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY

## STAFF

Hobart and Willam Smith Colleges honored former Peace Corps Director **Mark Gearan** (1995-99) and his wife, Mary Herlihy Gearan, by naming the new



Performing Arts Center in their honor. Gearan has served as president of the college since 1999. The Gearan Center for the Performing Arts opened in January and unites academic and performance spaces for the school's theatre, music, dance and media and society programs.

## BOLIVIA

**Matt Hayek** (1992-94) completed eight years on the Iowa City, Iowa city council and six of those years mayor. A feature in the Iowa City Press-Citizen reported that Hayek's grandfather was a city council member and city attorney in the 1920's, his father was city attorney and his mother was president of the school board. A 1997 graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, Hayek will continue his law practice in Iowa City.

## CAMEROON

President Barack Obama has nominated **Stephen Michael Schwartz** (1981-83) to be the next U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Somalia. A career member of the Foreign Service, Schwartz is director of the Office of Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Affairs. He has also served at posts in Zambia, Mauritius, South Africa and Cuba. Along with his service as a Peace Corps Volunteer, Schwartz was a country desk assistant and desk officer from 1984 to 1987.

## COSTA RICA

**Lydia Radosevich** (1992-94) went to Haiti in January to perform continued relief efforts stemming from the 2010 earthquake. A physical therapist with the Ruidoso Physical Therapy Center in

Ruidoso, New Mexico. Radosevich worked in Port-de-Paix for Sustainable Development and New Therapy, a physical therapy-driven multidisciplinary team that provides life changing care to those in need.

## CZECH REPUBLIC

**Sarah E. Campbell** became the first female minister of St. Stephens-Bethlehem United Church of Christ in Amherst, New York in January. Campbell holds a master's degree in divinity from Colgate Rochester Crozier Divinity School. She served a church in Rochester as student minister with preaching, teaching, providing pastoral care and other services.

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

**Al Kamen** (1967-69) retired from the Washington Post after a 35-year career there. Since 1993, he wrote the "In the

Loop" column which relentlessly followed Washington's political class. While at the Post, Kamen covered local and federal courts, the Supreme Court and the State Department. He assisted reporting colleague Bob Woodward in writing "The Final Days" chronicling the closing days of the Nixon administration and "The Brethren", a behind-the-scenes look at the Supreme Court.



## GABON

**Dean Pittman** (1978-80) is the new U.S. ambassador to Mozambique. He joined the Foreign Service in 1989 and has been posted to Mozambique, Angola, Guyana, and Iraq where was deputy director in the Governance Office of the Coalition

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Provisional Authority. He served three years in Northern Ireland, in the State Department's Office of Policy Planning and as a senior adviser to the Bureau of International Organization Affairs.

## GAMBIA

The Motion Picture Academy nominated **Bryn Mooser** (2001-03) for his production of the documentary, Body Team 12, which was nominated for best documentary short. The film features Garmai Sumo, a registered nurse in Monrovia, Liberia, who was the only female member of this team at the height of the Ebola crisis. Mooser has co-directed and produced 10 award-winning documentaries. While working in Haiti after the earthquake Mooser and a friend built a secondary school in Port-au-Prince Haiti, which educates 3,000 students a year. While in Haiti, he began his film career with "Baseball in the Time of Cholera."

## GHANA

The photographs of **Nikki Stefanelli** (1996-97), titled "Balance and Grace" were in a show of Journey Around the World, an exhibition at Danville, California's Village Theatre Art Gallery. Stefanelli is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute. As a teacher and traveler, she leads students on international service projects to Cuba, Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, China, Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

## HONDURAS

State University of New York professor of environmental science **Dr. Theodore Endreny** (1990-92) received a Fulbright grant to serve as distinguished chair in Environmental Science at Parthenope University in Naples, Italy, until summer. He joined the university in 1999 and chairs the Department of Environmental Resources Engineering. His work focuses on how public health can be improved through urban watershed restoration and biodiversity.

## KOREA

**Charles "Chip" Joseph** (1976-78) retired as head of Y-Haven, a Cleveland-based

YMCA shelter for recovering addicts, after 20 years of service. Joseph wrote the grant that established the shelter a decade after ending his own heroin addiction. He previously worked for Catholic Charities.

## LATVIA

**Robert Thornhill** (1996-98) and a U.S. navy veteran was instrumental in passage of the Veteran's Administration Reform Bill last year in Congress that supports military spouses. U.S. Senator from Oregon Jeff Merkley credited Thornhill with the proposal that gives surviving spouses of men and women in the military educational benefits under the G.I. bill. Thornhill spearheaded similar legislation in the Oregon legislature in 2008 when Merkley was speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives.

## MALAYSIA

**Mark Edleson** (1968-70) is president of Alila Hotels and Resorts, a company that owns and manages a dozen luxury spas and hotels in China, Indonesia, India and Oman. Edleson has spent 35 years in finance, real estate development and the leisure industry. He began his company with a resort in Bali and has been active for many years in establishing successful leisure industry brands. His company advocates green initiatives and community engagement projects throughout Asia. More at [alilahotels.com/](http://alilahotels.com/)

## MICRONESIA

When **Joe Freeman** (1966-69) suffered severe injuries in a racing car accident, he began racing vintage cars and became the driving force behind Racemaker Press, a publisher specializing in vintage car book publishing. He is a longtime supporter and past president of the Larz Anderson Auto Museum in Brookline, Massachusetts.

## MOROCCO

Singer-songwriter **Socorra Camposanto** (2010-12) performed in a seven-city tour

of Morocco in November, organized by the American Language Center-Arabic

Language Institute (ALC-ALIF) in Fez. The profits from one of Camposanto's albums that the center helped to produce provided support for the Ziat Center for Girls in Fez. Camposanto is based in San Francisco. More at [www.socorramusic.com](http://www.socorramusic.com).

**Neil Gottlieb** (2002-03) competed in Cambodia for 39 days last spring with 17 others for the grand prize of \$1 million on the 32nd season of the CBS reality show, "Survivor". The series runs this winter. This season's episodes were filmed in Cambodia during the spring of 2015. The Sausalito, California resident is founder of the nationally distributed Three Twins Ice Cream.

## NAMIBIA

**Jill Brown** (1996-98) is running for a seat in the Nebraska State Legislature. Her district covers much of Omaha. She is an associate professor of psychology at Creighton University and vice president of the Society for Crosscultural Research. She has performed kinship and child migration studies around her Peace Corps site for 15 years. Her campaign focuses on education, health care and public safety for children and families.

## NICARAGUA

**Blake Thomas** (2012-14), co-founder of Tiny House Coffee, buys his coffee beans from a half-dozen farmers he met during his Peace Corps service where he worked on several coffee projects. He offers a revenue-sharing partnership with his producers.

## PERU

**Carlos Garcia** (2012-15) returns to the Municipality of Huari where he served as a volunteer to accept an appointment as director of environmental and digital initiatives.

## RWANDA

**Heather Newell** (2011-13) is program officer for The Women's Bakery (TWB),

a Rwanda business owned by women that empowers women. The bakery was founded in 2014 by Markey Culver (2010-12). TWB currently operates programs in Rwanda and Tanzania.

### SIERRA LEONE

An exhibition of photographs by Alison Ormsby (1991-92) was displayed recently at the University of North Carolina-Ashville. The show is "Protecting the Environment through Cultural Traditions: Sacred Groves of Sierra Leone and India". Ormsby is adjunct assistant professor of environmental studies at the university. The sacred groves are small, forested areas that are locally protected for their cultural and spiritual significance.

### SOLOMON ISLANDS

The American Visionary Art Museum in

Baltimore in May will open "Matt Sesow: Shock and Awe," a solo exhibition of art by **Matt Sesow** (1988-89). Access Gallery in Denver offers another solo exhibition of Sesow's work in August. In 2013 the U.N. Postal Administration included Sesow's works in a series of postage stamps recognizing the talents of artists with disabilities. Sesow lost his hand and part of his arm following an accident when he was eight years old. More at [www.sesow.com](http://www.sesow.com)

### THAILAND

**Joseph Goldstein** (1965-1867) is a co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts, which is considered one of the largest Buddhist meditation retreat centers in the western world. He served in 1965 to 1967 and began studying meditation there. He is the author of One Dharma: The Emerging

Western Buddhism, and Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening.

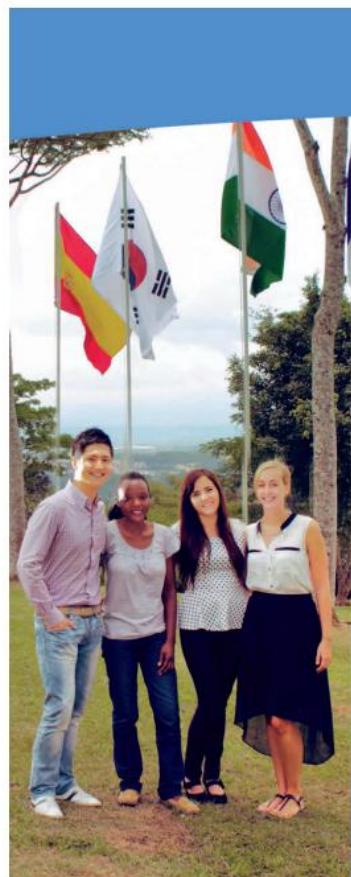
### UGANDA

The African Wildlife Foundation announced the appointment of **Kaddu Kiwe Subanye** (1996-1998) as its new president. Subanye's career in conservation and resource



management began when he was associate director of Peace Corps Uganda. He later worked as a country program coordinator for the International Union for Conservation of Nature

and as a senior policy and planning advisor for Conservation International. In 2006 he joined AWF in Washington as director of programs and became chief of party for the U.S. Agency for International Development/Uganda Biodiversity Program.



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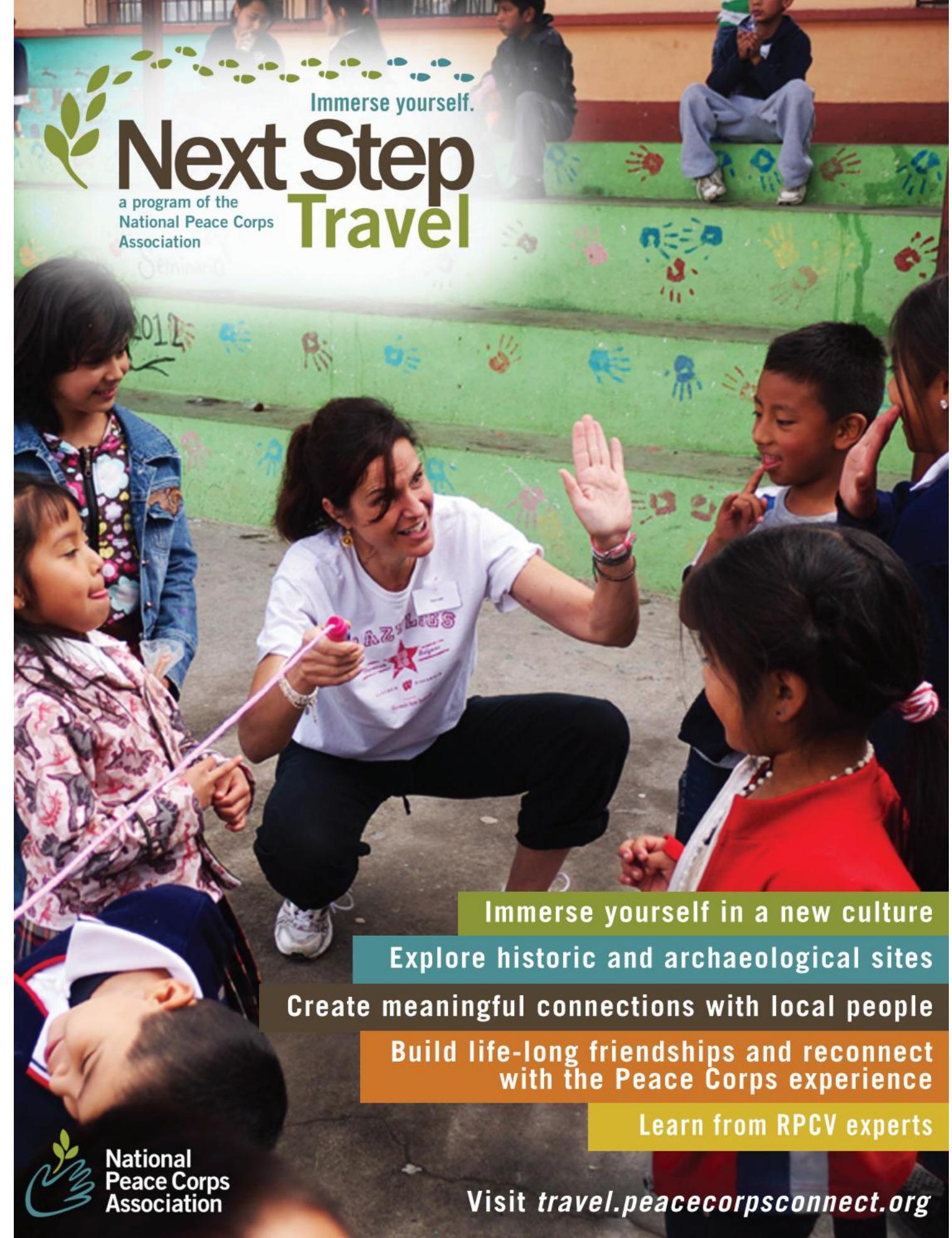


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A photograph showing a woman in a white t-shirt with a red star and the word "JAZZLIDS" on it, crouching down to interact with a group of children. She is holding a pink object and gesturing with her hands. The background features a green wall decorated with colorful handprints and drawings. Several children are visible, some looking at the camera and others interacting with the woman.

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