

Peace Corps Times



January — June 2014

Evacuation Aftermath

Peace Corps evacuates
230 Volunteers from
Ukraine

Agency Readies for Same-Sex Couples

Training starts worldwide

From East(er)n Europe to West (Coast)

Bringing Georgian food to Portland



19th Peace Corps Director Sworn In

Carrie Hessler-Radelet greets Peace Corps employees after her swearing in on June 10 as the 19th Director of the agency. Hessler-Radelet was sworn in by Senior Advisor Carl Sosbee; her husband, Steve Radelet, also attended. Prior to her confirmation, Hessler-Radelet had served as acting Director since September 2012, and was deputy director since June 2010.



“I envision Peace Corps as a dynamic, forward-leaning champion for international service. I see it as the place for Americans who are drawn to service abroad.

I envision a Peace Corps that is defined by its energy, innovation, and impact.

I envision a Peace Corps that is rooted in our vibrant past, but ready to harness the tools, technologies, and opportunities of the 21st century.”

**Carrie Hessler-Radelet, RPCV
Western Samoa, 1981–83**

Family: Four generations of Hessler-Radelet's family have served in the Peace Corps: her grandparents, aunt, herself, and her nephew. Hessler-Radelet served with her husband, Peter Radelet.

Education: Hessler-Radelet holds a master's degree in health policy and management from the Harvard School of Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Boston University.

Career accomplishments: Prior to her return to the Peace Corps in 2010, Hessler-Radelet was vice president and director of the Washington, D.C., office of John Snow Inc., a global public-health organization, where she oversaw the management of public-health programs in more than 85 countries. She was actively involved in the establishment of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and was a primary author of PEPFAR's first strategic plan.

Peace Corps accomplishments: Hessler-Radelet spearheaded a comprehensive agency assessment and reform and led the roll-out of the Focus In/Train Up initiative. She implemented policies and procedures to improve health and safety, including those required by the 2011 Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act. Hessler-Radelet also instituted the Office of Global Health and HIV and the Global Health Service Partnership.

A publication for Peace Corps
Volunteers serving worldwide

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Editor's Letter

Welcome to the new Peace Corps Times. For many, this is the only contact that you receive directly from headquarters. Many of you have regular Internet access, so you have access to your favorite sites from the States. In an effort to be responsive to changes in the field, we thought about what would make Peace Corps Times more relevant to Volunteers abroad. So, what can PCT bring you that is different, relevant, interesting, and that you can't get elsewhere?

Here's what we came up with. We've added new columns: Peace of Mind from the Counseling and Outreach Unit at headquarters, to build your mental health skills; Corps Innovation from the Department of Innovation, to highlight innovative operations ideas and how they can be used by PCVs; Puzzle Peaces, with a crossword and Sudoku to entertain you (Get it? Puzzle pieces?); Book Shelf, book recommendations that we find interesting or relevant to PCVs in the field.

We kept several columns: Agency News, Career Corner (now Corps to Career), Notes from the Field, Volunteer Life, the recipe (now PCV Pantry). We expanded content in other areas, planning for an article on agency initiatives, more in-depth features, and more articles about what Volunteers are doing in the field—or when they return to the U.S. We also added a section called The View from Here to showcase your photos. Send us a photo of your view from the camp fire—photos from summer camps—and we may run it in the next issue. (Send to pctimes@peacecorps.gov; include your name, country, and service dates, and make sure the photo is 300 dpi and 3 inches wide.) Also new is an interactive feature; this issue, it's a centerfold pull-out Peace Corps country quiz to use in classrooms or with counterparts. Maybe the most fun new feature is a DIY section. This issue, it's a stove (made out of two soda cans!) and cooking hacks.

This Peace Corps Times has been a labor of love. We hope you find it interesting and useful, and hold on to it. We will publish two issues a year, so you may only get four during your service. Feel free to let me know what you think at pctimes@peacecorps.gov.

—Sarah Blazucki
Editor

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Bringing Georgian food to Portland



Agency News



Top Volunteer-Producing Colleges and Universities Announced

The University of Wisconsin-Madison, for the first time in eight years, sits at the top of the Peace Corps' 2014 rankings of the top Volunteer-producing colleges and universities. Western Washington University and Gonzaga University topped the rankings of medium and small schools, respectively. Historically, the school has been the second-highest producer of Peace Corps Volunteers in the country, having held the top spot from 2001–06. The University of California, Berkeley, however, maintains the top all-time spot for Volunteers produced.



**HOWARD
UNIVERSITY**



**SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Top Volunteer-Producing HBCUs

For the third consecutive year, Howard University took the top spot among the Peace Corps 2014 rankings of the top Volunteer-producing historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). This year, Howard also became the first HBCU to claim a spot (No. 16) on the national list of top Volunteer-producing colleges and universities. Spelman College and Norfolk State University placed second and third among the 2014 top Volunteer-producing HBCUs.

Top Hispanic-Serving Institutions

San Diego State University claimed the top spot among the Peace Corps' 2014 rankings of the top Volunteer-producing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) with 33 undergraduate alumni currently serving as Peace Corps Volunteers. California State University, Long Beach ranked No. 2 with 31 currently serving Volunteers, and the University of New Mexico took the third spot with 26 currently serving Volunteers.

Six Schools Join Peace Corps Prep Program

Prospective students at Arcadia University; Georgia Gwinnett College; Hiram College; University of Washington, Tacoma; Ursinus College; and Wilmington College can now apply to enter their respective school's Peace Corps Prep program beginning in fall 2014. The Prep Program combines international development coursework, internship or volunteer experience, and foreign language study. Photo: At left, Helen Lowman, Associate Director of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, and Arcadia Provost Dr. Steve O. Michael. Photo credit: Arcadia University/Amy Jordan

U of Mich Expands Peace Corps Master's Programs

Current Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet (at left, center), University of Michigan Vice Provost for Global and Engaged Education James Paul Holloway (left), and School of Information Dean Jeffrey Mackie-Mason signed agreements in March to create new Master's International and Paul D. Coverdell Fellows programs at the school. The MI program combines graduate study with Peace Corps service; RPCV fellows receive financial support and credit toward a master's.

Total Volunteers

Large Colleges & Universities

More than 15,000 undergraduates

1. University of Wisconsin-Madison (90)
2. University of Washington (85)
2. University of Florida (85)
4. The Ohio State University (83)
5. University of Michigan (81)

Medium Colleges & Universities

Between 5,000–15,000 undergraduates

1. Western Washington University (65)
2. University of Virginia (44)
3. American University (43)
4. The George Washington University (41)
5. Cornell University (29)
5. The University of Vermont (29)

Small Colleges & Universities

Less than 5,000 undergraduates

1. Gonzaga University (22)
2. SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (17)
3. Carleton College (16)
3. Macalester College (16)
3. Pacific Lutheran University (16)

Graduate Schools

1. University of Denver (23)
2. University of Washington (20)
2. Tulane University (20)
4. University of Florida (17)
5. University of Pittsburgh (13)
5. University of Minnesota Twin Cities (13)
5. University of South Florida (13)
5. The University of Texas at Austin (13)

Historical, Since 1961

1. University of California, Berkeley (3,576)
2. University of Wisconsin-Madison (3,112)
3. University of Washington (2,840)
4. University of Michigan (2,556)
5. University of Colorado Boulder (2,385)



Agency Readies for Same-Sex Couples

Planning ahead
Staff training
in the Philippines

Last June, the Peace Corps announced it would begin accepting Volunteer applications from same-sex couples to serve together. The change was several years in the making, and had received strong support from the White House.

In the year since the policy change, the agency appointed a same-sex couples initiative coordinator, who is implementing a five-day training at posts that will eventually receive same-sex couples—just over half of Peace Corps host countries.

"We're offering posts proactive and advance training sessions to enable them to develop action plans to receive their same-sex couples," said coordinator Daniel Hinkle. "The goal is to conduct eight post trainings before the end of the year."

The first two took place in Cambodia and the Philippines in February, followed by Macedonia in May. Nicaragua is planned for July, and Mexico for September. Three more are pending this year.

"The training focuses on general lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender knowledge and sensitivity, including safe zone training," he said. "One of the most powerful days of the training is the cultural climate day, when we invite local NGOs and advocates working on LGBT rights in the community to share with the entire post team the realities of being an LGBT person in that country."

In addition to local advocates, host country national same-sex couples give an overview of what couples can expect in-country.

"HCNs are able to see the LGBT struggles and initiatives taking place in their own countries, which helps them more easily relate to and support LGBT PCVs and same-sex couples," he said.

In addition, the training includes the creation of a post action plan, revisiting post policies and procedures and developing new strategies to support same-sex couples.

One challenge of placing same-sex couples in Peace Corps host countries is that each cultural climate is different, both in terms of the country and the staff, who may be unfamiliar with LGBT issues.

"The training is tailored to the post," Hinkle said, "and we meet them where they are in terms of LGBT support and inclusion. We know some posts have more challenging cultural climates than others, and we'll be providing these posts with more resources."

Before the policy change, agency staff carefully considered safety issues faced by LGBT people in Peace Corps countries.

"Safety and security of our same-sex couple Volunteers is our No. 1 priority," Hinkle said. "We are committed to conducting this training at every eligible post: We want to ensure that when they do receive a couple, they will have a safe and productive service."

To manage the complexities of placing same-sex couples in challenging cultural climates, Hinkle is working with country directors who have championed LGBT support in similar cultural climates, as well as currently serving and returned PCVs.

Safety and security of our same-sex couple Volunteers is our No. 1 priority.

"We are ensuring that posts are aware of legal and cultural realities of their host country, and connecting them to host country LGBT networks," he said. "And we'll be ensuring that couples know what they are getting into, including having a call with the country director beforehand and putting them in touch with current and returned LGBT PCVs and support at post."

As part of the initiative, the agency interviewed its "pilot" same-sex couple, who finished service in Ecuador in March, as well as staff, counterparts, and fellow PCVs, about their challenges.

One of outcomes of the training Hinkle noted was how open staff were to discussing challenging issues.

"Some staff members on a personal level don't agree with this," he said. "But through the discussion, we helped staff realize that this element of diversity is really no different than the other elements they are already supporting."

"On the soft side, staff members' personal views have been transformed through the training. Afterward, staff told me stories about LGBT family members who had come out, and they felt they could better connect with them now."



Evacuation Aftermath

What happens after Peace Corps evacuates a post?

Evacuation days

Peace Corps/Ukraine's Ivan Nykyforuk packs PCV belongings for the evacuation.

Two hundred and thirty Volunteers. Ninety-two hours to evacuate.

In February, the Peace Corps evacuated Volunteers in Ukraine, one of the four largest posts in the agency.

Local political tensions had been ebbing and flowing since November 2013, when then President Viktor Yanukovych decided not to sign a planned alliance agreement with the European Union. Though the protests had been ongoing for three months, with people camped out at Independence Square in the capital of Kyiv, violence peaked the third week of February with more than 75 people killed, leading to the Peace Corps' decision to evacuate.

During the protests, which were centered in Kyiv with smaller protests taking place in western Ukrainian cities, Volunteers had been on either on alert or standfast status, depending on the tension levels. Volunteers either had to inform post if they came to Kyiv and avoid Independence Square—EuroMaidan—or were instructed to not travel to Kyiv.

Country Director Doug Teschner said he'd been in daily communication with the Volunteers, keeping them apprised of the protest situation.

"From our point of view, we were monitoring it," he said. "From time to time, we put the Volunteers on standfast—don't move."

Teschner knew how difficult those standfast calls were to make, and affected everything from planning and fundraising for summer camps to Volunteers who would lose their tickets for vacations they'd booked.

"If you were further away, you might not have noticed," he said. "Things seemed normal. But as the second round of violence came in [the third week of February] and it looked like they were going after the president, you started seeing activity in some of the other places and cities."

Although "no PCVs were ever threatened or in any danger," Teschner, whose apartment is close to the protest area, had to evacuate twice.

'Hard leaving your home'

In Vinnytsia, in western Ukraine, PCV Michael Dixon had been working with a municipal community development agency. Many of his projects—parks, museums, theaters—had been put on hold as his agency, the Podolian Agency for Regional Development, began to focus on e-government and municipal transparency issues. A retired architect, Dixon had extended his service for a third year, and only had five months left when he was evacuated.

Before leaving, Dixon packed two suitcases and two small packages to be sent back to him in the U.S. They were still in his old apartment at the end of April, waiting for Peace Corps/Ukraine staff to retrieve them.

Once evacuated, Volunteers flew to Washington, D.C., for a three-day transition conference, which happened in three waves based on how long the Volunteer had been in service.

Of 230 total Volunteers, 219 closed service; the remainder either transferred or chose to remain in Ukraine on their own. A few others returned after the transition conference in the U.S. All told, Teschner estimated that about 50 Volunteers were close enough to the end of their service that they likely won't return if the security situation allows the post to reopen.

Lukas Henke is one such Volunteer who said he won't return to finish service; he's starting a graduate program at Brandeis in Boston in the fall, in sustainable international development.

"I only had two months left in my service at the time of evacuation and therefore already had my post-Peace Corps plan figured out," Henke said.

Because he was finishing service soon, Henke had already started packing—he'd taken some things home with him on a recent trip—and was able to pack everything else in the 24 hours he had between the consolidation call and his flight.

For Henke, who was a Youth in Development Volunteer in Odesa, the hardest part about leaving was "not being able to say goodbye to our friends and new families. I followed directions from the Peace Corps and didn't inform anyone that we were being evacuated."

Grace Ansani, a Youth in Development Volunteer in a small village in northwest Ukraine set to close service in June, said she was ready to leave

professionally, but not personally or emotionally, and didn't have a chance to pack everything.

"I had convinced myself that we would not be evacuated, and we were only allowed one bag," she said. "So I quickly ended up packing two bags, but had to leave one. Most of my stuff was left for my Ukrainian family to pack for me."

"The hardest thing was feeling as though I was abandoning my friends, co-workers, students, and family," Ansani said. "I only had a chance to say goodbye to my boyfriend and family. I worked with young children and a lot of children with special needs. I knew that they would not be able to understand why I just left, without even saying goodbye, and this was really the hardest."

It's always hard leaving your home, especially not knowing when we could go back.

Since returning to the States, Ansani said she's stayed in touch with her counterpart and friends.

"I have been in very close contact with my counterpart," she said. "We are still finishing some projects and I am still helping her virtually. I Skype with my Ukrainian friends at least once a week and still virtually help with an English club at the regional library."

Despite embarking on the next chapter of her life—Ansani is taking prerequisite classes for nursing school, volunteering at a hospital, and nannying—the evacuation and transition has been hard on her.

"I miss the community, both of Ukraine and of other Volunteers," she said. "I came home—and many of my other PCV friends have felt the same—thinking that I am coming back to 'regular life'—the life that I left filled with friends, loved ones, social life, a job. I couldn't really imagine that I would feel more lonely at home than I ever did in Ukraine. I went from doing so much and having so many people and things around me, to coming home and being very underwhelmed."



The people [clockwise from top left]

PCV Lukas Henke
in Kyiv

PCV Grace Ansani
in Rivne

PC/Ukraine
staffers Tamara
Prydatko (left)
and Iryna
Krupska at the
post

PCV Michael
Dixon and his
counterpart in
Vinnytsia

Projects, special projects continue

Once the PCVs evacuated, they were placed on a 45-day administrative hold to determine if the post would resume operations. In April, the Peace Corps officially suspended Volunteer operations in Ukraine.

After the program suspension, Peace Corps/Ukraine staff got to work packing the Volunteers' apartments and shipping their goods home.

Teschner said the packing effort is monumental, as each apartment has to be handled individually.

"We gave PCVs the option that we could hold their bag in case they were coming back," he said. "Some packed ahead of time; some said give this to this person and this person."

The process was complicated by the fact that some Volunteers had been assigned to Crimea, the southern peninsula that was annexed by Russia in March.

"Some of the Volunteers were in Crimea," Teschner said, "and we worked through our counterparts to pack and ship their belongings to Ukraine."

In addition to packing, shipping, and tracking Volunteers' belongings, the 65-member post staff has been continuing their work on projects and with counterparts, attending training locally and abroad, and working on maintenance and special projects.

"We've been looking at manuals and procedures, other projects, things that you don't have a ton of time to work on—like strategy—when Volunteers are here," Teschner said.

"We've also doing some training on emotional health and support, and trained our staff on how to deal with stress. I can't tell you how stressful this is on staff.

"We're monitoring the safety situation every single day. Standfast is really stressful on PCVs. But it's very stressful for staff too. They are worried about their country and their job."

"And we're doing a lot of things we don't normally get to do, like clean out files," he said.



One project Teschner said the post is working with the Office of Innovation on a language training program with DuoLingo, a free language learning smartphone application.

Katvia Pullapilly, director of programs and training, said regional managers are packing, monitoring the safety situation, working on annual reports for partners, and keeping in touch with counterparts.

For the counterparts, Teschner said they are working to keep the ministry and local level partners engaged for when Volunteers return.

Iryna Krupska, Peace Corps/Ukraine's training manager who has worked for the agency since 2003, said she is working with staff, (now returned) Volunteers, and counterparts on projects to enhance training and ongoing language learning support.

"Together, with our pre-service training staff, we are developing a tutor's media guide, which



will be helpful to the language tutors of our PCVs," Krupska said. "Besides, we are developing technical language modules which will be used both during PST and as a self-directed learning tool. Both ideas were suggested by our PCVs through the post-PST surveys, and also at the Training Advisory Group meetings, but we never had enough time to fully implement it. Our PCVs—or actually now they are RPCVs—are actively helping us with those projects."

Tamara Prydatko, Peace Corps/Ukraine's TEFL lead specialist since 1996, has been working closely with the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science. Since the Volunteers left, she's been visiting central and western Ukraine to meet with potential partners and help teachers prepare to work with Volunteers in the future.

Prydatko added that she has been working with counterparts, local education officials, and the Ministry of Education to continue cooperation and discuss future strategies.

She also attended the National English Language Olympiad in March, which she said Volunteers have collaborated with Ukrainian educators on for 14 years.

This year, Volunteers finalized the olympiad tests after they had evacuated.

"Due to the hard work and dedication of the TEFL PCVs, the National Olympiad materials were very well received and actually served as the baseline of the nationwide competition," Prydatko said.

Teschner said that Volunteers have been keeping in touch with their counterparts and students, hosting a "Virtual Peace Corps."

"A number of Volunteers have been working on projects with their communities—strategic planning activities with their NGOs, a project with Grassroot Soccer—a number of those are going to continue on, staying virtually engaged with the planning via Skype," he said.

In transit
[Clockwise from left]

Street view of a Kharkiv oblast site, in Eastern Ukraine

Notes from PCVs to Peace Corps/Ukraine staff

Collected PCV apartment keys



Work goes on

Peace Corps/UA
Country Director
Doug Teschner
(right) attended
the National En-
glish Language
Olympiad, which
PCVs had helped
organize, in
March after the
evacuation.



Pullapilly added that some Volunteers have also done Skype lessons with students.

Teschner has been staying in touch regularly with Volunteers, sending a newsletter reporting on staff work and political events.

Krupska said it was difficult to keep her spirits up and "find enough energy to keep sharing positive thoughts and inspire all of our PCVs through the [transition] conference" in Washington, D.C.

"Having said that, I am really happy that I had such an opportunity to be with our PCVs and support them," she said. "In spite of all the latest developments, I am staying optimistic both about the future of Ukraine and about the future of the Peace Corps in Ukraine."

Prydatko said she appreciated the support that the Peace Corps has offered.

"Thanks to the Peace Corps/Ukraine administration, great trainings have been provided for staff: a Language Proficiency Index workshop and emotional skills and support training," she said. "Both trainings provided quality professional development opportunities for staff. They were timely and interesting, expanding our professional skills and knowledge. We are discussing with our staff ways to keep our cooperation active with counterparts, planning training events, and maintaining communication."

'A bright future for Ukraine'

At the end of the day, Teschner wants the Volunteers to come back soon.

"The challenge is to balance security and need," he said. "Ukraine is at a critical point in its history. Some people think that the Peace Corps isn't needed in Ukraine. But when you see the kind of connections that Volunteers make, the role we are playing is at the very grassroots level, in the most simple way."

"One of the concepts we bring is the idea of fair play," Teschner said. Volunteers had worked on a national English competition, and had written many of the tests.

"The whole power of that is the sense of fair play, which is fundamental to our values," he said. "Ukraine has a history of corruption and people get jaded or apathetic." That sense of fair play, Teschner believes, is needed more than ever.

"There's a huge role for the Peace Corps here. The U.S. Embassy has been very supportive, and has already sent two letters requesting the return of Volunteers," he said.

Following the May 25 presidential elections, the Peace Corps will conduct a security assessment to determine if the program can resume.

Dixon echoed Teschner's sentiment.

"It won't be easy, and it won't happen immediately, and will most certainly take several generations, but the countless number of amazing people with whom I have worked gives me confidence for the development of a bright future for Ukraine," Dixon said.

"PCVs are an extremely important factor in bringing friendship and instilling hope for this new democratic and civil society."

For information on Peace Corps/Ukraine, visit ukraine.peacecorps.gov.



PEACE OF MIND

Resilience

Bouncing Back From Adversity

Each of us has learned behaviors, patterns of thinking, and personality characteristics that help us through both good and difficult times. Some of us have more of this combination of thoughts, actions, and emotions than others, but all of us are able to increase our skills in these areas. These factors constitute resilience, defined as “a set of processes that enables good outcomes in spite of serious threats.” More commonly we think of resilience as “the ability to persist in the face of challenges and bounce back from adversity.” When defined this way, Peace Corps Volunteers use resilience daily!

As a Volunteer, you received resilience training in PST and Reconnect. Some PCVs have had training in resilience in school, sometimes called “skill streaming.” But the challenges we face change as we get older, and they change in the Peace Corps. Educators and mental health professionals believe resilience skills can be taught and that we can increase our ability to “bounce back from adversity” by trying out new techniques.

As you look at the list of factors to the right, try to estimate how much of each you’re feeling today. On a scale of zero to 10 (zero equals “absolutely none” and 10 equals “there’s no way I could get stronger on this factor”) consider which of these you rely on most often in service. (Perhaps also consider how you might have responded before you left the U.S.) Are the factors you’re relying on now working, or would it be worth it to increase your strengths in some factors?

For example, some ways to increase optimism include realizing what is controllable—very important in a new culture—and noticing goodness in yourself and in others. Or try this: Before you go to bed, make a list of three good things that happened that day. Think about why they happened. Many people who have made this a regular part of their day attest to a marked increase in gratitude and optimism. The added benefit of this exercise is falling asleep thinking of positive

things rather than ruminating on negatives. Increased optimism can increase resilience.

One way to increase problem solving ability is to identify your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Often, they are entwined in an almost circular pattern. To break counterproductive patterns, change how you think, feel, or act in a situation. It rarely matters where we break the cycle, but it is important that we try to break it somewhere.

For example, if you avoid going to the market because you hate to bargain, what thoughts are you having? Is it something like, “Bargaining people always sound like they’re angry, with loud voices and disparaging remarks about each other’s offers”? Is that accurate or do the buyer and seller stay friends and go at it again next week? By examining and altering your thoughts about bargaining at a market (“They’re not fighting and not angry. If I raise my voice to bargain, no one will think I’m angry.”), it might make going to the market (a behavior change) a much happier (a change in emotions) experience.

Now, look at the other eight factors and consider how you can increase each. Finally, visit the Authentic Happiness website (<http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>) and taking the Brief Strengths Questionnaire, which measures your perception of your character strengths. Look at your top five and decide how you might use them differently in-country.

Remember, the strength is already there: Discovering new ways to use it increases resilience.

10 factors that build resilience

- Optimism
- Effective problem solving
- Faith
- Sense of meaning
- Self-efficacy
- Flexibility
- Impulse control
- Empathy
- Close relationships
- Spirituality



VOLUNTEERS

What Can You Do with 5,460 Soccer Balls?

Soccer is going to be on the world's mind this summer, with millions expected to watch the World Cup in Brazil. As the 32 teams battle it out across the country, an estimated 1,000 soccer balls—the 2014 World Cup ball is the Adidas Brazuca—will be used in game play. What would you do with that many soccer balls?

For their part, Peace Corps Volunteers Daniel Brown, David Gooze, Sebastian Rivera, and Neal Burton (2012–14) are helping to distribute more than five times that amount, teaming up with the U.S. Embassy in Togo, PLAN Togo, the Togolese Ministry of Sport, Grassroot Soccer, and Rotary International to distribute more than 5,460 nearly indestructible soccer balls. Donated by the nongovernmental organization One World Futbol Project, the soccer balls will go to disadvantaged communities throughout Togo to educate community members and foster social change through sport. A third of the balls will go to "More Than Just A Game," an anti-malaria initiative in which Brown and fellow PCVs will travel to five middle schools to lead soccer-based trainings on malaria prevention and treatment for more than 200 students.

"In a World Cup year, we can see how billions of people throughout the world will converge on a single event to share in their passion for what can most simply be described as a game," Brown said. "But we know it is more than that. Something with the ability to unify billions of people is certainly more than just a game. In Togo that holds true even at middle-school soccer matches, which often draw hundreds of spectators. If this game has the ability to draw hundreds of spectators to watch middle-school children play, why not aim for a goal larger than the one we see on the field?"

Brown and his fellow Volunteers worked with Grassroot Soccer to create an interactive curriculum that uses soccer to teach kids about the dangers of malaria and demonstrates preventative measures. Peace Corps/Togo will distribute the soccer balls, host the three-day "More Than Just A Game" sessions coinciding with the soccer ball distribution, train community counterparts in the curriculum, and monitor and evaluate performance after the trainings have been completed.

Something with the ability to unify billions of people is certainly more than just a game.

Each school has nominated 40 students to participate in the trainings. Upon completion, each participant will receive a soccer ball and 10 more will be donated to the host school. Every time the students use one of the balls for a game, they will be reminded of the dangers of malaria and how it can be prevented. The remaining balls will be distributed among Volunteers in Togo to host training sessions in their own villages, again using the balls to engage and motivate local community members.

"From the first days of planning, counterparts in some of our target villages have been actively interested in doing a project with Volunteers that could involve co-ed soccer and education," Brown said. "Given that malaria is such an important issue in Togo, this was chosen as the theme of the tour. As Volunteers in all regions of Togo become

involved in the project, they will coordinate with counterparts in their village to implement the training. The local schools will invite the whole community to take part in the soccer ball distribution, which will include a soccer tournament amongst student participants, as well as sketches on the dangers of malaria."

The "More Than Just A Game" sessions are taking place throughout a three-week period but the local Volunteers and community members will continue to lead sessions with the donated soccer balls.

"The project has been met with incredible enthusiasm on all levels. From the American Embassy and the Ministry of Sport right down to the middle schools involved, everyone has been excitedly preparing for the trainings and distribution," Brown said. "By finding cultural traditions and practices specific to a given country and turning them into agents for change, you can have an enormous opportunity to not only impact a community, but a country. By including both boys and girls in the soccer trainings sessions and traveling to villages in every region of Togo, we can unify communities in the fight against malaria nationwide."

Camp GLOW

From 81 Campers in Romania to 60 Countries Worldwide

In 1995, PCV Sara Goodkind, along with Jennifer Bobb (now Petramale), Roz Edison, and four Romanian teachers, took 81 teen girls to Transylvania for a week-long leadership camp. The camp—dubbed GLOW for Girls Leading Our World—set out to help girls become active citizens by building self-esteem and developing goal-setting, assertiveness, and career and life planning skills. Today, PCVs in 60 countries host Camp GLOW programs that ask campers to think beyond traditional gender roles and address the unique issues girls and young women face. Goodkind (RPCV 1994–96) recently returned to headquarters for a Youth Empowerment Camp Expo—and answered a few questions for PCT.

PCT: How did you first come up with the idea for Camp GLOW?

Sara Goodkind: When I started in the Peace Corps, they told us we had to do secondary projects, and I knew from the beginning they said one possibility was to do a camp and that was immediately appealing to me. I had worked at a lot of camps in the U.S. and I was teaching English in Romania, so I knew that I would have time in the summer so it seemed like a good opportunity. At some point during my first year, I heard a representative from the U.S. Democracy Commission speak about the availability of small grants to promote the transition to democracy in Romania. This seemed like the perfect opportunity to fund a camp, so Jen and I wrote a grant application to them, which they funded.

PCT: What were the goals?

SG: We certainly had long-term goals for Romanian girls overall—specifically those that attended Camp GLOW—but I'm not sure we thought a lot about the future of the camp itself. We were just focused on making it successful for the girls that year.

In terms of our goals for the Camp GLOW participants, we had three. The first was to teach the girls leadership skills, as women were underrepresented in political office and other leadership positions in Romania, just as they are in the U.S. and most other parts of the world. The second was to begin to develop a sense of civic participation and responsibility, not

encouraged under communism, which had ended just five years before, and the third was to promote cultural awareness and understanding between ethnic Romanians and Hungarians. This third goal arose because I lived in a town on one side of the country, inhabited by ethnic Romanians, while Jen lived in a town populated almost entirely by ethnic Hungarians, who spoke Hungarian as their first language. This seemed like a great opportunity to bring these girls together and challenge some of the stereotypes and prejudices they had.

PCT: What was the biggest obstacle you faced in starting the camp?

SG: I would say that it was parents', and even some girls', opposition to a camp just for girls. Some parents thought it was unfair to the boys, and some girls did not want to attend if boys wouldn't be there, but luckily we had plenty of girls and parents who were interested. However, I think the Romanians were right: Boys need a space to talk about their challenges as well, so I'm really glad to hear about all of the camps that have started for boys too.

PCT: Have you kept in touch with any of the first campers?

SG: Some of my former students and some of these first camp GLOW participants are my friends on Facebook now. I put a post on Facebook to see if they had thoughts about Camp GLOW and what it meant to them. One of the girls, who is now a TV personality in Romania, said that what was

most memorable to her was the overall message of the camp about having the courage and confidence to make changes in your own life and in the world, to try new things, and really true to yourself.

PCT: Did you ever expect Camp GLOW to become so widespread?

SG: We thought the camp was an amazing experience for all of us there, but I sure never envisioned this kind of reach. It is incredible to see, especially when I think about its humble beginnings. I'm so glad to have been part of this! After the first Camp GLOW, we did realize that it was a meaningful and important experience for all of us and recognized that it would be worth continuing and sharing with others.



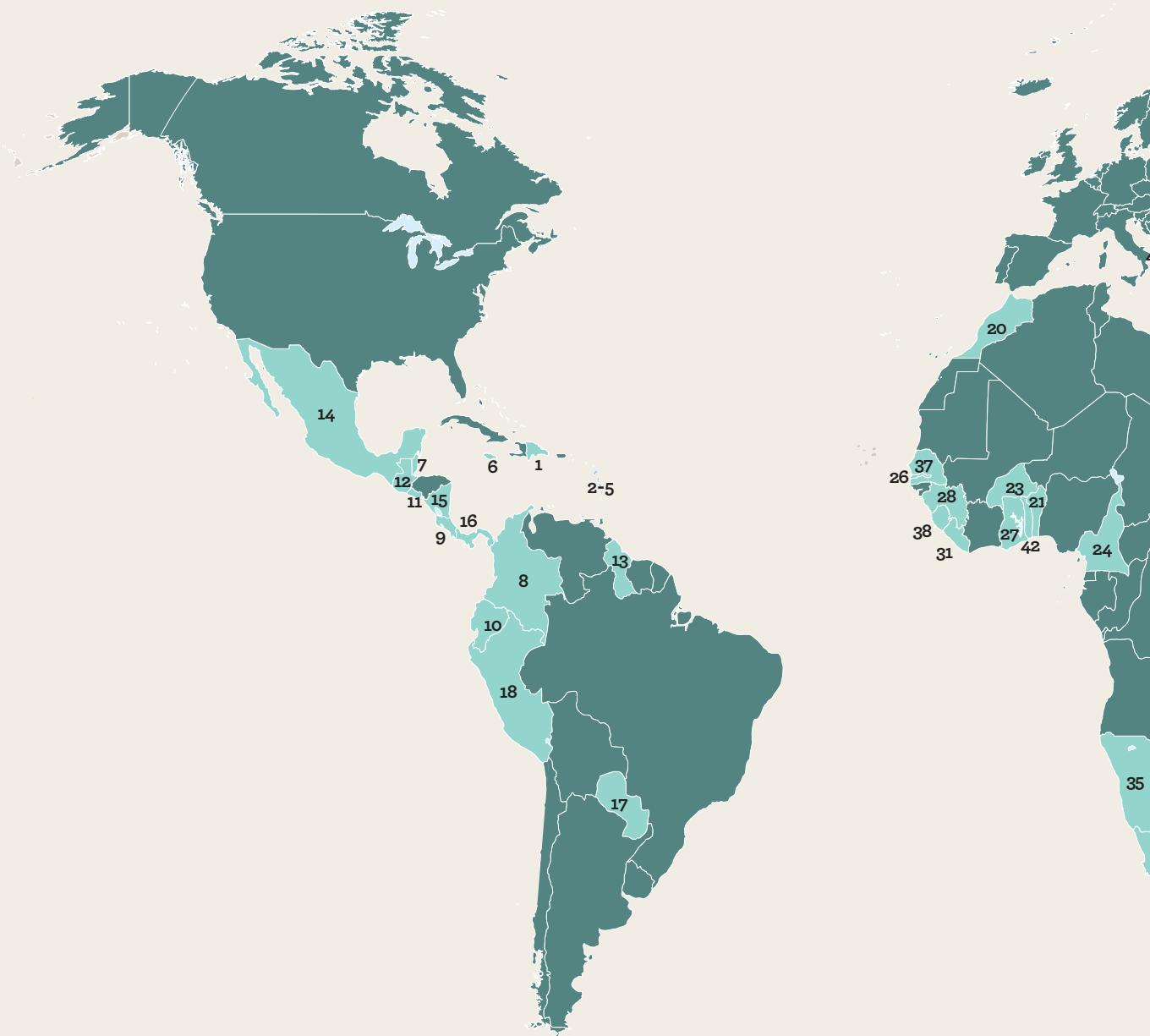
Then and now

GLOW in 1995 [above] and 2013

Sara Goodkind speaks at PC HQ [top]

Peace Corps Around the Globe

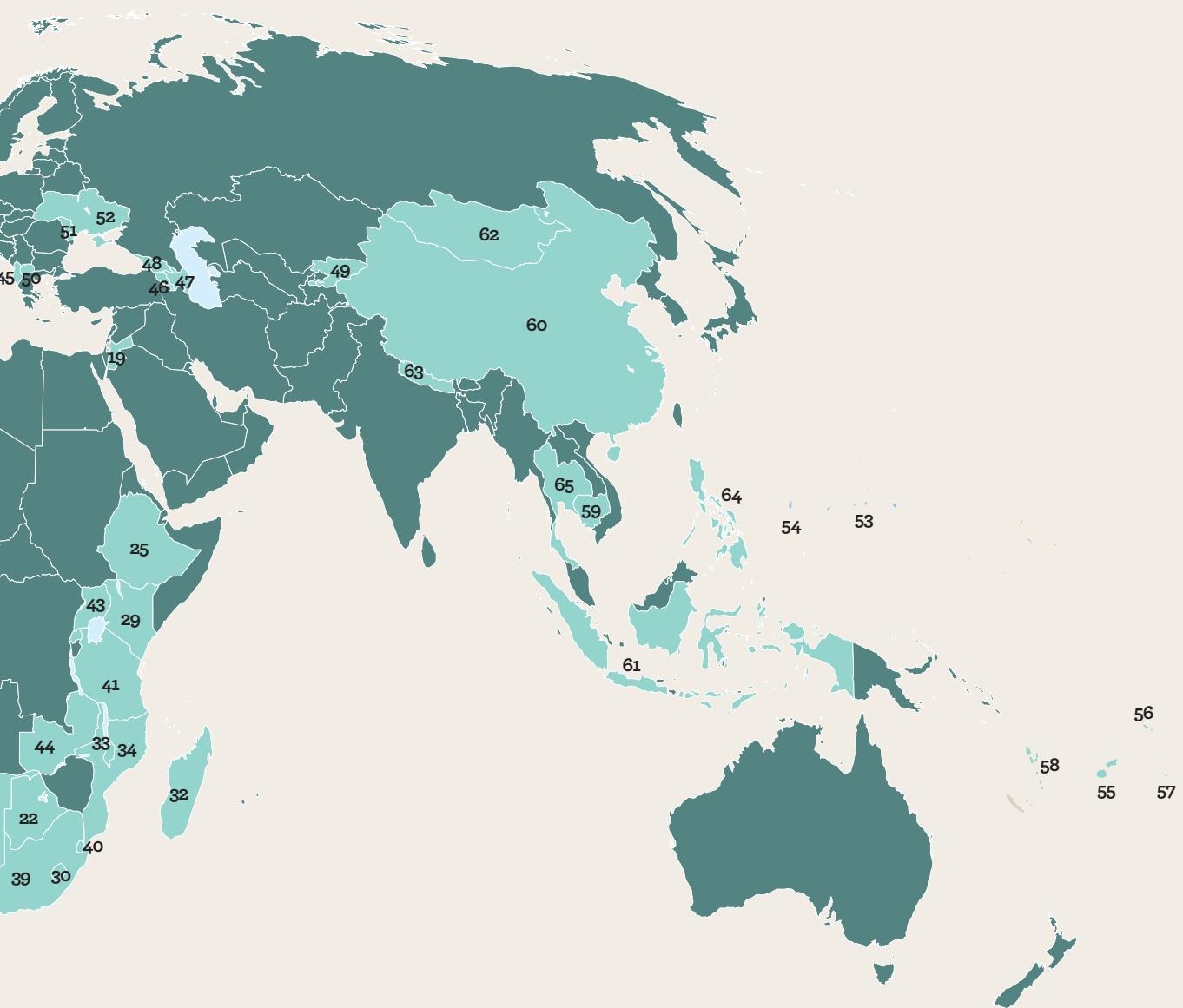
Peace Corps is in 65 countries.



Countries with Volunteers as of September 30, 2013.
Visit peacecorps.gov/countries for up-to-date information.

Countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific.

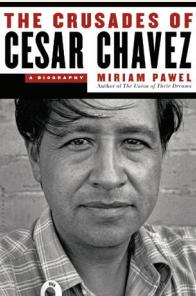
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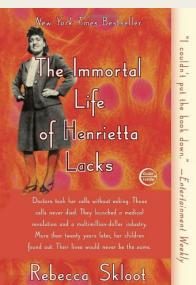


BOOK SHELF

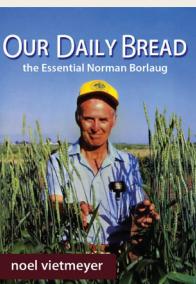
Our Top Five Biographies



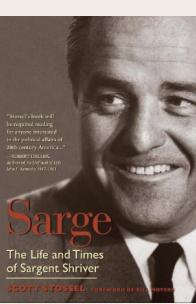
The Crusades of Cesar Chavez: A Biography (2014) by Miriam Pawel
The first truly comprehensive biography of the Latino leader, this book combines interviews and documents to tell the story of Cesar Chavez's rise from farm worker to national icon. Chavez's personal history, from immigration to the U.S. to farm laborer to leader of the United Farm Workers, is covered. Available in hardcover and e-book.



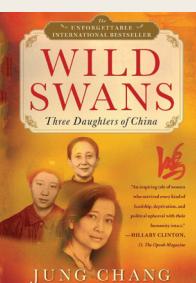
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks (2010) by Rebecca Skloot
Henrietta Lacks' name may be unknown but many have benefited from the discoveries her cells made possible. Taken without consent after her death, her cells became important tools in medicine—vital for polio vaccine development and breakthroughs in fertility, cloning, and gene mapping. This is the story of Lacks, her family, her cells, and the scientists. Available in hardcover, paperback, and e-book.



Our Daily Bread: The Essential Norman Borlaug (2012) by Noel Vietmeyer
This book follows Noble Peace Prize recipient Norman Borlaug from rural Iowa to the University of Minnesota and around the world as he worked to feed the hungry. Working alongside Mexican farmers and scientists, he developed new varieties of wheat able to produce previously unheard of amounts of grain, preventing the starvation of 6 billion people. Available in hardcover and e-book.



Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver (2011) by Scott Stossel
The epic biography of Sargent Shriver, first Director of the Peace Corps, provides an insider's view into the wild west days of the agency's launch and some of the 20th century's most historical moments. After the Peace Corps, Shriver led President Johnson's "War on Poverty," served as U.S. Ambassador to France, and helped found the Special Olympics. Available in hardcover, paperback, and e-book.



Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China (2008) by Jung Chang
A sweeping biography of three generations of Chinese women during the 1900s, this book follows the author's grandmother as she escaped from a brothel, her mother's rise in Mao's communist party and subsequent "rehabilitation" in a detention camp, and her life as a "barefoot doctor," a steelworker, and an electrician before leaving China in 1978. Available in hardcover, paperback, and e-book.

Map Key

The Caribbean	Africa	Eastern Europe/ Central Asia
1. Dominican Republic	21. Benin	45. Albania
2. Dominica	22. Botswana	46. Armenia
3. Grenada	23. Burkina Faso	47. Azerbaijan
4. St. Lucia	24. Cameroon	48. Georgia
5. St. Vincent/ Grenadines	25. Ethiopia	49. Kyrgyz Republic
6. Jamaica	26. The Gambia	50. Macedonia
	27. Ghana	51. Moldova
	28. Guinea	52. Ukraine
	29. Kenya	
	30. Lesotho	
	31. Liberia	
	32. Madagascar	
	33. Malawi	
	34. Mozambique	
	35. Namibia	
	36. Rwanda	
	37. Senegal	
	38. Sierra Leone	
	39. South Africa	
	40. Swaziland	
	41. Tanzania	
	42. Togo	
	43. Uganda	
	44. Zambia	
	45. Federated States of Micronesia	
	46. Palau	
	47. Fiji	
	48. Samoa	
	49. Tonga	
	50. Vanuatu	
Latin America	Pacific Islands	Asia
7. Belize	53. Federated States of Micronesia	59. Cambodia
8. Colombia	54. Palau	60. China
9. Costa Rica	55. Fiji	61. Indonesia
10. Ecuador	56. Samoa	62. Mongolia
11. El Salvador	57. Tonga	63. Nepal
12. Guatemala	58. Vanuatu	64. Philippines
13. Guyana		65. Thailand
14. Mexico		
15. Nicaragua		
16. Panama		
17. Paraguay		
18. Peru		
North Africa & the Middle East		
19. Jordan		
20. Morocco		

Sudoku Answers

Easy

7	9	3	8	5	2	4	1	6
1	5	6	7	9	4	8	2	3
8	2	4	6	1	3	5	9	7
9	3	5	1	6	8	7	4	2
2	6	8	9	4	7	3	5	1
4	1	7	3	2	5	6	8	9
3	4	1	2	8	6	9	7	5
6	8	2	5	7	9	1	3	4
5	7	9	4	3	1	2	6	8

Crossword Answers

Across

- 4. Response
- 9. Swaziland
- 10. March
- 13. Bookmobile
- 14. Nepal
- 15. Dumela
- 18. Eight
- 19. Malaria
- 20. Grassroot Soccer
- 21. Toughest
- 23. California
- 24. Hessler Radelet
- 25. Education

Down

- 1. Romania
- 2. Andes
- 3. French
- 5. Shukran
- 6. Passport
- 7. Friendship
- 8. Twenty-eight
- 9. Sarge
- 11. Antananarivo
- 12. Coverdell
- 16. Manat
- 17. Africa
- 22. Ghana

Medium

1	4	2	6	8	3	7	9	5
6	9	3	7	1	5	8	2	4
5	7	8	2	9	4	6	1	3
8	6	7	5	3	9	2	4	1
2	1	5	8	4	6	3	7	9
9	3	4	1	2	7	5	6	8
7	2	1	9	5	8	4	3	6
4	5	6	3	7	1	9	8	2
3	8	9	4	6	2	1	5	7

Hard

8	2	6	5	9	1	4	3	7
7	1	3	4	8	2	6	9	5
5	9	4	3	6	7	8	1	2
1	8	5	7	2	3	9	6	4
6	3	2	8	4	9	7	5	1
4	7	9	6	1	5	2	8	3
2	5	8	9	3	4	1	7	6
9	4	7	1	5	6	3	2	8
3	6	1	2	7	8	5	4	9

Games on page 24.



KARGI GOGO

From East(ern Europe) to West(coast)

PCVs bring Georgian food to Portland's street food scene

PCV foodie

McKinze Cook makes Georgian cheese bread—*khachapuri*—to sell at Kargi Gogo.

Many days, a Peace Corps Volunteer thinks about nothing more than food.

Like many PCVs, married couple Sean Fredericks and McKinze Cook (Georgia, 2010–12) spent their free time during service in home kitchens and restaurants learning the traditional recipes and unique spices that made their host country food special. After moving to Portland from their native Iowa, Fredericks and Cook opened Kargi Gogo, a food cart that serves authentic Georgian street food, in 2012.

"Georgian food is almost completely unrepresented in the U.S., outside of a handful of restaurants in major cities," Fredericks said. "We thought that Americans would eagerly eat up Georgian cuisine if they knew about it, so we set out to give them the opportunity. For many people who come to Kargi Gogo, this is their first experience with Georgian food—and with Georgia! I think people are surprised by how accessible the food is—especially something as delicious and simple as *khachapuri* [cheese bread]."

Kargi Gogo in Georgian means "good girl" and is a term of endearment for women of all ages—not just girls. Smart women, sweet girls, and great female cooks are often called "kargi gogos."

During their service, Cook and Fredericks both worked as organizational development Volunteers in the country of 5 million located in the Caucus region, situated between Eastern Europe and Asia. Cook worked at an organization focusing on women's issues, and Fredericks worked at several different organizations, including one that focused on minority rights issues and a local youth center. Additionally, both were involved in the American Corner and a number of other community groups.

Both Cook and Fredericks worked on a number of projects during their service, including a series of trainings for NGO leaders on issues critical to their success and growth; a series of trainings on entrepreneurship; a variety of health-related projects, including World AIDS Day awareness; renovating the shower facilities in a boys' boxing gym; raising funds for a mammogram machine; English language and American culture clubs; and securing U.S. Embassy small grants funding for projects at their organizations.

Prior to their Peace Corps service, Cook and Fredericks spent several years in Iowa City, Iowa, working in community development. Cook worked with several nonprofits and spent four years at the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce, helping connect small



Bread life

Cook (left) and Fredericks in the Kargi Gogo cart in Portland

We have become sort-of de facto “ambassadors” for Georgian culture and food in Portland, and we take that responsibility very seriously.

businesses to resources and promoting a better business environment for the area. Fredericks has a Master of Business Administration and managed the Englert Theater, a nonprofit, historic performing arts venue in downtown Iowa City.

As Peace Corps Volunteers, both worked to integrate into their community. Food was a great way to meet people and connect with local

community members. Cook and Fredericks saw firsthand the fierce pride Georgians take in their generations-old recipes, wine toasting rituals, and overwhelming hospitality and knew they wanted to bring those traditions back to the United States. Cook and Fredericks had the idea to do something with Georgian food during an afternoon at home where they were discussing what they would do post-Peace Corps.

“Our host mom called us in for an afternoon snack of khachapuri, the gooey, delicious cheese bread,” said Cook. “She had made a dozen or so, stacking them high on a plate. After we sat down, she pulled one off, buttered and sliced it. The cheese oozed out a bit, the steam rose and Sean and I just knew then that this food is legitimately delicious and, if given the chance, Americans would love it too.”

Working on the idea as they finished their service, they developed a business plan to flesh out the idea and plan everything that would be needed for the venture. Their business plan included vision and values; a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis; marketing plans and target markets; a draft budget; and food costs. Cook and Fredericks found this document to be an integral

Feeding the future

Sean Fredericks makes khachapuri for Kargi Gogo.

part of starting a new business and still refer to what they initially wrote down in the original business plan as they grow Kargi Gogo.

After completing their service in June 2012, they moved to Portland and started the food cart about five months later using their own money.

"Food carts are a great way to try out an idea. They are less expensive and risky than a restaurant, and give the owners an opportunity to be flexible and figure out what really works. The food cart scene is also really cool in Portland and we were excited to be a part of that," said Fredericks.

Like restaurants, food carts have to be approved and inspected by the county health department and, in Portland, carts are inspected about twice as often as restaurants. Cook and Fredericks have had a positive experience working with the health department.

"We have found the health department to be incredibly helpful and supportive," said Cook. "They make it as easy as possible to open and successfully operate a cart. There are various other licenses and fees involved, but overall it has been a positive experience."

Georgian food might not be that well known in the United States, but Kargi GoGo is working to change that. In addition to khachapuri, their menu includes *khinkali* (stuffed dumplings), *lobiani* (hearty bean and onion bread), *badrijani* (eggplant, walnut, and garlic rolls), a village salad, and *supra*, a combo plate with all the dishes.

Fredericks and Cook aim to be as authentic as possible with all their dishes. Using their firsthand experience in the kitchens and markets of Georgia, they apply that knowledge to their food. Each day also provides opportunities to practice the Peace Corps Third Goal: to help Americans understand the people and cultures of other countries.

"We have become sort-of de facto 'ambassadors' for Georgian culture and food in Portland, and we take that responsibility very seriously," said Fredericks.

In their first year of business, Cook and Fredericks have introduced numerous people to these Georgian foods and have had a very positive response. Right now, they are focused on maximizing their cart, adding new menu items, and planning for a busy summer. They have also used the food cart to connect with local Georgian expatriates.

"Having that support—especially from our Georgian friends—is the ultimate compliment for us," said Fredericks. Kargi Gogo's success has been the subject of articles from the Associated Press, USA Today, and a number of other outlets in the U.S. and Georgia.

"Food and hospitality are absolutely inseparable from the Georgian experience," said Fredericks. "You cannot talk about Georgia without talking about khachapuri, khinkali, wine, the tradition of the *supra* [traditional Georgian feasts], and the overwhelming level of hospitality in virtually every home in the country. We were immersed in it from day one, and quickly came to love the food and accompanying traditions. Preparing, serving, sharing, and gathering around these dishes is a key element in Georgian life. Food, along with homemade wine, is what brings family, friends, and even the casual acquaintance together to celebrate every occasion, big or small."

"By coming to love Georgian food, we came to love Georgia itself," added Cook.



CORPS INNOVATION



The Smartphone REVOLUTION

Technology is changing everything we do and how we do it, and the Peace Corps is no different. Two years ago, smartphones were uncommon at staging. Now, almost every trainee arrives at staging with a smartphone that will work in their country of service. In two years, the percentage of Volunteers with a smartphone went from almost zero to over 90.

What's changed?

For those of us who have been off the grid, smartphone costs have plummeted and the majority of those over 12 in the U.S. have one.

Though not a sure bet, there's now a good chance your phone will work in your country of service. The two historical barriers to your phone working abroad are the cellphone technology (CDMA vs. GSM) and locked phones.

CDMA and GSM are two distinct (and incompatible) technologies used by cellular networks. CDMA technology is only used in a few countries, including the U.S. by Verizon and Sprint. GSM technology, used by nearly every country in the world and AT&T and T-Mobile in the States, uses a removable SIM card you can swap to change carriers. In the U.S., it's a 50-50 split between CDMA and GSM phones. Many CDMA phones now have a SIM, and many SIM slots are unlocked by default allowing you to use the SIM on networks abroad. This hasn't changed much in the past couple of years, but the other barrier, locked phones, has basically vanished.

A "locked" phone means that your phone will only work on your provider's network. So, an AT&T phone would only work with an AT&T SIM card. But if you have an "unlocked" phone, you can put any SIM card in and it will work.

Now, it's easy to get a phone unlocked. The catalyst was T-Mobile's move to offer exclusively unlocked phones, which pressured the other carriers to follow. If you forget to unlock your phone before you go, an eager cellphone dealer will unlock your phone for cheap.

Culturally, a barrier to PCVs using smartphones is that host community members don't have them: Volunteers can inadvertently separate themselves by using flashy technology the

community could never afford. But this barrier is also disappearing.

In 2013, global smartphone sales hit \$1 billion. With developed markets nearing saturation, the major increase is in the developing world. In fact, Latin America showed the greatest increase in smartphone sales in the world, increasing by 96 percent in the last three months of 2013.

The major reason is that costs are dropping. A third of the smartphones sold in 2013 cost less than \$150; soon there will be options for \$25.

What does this mean for you?

The latest smartphones are faster than ever, with processing speeds that allow you to download a full-length HD movie in 20 seconds. Battery life allows for 20 hours of talk time and 35 days on standby. They do better with dust and dirt, and some are even water-resistant up to one meter (so it will survive a drop in the latrine—if you are willing to go in after it).

The latest smartphones can include a 16 megapixel camera—eight times better than the original iPhone. This allows PCVs to share their experiences via blogs and videos and let Peace Corps headquarters use more Volunteer content in promotions and on peacecorps.gov.

Unfortunately, Volunteers with this technology will meet connectivity barriers. Internet speeds in Peace Corps host countries are still slow: Making a movie might be easy, but uploading it to YouTube might mean waiting until you are back on WiFi. Google Translate? Better download the offline library.

Devices have already started to change how we serve: How we adapt, innovate, and solve with them will help our communities thrive even more in the future.

The Office of Innovation works to enable more efficient operations and implement "smarter" government initiatives.



Noncompetitive Eligibility & You

**Dear Peace Corps
Career Counselor,**

Help! I am very confused about noncompetitive eligibility and have heard conflicting things about whether having it can actually help me get a job post-Peace Corps. Please clarify what it is and how I can use it.

—PCV, 29

Thank you for your inquiry about noncompetitive eligibility (NCE). Rest assured, you are not alone in being confused by NCE. In fact, from my years of working at the Peace Corps and supporting RPCVs in their job searches, NCE has been one of the most misunderstood, undervalued, and overlooked benefits of Peace Corps service. And yet, it is an amazing tool that can speed up the hiring process for RPCVs seeking to work for the federal government.

Simply put, NCE is a special hiring mechanism authorized under Executive Order 11103 that permits (but does not require) a federal hiring official to bring on a candidate much more quickly and easily—without necessarily even posting a vacancy announcement—provided that the candidate meets the minimum qualifications for the position being filled. For this reason, NCE is very attractive to federal agencies.

Peace Corps Volunteers who successfully complete their service are granted one year of noncompetitive eligibility, which begins on the date they finish their service. Federal agencies can choose to extend (or “pause”) your NCE up to an additional two years (for a total of up to three years) for a few very specific reasons:

- You enter an accredited university full-time. In this case, whatever amount of NCE you have left when you begin your studies will be “paused” until either you finish/leave school (at which time your remaining NCE would begin ticking down again) or after you have been out of the Peace Corps for three years (NCE cannot be extended any longer than two additional years).
- If, after Peace Corps service, you enter the military.
- If you engage in another activity that the hiring agency thinks warrants an extension. Generally, the U.S. Office of Personnel

Management has indicated that NCE can be extended if a candidate is gaining work experience that is relevant to the position being filled and that can be expected to enhance the candidate’s performance and value to the agency.

So, how do you connect with federal employers who wish to hire using NCE? One of the easiest ways is to check out RPCV Career Link (www.peacecorps.gov/rpcvcareerlink), the interactive online job board that allows employers to post vacancies specifically targeting RPCVs. You, the jobseeker, can search for jobs by location, sector, and/or NCE status. Many federal agencies post “calls for NCE résumés” on RPCV Career Link, asking those with active NCE status to submit a résumé and proof of NCE (your status is indicated in your description of service) in consideration for an NCE appointment.

You should also actively promote your NCE status to federal employers by referencing it wherever you can. Consider including a bullet at the top of your federal résumé stating you “Qualify for noncompetitive eligibility based on successful Peace Corps service.” Mention your NCE status in cover letters, in informational interviews, and when delivering your 30-second “elevator pitch” while networking within the federal sector. Getting the word out about this temporary hiring status is the key to making it work to your advantage. Remember, NCE is only applicable to federal employment, so there’s no need to reference NCE in résumés for the private, nonprofit, or state/local government arenas.

For more information on NCE and how to use this valuable tool, visit www.peacecorps.gov/nce, email rvs@peacecorps.gov, or call 202.692.1430.

Best wishes and happy job hunting!

For questions about post-Peace Corps employment, email career development specialist Jodi Hammer at rpcvcareercenter@peacecorps.gov.



Notes from the Field



PCV Brendan Bates with guitar students in Albania.



PCV Nataly Rodriguez with soccer workshop participants in Colombia.



Students stand inside the new bookmobile in Georgia.



New water tanks in Namibia are delivered by PCV Andre Heard.



Students in Panama paint a map on the library wall.

Albania

Volunteers Use Music to Educate, Empower Youth

PCV Brendan Bates (2013–15) is using his guitar to enhance his English lessons and has paired up with a local pastor, who also plays guitar, to create a music group for young people in his community that meets twice a week. A local church bought new guitar strings and paid for photocopies of music for the students, who recently played at its Christmas celebration. Thanks to community contributions, the group now has seven guitars.

Armenia

Volunteers Bike across Armenia to Support Healthy Habits

PCV Rosie Jeffrey (2013–15) is working with fellow Volunteers to teach Armenian youth about healthy lifestyle choices through a cross-country bike initiative called Border2Border (B2B). During B2B, 14 Volunteers will bike across Armenia, stopping in communities along the way to lead educational sessions on nutrition, hygiene, and sanitation for youth. By the end of the three-week initiative, the Volunteers plan to teach sessions to more than 1,000 local youth.

Benin

Volunteer Organizes National Spelling Bee

PCV Daniel Martinez (2012–14) is working with communities across Benin to bring together 46 students from 23 secondary schools to take part in the sixth annual National English Spelling Bee. Students from different cultures and backgrounds will participate in the bee, which is organized each year to support creative learning opportunities and further education.

Colombia

Volunteer Empowers Young Women through Soccer

PCV Nataly Rodriguez (2012–14) has teamed up with a local Colombian organization to empower young women and improve their physical health through sports. During interactive soccer drills, Rodriguez mentors a group of young women aged 12–17 on healthy lifestyle choices, self-confidence, body image, and life skills.

Georgia

Volunteer Brings the First Bookmobile to Underserved Communities

PCV Kristen Moses (2013–15) recently joined U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Richard Norland and local community members to celebrate the launch of the country's first bookmobile, a traveling bus that brings educational programming and resources to underserved communities. In collaboration with a local nongovernmental organization and the U.S. Embassy, Moses worked to expand the embassy's American Corners library project by using an old school bus donated from the United States to create the mobile learning center. The bookmobile has already reached more than 6,000 people across three villages.

Guatemala

Volunteer Advises Children and Mothers on Healthy Eating

PCV Kate Young (2010–14) is spearheading a school nutrition project to address malnutrition in her Guatemalan community by educating preschool students and their parents on long-term healthy eating habits. Working with fellow Peace Corps Volunteers and the local government, Young has planted vegetable gardens on the school's grounds and trained the children's

mothers in gardening, harvesting crops, nutrition, and cooking. Young has also helped the mothers plant family gardens at their homes.

Kenya

Volunteers Create First Visual Record of Kenyan Sign Language

PCV Rachel Rose (2011–14) and Peter Hess (2011–14) are working with local community members and fellow Volunteers to improve the quality of deaf education throughout Kenya by developing the country's first Kenyan Sign Language digital video glossary. The digital glossary includes signs for science and math education, with plans to expand to additional subject areas.

Namibia

Volunteer Brings Clean Drinking Water to Community

PCV Andre Heard (2012–14) recently completed a project that is delivering clean drinking water to his community in Namibia. Three 10,000 liter water tanks were connected to a local school, and a solar-powered pump was installed in a new borehole well that is providing clean water from 50 meters down. Previously, people in Heard's community had to travel to a nearby river that was contaminated and crocodile-infested to get water.

Panama

Volunteers Teach Geography and Culture through Maps

PCVs Kelly and Pete Brands (2012–14) are teaching middle-school students in Panama about geography and culture with maps. Twenty of their students recently collaborated to paint a world map on the walls of their school library that is serving as an educational tool for teachers and promoting discussions among students about Panama and other parts of the world.



Being Black in a Brown Country

Jazzmine Oshitoye (PCV Ecuador, 2013-15)

**Tú eres morena.
Tú eres fea.**

**You're black.
You're ugly.**

Day 1 of arriving to my host family's house during training, these were the words spat in my face by a little girl. The circumstances under which they were said at least made the hostility understandable. My new host niece had just gotten in trouble. Little kids sometimes lash out when that happens. But her words still stung.

The next day, I wrote to God about it in my diary.

I am a first-generation American: My mother is Filipina and my father was born in England. His parents are from Barbados and Nigeria. My skin is brown and beautiful.

I'd been enamored with Ecuador and the Peace Corps; my biggest challenge was Spanish. But I hadn't fully considered what my Peace Corps experience would be like through the lens of being black. But three days after arriving to my first foreign country, I was staring into the face of an 8-year-old girl, being called ugly for my skin.

After swearing in, I was placed in southern Ecuador, with a new host family. With a little time, I started to notice little things that reminded me of my worries about discrimination:

In my host family's house, most of the pictures on the walls were of Caucasians. No relations—just random posters/pictures of Caucasians. I noticed my host mother scowled or laughed when she saw black people walking in the street. I realized that every time my host mother described a person as *negro* (Spanish for black), the next adjective was always *feo* (ugly).

Eventually, despite the odds, I built something of a relationship with my host mother. When she mentioned something about a *negro* and *feo* again, I decided it was time to sort this out.

"I was talking to Papá about this. He said there are a lot of racist people in Loja. Is that true?"

"Oh, yes. Definitely. It's terrible. For me, I'm just scared of them though."

"Why?"

"They're not good. They come here from other countries and they steal and you see them on the news. I'm scared of them."

I explained that her comments were hard for me

to hear because I was black too.

"Oh, no. But not you. You're *buena gente*," she said. Roughly, of the good sort, a good person.

Feeling as though my point was not being understood, I tried again to get her to look at things through eyes surrounded by dark skin. But either my level of Spanish or my new ideas were obstacles too big to surmount.

In addition to God, I talked to my friends. When I shared my story, they empathized. They listened and shared their own stories of struggles with racism. They offered what support they could.

I would like to say that my host mother now loves all black people and that a smile spreads on her face when she sees them on the sidewalk, that the little girl now believes that black is beautiful.

But I can't.

I found comfort in my friends and the support of my God, but no cinematic happy ending.

What I know is that my host-mother has a decent relationship with one black person. I know that she considers one black person *buena gente*.

I know that the little girl runs up to me and hugs me when I visit my used-to-be host family.

And I know that I'm stronger. I've cried mightily for everyone who has gone through the experience of being feared, disliked, or even hated for their appearance, but I didn't dry up and wither away. I'm still here. I can still live, work, and show others that black does not equal bad.

I can only hope that those with prejudices will see me and learn to celebrate the colors brown and black and dark. If there's one thing that the Peace Corps has taught me, it's that a change made, however small, is worth celebrating.



DIY

Spirit Stove

Make your own cook stove from soda cans



Tools

Measuring tape or ruler
 Magic marker
 2 soda cans
 Nail or pin
 Hammer
 Metal screw
 Screwdriver
 Metal shears or wire cutters
 Ethanol or denatured alcohol
 Matches
 Sand



Instructions

Making the stove:

Step 1 The base can: Mark 3 or 4 points about 1-1/2-inch from the bottom of one can, and then draw a circle around those points, making a straight line around the can's circumference.

Step 2 The burner can: Repeat Step 1 on second can.

Step 3 Mark 15–20 holes spaced in a roughly even pattern around the bottom of the burner can, just outside the rim (the raised part on which the can rests).

Step 4 The flame vents: Poke holes in the burner can through the markings from Step 2, using a nail or pin. (A hammer might be handy if it proves too tough to push the nail/pin through.)

Step 5 Cut both cans along the lines marked in Steps 1 and 2. Use your nail or pin to poke a hole in the side along the marked line, and then cut using metal shears or a wire cutter. Keep the 1-1/2-inch high sections of the cans, and discard the rest.

Step 6 The fuel-draining hole and cap: Tap a metal screw into the middle of the top of the burner can with the hammer, and then screw it in the rest of the way.

Step 7 Cut 6 slits 1/2-inch wide around the base of the burner can. One of the cans must have some give if they are to fit snugly together; the slits will provide that.

Step 8 Put a small layer of sand into the base can. This should only fill it 1/4–1/2 inch. Push the burner can and the base can together.

Using the stove:

Fuel the can by removing the screw-plug and pouring a steady trickle of ethanol (or denatured alcohol) inside. Fill the base about halfway, then replace the plug.

Prime the stove by pouring a little ethanol into the middle of the burner. Try to splash or rub a little around the burner holes, too.

Light the center of the stove with a match or candle. The heat of the burning fuel will start vaporizing the fuel inside the cans, and ignite it into a burning jet of gas.



Khachapuri

Georgian Cheese Bread

Yield: 5 loaves—enough for a PCV party!

Instructions

Start by making the dough:

1. In a large bowl, stir together flour, kosher salt, sugar, and yeast.
2. Slowly pour in water, mixing continuously with by hand.
3. Once dough forms, knead into a ball on a lightly floured surface.
4. Place kneaded dough in a large bowl and cover with plastic wrap or a towel. Allow to rest for at least 30 minutes.

Next, make the cheese filling:

5. Pour mozzarella cheese (or equivalent) into a large mixing bowl. Crumble feta (or equivalent) into the same bowl and mix.
6. In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs.
7. Pour whisked eggs over cheese and mix together to bind.
8. Portion out five equally sized cheese balls.

Finally, make the khachapuri:

- Divide the dough into five pieces.
- Take the first piece and, with a rolling pin, roll the dough into a 12-inch round. Place one cheese ball in the center.
- Carefully fold the edges of the dough in a pleated fashion, gathering the top edge in your hand as you go. You should end up with accordion-style folds and a “nub” on top. Twist off the nub and discard.
- Use a rolling pin or your hands to carefully roll out the dough to an 8-inch round. Pop any air bubbles with a fork.
- Cook over medium heat in a non-stick pan (no oil) for approximately 3 minutes on each side, until golden brown.
- Remove from heat and butter one side, then slice and serve.

Ingredients

Dough

22 oz. all-purpose flour
 1/2 T kosher salt
 1/2 T sugar
 1/4 t active yeast
 1-1/2 cups water

Cheese Filling

20 oz. shredded mozzarella
(or substitute a mild and creamy equivalent)
 14 oz. feta cheese
(or substitute a sharp and salty equivalent)
 2 eggs

Cooking Hacks

#1

Speed Pasta

Soak the pasta in water in a sealed bag for a couple hours or overnight. You can then cook it in about 60 seconds in boiling water or just add it straight to a hot pasta sauce in a pan to let it finish cooking.

#2

Never Boil Over Again

Balance a wooden spoon over a pot of boiling water to prevent the water from boiling over.



#3

Know Your Eggs

To tell how old an egg is, place it in a bowl of cold water about two times higher than the egg.

An egg that floats at the surface is rotten and should be thrown out.



FRESH : sinks to the bottom of the bowl and probably stays on its side

WEEK OLD : lies on the bottom, but bobs slightly

3 WEEKS OLD : balances on its smallest end (large end on top)

Puzzle Peaces



Crossword

See page 14 for answers.

You Think You Know Peace Corps?

Across

4. Peace Corps __ (high-impact, short-term assignments)
9. Country where the CEO of Netflix served
10. Month in which Peace Corps Day falls
13. Name for a library on wheels
14. Only country with non-quadrilateral shaped flag
15. "Hello" in Setswana
18. Number of Peace Corps regional recruitment offices
19. Stomping Out __ in Africa
20. Soccer-based HIV/AIDS education program (two words)
21. "The __ Job You'll Ever Love"
23. Top PCV-producing state in 2013
24. Last name of the Peace Corps Director (two words)
25. Peace Corps sector in which the most PCVs serve

Down

1. First country to establish Camp GLOW
2. Peruvian mountain range
3. Official language of Togo
5. "Thank you" in Arabic
6. Peace Corps __ (name of the Peace Corps blog)
7. "To promote world peace and __ "
8. Average age of PCVs (two words)
9. Nickname of first Peace Corps Director
11. Capital of Madagascar
12. Paul D. __ Fellows Program
16. Currency of Azerbaijan
17. Continent where most PCVs serve
22. First Peace Corps country

Sudoku

Easy

9		5						3
8							3	
3		1	8	7				
2					7	5		
1		3	2					9
4		2				9		
6	2							
5							6	

Medium

		8	7	9	5
6		7	1		
		2			3
				2	
1	5		6		
		1	2		6
		9		4	6
	5				
3	8				7

Hard

2	6	5				7
7			8			9
		4				
1	8		7	3		
					5	
			1		2	
			9			
	4				3	2
3	6		7	8		



PEACE CORPS RESPONSE

3-12 MONTHS
CAN MAKE A LIFETIME OF DIFFERENCE

Peace Corps now offers short-term Volunteer assignments overseas for 3-12 months for especially skilled professionals with at least 10 years' experience.

peacecorps.gov/response

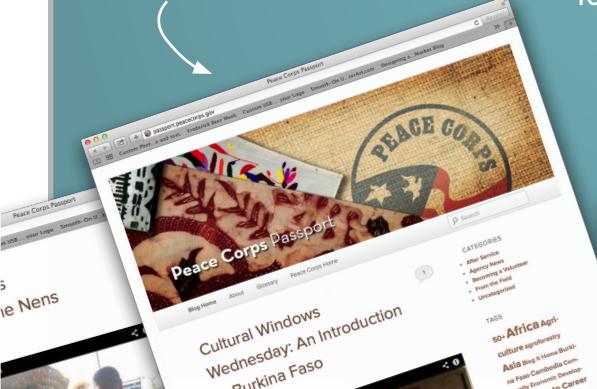


Please contact
thirdgoal@peacecorps.gov
with any questions about
Blog It Home 2014.

We look forward to seeing your blogs!

Is your blog good enough to win a September trip to Washington, D.C.? Submit it to the Blog It Home 2014 competition and find out! Last year, the Peace Corps Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services held the first-ever Blog It Home competition to recognize Volunteers whose blogs support the Peace Corps Third Goal of sharing other cultures with Americans. We can't wait to see what Third Goal superheroes we find this year!

Your Blog Here!



Do you have a great Third Goal blog? Submit it
for consideration to <http://tinyurl.com/BIH2014> by July 15.

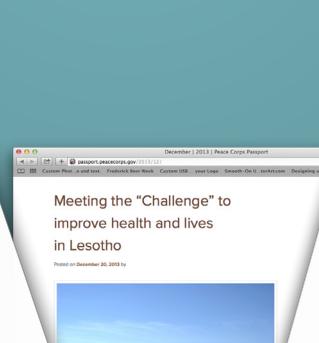
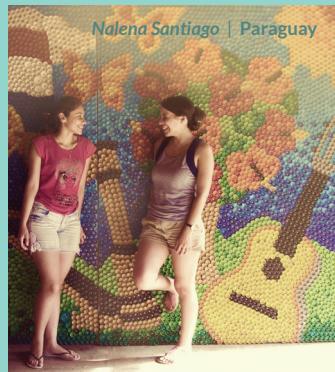


Photo essay: Documenting damage helps the Philippines rebuild



The View from Here: The Classroom

Next Issue: View from the Camp Fire
Send photos from around the camp fire—from summer camp—to pctimes@peacecorps.gov. Include your name, country, and service dates. Make sure your photo is 300 dpi and at least 3 inches wide.

