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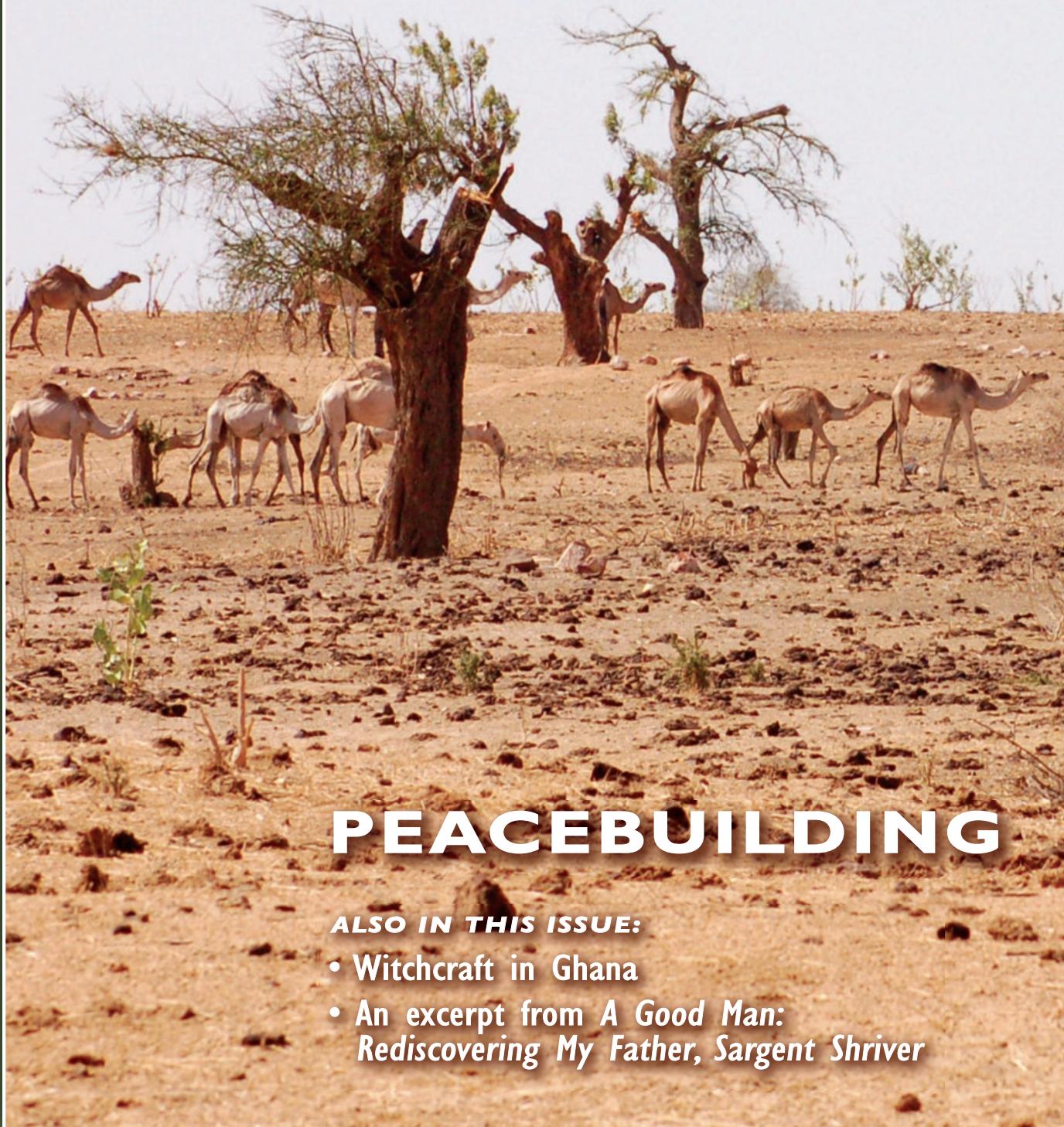
# WORLDVIEW

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Summer 2012

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Vol. 25, No. 2



## PEACEBUILDING

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- Witchcraft in Ghana
- An excerpt from *A Good Man: Rediscovering My Father, Sargent Shriver*



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*Erica Burman, editor*

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Letters to the editor are welcomed. Unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, or other illustrations will be considered. The editors prefer written proposals before receiving original material. Send queries or manuscripts to the editor at news@peacecorpsconnect.org or by mail to the NPCA address.

All inquiries can be addressed to the appropriate person at NPCA by fax at 202 293 7554 or by mail to NPCA, or through the NPCA website at www.peacecorpsconnect.org or www.worldviewmagazine.com

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Camels graze in a destroyed village in Western Darfur, June 2006.

*Photo: United Nations Environment Programme*

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# WORLDVIEW

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## THE PEACE CORPS AND PEACE

*Time to re-emphasize “Peace” in the Peace Corps*

by Kevin F. F. Quigley

**W**ithin the Peace Corps community, we talk often about the agency's three goals, which can be paraphrased as: 1) help others help themselves, 2) help others understand us better, and 3) bring the world back home. Disappointingly, there is a lot less talk regarding the agency's overall mission established in the Peace Corps Act of 1961: *promote world peace and friendship.*

Promoting world peace was the overriding concern of Sargent Shriver, the architect of the Peace Corps. As a World War II combat veteran, Shriver understood keenly the importance of a strategic and disciplined approach to waging peace. In his last major public address at Yale University in November 2001, less than two months after the 9/11/01 attacks, Shriver suggested that the Peace Corps must place a much greater emphasis on peace. He lamented that:

*“No matter how many bombs we drop, no matter how skillfully our soldiers fight, we are not responding to the ultimate challenge until we show the world how and why we must all learn to live in peace –until peace becomes the only permanent alternative to war.”*

Shriver also knew that to succeed at winning peace would require comparable resources to waging war. In that same speech he said, “*Peace is much more than the mere absence of war. Peace requires the simple but powerful recognition that what we have in common as human beings is more important and crucial than what divides us.*”

Although the Peace Corps creates this powerful common recognition of our shared humanity, Shriver lamented that the Peace Corps

had fallen short of its promise in promoting peace by saying that, *“...our dreams were big, but our accomplishments were small.... we did not do enough...”*

Our country, much to Shriver's and others disappointment, has never really put the resources into waging peace. In fact, the Peace Corps entire budget in its first 50 years—roughly \$8.7 billion—was spent by the Department of Defense budget in just five days this year alone.

Although not directly engaged in war zones, the Peace Corps is indirectly engaged. The Peace Corps is not now or has not ever been engaged in places where peace is at greatest risk. Today, that means countries like Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite the fact that the Peace Corps is not engaged there, one cannot travel to Khartoum, Baghdad or Kabul without meeting Peace Corps alumni who are striving to create better conditions for peace in those war-torn places.

This issue of *Worldview* hopes to spark a conversation regarding how we can create a more peaceful world and what role the Peace Corps community may play in that effort. It includes a number of remarkable articles by Peace Corps alumni and others who dedicate their lives to making a more peaceful world even in a small way. These include a piece by Kirk Talbott on peacebuilding and natural resources, and an article by RPCV Alison Milofsky on the role of education in peacebuilding.

These articles and others in the mainstream media suggest that the United States continues to misappropriate our national funds and resources, spending far more on waging war than on winning peace.

For example, in “Tanks, Jets and Scholarships,” *The New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman contrasts the return in good will and positive relations between \$13.1 million invested in merit-based scholarships in Lebanon and \$1.3 billion for the purchase of jets and tanks in Egypt. This marked difference between investing in people and spending money on weapons is something that everyone in the Peace Corps community understands does not create peace.

As the Peace Corps moves forward into its second half-century, a far greater part of how we bring the world home should be to aggressively promote the common recognition of shared humanity that Shriver spoke so eloquently about, along with a clear recommendation that our country must put more resources into waging peace.

---

*Kevin F. F. Quigley is the President of the National Peace Corps Association. He served in Thailand from 1976 to 1979. Please send your comments to president@peacecorpsconnect.org*

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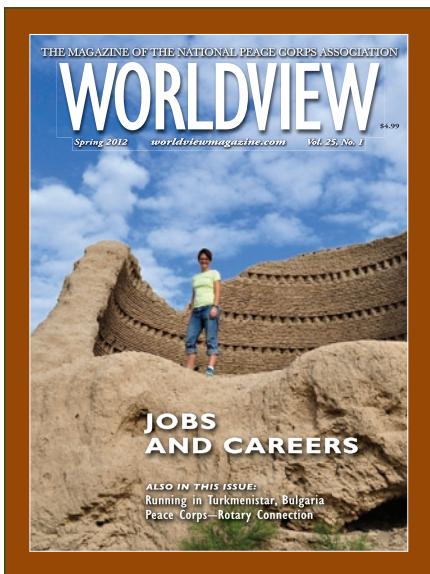
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## READERS WRITE US

*Letters to the Editor*



The spring 2012 issue of *WorldView* provided me eye-opening examples of the challenges facing newly minted Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) as they return home to face a challenging job market in our extended economic downturn.

I faced similar problems when I came home to recession era America, circa 1971. I dearly enjoyed and wanted to continue public service, and also had a pipe dream about finding a career enabling me to go everywhere and do everything. Armed with our federal re-employment rights, I was fortunate enough to land an entry-level, civil service financial

intern position in San Francisco with Department of the Army.

After four decades of rewarding and enjoyable federal service, I pretty much achieved both goals. Assignments took me to seven different American cities, six years in Germany, serving as a research analyst, comptroller of several organizations, heading an Army Resource Management School in Munich, Germany, and even attending the Army War College.

Yes, it's important for RPCVs to pursue such traditional job-hunting approaches as using LinkedIn, Facebook and other social media, networking, and continuing their education. RPCVs considering federal careers, however, should remember the competitive advantage of federal re-employment rights that accrues from completing their Peace Corps tours. It sure paid career dividends for me.

Vincent Lauter  
Jamaica 1969-71

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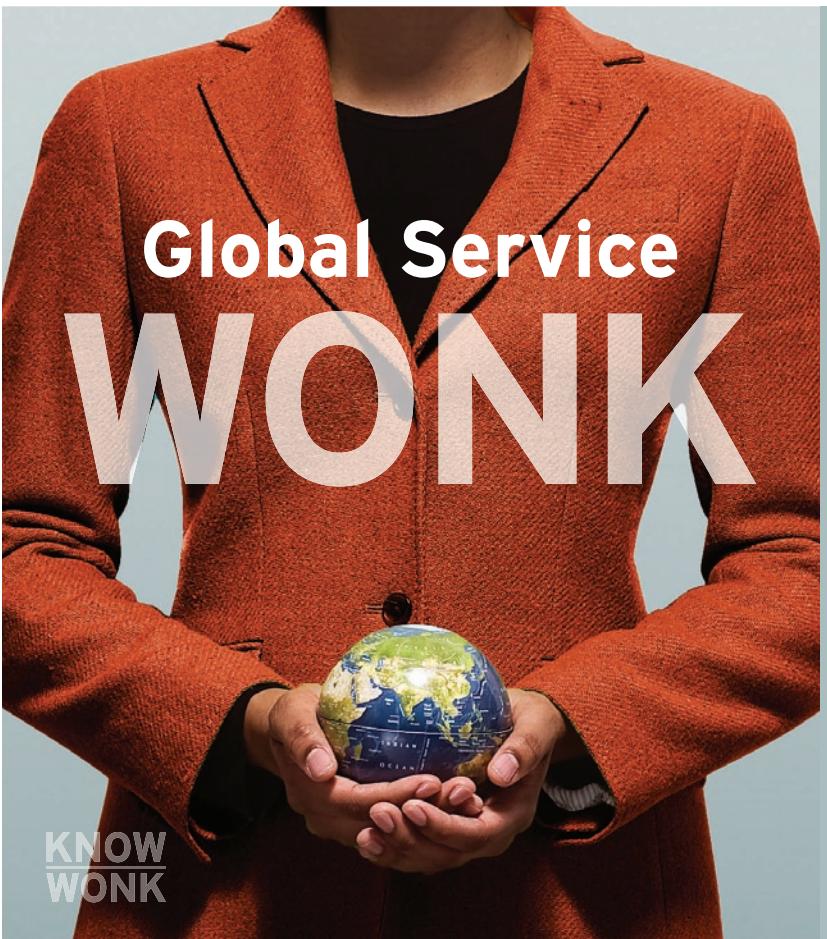


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### CORRECTION

The cover photo of *WorldView* Vol. 25, No. 1 was incorrectly credited. The photograph was taken by Andy Franks. We apologize for the error.



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## DAY OF ACTION HELPS HOLD THE LINE

*Peace Corps community voices heard on Capitol Hill*

by Jonathan Pearson

**W**hen the House Appropriations Subcommittee for State/Foreign Operations sat down on May 9th to put forth its funding recommendations for the 2013 Fiscal Year, it faced a daunting task: create a spending package for our nation's international affairs programs using nearly \$5 billion less than current spending, a nearly ten percent decrease.

While many important programs suffered cuts in the subcommittee proposal, Peace Corps received President Obama's request of \$375 million, a figure equal to current spending but still \$25 million below the high-water funding level of two years ago.

Many factors contributed to preventing further cuts, including the NPCA's annual National Day of Action in Support of the Peace Corps. On March 1st as advocates across the country contacted their lawmakers to urge support for the Peace Corps, an outstanding contingent of 75 advocates, representing 22 states and every era of Peace Corps service, criss-crossed Capitol Hill, holding nearly 130 meetings and dropping off information packets to virtually every congressional office.

This activity help secure a record breaking number of signatures on RPCV Congressman Sam Farr's (D-CA) Peace Corps funding letter. "The 128 members who have signed our letter serve as a true testament of the power of the Peace Corps, and its ability to show the world our nation's investment in world peace."

Decisions on Fiscal Year 2013 funding are not finalized. The next step comes when Senate appropriators make their recommendations on how much to spend on Peace Corps and other programs. To keep up with the latest information, visit <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/advocacy/peace-corps-funding/>.

---

*Jonathan Pearson (Micronesia 1987-89) is the Advocacy Director for the National Peace Corps Association.*

NPCA



Washington, D.C. residents Harriet Lipowitz, Glorious Broughton, John Prothro and Helen Raffel held meetings with five congressional offices on March 1st.

NPCA



RPCVs Wylie and Janet Greig (NPCA Board member), Sean Murphy and Vanessa Porter met with California congressional offices and created a video about their National Day of Action experience.

NPCA



NPCA Board member Joby Taylor teamed up with new RPCVs Jared Kebbell and Sarah Singletary for meetings with offices of the Oklahoma congressional delegation.

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A close-up photograph of a young girl with dark hair, looking down with her hand near her chin in a thoughtful pose. The background is slightly blurred.

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## VALUING PEACE CORPS SERVICE

*NPCA working to bring recognition, support, to RPCVs*

by Jonathan Pearson

**A**s you read this article, approximately 9,000 Peace Corps volunteers—just like tens of thousands before them—are at work for our nation, providing grassroots, bottom-up value to global aspirations of peace, understanding and friendship.

In many forms, and for many years, Peace Corps community members have commented on how our nation values this service. In ways large and small, there is much than can be done to improve upon or add to the ways in which Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are recognized. Here are three examples of such issues, and NPCA's current efforts to support those efforts:

- **Peace Corps Commemorative:** A location in Washington D.C. recognizing the historic significance of the 1961 founding of the Peace Corps has been a long-held aspiration for many in our community. Moving from aspiration

to reality begins with congressional authorization of the concept. We are closer than ever before in passing Peace Corps commemorative legislation (S. 1421; H.R. 854), with nearly 180 Senate and House co-sponsors and unanimous approval from the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

- **Support for Seriously Injured/Ill Volunteers:** One of the offshoots of the 2011 "Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act" centers around an issue raised by the NPCA during deliberations—how to better address the needs of other volunteers who are harmed during service but not subjected to violence. One of the primary ways this need presents itself is the significant challenges Volunteers suffering debilitating injury and illness have faced when seeking benefits from the U.S. Labor Department. During 2012 NPCA has been working with RPCVs who are focused on this

issue, and collaborating with officials from the Government Accountability Office who—as required by the Puzey legislation—are undertaking a study of the Peace Corps – Labor Department relationship.

- **Non-Competitive Eligibility:** In conjunction with the Peace Corps Employees Union, and in response to concerns raised over time by returning Volunteers, NPCA sent a joint letter to Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams in April expressing the need to examine further ways to strengthen the Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) benefit for returning Volunteers seeking employment with the federal government. In response, Director Williams outlined steps currently underway to further promote NCE, adding "I certainly welcome your assistance as we move forward with efforts to further assist our RPCVs and former Peace Corps employees..."

## SAVE THE DATE FOR GLOBAL HOUSE PARTIES, 2012

*Global gatherings, large and small, to become an annual event*

by Molly Mattessich

**O**ver 20,000 of you celebrated Peace Corps' 50th birthday at a home or event last year on March 1. There were gatherings in China, Egypt, Great Britain, Japan, the Philippines, and all across the United States. Many of you met returned Peace Corps Volunteers who had been living in your community for years—but you didn't know. The majority of you gathered with friends and family to have fun and enjoy reminiscing about an experience that

was instrumental in forming who you are today.

Now, we're doing it again! On September 22, there are Global House Parties happening all over the world. You might be hosting one. Or there is one in your town. You can find out more details and contact a party host at [www.peacecorpsconnect.org/global-house-parties-2012](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/global-house-parties-2012).

The National Peace Corps Association's tagline is "the next step in changing the world," and this year's

Global House Parties are a way for you to take the next step after the Peace Corps 50th Anniversary to continue deepening your connection to Peace Corps and its alumni community.

(Stay tuned to the website and electronic media for more announcements and updates about Peace Corps Alumni Day and the Global House Parties.)

---

*Molly Mattessich (Mali 2002-04) is Manager of Online Initiatives for NPCA.*

## GROUP NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

*A look at what NPCA member groups are up to*

by Erica Burman

**Arkadaslar, Friends of Turkey**, supports its second homeland by contributing each year to post-secondary scholarships, a neurological lab for childhood epilepsy, individual artisan empowerment, a school for special needs children, and projects promoting educational and cultural understanding. During a crisis, such as an earthquake, they actively solicit donations to funnel through the Red Cross or Red Crescent. To maintain connection, the group sponsors trips to Turkey to tour and visit artisan sites. This fall, a group of Turkey I Volunteers will attend the U.S. Ambassador's reception in Ankara to honor the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps in Turkey. [www.arkadaslar.info](http://www.arkadaslar.info)

Peace Corps Thailand will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in Bangkok this July and **Friends of Thailand** is trying to locate ALL the Peace Corps Volunteers and staff who have served in the Kingdom. (If you are already on our mailing list, please pass this message along to your friends who served in Thailand.) Contact Friends of Thailand c/o Carolyn Nickels-Cox (Thai 34), 1418 Striped Bass Street, Unit D, San Francisco, CA 94130 or [carolynnickels@earthlink.net](mailto:carolynnickels@earthlink.net). [www.friendsofthailand.org](http://www.friendsofthailand.org)

**Friends of Nigeria** was an early supporter of WE CARE Solar (Women's Emergency Communication and Reliable Energy), a non-profit organization founded by Dr. Laura Stachel that provides portable "solar suitcases" to hospitals in Africa, Asia, Central America and the Caribbean facing chronic power shortages. In 2010 the group donated \$3,000—enough money to purchase two suitcases and to touch hundreds of Nigerians' lives—and is in the process of developing a proposal to lend additional support. [www.friendsofnigeria.org/](http://www.friendsofnigeria.org/)

**Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida (RPCVSF)** is reaping benefits of its new relationship with a local Rotary Club. In 2011, RPCVSF received a

\$4000 matching grant for its micro-credit loan program (The Colombia Project) and is working on a second grant of \$17,600

with no RPCVSF match and has been invited to submit grants for local projects as well. [www.rpcvsf.org](http://www.rpcvsf.org)

## REMEMBERING SARGE

**"As founder of the Peace Corps, Sargent Shriver had the genius to change lives, mine included.** With this powerful book, his son Mark shows a great man can also be a good man. What a joy to read about Sarge, the father.

In a real way, he was father to everyone who ever served in the Peace Corps."

—CHRIS MATTHEWS

**"Asking around, in order to write about Sarge Shriver, I could find no one with a bad word to say about him. This book tells why.**

**The mystery of goodness is deeper than the mystery of evil."**

—GARRY WILLS

**"Read it and come away, like Mark, reenergized and re-inspired to follow Sargent Shriver's extraordinary example."**

—MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

“Compassion and service shatter barriers of politics and creed; [they] dissolve obstacles of race and belief anywhere in the world.”

—SARGENT

SHRIVER,

founder of the Peace Corps

**A Good Man**



REDISCOVERING MY FATHER,  
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# FIFTY YEARS WITH THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE

*Friends of the Dominican Republic sets a bar for in-country reunions*

by Guy T. Baehr

**R**eturned Peace Corps Volunteers who served in the Dominican Republic have held five reunions over the last 25 years. But, by common agreement, this year's event celebrating 50 years of continuous Peace Corps presence in the Dominican Republic topped them all.

For one thing, 165 former Volunteers and staff attended, more than ever before. They included at least five past country directors and Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams, who served there as a Volunteer from 1967 to 1970.

Equally important, 91 current Volunteers (almost half of those in the country) also participated, many more than at previous reunions. They did everything from creating a website and Facebook page promoting the event and organizing an artisan fair to display local crafts and products, to organizing presentations on their current programs and recording oral history videos going back to the first Volunteers who arrived in 1962.

Current and former Volunteers had plenty of chances to compare notes on their experiences, including an optional "Take a Volunteer to Dinner" program. The most notable changes involved communications and security.

Volunteers from the 1960s and 70s recounted stories of being dropped off at their sites in the countryside and being visited by Peace Corps staff only once or twice in two years, with communication in between requiring going to the nearest provincial capital to send or receive a telegram. Many rural Volunteers drove Honda 50s or other small motorcycles supplied by the local agencies for which they worked.

Current Volunteers said they now all have Peace Corps-supplied cell phones that allow them to call each other anytime at very low cost. Many also

have Internet and email connections. They said current Peace Corps policy also requires them to inform the office any time they are away from their site for more than 16 hours. They, like Volunteers worldwide, are prohibited from driving motorcycles because accidents are so common. They can ride as passengers only if they wear a helmet.

But much remains the same. Learning a new language and culture is still a challenge, as is finding a useful role in a new community, although it was agreed that the warmth and hospitality of most Dominicans continues to help make these tasks easier. Current volunteers routinely refer to "my Dominican family" or "my Dominican mother, brother or sister" and some 60, almost all women, have married Dominicans over the past five years.

Making do on the Peace Corps' living allowance also remains a challenge, perhaps more so for today's Volunteers. Adjusted for inflation, they are living on less than Volunteers in the 1960s.

Some 4,220 Volunteers have lived and worked in the Dominican Republic since 1962 and the number of Volunteers currently serving is 186. Despite a coup, an attempted revolution, a U.S. invasion and occupation and several major hurricanes, the Peace Corps has never been pulled out or expelled.

Neil Ross, an early Volunteer who now heads a project to collect as much of the history of the last 50 years as possible, said the reunion was a windfall. Sixty former Volunteers contributed 145 documents, 2,414 photographs for scanning, along with 18 hours of videotaped oral history.

One former Volunteer at the conference, Joe Zuiker (1965-67), sent an email from Santo Domingo to members of both of the former Volunteer groups that have alternately

organized the reunions since 1997, Friends of the Dominican Republic and Fondo Quisqueya. Capturing the feelings of many, he wrote, "After three days of laughing and crying with my old PCV friends and two days of listening to both the current Volunteers and Dominican citizens who were affected by us Peace Corps Volunteers over the years, I have news for you; the Peace Corps is alive and well, thank you."

Adam Fivenson, who was chosen by former country director Romeo Massey to lead the year-long organizing effort by current Volunteers, said many of his peers have told him how much they enjoyed meeting the former Volunteers. A month after the event, he said, "It's really rewarding to see current Peace Corps projects benefitting from the advice and expertise of the RPCVs."

John Evans, treasurer for Friends of the Dominican Republic and chair of the reunion committee, reported that the event, which took more than a year to organize, not only drew compliments from attendees but was also a financial success, running a \$14,000 surplus due to both strong paid attendance and generous donations and sponsorships. Money from the surplus will be used to help support current Peace Corps projects and provide vocational scholarships for individual Dominicans recommended by current Volunteers, he said.

One high point of the reunion was a reception held at the residence of U.S. Ambassador Raul Yzaguirre and attended by almost 500 people, including current and past Volunteers, spouses and Dominicans from all walks of life who have worked with the Peace Corps over the years. Among the ex-Volunteers were both Williams, who met his Dominican wife Rosa during his time as a Volunteer,



Roger Weiss

Three days of programs and four evenings of social events, mixed learning, play, merengue, and socializing.

and recently retired U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd, who served as a rural community development Volunteer from 1966 to 1968.

Another high point, with more than a few Volunteers tearing up, was a panel concerning the Peace Corps' legacy in the Dominican Republic. Three Dominicans who are today leaders in the fields of agriculture, forestry, regional community development and sustainable development, talked with emotion about the personal impact that working with Peace Corps Volunteers had on them.

"We saw these young Americans move into our rural villages and share our rural hardships without ever complaining."

said Alejo Medrano, who heads a project to both protect and develop the area around the country's largest lake. "We saw these Americans demonstrate persistence, hard work and confidence in our ability to improve ourselves. With those images before us we Dominicans had no choice but to follow their example and help ourselves."

A final high point came at the end of the event following a talk on "The View from the Top" by Peace Corps Director Williams. One member of the audience put him on the spot by asking him if the Dominican Republic has had "the best Peace Corps program in the world." Williams hesitated, then smiled and said

he thought Art Flanagan, the current Peace Corps director in the Dominican Republic, "runs the best program in the Peace Corps."

In answer to another question, he said it was his personal opinion that the Peace Corps could and should be expanded significantly because there is both a need for its services and more than enough Americans seeking to join.

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*Guy Baehr (Dominican Republic 1968-71) spent 30 years as a newspaper reporter in New Jersey, most of that time with the state's largest daily, the Newark Star-Ledger. He is retired and living in the D.R.*



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## PEACE CORPS KENYA I

*First into their host country, the bonds of the “Ones” remain strong*

by Arthur Levi

**F**orty-eight years ago, a group of 32 young, idealistic Americans arrived in Kenya on the cusp of the country's first year independence day. Kenya's population at that time was 8.4 million. When many of us met in Washington, D.C. this past fall to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Peace Corps, it had grown to almost 40 million. Little did we know, in September 1964, when we began Peace Corps training at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, how both Kenya and each of us individually would change. But let me back up and begin at the beginning.

Our training started with an eight-week total immersion language course in Swahili, which was to become our language of everyday life over the coming two years. This was followed by four weeks of Swahili and cross-cultural training. We had joined the Peace Corps for many reasons, but regardless of our motivation, we all bonded from the outset.

Our assignment was to become land settlement and co-operative officers for Kenya's very ambitious Million Acre Land Resettlement program, under which one third of the prime European-held land in Kenya was parceled out in small and moderate sized holdings to largely landless and often poorly-educated Africans. We were part of an effort to teach better farming methods and introduce cash cropping and dairy management, and to create marketing societies, through which the newly settled farmers would market their cash crops and milk. Coming from a New York City suburb, I had never milked a cow or sheered a sheep. I learned quickly.

On arriving in Kenya on the first anniversary of Kenya's Independence,

December 27, 1964, we were met at the airport by a high-level Government of Kenya delegation. After brief introductions, we sang the Kenya National Anthem and one of our group shook the hand of the head of Land Settlement, thanking him for inviting us to Kenya. It was all very moving.

The two years went by all too quickly, and the majority had a hard time leaving. Since then, most of us have kept in touch and many have remained abreast of Kenyan politics and have returned to our second country many times. We gathered together for the 40th Peace Corps reunion in Washington, D.C., in June of 2001, and again for the 50th in September of 2011. Many of us are planning to return to Kenya for our group's 50th anniversary of our leaving the Peace Corps, at the end 2013 or early in 2014.

President Kennedy hoped that the Peace Corps would lead to a more informed U.S. foreign policy and that many returned Peace Corps Volunteers would enter the foreign service and other forms of foreign and public services where their influence would have direct impact on policy. As the career paths highlighted below illustrate, we certainly lived up to his dream:

- Janet Benson went on to a professional career as a cultural anthropologist specializing in South Asia and immigration.
- Mike Benson spent the better part of 35 years counseling substance abusers and working with disadvantaged adolescents.
- Tom Bruyneel (deceased) practiced law in Riverside, California and worked on water rights law there.
- James Cloutier designed our T-shirt commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps and has

a painting with a Kenya connection that will be featured in the permanent exhibit of the National 911 Memorial Museum opening this coming September.

- James Connell served as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State for over 40 years, serving primarily in Western and Eastern Europe, before permanently retiring in 2009.

- Don Dakin worked internationally for a large oil company and has since become a pro bono legal advisor to the National Peace Corps Association.

- Kae Dakin became CEO of several non-profit organizations in Washington, D.C.

- Mike Davidson became legal counsel to the U.S. Senate.

- Jim Eggert taught economics at the University of Wisconsin.

- Larry Eickworth (deceased) served in Vietnam and then became a tennis instructor traveling around the world to Hawaii, Singapore, Hong Kong, and then to the Boulders Resort near Tucson, Arizona. Eick was an avid fly fisherman.

- James Finucane completed an economics Ph.D, lived and worked in developing countries for 30 years, and continues as a World Bank advisor for rural projects in East Asia and Latin America.

- Mike Ford did graduate work in political science, focusing on African and African-American politics, taught at Brown University, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and for thirty years served as Dean of the College and Professor of Politics at Hampshire College. He is now retired and consulting with educational institutions as well as election monitoring in East Africa.

- Tom Giddings (deceased) led

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Mike Davidson

**Above:** Kenya 1 group arrives in country, 1964.

**At Left:** Kenya RPCVs gather by the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. at the conclusion of the parade of flags, September 25, 2011.

TechnoServe's efforts in East Africa, where he unfortunately died of viral malaria.

- Roland Johnson became a principal in the non-profit world, active in Philadelphia and has been a leader in the National Peace Corps Association.

- Jim Jorgensen became a Teacher in Sacramento, NCAA referee and Commissioner, oversees the 300 acre Jorgensen Ranch, has taken four trips to Kenya to visit scheme farmers and helps Dan Ritchie's student group.

- Larry Howe became an award-winning TV producer and founding board member of C-SPAN, started his own management consulting firm, and helped build a microenterprise operation in India.

- Dave Kuhn (deceased), was a public television producer, and produced the well-regarded series on "The Constitution: That Delicate Balance."

- Arthur Levi worked with the World Bank Group for 30 years and now consults in Africa on agriculture and project finance.

- Fred Lickteig recently retired from a career in accounting, in Annapolis, Maryland.

- Brian McDonald enforced desegregation laws, prosecuted civil rights violations, served as an assistant United States attorney, and retired as a Massachusetts state court judge.

- Chuck Mohan worked for USAID where he was chief economist for Latin America.

- Ann Mohan (deceased) was CEO of a successful editing and publishing firm.

- Ivar Nelson, Foreign Service for a time; started a bookstore and helped create an art house theater in Idaho; director of university press.

- Pal Owen started a turkey farm, became an investment advisor and writes country music songs.

- Tom Pieper became a lawyer and practiced for many years in New Jersey;

- Dan Ritchie worked with the World Bank for 30 years and created a scholarship program in Kenya in 2000 that supports 50 secondary school and university-level students a year.

- Phil Schaefer created the World Pension Forum, which brings US Pension Fund money to many emerging markets.

- Bill Stirling started schools to teach high school dropouts in Harlem, moved to Aspen on a self-styled sabbatical, served four terms as mayor and started Stirling Homes, Inc.

- Art Schoepfer served 27 years as a Foreign Service Officer;

- Art Spore remained in Kenya and helped design and implement water programs.

- Bill Ulland became CEO of Ikonics Corporation, a technology company in Duluth, Minnesota.

- Joe Wcislo became a junior college educational administrator and software developer.

We worked hard, played hard and over the years, have been there for one another. When we first arrived in Kenya we believed that our two-year stay would make a modest difference in Kenya's development, but we never anticipated how much of a difference Kenya would make in all of our lives.

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*Arthur Levi (Kenya 1964-66) is retired from the World Bank Group and now consults in Africa on agriculture and project finance.*

## LINKING KNOWLEDGE

*Returned Volunteers on the front lines of a major environmental peacebuilding initiative*

by Kirk Talbott

**L**ess than a block away from the Peace Corps headquarters in downtown Washington D.C., a cadre of lawyers are working together to understand essential linkages between peacebuilding and natural resources management. Four of the key attorneys at the lead organization in this initiative are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs). Each credit their Peace Corps experience for providing the context and inspiration to set their respective career directions. They make up a formidable team within the Environmental Law Institute's Environmental Peacebuilding program. Each brings to bear a nuanced understanding of conflict, poverty, and endemic corruption and their corrosive impacts on peace and the environment. They also know first-hand of the resilience of local people and the importance of good governance of natural resources in strengthening civil society. These four women's collective story and the project that has brought them together illustrates the enduring legacy of the Peace Corps' mission in planting the seeds of understanding and caring that reap benefits years later in helping professionals address some of the world's most pressing challenges.

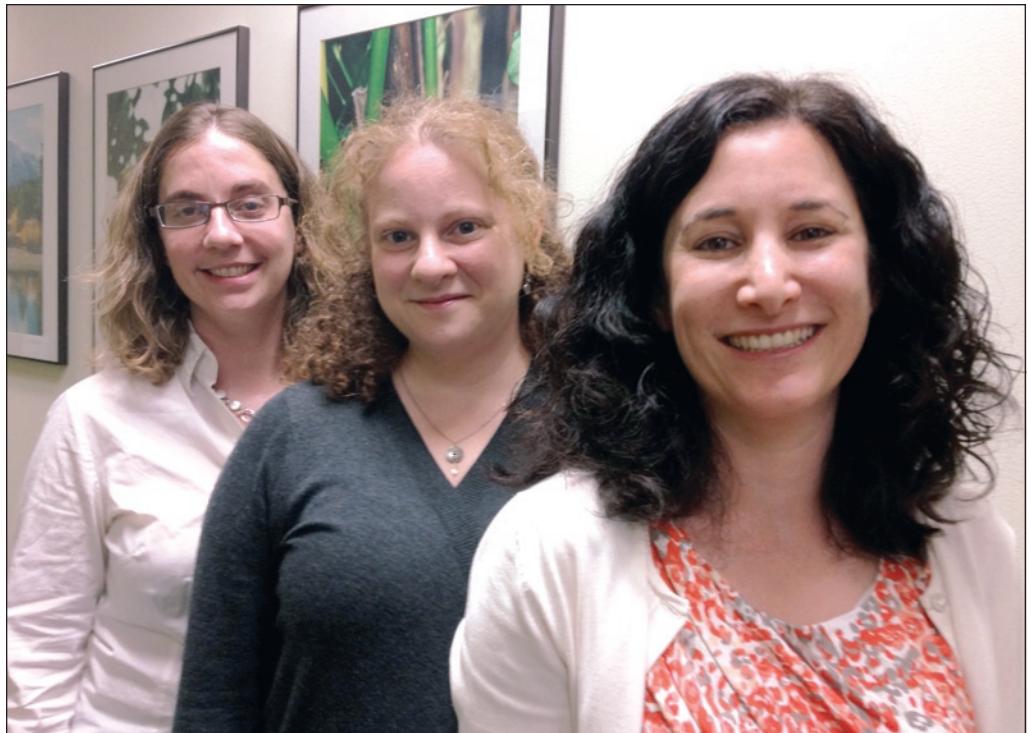
The Environmental Law Institute (ELI), in collaboration with United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the University of Tokyo and McGill University, has launched an ambitious initiative to improve

peacebuilding through the more effective and equitable management of natural resources. Over the past four years, this initiative has engaged over 225 authors in 150 case studies and analyses of experiences from over 60 conflict-afflicted countries and territories. Six edited books published by Earthscan and an overarching synthesis volume (Cambridge University Press) will come out this year. ELI and its partners are using this ongoing analytic work to assist post-conflict societies in transition and foster a growing interdisciplinary dialogue for a range of public and private institutions on the front lines of peacebuilding from Colombia to Congo to Burma.

ELI's Director for the Peacebuilding program, Carl Bruch, has assembled

an impressive, hard-working, and highly productive team to lead this ambitious endeavor. "Sometimes I feel like I am surrounded by former Peace Corps Volunteers in this campaign," says Bruch.

Indeed, four women RPCVs, who each served in Africa, have come to play leading roles in this collaborative global effort. Sandra Nichols who travels frequently to Liberia and other post-conflict nations, is unequivocal about the importance of her Peace Corps experience in her work. "It made all the difference in providing me the baseline of real-world experience to engage in law and policy in war-torn societies." Sandra served as a municipal water and environment officer in Côte d'Ivoire in the late 1990s, just as that country began to



Ilona Coyle, Jessica Troell and Lisa Goldman are Returned Peace Corp Volunteers working on ELI's Environmental Peacebuilding initiative. (Not pictured, Sandra Nichols)

descend into years of conflict and civil violence. Lisa Goldman and Jessica Troell, also ELI senior attorneys, served as Volunteers in Niger and Morocco, respectively, in the mid-1990s. Both had formative experiences working with communities managing local natural resources and watersheds and learning how information, rule of law, property rights and access to credit can enhance prospects for sustainable development. Now they are co-editing volumes for the project and assisting governments and civil society organizations in rebuilding their laws and policies to promote equitable resource development. A fourth key contributor to the peacebuilding initiative, Ilona Coyle, entered Peace Corps after law school, marriage and several years of working as an attorney, noting, “My experience in Togo helps me better understand post-conflict situations because Peace Corps projects address some of the common challenges that post-conflict and fragile states experience by building capacity within communities, addressing corruption, rebuilding trust in groups, and meeting short-term needs while pursuing long-term solutions.” Each of these ELI attorneys’ Peace Corps years in Africa have proven invaluable in shaping and strengthening their roles as they help complete the over-3,000 page manuscripts for the various volumes on livelihoods, high-value resources, governance, etc.

The Environmental Peacebuilding initiative has caught the attention of many U.S. government, European, United Nations and civil society organizations engaged in global peace and environment issues. One does not have to look far to see a host of further Peace Corps connections throughout the expanding audience and user community for the ELI studies and support activities. Several other RPCVs are supporting the ELI effort and contributing chapters including John Waugh (Sierra Leone) and Stephanie Altman (Senegal). USAID has recently joined ELI and its partners. Tim Resch, Environmental Advisor for the Bureau for Africa and a RPCV forester from Morocco in the late 1970s, stated

“some of the case examples hail from USAID experience, and we look forward to bringing those products forward into our future programs.”

With Peace Corps’ first half century come and gone, it is encouraging to know that the legacy of service and peacebuilding continues to build. The four RPCVs attorneys working away at the Environmental Law Institute on the peacebuilding initiative provide living proof of that exciting legacy in action.

*Learn more about the Environmental Law Institute’s Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Natural Resources Management program at [www.eli.org/Program\\_Areas/PCNRM/](http://www.eli.org/Program_Areas/PCNRM/)*

*Kirk Talbott is a Visiting Scholar at the Environmental Law Institute and contributing to the Peacebuilding initiative. Kirk has not done Peace Corps (yet) but, as a world traveler (WT) gratefully slept on many a PCV’s floor.*

## CASE STUDIES

*ELI’s case studies and analyses have been assembled into a set of six edited books, all published by Earthscan.*

- **High-Value Natural Resources and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**, edited by Päivi Lujala and Siri Aas Rustad, with a foreword by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia.

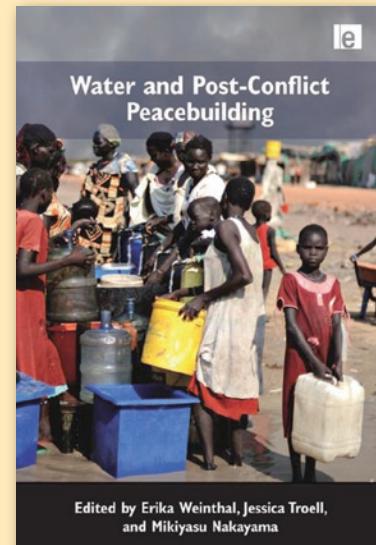
- **Land and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**, edited by Jon Unruh and Rhodri C. Williams, with a foreword by Jeffrey D. Sachs, Columbia University.

- **Assessing and Restoring Natural Resources in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**, edited by David Jensen and Steve Lonergan, with a foreword by Klaus Töpfer, former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

- **Water and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**, edited by Jessica Troell, Erika Weinthal, and Mikiyasu Nakayama, with a foreword by President Mikhail Gorbachev, Green Cross International.

- **Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**, edited by Helen Young and Lisa Goldman, with a foreword by Jan Egeland, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and former UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

- **Governance, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**, edited by Carl Bruch, Carroll Muffett, and Sandra S. Nichols, with a foreword by President Óscar Arias Sánchez, Costa Rica.



## RESTORING “AFRICA’S LOST EDEN”

*In the wake of conflict, Peace Corps Volunteers help bring back Gorongosa National Park*

by Valerie Cooper

**T**here's a small chart tacked onto a bulletin board in the guest camp at Gorongosa National Park that lists animals in English and Portuguese and their population for three nonconsecutive years.

- Elephant/Elefante: 1972 – 2,200...1994 – 108...2007 – 300
- Lion/Leão: 1972 – 500...1994 – 0...2007 – 40
- Hippopotamus/Hipopótamo: 1972 – 3,000...1994 – 0...2007 – 160

The sign doesn't give any explanation, but the numbers are a testament to the park's history—from its heyday as a tourist destination when Mozambique was under Portuguese rule; to the two wars that gave the country its independence and then threw it into a 16-year civil war, leaving the human and animal inhabitants struggling for survival against warring factions and starvation; and finally, to the joint effort of the Mozambican government and the Carr Foundation, a U.S. not-for-profit organization, to restore the park that a National Geographic

ANIMAL	NUMERO ACTUALIZADO DE ESPECIES NUMBER OF SPECIES		
	1972	1994	2007
Elephant/Elefante	2200	108	300
Buffalo/Búfalo	1400	0	185
Lion/Leão	500	0	40
Hippopotamus/Hipopótamo	3000	0	160
Eland/Elande	500	0	5
Bushbuck/Impalabala	N/A	0	1125
Impala/Impala	2000	0	560
Kudo/Cudo	1000	0	430
Hartebeest/Gondonga	800	0	415
Nyala/Inhala	N/A	22	395
Oribi/Oribi	N/A	22	1300
Reedbuck/Chango	1000	334	4600
Sable/Pala-Pala	700	0	320
Warthog/Facocero	N/A	0	3615
Waterbuck/Piva, Inhacosó	3500	129	4615
Blue Wildebeest/Boi Cavalo	5500	0	200
Zebra/Zebra	3000	65	5
Leopard/Leopardo	N/A	0	2
Hyaena/Hiena	N/A	0	0

documentary called “Africa’s Lost Eden.” “Mozambique is about the lowest on the human development index in the world,” said park administrator Mateus Mutemba. “At the same time, there is so much beauty and potential in the park.”

Since the Gorongosa Restoration

Project began in 2004, the wildlife population has increased by more than 40 percent. But the animal inhabitants only represent a portion of the project's objectives.

“When Carr decided to do the restoration, the proposal also looked at the human element and recognized its importance,” Mutemba said. “The restoration would not be successful if it didn’t look at the people around the park, if their basic needs were not met.”

In addition to a mobile clinic, literacy classes and other income-generation activities in the communities, the park decided to host a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) to work with environmental education.

“Peace Corps Volunteers are very close to the community. They easily engage in the community and work with their leaders,” Mutemba said.

Sinead Brien, who spent her first two years teaching biology in southern Mozambique, applied for the opportunity to stay a third year and work with the park in 2010.

“The job was perfect,” Brien said after accepting the job. “There was no way I could pass up this opportunity.”

Brien and her successor, Adrienne McGill, have worked with the environmental education team on trainings, festivals and workshops to educate members of the surrounding communities—around 200,000 people—on the importance of protecting and preserving the park next door.

“It’s difficult to see change when you are dealing with conservation, but the hope is to impact people’s perception of the environment, the

Lauren Fox



Peace Corps Volunteer Adrienne McGill at work in the park.

park and conservation, along with environmentally sustainable practices,” McGill said.

The program brings neighboring groups to the park’s Community Education Center as well as takes staff to the schools, health centers and organizations in the communities. Trainings include everything from preventing fires, pollution and poaching to using conservation agriculture practices. In the schools, the PCVs train teachers to include environmental education in the curriculum and assist in the creation of environmental clubs.

“There is a member of the enviro-club from Nhambita, our closest community, and almost every time we go there, this student Dito gives me a bag full of seeds he has collected to be planted in our tree nursery,” McGill said.

McGill and her counterpart, Herculano Ernesto, worked with more than 3,000 people in 2011 alone. While results from these encounters are more difficult to quantify than the increase in wildlife population, the results are no less tangible.

“When I first arrived the levels of support were very low. People had fears about the park and the restoration project,” Mutemba said.



Park entrance.

**Instilling pride in the park through hands-on learning.**

Lauren Fox



Mozambique's future.

“But over time, people understood that the park is theirs. More and more they trust us and want to cooperate with us. They’ve come to realize that they are an important part of the park’s life.”

At the completion of her year, McGill was asked to stay on as permanent staff in environmental education.

“I only have positive things to say about Gorongosa National Park and

the Gorongosa Restoration Project,” McGill said. “I take pride in being part of the team to help bring it back.”

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*Valerie Cooper is a Peace Corps Volunteer Leader and third-year extendee, serving in Mozambique. She has a bachelor's degree in news/editorial journalism from the Schieffer School of Journalism at Texas Christian University, where she was managing editor of Image Magazine*

Lauren Fox



# A PLACE OF TRANSFORMATION

*The role of education in peacebuilding*

by Alison Milofksy

Once considered a post-conflict recovery effort, peacebuilding has more recently taken on a broader meaning to include humanitarian relief, protecting human rights, supporting education for all, providing trauma healing services, and aiding economic reconstruction. Peacebuilding is a process of establishing peaceful relationships and building institutions that can manage conflict without resorting to violence.

Education is one of the many sectors of society that can suffer in a conflict situation. Unequal, or lack of, access to education can be both a cause and a consequence of conflict. However, when viewed as a place of transformation, the post-conflict-zone classroom can serve as a space to engage youth in conversations around peace and conflict, to develop critical thinking skills as well as the skills that allow them to manage conflict, and to understand how they can participate in peacebuilding.

## THE PEACE CORPS AS A NATURAL SPACE FOR PEACEBUILDING

As a Peace Corps Volunteer in Slovakia from 1996 to 1998, I developed a hyper-

awareness of the discrimination the Roma face on a daily basis. For two-and-a-half years I worked as a teacher trainer in the pedagogical faculty of a university, preparing my students to be English teachers. My own teacher education in a Masters program in TESOL equipped me to teach these students the English language and to prepare them to teach others, but nothing in my past experience shaped my ability to address the discriminatory views of my students and colleagues. I needed a different knowledge base and a new set of skills to engage those around me in conversations about identity, othering, discrimination, and the conflicts that can arise when groups mistrust one another.

The English Language classroom can be a space for content-based curriculum rooted in conflict management and peacebuilding. Within the field of English language teaching, such instruction uses content to teach English. Conflict management and peacebuilding becomes the vehicle through which students learn English. The basic concepts and skills in conflict management and peacebuilding deal with reducing prejudice, building relationships, communicating effectively, and using negotiation to manage

disagreements. With such closely aligned purposes, and since communication skills are a large part of language teaching, the English language classroom becomes a natural site for teaching conflict management and peacebuilding.

## GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ABOUT PEACEBUILDING

How we teach depends very much on our philosophy of education and our views on the purpose of teaching and learning. While some argue that schooling is about academics, others argue that it is an opportunity to nurture caring, responsible individuals who have a sense of their place in the world and who will become effective participants in local and global societies. Assuming that education is somewhere between these two poles, we must consider how to educate young people for the latter task. This space is where peacebuilding and the classroom interact.

Teaching peacebuilding is, in many ways, the application of good teaching practices. Below are just a few examples of such practices:

### ***Emphasize multiple perspectives.***

Conversations on difficult topics allow us to experience and learn different



A group of Sudanese and international youth participate in an identity exercise, as part of Sudan Youth Dialogue in 2007.



Diverse "youth" from across Iraq who took part in an Iraq Youth Dialogue in 2008. Internationally, the term "youth" is applied to a broader age range than in the U.S.



Camels graze in a destroyed village in Western Darfur, June 2006.

perspectives. It is, therefore, important for our students to develop the capacity to listen to one another and truly hear what each other has to say. In the process of conversation, disagreement may occur, but this provides students with an opportunity to clarify their own perspectives and consider how other people's views can inform opinions. Disagreement is natural and should be considered a healthy part of conversation. Learning to manage conflict is often about effectively dealing with disagreement before it escalates to violence.

**Teach dialogue skills.** Debate is a useful educational exercise and has a place in the classroom when discussing complex topics. However, the process of dialogue can contribute significantly to the classroom climate, encouraging an open mind and developing active listening skills. Unlike debate, which concludes with a winner and involves a process of listening for holes in the opponent's arguments, dialogue assumes there is no winner or loser. In the process of dialogue, listening is for the purpose of enhancing one's understanding of a topic and demonstrating that the listener hears the intended meaning.

**Engage students in interactive lessons using creativity.** The methods used to teach conflict management and peacebuilding focus on interaction between learners. These methods can include role-play, small group work,

experiential activities, and large group discussion. By using interactive strategies, educators are able move students from the abstract to the concrete, encouraging students to make decisions about how they will act when faced with conflict and what can be done to address conflicts beyond the interpersonal level.

**Share real stories.** It is important that students have the opportunity to share their stories and to hear the voices of other people whose lives have been affected by conflict. Stories can help clarify concepts that may otherwise seem elusive, making the abstract real. At a deeper level, real stories bring home the impact of conflict on individual lives by tapping into students' empathy.

**Leave students feeling empowered.** Difficult topics that involve human suffering can be overwhelming for any individual. It is important to alleviate any despair students might feel by helping them understand that they can take ownership of how they approach interpersonal conflicts. Teaching them these critical skills reveals to students that they have the possibility to empower themselves, that they can take action as an individual or as a community of young people, and they can make a difference.

These teaching practices can help Volunteers in post-conflict zones engage students in the conversations and skills development that will enhance their understanding of the "other." This becomes even more of a priority when

the conflict is in some way rooted in or manifests in issues around identity. But Volunteers must tread carefully in this domain. When one group's identity is defined by viewing another group as "other," it can be difficult to move beyond the stereotypes that lead to hate. To do so might require redefining one's self, as well as an acceptance of such redefinition by one's community. Volunteers may encounter resistance to the idea of building peace when the process involves breaking down the attitudes and beliefs that define a community. They must remain mindful that the personal transformation which can lead to community and societal shifts takes time.

Peacebuilding is a process—an active process—that involves the work of individuals as well as institutions. When Volunteers provide the skills transfer that will allow their students and community members to engage with the "other" and to communicate with one another to resolve differences, they are supporting the goals of the Peace Corps while developing their own capacity as peacebuilders.

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*Download USIP's Peacebuilding Toolkits for Educators (middle school and high school editions) at [www.buildingpeace.org/toolkits](http://www.buildingpeace.org/toolkits).*

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*Alison Milofsky (Slovakia 1996-98) is the Senior Program Officer at the United States Institute of Peace.*

# WORKING IN WAR-RAVAGED SOCIETIES

*Preparing Peace Corps Volunteers for post-conflict environments*

by Steven Ruder

*Fifty years after its establishment as an American force for world peace and friendship, the Peace Corps has evolved, branching out to work in post-conflict countries such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Kenya and Guinea. These complex environments create unique challenges for Peace Corps Volunteers and the organization that must ensure their safety and effectiveness. What are the challenges for operating in these environments? How might individuals be best prepared for service in war-ravaged societies?*

*The United States Institute of Peace has been operating in and training others to work in post-conflict conditions for decades. USIP and the Peace Corps partnered to commemorate the Peace Corps' 50th anniversary with this panel discussion on post-conflict environments and the requirements for preparing and protecting volunteers who serve in them.*

**M**oney spent on peace is an “investment” that will eventually “mature,” said Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA) at the U.S. Institute of Peace on Oct. 27, bringing both short- and long-term gains to the United States and countries around the world.

Garamendi, who served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia from 1966 to 1968, offered his remarks at a USIP event marking the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps’ founding.

Work that helps build stable, inclusive governments and developing communities’ capacity to be self-sustaining—the work done every day by USIP and the Peace Corps—is the kind of investment the U.S. should do more, Garamendi said.

Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA), who served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Colombia from 1964-1966, agreed.

Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams called the two organizations “natural partners,” and thanked USIP for the “vital assistance” the Institute has provided the Peace Corps “as we evaluated the feasibility of programming in countries emerging from conflict.” He said there’s great potential for future collaboration.

USIP President Richard H. Solomon echoed Williams’ remarks.

“The United States Institute of Peace



RPCVs involved in peacebuilding take part in a panel discussion.

and the Peace Corps are partners in the important work of preventing conflict and building friends in the world,” said Dr. Solomon. “I congratulate them on their fiftieth anniversary. There is symmetry to the work both organizations do on the ground in unstable environments abroad. The important social and infrastructure development activity of the Peace Corps complements the conflict resolution, government stabilization, and rule of law work of the Institute. Together we are committed to building a more peaceful world.”

President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961, just six weeks after his inauguration.

He charged the organization with building a better understanding between Americans and people of distant lands through the work of trained volunteers. Solomon noted that the programs of both USIP and the Peace Corps have changed dramatically in recent

years as their missions have expanded to include operations in dangerous, unstable regions. A panel of experts, including Colin Thomas-Jensen of the U.S. State Department, Marc Hanson of Refugees International, Krista Rigalo of the Peace Corps, and Sean Kane and Alison Milofsky of USIP, discussed the challenges of working in regions emerging from conflict.

Weak or failed civic institutions, ravaged infrastructure, heightened mistrust between groups, and the lasting effects of trauma are challenges Peace Corps volunteers and USIP staff frequently confront in their work on the ground.

Challenges like these can make simple tasks like arranging a meeting become extraordinarily difficult in post-conflict countries, Kane said, recalling his USIP work in Iraq.

Panelists said the challenges are not insurmountable, however.

Training in transferable skills like facilitation, conflict analysis, and intergroup dialogue are a critical part of the solution, panelists agreed. Through the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, USIP has trained African peacekeeping forces to use these skills, and Milofsky suggested that volunteers deploying to post-conflict countries also need them. Thomas-Jensen noted, however, that “there is no checklist” for ensuring success.

“For the Peace Corps, preparing volunteers for service in more challenging environments has become an imperative,” said Beth Cole, USIP’s director of inter-governmental affairs. “For USIP, preparing people to serve is a core element of our work. Linking our two organizations together will lead to better volunteers and service for people all over the globe.”

*Reprinted with permission from the U.S. Institute for Peace.*

# BUILDING PEACE

*A sampling of RPCVs on the front lines of peacebuilding*

by Erica Burman

**Dane F. Smith, Jr.** was called out of retirement in December 2010 and named the U.S. government's Senior Adviser on Darfur, a region in western Sudan where a prolonged civil war has claimed thousands of lives and forced millions into refugee camps, causing a humanitarian crisis. Smith was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Eritrea, then part of Ethiopia, in the early 1960s. Beginning in 1967 he pursued a long and distinguished career with the U.S. diplomatic corps.

Smith was Deputy Chief of Mission in Sudan (1986-89) and in Botswana (1984-86). He directed the African Economic Policy Staff (1989-90) and was Chief, Food Policy Division, in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (1979-81). President Clinton appointed him to serve as the Special Presidential Envoy for Liberia from 1995-1996

while he concurrently directed the State Department's Office of West African Affairs. Smith was Ambassador to Guinea (1990-1993) and Senegal (1996-99). He served as President of the National Peace Corps Association from 1999-2003.

**Julie Demichelis** was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ghana from 1982 to 1984 and while there became interested in disaster preparedness. In the intervening years, her career has included work with Liberian refugees during some of the worst years of the crisis in that country, directing emergency food relief operations for refugees in Macedonia and to direct a multi-ethnic team to reestablish community services in war-torn and ethnically split communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. More recently, she has worked in the post-conflict

environments of Iraq, Somalia and Southern Sudan. Demichelis is the 1999 recipient of the Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarianism.

**Anthony W. Gambino** first went to Congo (then called Zaïre) in 1979, where he served for three years as a Peace Corps Volunteer. From 1997 to 2004, he worked for USAID on the Congo and other countries in the region, including two and half years as USAID Mission Director for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He returned to the Congo in 2006 to monitor presidential and National Assembly elections. He has worked on international development issues for the House of Representatives, the State Department, and nonprofit organizations. He presently works as an independent consultant on international development and foreign policy issues.

**Leila Abu Gheida** started her development career with Peace Corps and was part of the first group to serve in Guinea Bissau (1989-1991). She stayed on in Guinea Bissau to work with Africare in coordinating assistance to an influx of refugees from the Casamance region of Senegal and took a short-term assignment with UNHCR in Mozambique, working on resettlement issues and food distribution to ex-combatants and villages affected by the conflict. After earning her master's degree, she began working as the International Red Cross Emergency Coordinator in Guinea Bissau during the war there. Abu Gheida has since worked at USAID/Nepal as Senior Conflict Advisor and then Director of the Democracy and Conflict Mitigation team, and now with USAID/Indonesia as their Senior Peacebuilding Advisor.

UNAMID - Olivier Chassot



## SPECIAL ENVOYS RETREAT

**20 October 2011:** Ambassador Dane Smith - Senior Adviser of the United States on Darfur (center) and Professor Ibrahim Gambari, UNAMID Joint Special Representative (right) meet with Darfuri in Mukjar, West Darfur, following 4th Special Envoys Retreat in El Geneina, West Darfur. The purpose of the Fourth Retreat was to take stock of recent developments in Darfur, and generally in Sudan following the independence of South Sudan, and to agree on next steps for international support for the ongoing Darfur peace process.

## WITCHCRAFT IN GHANA

*A Volunteer grapples with a cultural belief*

by Emmaline Repp

**W**hat does it mean for a society to believe in witchcraft in the 21st Century; not just a superstition, but a deep-seated belief that (for those who commit and bear witness) justifies countless assaults and murders?

The reality of living in Ghana, a country with at least six witch camps and uncontrolled brutality against the accused, is still something I find shocking. Many people, people I respect and consider close friends, tell me stories of witchcraft—stories they whole-heartedly believe. There are witches in the trees; witches who steal human souls, hiding them in animal sacrifices and eating them. Witches are everywhere.

Joke as they may, it isn't really a joke—the unforgiving, often strong reactions to my inquiries tell me that this is seen as a real threat. Death by beating, poisoning, and banishment



A local ju-ju man.

Lauren Corke

are all considered necessary. A recent incident in Accra ended in a public burning; it all just seemed so at odds with everything I've come to know and love about Ghana.

So I started asking questions, attempting to understand such dark undercurrents in a country I truly consider home. I wanted to discuss the complexities of such beliefs within a society that celebrates ju-ju men. What I found created only more questions (and a sense of urgency that something needs to change).

"If witches and magic are bad, why is a ju-ju

man different? He's using magic to find magic; isn't he a witch, too?" No, they told me, *that's different; plus, a ju-ju man never lies*. Never? Never. Some of it sounded so complicated, so contradictory—witches can't see each other, but a community of witches exist that make blood sacrifices to their Witch King; witches can only affect and curse their own households, but a stranger can level the accusation against a witch; different levels of witchcraft exist, but one can't tell the difference unless by special circumstance. After asking dozens of questions, I was still no closer to understanding any of it.

"What if it's just jealousy or hatred? People are mean-spirited sometimes." *Oh, they agreed, if it was a natural hatred, the village would know—the ju-ju magic would see.* But sometimes



Ju-ju men gather at a local festival.



Emmaline Rapp

**One of many fetish shrines surrounding Tongo's Chief Palace near the Gbeogo School for the Deaf.**

small incidences like a birth defect, or being unable to balance water on one's head is considered proof enough; "What if the juju man is wrong? What if someone lies? This happened in America and people lied." *There is no lie. They exist.*

When witchcraft exists, there isn't room for failure or mistaken identity; doubt throws everything into question. It is a dangerous world to live in. When extracting the confession of a witch, it doesn't matter



Lauren Corke

**Traditional dancing footwear.**

the circumstances of the answer, what matters is the confession itself. Sometimes there are trials, but any confession is seen as adequate proof; as many Ghanaians told me, no confession: no witch, no problem.

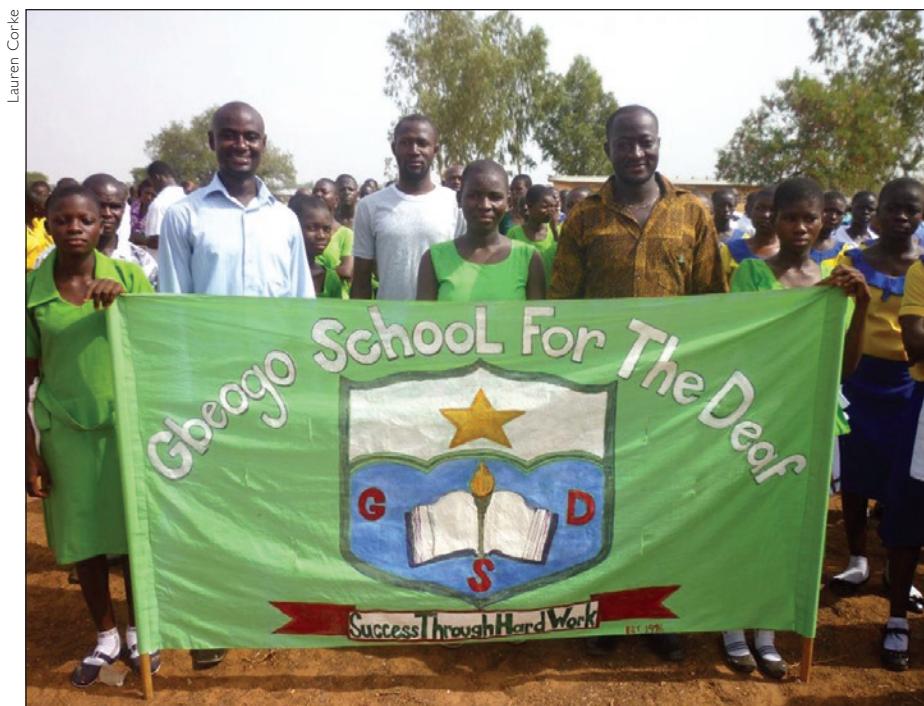
Of course, this isn't always the case (nor is it ever that easy). In some children born with physical defects, the proof is obvious. If not banished, they are certainly punished and often abused. I met one such girl at the Gbeogo School for the Deaf. Born

with her tongue attached to the roof of her mouth her father, suspecting her of being a witch, cut most of it out with a machete. In fact, her face is littered with machete scars, cigarette burns mark her body and, until her parents died, the school feared for her life every time she returned home. How many other cases like hers occur?

It stands to reason that a woman accidentally serving spoiled food is open to accusations; a child getting an unknown infection after visiting a neighbor can point to a curse. It can happen without warning and it is the lucky ones who find themselves in witch camps; many other cases end in death.

Women and children aren't the only victims, but it seems more likely a man will proceed over the ju-ju than be judged by it. It is believed that women, who have more control over children and household duties, are most likely to engage in witchcraft because it is passed through food; women and children are simply more vulnerable.

It is the aim of Ghana to abolish witch camps, but in communities far removed from the influence of Ghana's modern government, one suspects the answer is not so easy. With no government run rehabilitation centers and very little publicity, local witch camps (presided over by the same mystic beliefs), are the only safe option. Removed from their homes and families, many rely



**Students from the Gbeogo School for the Deaf. Students are often accused of insanity, if not witchcraft, on a regular basis.**



Offerings at a family shrine.

on the neutralizing magic of such places; some of them truly believe they are witches.

Though the mystical aspect of this both fascinates and infuriates me, it is the human part that makes it hard to accept. Such a belief cripples the most vulnerable; young and elderly, alike, experience terrible, unjustified abuses. The amount of trauma endured, the confusion associated with believing their own guilt, must leave many

of them with severe depression and PTSD. Surviving such a hardship, is about as strong an act as I can think of, but they desperately need a voice. And though discretion and graceful acceptance are necessary in the Peace Corps, these victims need advocacy and recognition.

Not rooted in just traditional beliefs, but religions too, it's hard to stop such fervor; the secretive nature of such trials make them even harder to control or influence, especially by the law. In Northern regions like the Upper East, a lack of widespread education works against a system meant to protect its people. With only a handful of NGOs and a limited governmental reach, it's likely the only true solution will come from the international community. But how and when?

Watching from the perspective of historical hindsight is difficult, but finding balance between misguided local beliefs and one's own heart is often the hardest battle of service. More importantly, I've come to realize that change can only occur when the truths of the world are accepted—sometimes ugly, difficult truths—and brought into the light.

Change is occurring in Ghana; slowly but surely we are moving forward. The first

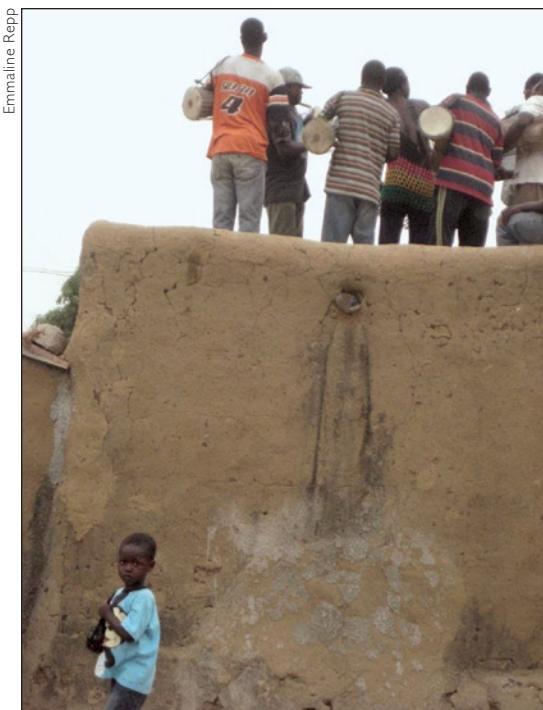


A fetish priest gives a tour of the sacred shrines in the hills of Tongo.

step is asking questions, starting conversation; the second is challenging the answers. We must start somewhere, after all, and I have faith in Ghana.

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*Emmaline Repp is a Volunteer currently serving in Ghana and edits GYDInes, Peace Corps/Ghana's Gender, Youth and Development newsletter. She would like to thank Lauren Corke and Dawn Rostad for sharing their stories with her and allowing her to use them in this article.*



Cultural display at a recent funeral. Community members drum around an animal sacrifice in order to scare the witches/bad spirits away from the house.



A woman from the author's village follows traditional customs and visits the juju man on a regular basis

## DOLLARS AND CENTS

*A Volunteer makes the case for student loan advocacy*

by Shavonda Mobley

**R**ecently, during a torrential downpour in my Paraguayan pueblo, I did what the locals generally do during such weather conditions: stay indoors and stay dry. Having a broken external hard-drive, and not in the mood to read, I did what Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) nearing the end of their service do: think about life after Peace Corps.

Like my fellow PCVs and those that have come before me, I'm worried about the job market and if my readjustment allowance will tide me over until I'm able to find employment. I'm also worried about the student loans that I've deferred for the three years I've been a PCV. I want to be able to repay what I owe. However, with an economy that is slowly recuperating, there's still no guarantee that I'll be able to find a job upon my return. If I am one of the lucky ones to find a job, there's certainly no guarantee that my salary will be sufficient to cover living expenses and student loan repayment.

Let's look at how the Peace Corps helps Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) in these two areas: employment and student loan repayment.

Peace Corps volunteers completing two full years of service qualify for non-competitive eligibility (NCE) of federal employment for one year after their close of service (COS) date. This benefit allows an RPCV to skip certain steps in the application process, while still having to meet the minimum requirements for the job. NCE does not guarantee that an RPCV will get the job, but it can shorten the application process.

One of the common complaints that RPCVs have about NCE is that the one-year window of eligibility

is too short, especially considering the slow hiring pace of large bureaucracies. Another complaint is that many hiring managers simply are not aware of NCE. What good is a benefit if the people in position to bestow said benefit don't even know about it?

To address these common complaints and better serve RPCVs, the National Peace Corps Association, along with the Peace Corps Employee Union, have sent a letter to Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams calling for a "strengthening of NCE." They are advocating for extending the one-year NCE period to two years. This would give RPCVs a longer window to readjust to life in the U.S., and still have enough time to complete the federal hiring process. They are also urging more awareness on the part of federal agencies about NCE to help RPCVs get a foot in the door.

Student loans. I've got them. Most recent college graduates have them. I would even say most PCVs have them. If you're like me, you don't have a relative who can make payments on your loans while you're in the Peace Corps. Luckily, most types of loans allow for a Peace Corps hardship forbearance, allowing one to defer payment until after COS. However, if you or a relative do make payments on your loan during your service, you qualify to participate in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF) which forgives the balance of your qualifying loans after you've made 120 payments while working for a public service organization, which includes Peace Corps.

Another option is to use some or all of your readjustment allowance

to make a lump sum payment on your loans after your COS. The PSLF Program permits this especially for Peace Corps and AmeriCorps volunteers. The dilemma, however, is that people who don't know when they will find employment tend to want to hang on to every penny.

While the PSLF Program is offered through the federal government, Peace Corps offers a partial loan cancellation benefit. If you have a Perkins loan, Peace Corps offers a partial cancellation of 15% for each year of service completed during the first two years, then 20% for each additional year. Sounds like a win—for those with Perkins loans.

Unfortunately, no cancellation is offered for the more popular Stafford Loans. In fact, from informal conversations with other PCVs here in Paraguay, it appears that many share my predicament: they have almost all Stafford loans. The partial loan cancellation is a great benefit for those who can actually use it, but for the rest? That's where advocacy comes into play.

The National Peace Corps Association needs our support so that it can advocate for our needs. I know that Peace Corps Volunteers don't join the Peace Corps for the financial benefits. I joined in 2009 knowing that the type of student loans that I have would not be covered. As we say here in Paraguay, *igual nomás*. I, like my fellow PCVs, knew what I was signing up for. Since then, however, even President Obama has acknowledged the need to address student loan debt specifically. He recognizes that it's an impediment to a stronger economy. People are putting off buying homes, autos, etc., because

*Continued on page 40*

## LEGENDS OF GER LIFE

*Every Peace Corps country has its myths*

by John Dwyer

**M**yths. Fascinating and fun to tell, they seek to make sense of the inexplicable. They can involve gods or mere mortals—but are more exciting when they contain both. Mongolian myths have casts ranging from wolves, to the Chinese, to Father Sky. Twenty years of Peace Corps Volunteers in Mongolia, it turns out, has created its own sub-culture, complete with its own legends.

The Peace Corps' first myth was handed down to my training group by no less a personage than the United States Ambassador himself. His speech at our swearing-in ceremony lulled the audience with proper praise for our service and advice for the next two years. Then he said something that gave everyone pause.

The translator even balked, mid-translation.

In front of a crowd of newly minted Volunteers and their supervisors, the Ambassador told us that we had a unique placement in Peace Corps. When the going gets tough in other countries, he claimed, Volunteers there tell themselves, “*at least we’re not in Mongolia.*”

Whether or not we truly believed the Ambassador’s story, his remark became a refrain during service. When I fetched water from the well, hardly five hundred meters from my home, I tried to flip the phrase. I had heard of Volunteers who trudged *five thousand* meters to their wells; at least I had a short walk. However,

when the winter cold froze my water container shut by the time I reached my bright orange *ger* door, the reversed mantra trick failed me.

**AFTER MY FIRST YEAR**, I fled for the tropics, taking vacation time in Cambodia. I visited the Peace Corps office in Phnom Penh, hoping to trade tales with the local Volunteers. In truth, they squeezed more information out of me than I could get from them. I blame their opening question: “Do you have to wear a helmet when you ride your horse?” Caught off-guard, I fumbled for an answer while they clarified the question. Volunteers have to wear helmets when riding bicycles, so they wanted to know if the same rule applied in Mongolia, when we ride the horses that we were given after pre-service training.

A legend gives a glimpse of the culture that gave it life. For the two

years that I called a *ger* home, I often wondered how the lives of other Volunteers resembled or differed from mine. The *ger*, basically a round felt tent, perfectly contrasted the square, brick house I grew up in. Central heating in *gers* is a wood stove around which we passed stories of countries where Volunteers rode bicycles to visit each other instead of Russian jeeps, or spent Christmas on a boat in a warm Pacific ocean instead of a frozen sea of grass.

The Volunteers in Cambodia knew that small, warm countries could easily use bicycles for transportation. It made sense to assume Peace Corps adjusted for a wider, colder country. Sadly, I put this myth to rest. In Mongolia, horses are not handed out with the medical kits. As Volunteers actually opt for bikes over horses, the legend demonstrates that experiences can be more similar than we expect.

*Continued on following page*



Mongolians in a fusion of modern and traditional clothes at a *ger* camp outside of Kharkorum.

John Dwyer



Panoramic view inside my own ger.

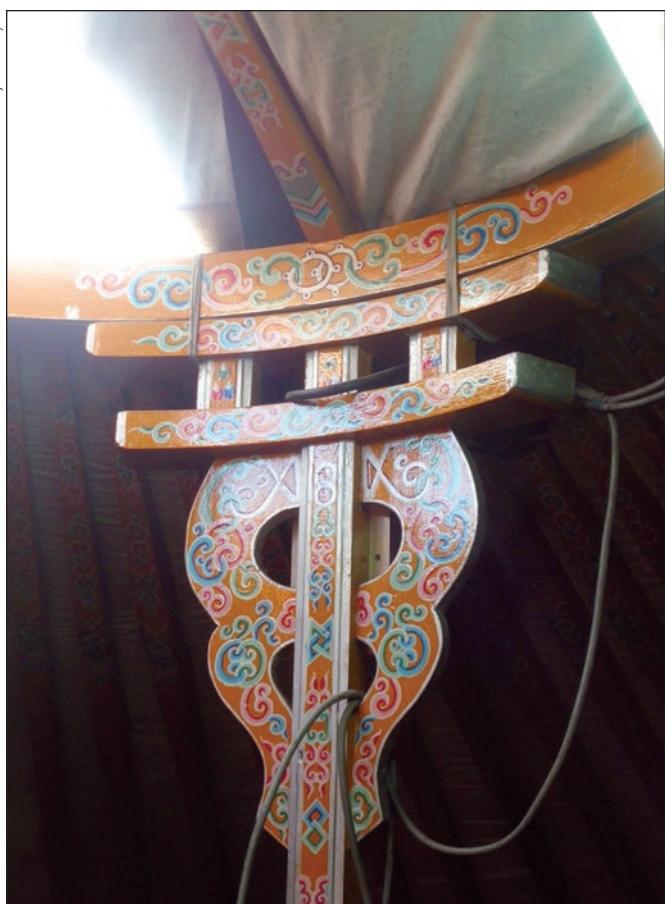
When describing the traditional Mongolian dwelling to others, many Volunteers—including myself—sigh and say, “It’s like a yurt.” The word, “like,” is important. Russians and hippies live in yurts. In the same way that Americans live in apartments and not flats, Volunteers in Mongolia live in gers, not yurts. Some also live in apartments, and even houses, but that is beside the point. On the outside a ger resembles a yurt, but inside it is distinctly Mongolian. They are clean

to the point of seeming Spartan. The door opens from the south side and beds lie to the right and the left, the east and the west, but never the north. The north holds the altar. Sometimes the altar stands out, butter lamps and offerings littering a table in front of a picture of Buddha. Sometimes the altar still reflects the constraints of Mongolia’s communist past, decorated by family pictures, awards, or gaudy medals.

I like to think of the ger as the most efficient dwelling Mongolians could make around their stoves. There are no corners to grow cold, just concentric rings surrounding the fire. Circles, obviously, hold importance. Above the stove, the pipe rises up through the toono, a wheel

that holds the many roof poles of the ger, like a capstone on an arch. The toono is often compared to the Buddhist wheel of enlightenment, an image that has slowly recovered in the post-Soviet culture.

Of course, stories have circulated about Volunteers who get too obsessed with the repetition of rings. My favorite cautionary tale came from the Medical Officer who visited a female Volunteer’s site. Apparently a combination of too much free time and dietary boredom led her to make bagels. I looked into making bagels myself but passed on the idea after learning that the process included boiling the dough before baking it. I had trouble convincing myself to spend the time making a meal more complicated than boiling noodles when alone. This particular Volunteer decided she had plenty of time, and began a veritable bagel production line. By the time Peace Corps intervened, I heard she had multiple ropes hanging from her toono and circling her ger, bagels strung along every inch.



Decorated ger poles supporting the toono.



My khashaa and ger, complete with stove pipe, shed, and added weight to keep my ger from flying away in the spring sand storms.



Outside my *ger* with Enkhunaa, a child who lived in my *khashaa*.

NORMALLY, THOUGH, THE *GER* is surrounded by a stabilizing influence, the *khashaa*. The *khashaa* is literally your fence, or more figuratively, the yard contained by your fence. Within the fence you live along with your *khashaa* family, the greatest lifeline you have available during service. Often they are the people in the community who want you there the most, and it is humbling when you realize how invested they are in your safety. Sometimes my *khashaa* family insisted I go to volleyball games at the school when I stayed inside too long. Most often, they showed their concern by including me in their meals. I have heard about Volunteers who repaid their families by buying beef for the winter, or even half a horse. My family preferred to ask me to buy the mayonnaise for the potato salads.

*Ger* life easily becomes a microcosm of your own life. Your *ger* mirrors your mind, requiring cleaning or else it risks becoming cluttered. People surround you, but it is your responsibility to go outside of your comfort zone, your *khashaa*, and interact. Sometimes, though, it is simply fun to huddle around the fire and collect stories.

What are the Peace Corps myths in your country?

---

John Dwyer served as an English education volunteer in Mongolia's South Gobi province from 2009-2011. He is currently writing in St. Louis, Missouri. Contact him at: [john.christian.dwyer@gmail.com](mailto:john.christian.dwyer@gmail.com).



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# TURNING WHAT IS, AND WHAT IF, INTO WHAT CAN BE

*Social entrepreneurs*

by Beverly Schwartz

*The incredible journey of Greg Van Kirk, from Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala in the early 2000s to social entrepreneur extraordinaire and Ashoka Fellow, is one of the stories told in a new book called Rippling: How Social Entrepreneurs Spread Innovation Throughout the World ([www.ashoka.org/rippling](http://www.ashoka.org/rippling)). Along with Greg's story are 18 others—all social entrepreneurs—who, similar to Peace Corps Volunteers, are dedicated to improving the lives of others.*

*Rippling tackles a number of big questions. The five sections of this book represent five ripples in the pond of poverty, inequity and inadequate access to opportunity. Each of the sections includes reflections from thought leaders: Esther Dyson on restructuring industry norms; Peter Senge on changing market dynamics; William Jefferson Clinton on using market forces to create social value; Geeta Rao Gupta on advancing full citizenship; and Arianna Huffington on cultivating empathy.*

## TURNING WHAT IS AND WHAT IF INTO WHAT CAN BE.

“.....Greg was assigned to a small mountain village in Guatemala seven hours from the capital that had been hard hit during the armed conflict of 1996. After supporting a number of existing Peace Corps initiated village improvement projects, he decided that what the village could really use to improve itself economically was a restaurant where Peace Corps

volunteers, locals and tourists could go. Since starting a restaurant was off the Peace Corps “menu” so to speak, he was persuasive enough to receive special permission to proceed, but with no extra funding. This would have put a stop to most people’s plans, but equipped with his own \$4,000 U.S., an English-language cookbook and with only microwave experience as a cook, Greg, along with local cooks and waiters, opened a restaurant to help bring new money into the village.

Within months, it turned a profit. With the glow of entrepreneurial success under his belt, he started complementary services: an Internet center, a trekking business, an artisan store, a Spanish-language school, and eventually a youth hostel. All of these tourist-oriented businesses were planned with and involved on-the-ground local help and management. The aim was to create local ownership as well as financial and administrative self-sustainability so that the enterprise could function on its own and sustain not only individual livelihoods, but the village’s all-around growth and well-being. From the outset, Greg had challenged himself to devise a way to create local ownership, to find people who could understand the work and shared the same core values. If he could be successful at accomplishing that, he was sure the enterprises he was building would prosper and thrive. Over time, he realized the secret of success was to set up local

Ashoka



Above: Greg teaching Margarita.

At Right: Greg Van Kirk.



Ashoka

companies and identify local (or micro) entrepreneurs who would then become leaders of the business. Then, through their commitment and hard work they would earn a share of ownership. He started by offering ownership of the restaurant to the cooks and waiters who worked there. To this day, 10 years later, the businesses are all alive and well, prospering are locally owned and still attracting locals and tourists... ”

## THERE ARE MANY SEEDS IN AN APPLE—BUT HOW MANY APPLES ARE IN THOSE SEEDS?

In order to scale and sustain the social change they envision, social entrepreneurs build institutions around ideas and create virtuous cycles of social benefit that begin when people, businesses and corporations in the community become agents of change themselves—and then influence others to do the same. Along with entrepreneurial leadership, these are the people, organizations and donors who co-create value and form the new infrastructure that leads to the establishment of an innovation. They become the synergistic manifestation of “rippling.”

This whole process is enormously contagious. Cumulatively, they build the institutions and attitudes that make local changemaking progressively easier and more respected. All of which eases the tasks facing the next generation of problem solvers. This “rippling,” catalyzed by leading social entrepreneurs and local changemakers, is the chief engine now moving the world toward what is termed an “everyone a changemaker” future—a world that will be a fundamentally safer, more tolerant, empathetic and equal, happier, and more successful than the one we live in today.

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*Beverly Schwartz is the author of Rippling: How Social Entrepreneurs Spread Innovation Throughout the World, and vice president of global marketing at Ashoka, the world's largest association of leading social entrepreneurs. Portion reprinted by permission of the publisher, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.*



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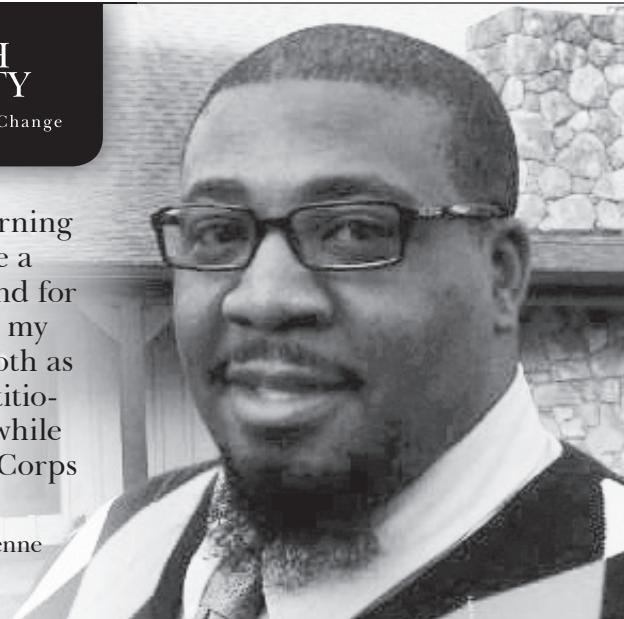


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## PEACE WORK

*An excerpt from A Good Man: Rediscovering My Father, Sargent Shriver*

by Mark K. Shriver

**G**rowing up, I saw the Peace Corps and Special Olympics as extended family. These organizations were so much a part of the daily fabric of our lives that as a child I never really thought about their origins. Mom was the founder and public face of Special Olympics, just as Dad was of the Peace Corps. But they were both as involved with each other's "babies" as their own. They sought each other's advice, helped each other plan the growth of both institutions, and, more than anything, enjoyed sharing in each other's worlds. Mom was always happy when she was at a Peace Corps celebration; likewise, I never saw Dad more joyous than when he attended a Special Olympics event. They relished each other's work.

I loved meeting Peace Corps volunteers and hearing their stories. Dad's high energy level would increase even more whenever he met a Peace Corps volunteer. He'd pepper them with questions: What country did you serve in?

What did you do? What did you like? What didn't you like?

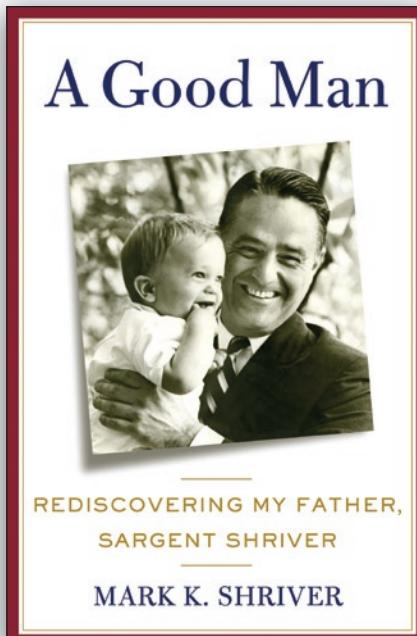
One time I watched as he mesmerized a group gathered on the back porch. He told us that he had landed in some Asian country after sleeping on the floor of the airplane, below the seats, which was his habit. He didn't have time to go to the hotel to shower, so he freshened up in the airport bathroom.

Dad entered the president's office, they shook hands and sat down, and no one spoke. Dad waited. And waited. The president just sat there without speaking, without blinking, without even moving.

"In a Westernized country, we would have exchanged pleasantries, chatted about our children—we would have said something!" Dad exclaimed. "I was wondering what the hell was going on, but I waited for him to speak first."

After ten minutes, when the president

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did finally open his mouth, it was to tell Dad that the Peace Corps was welcome. The organization would know how to respect local custom if its founder and leader could.

From stories like these, at an early age I had a sense of the world, of geography, because places like the Philippines and Chile and Haiti were regularly discussed at dinner. To me, that was just part of my dad's job, and I had little sense of the uniqueness of his work.

In fact, I first heard the story of the founding of the Peace Corps from Mom. Dad was traveling in the Soviet Union and Mom decided to hold a course for me on what Dad had done years before. She wasn't much for reflecting on past events—she was always so consumed with the tasks of the day that she rarely looked back—but this time was different.

She began with her brother's first public mention of the concept.

On October 13, 1960, Jack had flown straight from New York and his third debate with Nixon to address

students at the University of Michigan. He arrived at two a.m. on the morning of the fourteenth after a flight delay. Thousands of enthusiastic students had waited into the wee hours, hoping their candidate would show up. In response to the students' energy, Jack made extemporaneous remarks:

"How many of you," he shouted, "who are going to be doctors are willing to spend your days in Ghana?" As the crowd roared its affirmation, Jack continued: "On your willingness to do that, not merely to serve one year or two years in the service, but on your willingness to contribute part of your life to this country, I think will depend the answer [to] whether a free society can compete."

Less than a month later, Jack won the presidency. The next day, he asked Dad to lead the hiring effort for Cabinet level jobs; Dad was the headhunter for assembling the legendary "best and brightest." Scott Stossel, in his biography of my father, Sarge, enumerated several reasons why Uncle Jack gave this crucial assignment to Dad: Dad had demonstrated excellent judgment throughout the campaign; he had an eye for talent, as evidenced by those whom he had brought on board for the race; and he had what was thought to be the widest range of acquaintances, from Catholic bishops and African American publishing executives to Supreme Court justices.

"Though people were sometimes ruffled by Shriver's courtesy and easy amiability into dismissing him as something of a Boy Scout," Arthur Schlesinger wrote in his 1965 book *A Thousand Days*, "the President-elect had confidence in his energy and imagination—a confidence Shriver had justified in the campaign and justified again now."

And it was that imagination that recruited Republicans like Douglas Dillon

to be secretary of the Treasury and Bob McNamara (the newly named leader of Ford Motor Company) to be secretary of Defense. The Harvard economics professor David Bell was recruited to run the Bureau of the Budget (now called the Office of Management and Budget). Dad identified Dean Rusk as secretary of state and staffed his office with Adlai Stevenson as U.N. ambassador, Chester Bowles as undersecretary of state, and Michigan governor G. Mennen Williams as undersecretary of state for Africa.

But all the while the president labored to find the best position in the administration to realize Dad's talents.

Dad rejected several proposals—jobs at State, Justice, even high-level White House staff positions. He held out for a position with the real power to effect change; otherwise he wanted to return to his adopted home of Chicago and potentially run for governor of Illinois, as many people there were encouraging him to do.

The Peace Corps idea, meanwhile, seemed destined for the waste bin of so many political campaign promises. That is, until the president offered the job to Dad. The day after he was sworn in, Jack called Dad at his Chicago home and asked him to create the Peace Corps.

Dad struggled with the offer because the opportunity in Illinois pulled strongly at him. But in the end, he couldn't resist taking command of a compelling idea that, if fulfilled, would help spread hope around the world. I use the word "idea" because that was all Dad really took charge of—a vision that no one had fleshed out beyond a few campaign conversations. Not only was there no funding for the project, but existing foreign aid agencies posed significant opposition.

The odds of making the idea a reality were stacked against Dad. Former president Eisenhower mockingly dubbed the Peace Corps a "juvenile experiment," and in an editorial entitled "It's a Puzzlement," the Wall Street Journal wrote,

*The thing is so completely disproportionate as to be nonsensical. The wars of the civilized world did not break out because there was any lack of peoples-to-peoples contact between*

*Germans and Frenchmen. . . What person—except perhaps the very young themselves—can really believe that an Africa aflame with violence will have its fires quenched because some Harvard boy or Vassar girl lives in a mud hut and speaks Swahili?*

Foreign governments accused the effort of being a vehicle for American infiltration (read: spying) of their cultures. Dad even joked publicly that he was given the job because Jack had told him that if it failed, it would be easier "to fire a relative than a political friend."

Yet Dad, through grueling months of strategic lobbying, cajoling, hell-raising, and insisting, almost single-handedly turned a wobbly idea into an enduring entity. He appeared on Meet the Press to persuade the nation; he constantly went to the Hill to lobby; and he traveled the country encouraging and being encouraged by all the young people who wanted him to deliver on the president's promise.

When Mom told me about all this, I

was struck by the pride she took in the story. She was as persistent a person as I have ever or will ever meet. And when she got to the part of the story in which she recounted how Dad just wouldn't quit, I sensed why they were so attracted to each other. They were soul mates because they were workmates. They woke up each morning with determination on their faces. They walked out to meet the world as comrades in their common causes.

The Peace Corps, for Dad, was an antidote to all the espionage and intrigue and mistrust of the geopolitical era. I found out after Dad died that in the entrance to the original Peace Corps building, he had hung a sign with ten words:

"If they mean to have peace, let it begin here."

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*Excerpted from A GOOD MAN: Rediscovering My Father, Sargent Shriver by Mark K. Shriver, published by Henry Holt and Company, LLC. Copyright © 2012 by Mark K. Shriver. All rights reserved.*

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# COCONUT WATER WITH A PURPOSE

*RPCV brings a tropical elixir to the masses*

by JoAnna Haugen

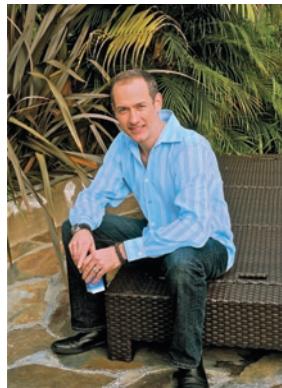
In vending machines and on shelves in grocery stores across America, there is a plentiful supply of syrupy sodas and sugar-laden sports beverages. But on white-sand beaches and in tropical destinations around the world there is a plentiful supply of palm trees, and on select trees are coconuts filled with natural, refreshing liquid. Packed with potassium, low in acid and void of fat, cholesterol and added sugar, this coconut water may just be the perfect substitute for those soft drinks and flavored electrolytes.

Coconut water is enjoyed by people in equatorial and island nations the world over, and while urban dwellers in developed nations have remained relatively unaware of the benefits of coconut water until recently, Peace Corps Volunteers have been drinking it for years. "I fell in love with coconut water when I was in Costa Rica," says Mark Rampolla (1991-94) about his country of service. "I drank it all the time: on the beach, on hikes, playing basketball, after a rough night out. It was very much a part of my lifestyle there."

After his Peace Corps service, Rampolla made his way through a corporate career, including managing a number of businesses for International Paper in Latin America. Eventually, he was ready to move on and start his own company, and it had to be something that coincided with his business, personal and social ideals.

"I didn't think about it as a business idea at the time." But a business idea it was, and in 2004, he launched ZICO (pronounced zee-ko), a coconut water company in New York. While a small but loyal following based in the United States found a new love for a refreshing product, people in developing countries began to benefit from the founding of the company.

ZICO



**ZICO  
founder,  
Mark  
Rampolla**

The coconut water sold through ZICO is sourced from Brazil, Indonesia and Thailand. "The vast majority of the places from which we source coconuts are existing plantations," Rampolla says. In those countries, coconuts have been a major source of income, and they are harvested mainly for the oil, fiber and other byproducts—but not the water. "The water was literally thrown away," Rampolla says. "We were able to provide jobs and development with very little environmental impact because the water comes from plantations that were already there."

Rampolla acknowledges that running a sustainable company isn't easy, especially given the fact that ZICO does not own the plants at which the water is produced, but it does work closely with suppliers to ensure that workers are not exploited. "We make sure that we aren't just meeting the local legal requirements but that, in fact, people are receiving livable wages and that we're encouraging good worker and community practices," he says.

ZICO's commitment to sustainability is due in part to Rampolla's experience in the Peace Corps. "What I feel most strongly about is the power of commerce," he says. "One of the most important benefits we can bring is jobs that are sustainable. Our number one

focus is that we bring as much value-added benefit to the local economy through everything we do."

But it's not just sound business practices that Rampolla picked up from his Peace Corps service. Like many returned Volunteers, it wasn't until after his time in Costa Rica that he was able to reflect on how much he'd learned ... and how it has helped shaped his role as a businessperson leading the way with an innovative product. "Unbeknownst to me at the time, Peace Corps was absolutely one of the most pivotal experiences of my life, and I can link so much of ZICO's success to my service," he says. Peace Corps Volunteers have to be entrepreneurial by figuring out how to add value to a community, adapt to a new culture, and engage and participate in a foreign environment. "Those are all skills that made a big impact on me," Rampolla says, and then doing all of those things on a very limited budget prepared him to launch a company that has gone from an idea in a coconut to a company that is on the fast track for global growth. After all, ZICO recently launched in London, Barcelona and Paris, and it has fielded interest and requests from about 50 countries from around the world.

As for the future of ZICO, Rampolla says that a new partnership with Coca-Cola is likely to help ZICO continue to grow. "Our goal is to introduce the world to coconut water and to make a massive, positive social impact in the developing world," he says. "In the process of that, I expect that within a certain number of years it will be a billion-dollar global brand."

We'll raise a coconut to that.

---

*JoAnna Haugen (Kenya 2004-05) is the community news editor for the National Peace Corps Association.*

## BE A JOB BOARD NINJA

*Using job postings to your advantage*

by Mrim Boutla

**C**onventional wisdom has it that 80% of job opportunities are never advertised, and are instead filled through networking. But that does not mean that job boards are useless. Job boards can be used in multiple ways: job boards can serve as a valuable resource for career exploration (i.e. discovering what career opportunities are out there). They can help you find out about employers you have not heard of through other channels. Finally, job boards are also extremely helpful to learn the keywords used in specific industries and fields to describe specific skills or areas of expertise.

This last dimension is critical for converting your next applications into interviews. For all these reasons, the National Peace Corps Association decided to design and deploy this new online job board, Next Step Job Finder ([www.jobs.peacecorpsconnect.org](http://www.jobs.peacecorpsconnect.org)). Here are a few tips on how to maximize your use of our new job board, or of any job board you are leveraging to build your career.

### IDENTIFY JOBS FOR WHICH YOU ARE QUALIFIED

Job postings are intimidating. One can get quite discouraged by reading the requirements listed on most job postings, even “entry level” jobs. Remember, though, that a job posting represents the profile of the ideal candidate. The hiring manager knows that it is unlikely that s/he will find that ideal candidate among the applications s/he will receive. Therefore, your task is to show through your resume and cover letter how close your profile is to that of the perfect candidate as described in the job posting—and increase your

chances to convert your application into an interview opportunity.

Often a job posting will include a list of initial requirements and preferences. These might seem non-negotiable. However, from my hundreds of conversations with recruiting managers, I have learned that it is not uncommon for hiring managers to change the job description or their criteria as they connect with potential candidates. Therefore, focus on the value you can create by highlighting how much you have in common with the ideal candidate. Overall, don’t let a long job description deter you from applying. Remember that 100% of people who get the job applied for it! If your profile meets most of the requirements and some of the preferences listed on the description, apply and let the hiring manager make a decision!

### WHAT'S THE BEST JOB FOR YOU?

It is always easier to find what you seek if you know what you are looking for. A dream job for one person can be a nightmare for another equally qualified person. How can you narrow down the type of organizations and the type of job that would be a better fit for your education, skills, career goals and life preferences? Knowing which skill sets you have and what these skills are called by potential employers is crucial in order to enter the right keywords in the job board search engine or when you set up email alerts.

Using technology to analyze job postings can help you determine which jobs are a better fit for your skills and goals. Go online to your favorite job boards (including the new NPCA

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Next Step Job Finder). Browse job postings, and select three to five jobs that are of interest to you. Whether you feel qualified for them or not is not important for this exercise. Just select jobs that you would be excited to have. Then run a word cloud analysis that includes all your jobs of interest. (We recommend TagCrowd: [www.tagcrowd.com](http://www.tagcrowd.com).) This analysis will help you find the half dozen skills that all jobs you selected have in common. Use these keywords to search for other jobs that are within your range of experience or when setting up a new email alert. This approach will help you better articulate your skill set and better target jobs that are a good fit for your talent, skills, and Peace Corps experience.

## **CONVERTING TAILORED RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS**

When you have identified a job that you want to apply for, it's important that you tailor your resume and cover letter for each job. Indeed, most employers now use specialized software that compares the keywords included in the job posting to those included in your resume and cover letter. In other

words, a computer will first review your application. The software program will assess if your cover letter and resume match at about 60%-80% of the terms used in the job description. If your resume and cover letter don't meet their match criteria, your application is likely to be discarded without even being looked at by a hiring manager.

But how do you tailor your job application so that you can showcase how close your profile is to that of the ideal candidate described in the job posting? Use the job posting as your roadmap. Use the keywords and skill names from the job description to tailor your resume and your cover letter. To do so, you can again use TagCrowd to create a word cloud to represent visually the keywords that are most important for you to highlight in your resume and cover letter when applying for a specific job. When you have that cloud, revisit your previous work experiences, coursework, and volunteer experiences. Don't make anything up, only highlight and emphasize the aspects of these experiences that best showcase how close you are to the ideal candidate

described in the job posting.

In this tough economy, it's crucial for you to focus on quality over quantity. It's not about how many applications you send. It's all about how spotlighting how close you are to the ideal candidate the organization hopes to bring on board, and that you have what it takes to add value and to hit the ground running. If you apply these insights moving forward, you will increase your conversion rate dramatically, no matter whether 10, 100 or 500 other applicants are also sending their application for this job.

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*An earlier version of this article was published on the Justmeans Responsible Careers Blog in 2010.*

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*Dr. Mrim Boutla is a Swiss-Moroccan brain scientist turned career coach. She has lived and worked in 4 countries, and served as a career counselor at Brown University and at the Kelley School of Business (Indiana University). She co-founded and manages More Than Money Careers ([www.morethanmoneycareers.com](http://www.morethanmoneycareers.com)), which helps students and professionals get clear, get connected, and get hired for well paying jobs in corporate social responsibility, social enterprise, and sustainable business.*

## **DOLLARS AND CENTS**

*Continued from page 30*

of student loan debt. Returned Peace Corps volunteers are no different. The way we use our readjustment allowance is, in large part, determined by employment and debt. The White House is addressing this, but the Peace Corps needs to as well. That's why I urge all of my fellow PCVs as well as RPCVs, to join and donate to the National Peace Corps Association. Help them to help us.

---

*Shavonda Mobley is a Peace Corps Volunteer currently serving in Paraguay.*



### **NPCA Serving Volunteer Advisory Council**

The purpose of the National Peace Corps Association Serving Volunteer Advisory Council is to create a regular two-way channel of communication between serving Peace Corps Volunteers and the NPCA, the nonprofit organization that connects the Peace Corps community at home and abroad. For more information about the NPCA Serving Volunteer Advisory Council, visit <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/about/serving-volunteer-advisory-council>.

# COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT THROUGHOUT AFRICA

by JoAnna Haugen

## GLOBAL SOLUTIONS TO LOCAL PROBLEMS

Part public art and community action project, the Ghana Think Tank is the brainchild of **Christopher Robbins** (Benin) whose experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer taught him that developed world advice can often be nonsensical in the context of the developing world. Founded in 2006, the Ghana ThinkTank is a worldwide network of think tanks creating strategies to resolve local problems in the “developed” world. The network began with think tanks from Ghana, Cuba and El Salvador, and has since expanded to include Serbia, Mexico and Ethiopia. In a recent project, they sent problems collected in Wales to think tanks in Ghana, Mexico, Serbia, Iran, and a group of incarcerated girls in the U.S. prison system. <http://ghanathinktank.org/>

## REVERSE PEACE CORPS

**Liz Fanning** (Morocco 93-95) is the founder of CorpsAfrica, a non-profit organization that provides an opportunity for Africans to serve as “Peace Corps Volunteers” in their own countries—like AmeriCorps for African countries. CorpsAfrica provides training in development issues and places ambitious, creative Africans in high-poverty areas for one year where they drive solutions to poverty at the community level. “Graduates” of the program can then go on to serve in other African countries. CorpsAfrica is meant to serve as a model for national service and participatory, collaborative and accountable community development across Africa. [www.corpsafrica.org/](http://www.corpsafrica.org/)

## PROMOTING HEALTH IN TOGO

Hope Through Health, which was co-founded by **Kevin Fiori, Jr.** (Togo 03-06) and Thomas Flori, partners with a local Togolese association to reduce inequity in poverty settings by providing technical and financial support to community-based health initiatives. This partnership employs more than 90 Togolese individuals who provide prevention and treatment services for more than 2,000 patients at four health clinics. [www.hthglobal.org](http://www.hthglobal.org)

## EMPOWERING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN WASHINGTON, DC

**Spencer Hamilton** was one of the early board members of the Heart Award Foundation, a small social enterprise in the Washington, DC, area. The organization invests in projects proposed by youth or a group of youth that have demonstrated character in overcoming challenges and have a passion in improving their lives or communities. <http://heartawardfoundation.wordpress.com/>



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# RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY

by JoAnna Haugen

## BOLIVIA

**Jennie Stapp** (01-03), who recently became the library director at the Montana State Library, is the youngest person with the job title in the United States. Prior to this position, she was the digital library director and chief information officer, where she took on the task of digitizing the 55,000 items in the state library's print collection. She has a bachelor's degree from Rocky Mountain College and a master's degree from the University of Arizona.

## CHINA

**Michael Levy**'s memoir *Kosher Chinese: Living, Teaching and Eating with China's Other Billion* is one of the winners of Barnes & Noble's annual Discover Great New Writers awards. The book recounts his Peace Corps experience as a basketball-playing, kosher vegetarian. Levy is a teacher in Brooklyn, New York.

## COLOMBIA

**David Fretz** (64-66) is teaching a drawing class at the Allentown Senior Center. In a typical class, he shows students how to combine basic geometric shapes to create animals and people. Fretz used to teach college-level economics, and he taught English, biology and French at the high school level as well. He received his bachelor's degree from Wayne State University in Detroit and his master's degree from Memphis State University.

## COTE D'IVOIRE, MADAGASCAR

**Tony D'Souza's** (Cote d'Ivoire 00-02, Madagascar 02-03) third novel, *Mule*, is on the fast track at Warner Brothers to be turned into a major motion picture. He has just finished the manuscript for his fourth novel.

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Xpert Financial, Inc., has hired **Jim Anderson** as its new president and COO. He has more than 25 years of financial

experience, specifically in the areas of investment banking, commercial banking and investment management. Most recently, at Silicon Valley Bank, Anderson founded and served as president of SVB Analytics. Other positions at SVB include serving as president of eProsper; founder and president of SVB Securities; and founder, president and chief investment officer of SVB Asset Management. Prior to SVB, Anderson was managing director of technology investment banking for CIBC Oppenheimer and a software engineer for Electronic Data Systems. Anderson received his bachelor's degree from the State University of New York and his master's degree from the American Graduate School of International Management.

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

**Matthew D. Kaye** (96-98) recently became the director of volunteer programs and service learning at Sacred Heart University. He is responsible for facilitating faculty development of service learning initiatives within their academic disciplines and coordinating and overseeing student volunteer efforts. Kaye's previous employment includes positions with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Migrant Education and the University of Florida's College of Education. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Winthrop University in South Carolina and his doctorate from Claremont Graduate University/San Diego State University.

## ECUADOR AND WASHINGTON, DC

**Howard Dodson, Jr.** (64-66) is the new director of the Howard University Libraries and its flagship Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. In April 2010, Dodson retired from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City after 25 years of work. In July 2011, he became a consultant to the

Howard system. Dodson was a member of the commission that recommended building the National Museum of African American History and Culture and a former consultant to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## EL SALVADOR

**Rob MacWhorter** has been named as the new supervisor of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. He has been working as the supervisor of the Dixie National Forest in Cedar City, Utah. Prior positions with the Forest Service were in Klamath Falls, Eldorado National Forest, Bend Ranger District in the Deschutes National Forest, Mount Hood National Forest, Ochoco and Fremont National Forests and the agency's Washington, D.C., office. MacWhorter is a graduate of West Virginia University School of Forestry, and he completed graduate level coursework at the University of Montana.

## GRENADA

**Robert Davidson** (90-92) is preparing to release his third publication, *The Farther Shore*, a collection of short stories edited and published by Bear Star Press. The main theme of all the stories is that the characters find themselves on a personal borderline. Davidson is a professor of English at California State University, Chico, where he teaches creative writing courses. He is also the author of *Field of Observations: Stories and The Master and the Dean: The Literary Criticism of Henry James and William Dean Howells*.

## GUATEMALA

The South Carolina Department of Commerce announced that **William Ford Graham** (99-01) will lead the agency's Europe Office in Munich, Germany. Graham, who has been with the agency since 2008, has been working as the director of international investment, where he is responsible for the international

recruiting strategy and leading the department in large-scale economic development efforts. Prior to his work with the Department of Commerce, Graham worked as general counsel for a real estate development and investment firm and served as a law clerk in the 5th and 14th Judicial Circuits of South Carolina. He received his bachelor's degree from Tulane University and his juris doctor and master's degrees from the University of South Carolina. Graham is a board member in Indian Waters Council's Three Rivers Scout District and immediate past president of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Carolina.

## INDONESIA

**Victor Godfrey** (63-65) was the winner of the 2012 Dan Lennon Award. He is the 23rd winner of the award. Godfrey is in his 50th season of coaching track and field, which started when he was serving in the Peace Corps. He has coached at Madison, Minn.; Watertown, S.D.; the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and for the country of Bahrain. Godfrey retired from teaching in 2003, but he has remained the head coach for Watertown.

## MAURITANIA

**Matt Gould** (01-03) and his writing partner Griffin Matthews have received the Richard Rodgers Award, which will help fund their show "Witness Uganda." Based on actual events, "Witness Uganda" documents the story of an aid worker battling to find his place in the world full of injustice and inhumanity and explores the question, "Is changing the world even possible?" Gould is currently working on a commission for Yale Rep and has written and directed several other shows. He has composed and arranged music for Grammy winner Desmond Child, Terrence McNally and Vanessa Williams, among others.

## NIGER, SENEGAL

**Shelby Rajkovich** (10-11) has been hired as the communications manager for United Fresh Produce Association. She has completed agricultural internships for Washington, D.C., policymakers by providing research assistance at USDA during the 2008 Farm Bill and in the office of Senator Richard G. Lugar. Rajkovich is a graduate of Cornell University.

## PARAGUAY

**Scott Missildine** is the new director of the Chilton County Humane Society. Prior to this, he worked at the Prattville/Autauga Humane Society as co-director and with the Montgomery Humane Society as a volunteer coordinator, administrative assistant and humane deputy. He is also in the National Guard. Missildine received his degree from the University of South Alabama.

**Deb Hauser** (83-85) is president and executive director of Advocates for Youth, a national sexual health nonprofit group, where she has been working in some capacity since 1992.

Prior to her work at Advocates for Youth she was the director of community health services in Atlantic City. Hauser received her bachelor's degree from George Washington University and a master's degree from the University of Michigan.

## ROMANIA

**Jimmy Ilseng** (05-07) is the newest study abroad and exchange student adviser at Baylor. A graduate of Texas Tech University, Ilseng completed graduate work at Vanderbilt before beginning his job at Baylor.

## SIERRA LEONE

**Cindy Nofziger** (85-87) has won the 2012 Jefferson Award for her work in Sierra Leone. In 2004, she founded Schools for Salone, a non-profit organization that has built 14 schools, two secondary school libraries and several water wells. The organization has also sent more than 25,000 books to Sierra Leone and published *Salone Stories: Ten Sierra Leonean Tales for Children*. In addition, Schools for Salone will be hosting their fourth annual teacher training workshop for teachers this summer.

## THAILAND

**Lucy Joyce** (83-85) has been named the executive director of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Agency of Orange County. She began her career with Cornell in 1986 as a community issues agent in

Broome County. Joyce is a member of the Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and Orange County Land Trust Board, and she serves as a 4-H Club leader.

**Anne-Marie L. Storey** (89-90) has taken over as president of the Maine State Bar Association. An attorney with Rudman Winchell, she plans to emphasize professionalism within the bar and increase value to members in her new position. Storey has been serving as vice president of the bar association. She graduated from Middlebury College and the Vermont Law School in Burlington. She is a member of the board of directors of the Bangor Humane Society, the Maine Discovery Museum and the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce.



## TOGO

The Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York, Inc., has appointed **Betsy Brown** as the president and CEO. Brown has worked on federally funded planning-service programs in Latin America and the Caribbean, West and East Africa and several countries in the Soviet Union. Most recently, she has been running a consulting practice, volunteering for Planned Parenthood and working as a member of a mobile Wellness Outreach Team.

## WASHINGTON, DC

Governor **Richard F. Celeste** (79-81) has joined the Board of Trustees of CHF International, an international development and humanitarian assistance organization. Celeste served as the director of the Peace Corps from 1979-81 then went on to serve as U.S. Ambassador to India. He recently retired from his position as the twelfth president of Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Celeste holds a degree from Yale University and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University.

## WESTERN SAMOA

**Rob Shaffer** has completed and published his 659-page book, *Samoa: A Historical Novel*, which spans nearly 3,000 years of the nation's history. Shaffer has been researching and writing the book for more than 40 years.

# REUNITED

*The story behind I Am the Water, You Are the Sea*

by Erica Burman

**I Am the Water, You Are the Sea originates with a Peace Corps veteran who served in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s. Forced to leave before the Iranian Revolution in 1977, he lost touch with his Iranian Muslim lover, Ali.**

Directed by Malachi Leopold, *I Am the Water, You Are the Sea* tells the true story of his uncle Alex, a Peace Corps Volunteer who served in Iran in 1967, and fell in love with Ali, an Iranian Muslim man. Their relationship had been secretive for their duration in Iran. Due to the Iranian Revolution in 1977, Alex was forced to leave the country, as well as Ali, the man he loved. Over 35 years Alex and Ali kept in touch with secret love letters, and every so often a phone call. For the first time since their separation in 1977, Alex and Ali were finally reunited this May. *I Am the Water, You Are the Sea* struggles with the pain of civil rights and liberties, immigration, as well as LGBT issues. We sat down with Director Malachi Leopold to see where the film has gone in the year since we've first found out about its initial production.

**Worldview: What is happening at this very moment with *I Am the Water, You Are the Sea*? I understand you're currently in production.**

Malachi Leopold: We're on location, filming in the Middle East. Alex and Ali have been reunited for the first time in 35 years. We're filming their time together, in addition to their grappling with what is going to happen next. Their decisions are all difficult, as no path is easy, and all have implications for the rest of their lives.

**Worldview: What do you want your audience to take away from *I Am the Water, You Are the Sea*?**

Malachi Leopold: The very idea of the title—we are interconnected, one. "Many waves, one ocean." The more free we each become, the more able to become who and what we truly are, to love with the idea of helping others become the best versions of themselves, the better our individual lives will be and the better our world will become.

Also - the truth, that love is greater than hate, more powerful than fear, stronger than mistrust, and worth facing difficulties to realize. As Ali stated in an interview yesterday, "Countries and people can't be enemies forever. They will eventually find a way to love one another."

**Worldview: What specific laws and political affairs does *I Am the Water, You Are the Sea* touch on?**

Malachi Leopold: A lot of big ones! U.S. policy towards Iran, gay rights (specifically marriage and immigration equality), nuclear rights, the 'question of Islam for the West, and HIV/AIDS.

**Worldview: I saw on *I Am the Water, You Are the Sea's* Facebook page that Alex was doing an interview with a Swiss radio station, have you been receiving a lot of interviews globally?**

Malachi Leopold: In the first 72 hours that we've been here, we've given interviews to the Huffington Post and Swiss Radio.

**Worldview: Share with me a bit about the reunion.**

Malachi Leopold: It was an amazing moment, seeing Ali coming thru the security gate at the airport,



Alex and Ali reunite.

Malachi Leopold

recognize Alex, and quickly rush to him to embrace in spite of the barricade between them. After a brief but emotional hug over the barricade, they each walked to the end of the separation barrier. They went into each other's arms, and Ali buried his face in Alex's chest, crying and kissing him on the shoulder.

**Worldview: This is a completely independent project, and previously you used Kickstarter to secure funds. Will you be doing something similar when the film goes out of production and into its final stages?**

Malachi Leopold: We are continuing to accept donations, in addition to applying for grants and raising money from private investors.

**Worldview: This film captures a soft spot in international relations, what have you taken away thus far from the story?**

Malachi Leopold: People are people everywhere—whether they're in rural America or rural Iran, Nablus or Tel

Aviv, Nairobi or Singapore. People tend to get caught up in headlines, which depict the actions of a very small minority in power that usually does not represent the feelings and aspirations of everyday people. For example, the headlines we see about Iran's government gives us such a small and inaccurate picture of a people who have so much in common with us. Yes they have a distinct culture—but the fundamental values, desires, dreams and aspirations—having freedom to be who we want to be, love who we want, where and when we want; these are things I believe we all want. Finding the common ground, connecting to our common humanity, acting out of love and inspiration - this is the way to a better world in which we aren't discussing war but discussing ways to collaborate, connect, and celebrate life.

*You can follow I Am the Water, You Are the Sea on Facebook and Twitter: [www.facebook.com/alexandali](http://www.facebook.com/alexandali) and @AlexandAli. Thank you to Lauren Widor for her assistance with this interview.*

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