

# WorldView

Published by The Peace Corps Association



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BE? WE HAVE  
SOME IDEAS  
FOR THE NEXT  
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A magazine for the greater Peace Corps community



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Michael Malavé organized other Peace Corps Volunteers in Ghana's Volta region to support a camp for young boys in Peace Corps' popular Girls Leading Our World project.

CREDIT: ALEX SNYDER

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I chose the **Kroc School's Master of Peace and Justice** program because of the theory + practice model. At the risk of sounding cliché, the Kroc School was one of the highlights of my academic and personal life. With exposure to international students in the program, the world became a much smaller, more exciting place. The beauty of the degree is also its versatility and ability to be applied to almost any setting."

- Cindi Cassidy

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## TIME TO UNITE

We must demonstrate the values of diversity, tolerance and respect

By Glenn Blumhorst

**D**onald J. Trump will be the 45th president of the United States of America. His victory may have come as a surprise to many but it reflects the overwhelming conclusion that millions of Americans think change is needed. How that change will manifest is uncertain. Who will influence that change is not.

The National Peace Corps Association is determined to engage with this new administration and Congress and to press for positive change that ensures the future of the Peace Corps. Our primary goal - the best Peace Corps possible - remains our highest priority, and we are firmly convinced that now more than ever, America and the world need the Peace Corps.

Despite candidate Trump's provocative rhetoric regarding America's global partnerships, we hope he and his leadership team will carefully and objectively evaluate the institutions they now command and capitalize on the cost-effective, high-impact role of Peace Corps around the world.

We've already begun to engage with the new administration's transition team. We will continue to advocate for the expansion and improvement of the Peace Corps, building on our work with previous administrations and lifting up the agency's proud 55-year history as the world's premier international volunteer program.

We will raise questions and offer guidance regarding the White House selection and Congressional approval of the next director of the Peace Corps. We will press for appointment of a nominee of national prominence and influence who

can lead the agency through a process of increased growth and of vital reforms, particularly in health care for PCVs and RPCVs.

Central to this advocacy is our need to bridge divisions in our communities at home and abroad, to fight for our common causes, and to further our ideals with action—not words.

As a community, we must demonstrate the values that we espouse: diversity, tolerance and respect—particularly when it comes to those whose beliefs, opinions, and views may differ from our own. We must enlarge our circle to consider all perspectives, listen in order to understand, learn rather than judge, and address the issues as the times demand.

Now is the time to unite as a Peace Corps community to influence these new decision makers. We must be connected, engaged, and informed and we must seize every opportunity to advance our ideals. Not some of us. Not most of us. All of us. In our Peace Corps service, we learned that one person can make a difference and everyone should try; together we will be stronger.

As a community, we must ensure that President-elect Trump, his administration, and the next Congress put Peace Corps high among their priorities. We need to argue the causes we care most deeply about—grounded in equality and justice—and make them core to our mandate for change. We need to demonstrate that our vision is firm—a more peaceful world through greater cross-cultural understanding and awareness.

There is much to be done. Let it start

with you and me. Join together with us to stay abreast of these changes through our groups, our newsletter, our many connections.

Change may unfold at the national, state, or local level. Contact your local NPCA advocacy coordinator to act through an aggressive and sustained advocacy program that will include district-level visits to members of Congress. If you can't advocate in person, call or write your member of Congress to say what you think.

Join one of our cause-related affiliate groups, such as the newest, the Peace Corps Community in Support of Refugees, that's already building a network of RPCVs and RPCV groups to assist local refugee agencies. Some 350 RPCVs and 30 affiliate groups are already in the pool, soon to be listed on our NPCA webpage.

In these times of transition, one thing remains the same - NPCA's mission to champion lifelong commitment to Peace Corps ideals. Central to that mission is ensuring the future of an even bigger and better Peace Corps that reaches more people in more countries. In the coming days, weeks, months—and years—we'll be organizing for action, with opportunities to connect, engage, and advocate.

This community is capable of bringing about change. The opportunity to make that change is now.

---

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

## On a Greek island Getting ahead in government Myanmar welcomes Peace Corps Travelers find Persepolis

### AT LEZVOS

Each winter month of 2016, about 30,000 refugees were flooding the small Greek island of Lezvos, sailing in small rubber rafts and dinghies six miles across rough Aegean seas from the Turkish shore. They were escaping wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and refugee camps between the island and their homelands. They were trying to find a new life in Europe. Many drowned in the rough winter seas in the attempt.

Barbara Busch and her sister from New York City, Debby Landesman, were returning to the island to visit longtime friends, Tim Smith and Mike Honnegar. Honnegar and Smith had served at Peace Corps headquarters during some of the 35 years Busch was on Washington staff. As regular Lezvos vacationers, Honnegar and Smith had helped create a local foundation called Starfish to aid refugees as they reached the shore. Busch and Landesman had made Starfish donations, and decided to spend 10 days there as volunteers.



Konstantinos Mitragas is a Lezvos resident and member of the Hellenic Rescue Team that received the UNHCR's 2016 Nansen Refugee Award.

"The work was simple and basic," Busch says. "Greeting arriving refugees coming in rafts or rescued by Coast Guard cutters, handing out dry clothes and water, little toys for the children, offering simple food and transport to temporary shelters."

So many islanders were pitching in, including an 85-year-old grandmother who fed children on the beaches, that the residents were nominated for the Nobel Prize.

"Among the handful of older volunteers, there was a couple from Seattle, Washington, Dan and Bethany Leahy," Busch says. "Dan had been a Peace Corps Volunteer in Turkey in the '60's."

Busch was inspired to see the corps of young women and men who came to Lezvos to help: from Germany, Spain, the U.K., Canada, Australia and the United States. They pitched in alongside the International Refugee Committee, Medecins sans Frontieres and other humanitarian agencies at Moria, a former army camp turned registration center,

turned refugee camp.

Throughout this whole time, Busch kept thinking "of all the PCVs and RPCVs I knew and how much they would have to offer in places like this."

She is a co-founder of a new group, the Peace Corps community in Support of Refugees. "The terrible refugee crisis is only growing," Busch says, "and we have the potential to make a significant contribution. It would be very important to

ask the Peace Corps community to help." The committee is now engaged in aid for U.S. resettlement, direct overseas assistance and advocacy.

*WorldView's* Spring issue will be devoted to reporting on these massive migrations of the world's population, the displaced millions in Colombia and Nigeria, and the refugee camps in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia where thousands are living out there entire lives. We will ask why they are there and what the greater Peace Corps community can do about a humanitarian crisis that has no end in sight.

*The Editors*

### WORKING FOR THE FED

I had language skills, experience with the federal government, and the passion to be a great candidate for a U.S. government job when I completed service in Madagascar. But after months of looking for a federal job, I learned how little these skills mattered without non-competitive eligibility, or NCE.

Unlike military veterans who benefit from this special life-long hiring authority, Peace Corps Volunteers are granted a single year of NCE time, at most three years under special circumstances. In the past, many federal human resources departments were not familiar with NCE policies for Peace Corps Volunteers, which sometimes makes it difficult for applicants trying to take advantage of this special hiring benefit. However, more and more hiring managers are working to promote this program by educating colleagues about NCE policies.

I attended a Peace Corps Career Conference in Denver that clarified everything. They offered sessions on resume writing and interviewing and a career fair with government agencies interested in Peace Corps Volunteers. But to me the most important event was a detailed presentation about NCE that included a lot of information my close of

service briefings only brushed over.

One of my major discoveries was that RPCVs can register their non-competitive employment application and description of service with [www.avuedigitalservices.com](http://www.avuedigitalservices.com), the federal job search web site where federal employers can find you. They also explained how you can educate your interviewing managers about your NCE eligibility, and how that eligibility could be extended for specific activities.

There are some key facts about NCE that applicants may not know about, such as when you can extend your NCE eligibility. RPCVs can extend their eligibility through serving in the military or enrolling in an accredited academic institution for 12 months after Peace Corps service. A lesser-known clause says, "other activities that, in the [hiring] agency's view, warrant an extension" may include volunteer or part-time work, which can demonstrate that you developed skills that apply to the job you are applying for. But it's your responsibility in the cover letter, resume, and/or interview to make the pitch that those post-service experiences made you a more qualified applicant.

For more information on NCE, check out the NPCA website.

*Matthew Kennedy*

## OPENING MYANMAR

The article, "Road to Myanmar," in the Fall 2016 issue of *WorldView* calls attention to the optimism the world has for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her vision for all of the people of Myanmar and their future happiness.

Ironically, Suu Kyi visited Washington, D.C. in early September and met with President Obama who said, "U.S. policy toward Myanmar was to help Myanmar succeed."

Peace Corps support is on the forefront of this U.S. commitment and will soon lead in the effort to increase people-to-people ties between the United States and Myanmar. The pilot group of six Peace Corps Volunteers have recently arrived in country for training. The country director, Maura Fulton, served as a Volunteer in Micronesia from 1995 to 1997 and also served as country director of Georgia. In Myanmar, she has

been working closely with her Myanmar counterparts to prepare for this new country program.

The initial project sector is education. Volunteers will co-teach in middle and high schools to help students learn and improve their English language skills. The ministry of education identified this priority because students and teachers want to increase their ties with the rest of the world and with the global economy. When another 20 Volunteers arrive in early 2017, their role may expand to strengthening curriculum development and building teacher capacity.

Even after 55 years, Peace Corps continues to be on the cutting edge of global development and change. And as the world changes, so does Peace Corps.

*Russell Morgan*

## WELCOME, MICHAEL JACKSON

When we arrived in Tehran in May, a Hungarian looked at 16 Americans and said, "How did you get into Iran?"

It wasn't all that hard; we were on a two-week National Peace Corps Association tour from the capital to the Persian heartland: Shiraz, Isfahan, Yazd, Kashan and to the cradle of civilization, Persepolis. Several of us who had served as Volunteers in Afghanistan and Iran in the 60s still knew enough Farsi to find our way around. Our Tehran guide, Agha Baghman, decided his usual advice to American clients—"Tell them you're from Canada"—wasn't necessary.

Some people tell us Iran will follow the Cuban example. We bumped into an American history group in one city and Road Scholar and



## MEETING ON CAPITOL HILL

The 2013 Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award winner, Dr. Mohamud Sheikh Nurein Said of Kenya, left, met with Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia, right. NPCA President Glenn Blumhorst is seated behind the senator.



Nick Hoesl (red shirt) and guide Agha Baughman (blue shirt) stand with fellow travelers at the ruins of Persepolis, built in 515 B.C.

the World Affairs Council have booked tours. Business has a way of moving governments. Just ask Boeing or GE. Paris-based Accor opened two large hotels near the Iman Khomeini Airport last fall. Can Marriott be far behind? The government is eager to lead the world down the path of Marco Polo and the ancient routes of the caravansary to Iran's planned hotels.

The country has plenty to offer. Iran is blessed with 17 World Heritage sights. The meticulous artistry of their ancient Islamic shrines is impressive.

Given recent decades of their political discord with our government, what surprised us was the curiosity and welcome that we received. An Iranian saw us coming, and yelled, "I love Michael Jackson!" Isfahan has a dozen active churches and synagogues. In Shiraz, a mullah beamed, "Americans, we love you."

The women in our party were the center of attention, and they were invited into homes. Unfortunately, those who govern the Islamic State of Iran will not permit us to visit the homes of its people.

There are changes on the gender horizon: women outnumber men in their universities and they're serving in the parliament and taking top jobs. The mullahs' efforts to control the Internet have not been a total success, but the press in this country is state-controlled. And Americans with dual citizenship continue to risk arrest and prison.

Change takes time, but this could be the year Iran opens up to the world.

*Nick Hoesl*

*Check [www.PeaceCorpsConnect.org/travel](http://www.PeaceCorpsConnect.org/travel) for a Next Step Travel trip to Iran in 2017.*



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### REFUGEES

A woman cooks for her children in a displaced persons camp in Say Tha Mar Gyi, Myanmar, 2015. The photographer, Lynsey Addario, was one of five photographers commissioned by the Annenberg Space for Photography to document conditions in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Mexico, Myanmar, Serbia, Slovenia and the United States. The exhibition of their work, Refugee, is at the NEWSEUM in Washington, D.C. until March 12. The photographs capture hope and resolve in the face of dehumanizing and life-threatening persecution for more than 65 million people who live in refugee camps in other countries and displacement camps in their native lands.

# DEAR PRESIDENT-ELECT TRUMP,

Your election as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States offers limitless opportunities to energize America and re-engage the world through practical partnerships, innovative solutions and relentless determination.

The effectiveness and reach of the Peace Corps is well known. At just 7,200 Volunteers and \$410 million—0.01 percent of our budget—Peace Corps dramatically impacts thousands of communities in some 63 countries through sustainable projects in health, education, agriculture, environment, youth, and economic development. Peace Corps Volunteers are black, white, brown, young and old, from all faiths, full of curiosity and compassion, mettle and grit—the best men and women our country has to offer. As the Republican Party's 2016 platform so aptly recognized, when America sends Volunteers out into the world, those host communities "know firsthand our country's idealism."

It is the power of this idealism that we believe you can exercise as leader of the free world.

As independent and committed champions of a stronger Peace Corps, we are prepared to work with you to broaden and elevate the mandate for how Peace Corps can be the best it can be.

In these pages, members of the Peace Corps community offer insight and ideas for how your administration can address the future of Peace Corps—and how we can help.

From Capitol Hill, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and Congressmen John Garamendi, Mike Honda and Joe Kennedy are joined by their colleague, Congressman Charlie Dent, to tell you why a bi-partisan Congress champions the Peace Corps.

We offer a range of requests for building Peace Corps. An NGO partners with Peace Corps to train doctors and nurses for health services recovering from the Ebola epidemic. A former Marine argues that there's no better weapon than trust, and no better delivery system for it than Peace Corps Volunteers. A leader in tech innovation at MIT offers a new way to deliver on Peace Corps' mission.

Our community of 225,000 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, countless host country nationals, and many more Americans who share the spirit of Peace Corps service stand ready to work with you to make the Peace Corps the best it can be.

*The Editors*



Four girls on bicycles return home from school in a community outside of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

ALEX SNYDER/PEACE CORPS

Joel Ford pitches in on his host family's annual rice harvest in a village in Cambodia's Siem Reap province.

ALEX SNYDER/PEACE CORPS



# MESSAGE FROM CONGRESS

## Why Capitol Hill Champions the Peace Corps

*John Garamendi, Mike Honda, Joe Kennedy & Charlie Dent*

**O**n January 20th, 1961, President John F. Kennedy gave the inaugural address that transformed the American ethos, exhorting his fellow citizens to "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." His words were a defining moment of that generation, leading to the creation of the Peace Corps shortly after.

Now, more than 55 years later, these words still ring true. More than 225,000 Volunteers, from recent college graduates to retirees, have heeded the call of national service and traveled to 141 countries throughout the world. Some of us have been among those Volunteers and have built a strong cohort of Peace Corps allies in Congress. Today, the Congressional Peace Corps Caucus has more than 70 members of both parties who are committed to supporting the Peace Corps' mission.

While Congress has struggled to agree on much of anything in recent years, the Peace Corps has remained unique in its broad and bipartisan support. This is due in part to the Peace Corps' nonpartisan mission of promoting peace and friendship around the world. It accomplishes this by achieving three goals: to help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained volunteers, to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served, and to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. Since its creation, the Peace Corps has been instrumental in lending a helping hand, promoting cultural exchange and understanding, and building generations of Americans committed to national service.

### **Supporting unique global initiatives**

Congress supports the Peace Corps because it supports important Congressionally-authorized global initiatives in ways no other organization can. While immediate crises such as natural disasters, famine, and conflict-related migration often require short-term, high-impact interventions, many chronic development challenges require long-term, widespread attention. This is why the Peace Corps places Volunteers in multi-year postings in often hard-to-reach areas of their host countries, enabling them to be more instrumental in furthering health, agriculture, and education initiatives in their communities.

Many Peace Corps projects have also been priorities across multiple congresses and administrations. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), authorized and funded by Congress, has significantly reduced the spread of HIV/AIDS by providing testing, treatment, and counseling to millions of people in Africa and around the world. Peace Corps Volunteers have been especially vital to the community engagement initiative in PEPFAR and will be critical to creating the first AIDS-free generation.

Peace Corps Volunteers have also trained thousands of farmers to better manage crop yields to combat chronic food insecurity and are working hand-in-hand with the U.S. Agency for

International Development to meet common objectives. The Peace Corps will be critical to implementing a new, whole-of-government food security strategy as mandated by the Congress in the recently-signed Global Food Security Act. Additionally, to promote gender equality and opportunities for women, the Peace

**Congress supports the Peace Corps because it supports important Congressionally-authorized global initiatives in ways no other organization can.**



Congressman John Garamendi and Patti Garamendi served in Ethiopia before their site became part of Eritrea at that nation's 1993 independence.

Corps is implementing projects under the Let Girls Learn initiative in 44 countries. By helping to eliminate social and cultural barriers to education, Peace Corps Volunteers are creating a new generation of women empowered to lead their communities and create more equitable societies.

### **Promoting U.S. diplomacy**

Congress supports the Peace Corps because it promotes diplomacy. Thanks to the presence and commitment of Peace

Corps Volunteers to communities in developing nations, these communities gain a better understanding of Americans and experience first-hand the generosity and spirit of the United States. Because Volunteers only serve in countries where invited, Peace Corps programs are sometimes one of the only forms of American cooperation foreign governments are willing to accept, allowing a first step towards further engagement.

Peace Corps programs are also effective mitigation tools for problems that could require more



**Top:** Congressman Joe Kennedy III served in the Dominican Republic from 2004 to 2006.  
**Bottom:** Congressman Mike Honda served in El Salvador from 1965 to 1967.



We are especially grateful to the thousands of men and women who ... remain committed to their service and to the mission of the Peace Corps.

costly interventions in the future. Farms cultivated with resiliency and sustainability in mind are less affected by extreme weather events and less likely to require emergency assistance. Countries in which women are educated and empowered are more economically vibrant and less affected by the strains on public health sectors caused by high adolescent birth rates. In short, the Peace Corps is our ounce of prevention, preferable to the pound of cure available through other aspects of American power.

#### Advancing national service

Congress supports the Peace Corps because it promotes national service. As readers of this magazine are well aware, volunteering in the Peace Corps is a transformational experience. In an era when our nation's wars are fought on the backs of a small minority of our population, the Peace Corps is an opportunity for Americans to serve their nation and do good around the world. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are some of our most engaged citizens on international issues and have gone on to become teachers, diplomats, and leaders here at home. Some even become Members of Congress.

The Peace Corps also has a lifelong effect on

host-country nationals. Many RPCVs, some of us included, have returned to host cities and villages to find that the children they taught have now grown up to be leaders in their own communities. Some have even gone on to become national leaders. This truly underscores the importance of the Peace Corps' presence around the world. Where there is a volunteer willing to work hard for a greater good, there is an opportunity to change the world forever.

As committed public servants, we dearly cherish the commitment of all Americans who choose to serve this nation. We are especially grateful to the thousands of men and women who volunteer every year to serve in our nation's Peace Corps, and as Members of Congress, we remain committed to their service and to the mission of the Peace Corps. We look forward to working with the 45th President, the National Peace Corps Association, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers across the country to champion the Peace Corps' vital mission in the 115th Congress.



**Congressman Charlie Dent**

**John Garamendi** is a U.S. House Representative for California's 3rd District, and served with his wife, Patti, in Ethiopia. **Mike Honda** is a U.S. House Representative for California's 17th District, and served in El Salvador. **Joe Kennedy III** is a U.S. House Representative for Massachusetts' 4th District, and served in the Dominican Republic. **Charlie Dent** is a U.S. House Representative for Pennsylvania's 15th District.

# CARING FOR AMERICANS WHO SERVE

## A new Peace Corps healthcare bill seeks major changes

Jonathan Pearson

The founder of the NPCA affiliate, Health Justice for Peace Corps Volunteers, Nancy Tongue, says she and others have been engaged in a 30-year struggle "to ensure that those of us who become sick and injured from Peace Corps service obtain and retain the healthcare to which we are entitled by law."

Major legislation introduced in September in the House of Representatives would provide a step in the right direction towards reform. But Tongue is among those who say even if the bill passes, more will need to be done.

Congressmen Ted Poe (R-TX) and Sam Farr (D-CA) introduced the Sam Farr Peace Corps Enhancement Act (HR 6037), bi-partisan legislation that seeks to address several key issues raised by Health Justice and others over many years.

### Support for RPCVs

One key provision in HR 6037 would address a crucial need for enhanced compensation for disabled RPCVs who are unable to work. During a 2014 meeting with leadership of the Peace Corps and the U.S. Department of Labor, Tongue—who served in Chile from 1980 to 1982 and suffered service related health issues—outlined the need for a higher rate of support for RPCVs on federal worker's compensation. There was agreement at that meeting that the amount of compensation, which is less than \$25,000 per year, was not adequate. HR 6037 would adjust the compensation formula so RPCVs on disability can receive approximately \$10,000 annually in additional support.

The much-anticipated legislation would also extend from one to six months the amount of time returned Volunteers remain under the Peace Corps' medical

care, and extend the agency's role with newly returned Volunteers to include treatment of health needs, not just diagnosis. This should greatly reduce the number of cases transferred to the Labor Department, where a litany of complaints over time have centered on bureaucratic pitfalls, confrontations with claims examiners not familiar with Peace Corps service, limited medical specialists who are included in the narrow roster of approved, networked health practitioners within the Labor Department's system, and lengthy delays in reimbursement payments. By extending the length and scope of Peace Corps involvement, the aim is that most RPCVs who come home with shorter-term health issues can have them fully addressed by the agency.

### Kate Puzey reauthorization

HR 6037 also revisits and reauthorizes key provisions of the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act, which became law in 2011. Under the bill, the agency's Office of Victim Advocacy (which cares for Volunteers who are survivors of sexual assault or other violent acts) and the agency's Sexual Assault Advisory Council would be extended to 2023.

### Medical personnel improvements

Having never served in the Peace Corps, Sue and Dave Castle describe themselves as the most unlikely advocates. Yet, they have traveled to Washington to join NPCA on Capitol Hill and joined northern California RPCVs during district office advocacy meetings so that what happened to their son Nick won't happen to another volunteer or their family; Nick died while serving in China in 2013 after Peace Corps medical personnel failed to recognize the severity of his symptoms. HR 6037

seeks to increase medical personnel and resources at posts, and improve training and enhance selection criteria for Peace Corps Medical Officers. "The introduction of the Sam Farr Peace Corps Enhancement Act is an important step in protecting the most valuable asset of the Peace Corps, the Volunteers," said Sue Castle. "It is a beginning. It is an acknowledgement of the need for reform."

### Anti-malarials

Another longstanding concern involves Peace Corps Volunteers who serve in countries with a high presence of malaria, and relates to the use of the anti-malarial medication known as mefloquine, also known as Lariam.

HR 6037 addresses issues related to the distribution of mefloquine. According to the bill's sponsors, the legislation would change current laws that prevent the Peace Corps from administering mefloquine before a Volunteer goes overseas. This change would bring the agency into compliance with the general recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on how to administer mefloquine. This would be a step in the right direction, according to Sara Thompson, another leader of Health Justice. Thompson struggles with chronic health issues stemming from her use of mefloquine while serving in Burkina Faso from 2010 to 2012.

### The road ahead

Just days after its introduction, HR 6037 was a key issue raised with lawmakers during NPCA's Capitol Hill Advocacy Day, a major event that marked the 55th anniversary of the Peace Corps. Two hundred and thirty NPCA advocates held over 200

# FEEL GOOD ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RACE.

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

Establishing community trust is central to breaking down barriers to advance public health and health education globally. As a neighbor, teacher and friend in her Guinea community, Elizabeth led reproductive health and family planning classes, went door-to-door to hang mosquito nets and even founded a girls' soccer team in the village.

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

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meetings that day, resulting in early and strong bi-partisan momentum for the legislation, including 23 Democratic and six Republican co-sponsors of HR 6037. Work has also been underway on a Senate version of the bill. At the time of publication, legislation being prepared by Senators Bob Corker (R-TN), Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) has not been introduced.

Tongue contends that even if this legislation passes, more reform is needed, adding that having permanent legislation will better ensure that improvements are maintained during periods of leadership change within the executive branch and at federal agencies. "There remains little, if any outside oversight or transparency of the management of either the USDOL or the Peace Corps regarding health coverage. There is no independent advisory council, ombudsperson, or medical experts to ensure fair arbitration. Nor does there seem to be sufficient incentive to provide better care for sick/injured RPCVs."

2017 will likely serve as a re-start on Peace Corps policies related to health care. For one thing, the election and convening of a new, 115th Congress means H.R. 6037—and its expected Senate counterpart legislation—will need to be reintroduced. A new president will nominate the next Peace Corps Director, who will determine the direction of agency priorities—including and especially those related to Volunteer health and safety.

Upon introducing HR 6037 this past September, Congressman Poe noted the importance of these decisions and policy directions for Volunteers and RPCVs. "These young ambassadors from the United States must know that when they go to countries far away, their government has their back."

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

# MEDICINE'S NEXT GENERATION

## A partnership that's training Africa's new nurses and doctors

Dr. Vanessa Kerry

*"How many of you who are going to be doctors are willing to spend your days in Ghana?"*

**W**ith these preeminent words, well-known to the Peace Corps community, President John F. Kennedy (then-Senator) laid the foundation for the Peace Corps in his speech at the University of Michigan in 1960. It was in 2012 that this longstanding vision of a service corps for health professionals was formalized with the launch of the Global Health Service Partnership.

Public service and global citizenship were instilled in me early on. At 14 years old, I traveled with my father, John Kerry, to Vietnam. I had seen poverty and poor health in the United States, but I was not prepared for what I witnessed in Vietnam. The poor infrastructure, lack of electricity and scarce sources of clean water stuck with me long after I returned home; for many years, I was unsure of what to do with what I experienced. I attended medical school and residency and discovered others who shared my growing concern about global health, the world's poverty, and the difficult question of how we can tackle the problem in a sustainable, country-led approach.

Our opportunity came at a public forum in Boston when I asked the then-Peace Corps Director, Aaron Williams: would Peace Corps consider a program specifically for doctors and nurses to teach and train? His answer was yes, leading to the birth of a partnership between Seed Global Health and the Peace Corps.

### Skill transfers

The Global Health Service Partnership (GHSP) is a joint initiative with the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Peace Corps, and Seed Global Health (Seed). The program

sends U.S. physicians and nurses abroad as educators to work alongside local faculty at medical and nursing schools to expand capacity, strengthen the quality and breadth of medical and nursing education, and build strong, sustainable health systems. It is a unique, streamlined collaboration, which leverages the strengths of each of its partners.

The Peace Corps has a robust, 55-year history of sending U.S. volunteers to serve abroad in a culturally sensitive and integrated manner and provides existing infrastructure in the countries where GHSP serves. PEPFAR contributes core program funding as part of its recent mandate to train 140,000 new health workers, with an emphasis on health system strengthening to empower countries to address the AIDS epidemic. Seed brings expertise and specialized trainings in medical and nursing education, opportunities for professional and academic enrichment to volunteers and in-country faculty, and a debt repayment program for U.S. physicians and nurses serving internationally. Debt repayment is critical to facilitating long-term service

and volunteerism and to recruiting the best and brightest Americans regardless of background. Seed raises private philanthropy to leverage U.S. government investments in global health.

The World Health Organization has cited a critical shortage of 7.2 million healthcare workers in 83 countries worldwide. Africa specifically bears 24 percent of the world's burden of disease, but shares only three percent of the global healthcare workforce. Further, many of these countries are losing their physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals to brain drain; health professionals emigrate to escape from places where there is a lack of resources, mentorship, or professional development opportunities.

Embracing the Peace Corps model of long-term sustainable partnerships, GHSP has in its first three years supported 97 physician and nurse educators in one-year assignments to 15 partner institutions in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda. Clinicians from a myriad of specialties—including pediatricians, surgeons, obstetricians and gynecologists, midwives, and community health nurses—have served. Using a



Volunteer physician and educator Dr. David Ries and a Tanzanian colleague check a patient at Bugando Medical Center Sengerema Designated District Hospital.

DAVID DARG

country-led approach, clinicians are recruited based on the needs identified by our partner institutions and ministries of health.

The power of our program is that we focus on education and training so the clinicians can train across the entire health spectrum as well as successive generations—from community nurses to rising physicians and nurses. Together, Volunteers have worked alongside local faculty to teach over 450 courses to over 8,300 individual trainees and to contribute over 128,000 service hours. Our Volunteers are incredible models of inter-professional collaboration and have empowered students to be critical thinkers and display pride in their profession. They have developed new academic programs and curricula, initiated practice improvement initiatives, and become stewards for the profession. Their reach and impact grows exponentially with each cohort of volunteers.

### Philippines to Tanzania

Members of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) community have been especially instrumental in the success of our program to date. Of the 97 physician, nurse and midwife educators who have joined GHSP in the first three years, 28 percent are RPCVs who re-entered the Peace Corps, now trained as physicians and nurses, and carrying forward a life-long dedication to service and ambassadorship.

Dr. Martin Neft is one such Volunteer. He served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines from 1967 to 1969. He went to medical school, became a family medicine physician and returned to the Peace Corps as a GHSP physician educator volunteer in Tanzania. His first week in the hospital, Dr. Neft was with his students caring for an extremely ill, unresponsive patient. He was told the patient was six-months pregnant, HIV positive, had a stroke, and would not survive.

Dr. Neft challenged his students to think about alternative diagnoses, including toxoplasmosis, an infection common in HIV-positive patients, which can mimic a stroke. Together, they implemented a treatment plan for

toxoplasmosis, and ultimately the patient woke up and later delivered a healthy child. Not only was a patient and baby's clinical outcome transformed, there was another significant impact; a few weeks later, Neft observed one of his medical students successfully diagnose and develop a treatment plan for toxoplasmosis in another patient. His work extended beyond that first patient and beyond his time in Tanzania. The transfer of skills and knowledge to students who share their knowledge with others has increased their impact exponentially.

The GHSP is making a difference in the United States as well. Many volunteers return to the U.S. and work with underserved populations in underserved areas. They continue to teach as faculty at medical and nursing schools, and they remain focused on service in their profession. Further, they have strong clinical and teaching skills, refined from working in such resource-limited settings for the year.

Dr. Allana Krolkowski is a family medicine physician who demonstrates the program's reach post-service. After serving in rural Malawi for the year, she returned to work at a federally qualified, underserved health center in New York with a large patient population of refugees and immigrants. Her GHSP experience has increased her interest in teaching and she is a preceptor to students in the clinic, modeling culturally-integrated care to her students.

Dr. Kate York, a GHSP nurse educator who served in Tanzania, is also using her GHSP experience in her current work. Now hired to serve as the first Director of Global Health Nursing at the University of Cincinnati, she says her work with students in GHSP influenced her ongoing commitment to teaching.

"My students in Tanzania were inspiring," York says. "They wanted to know everything inside my brain and were eager to learn. It impacted me and reinvigorated my interest in education back home."

York is now developing academic-clinical partnerships in Tanzania for her students to participate in. She encourages global citizenship in her students which

means engaging both abroad and at home; she is building opportunities for students to work in disadvantaged and marginalized communities in the United States as well.

### Rebuilding health systems

In July, GHSP celebrated its fourth year by sending physicians and nurses abroad to two more countries, the Kingdom of Swaziland and Liberia. The former has the highest HIV rate in the world, with about one third of the population infected.

The expansion into Liberia was in response to the personal request of the country's president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. She wanted us to help rebuild their healthcare system after the Ebola outbreak and contribute to the goal of adding 6,000 health workers back into the community over the next six years.

With 68 volunteers in GHSP—11 of them RPCVs—now working at 21 sites, we have doubled our numbers, and amplified our impact.

The accomplishments of GHSP are not just quantitative; our volunteers, their counterparts and students have provided testimony to the qualitative impact of the program. We have learned about how we have helped reduce mortality, how volunteers have inspired students to want to stay in country and continue teaching, and how practice improvement can lead to better education and patient care.

GHSP's long-term goal is to stay engaged in the communities where we work and partner to strengthen the pipeline of health professionals and the systems in which they work. In these first few years, we have started on the path.

One of our volunteers understood the impact of what we do best when she asked a student what kind of doctor she wanted to be.

The response: "I want to be a Peace Corps doctor. You teach, you are accountable, and you care."

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**Dr. Vanessa Kerry** is co-founder and chief executive officer of Seed Global Health and a physician at Massachusetts General Hospital.

# YOU CAN'T SURGE TRUST

## A Marine's endorsement of the Peace Corps

Andrew Kraus

**F**rom ISIS to Zika, our nation faces a complex set of challenges unlike anything we have seen before. As a Marine, I'm proud of the work those in uniform do—but I also know first-hand that the military alone cannot keep us safe. In my role at the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC), I have worked with thousands of fellow veterans to advocate for strategic investments in development and diplomacy alongside a strong defense. Those investments include the Peace Corps.

I joined the United States Marine Corps in 2008, understanding fully that we were a nation at war. The war we were fighting, however, was very different from those that I studied in school or had seen portrayed in movies. This was not a war against a conventional enemy—countries, alliances, or well-defined armies—but against non-state actors and militant groups. Success could not be measured in battles won. The conditions under which we fought allowed entire populations to be exploited. I saw first-hand how hunger, lack of governance, and a void of economic opportunity could create a vacuum that allowed extremism to spread. Unfortunately, these conditions have no military-only solutions. We need our development and diplomacy programs to prevent these challenges before they occur.

Our top military leaders are the first to argue that foreign policy doesn't begin and end with boots on the ground. In fact, retired General James Mattis said it best in an address to Congress: "If you don't fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition." And from my service, I know for certain: the United States should only put our uniformed men and women in harm's way as a last resort, when it is of vital interest to our national security.

Development programs like those

through USAID, the Peace Corps, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation help lift communities out of poverty by providing necessities like access to clean drinking water, vaccines, and education. This type of assistance is essential to creating opportunity and stability in fragile areas. U.S. diplomacy efforts—which draw on the skillsets and experiences of many Returned Peace Corps Volunteers—are also working to promote peace, create goodwill, and build strong relationships with other countries.

Just over a decade ago, Colombia was deep in a narcoterrorism crisis that threatened our entire hemisphere. U.S. investments in assistance under "Plan Colombia" helped transform the country into a thriving market for American products and provide a key ally in counter-narcotics. While the peace deal has recently come back in the news, there is no doubt that Plan Colombia's military and economic assistance helped the

country move from a cartel-ridden state to a strategic ally and one of our biggest trading partners in South America.

Similarly, U.S. foreign assistance helped South Korea stave off economic collapse after the Korean War, transforming the nation into our sixth largest trading partner and a key U.S. ally. Today, we export more than \$40 billion in goods and services to South Korea annually. That's more than the total we invested there over five decades.

Programs like "Plan Colombia" and foreign assistance to South Korea were successful because we made investments in and built relationships with the people of these countries, including Peace Corps programs in Colombia, where 4,795 Volunteers have served to date, and in South Korea, where over 2,000 Volunteers served from 1966 to 1981. This is what America does best and what we must continue to do.

Many of the challenges we face today require comprehensive solutions. In most

Those relationships are critical, allowing America to lead the way by bringing things like education, sustainable farming practices, and basic medical care to remote and struggling populations.



Leslie Stewart developed U.S. ties as an advisor on economic development in Nicaragua. He also helped his own host family expand their pottery business.

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cases the military has a vital role to play, but it must be in coordination with our civilian counterparts. As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate, wars are not won only on the battlefield. Establishing security is vital in fragile areas, but keeping the peace through governance, economic development, education, and the building of civil society requires the labor of aid workers, civilian experts, and diplomats.

One of the first things the Marine Corps taught me is the importance of relationships. Whenever we deploy, it is continuously reinforced that we are ambassadors of the United States to everyone that we meet, and we must conduct ourselves accordingly. Members of the Peace Corps are no different. As ambassadors of the United States wherever they go, Volunteers craft meaningful relationships that can forever shape the local perception of the United States. Those relationships are critical, allowing America to lead the way by bringing things like education, sustainable farming practices, and basic medical care to remote and struggling populations.

In my role with the USGLC, I talk with veterans all over the country about how and why they support our civilian tools. On military combat missions we are often in one place for just a short time. We can surge personnel and equipment to respond to a crisis, but we can't surge trust, which is based on relationships and partnerships forged over time. Peace Corps Volunteers are in communities long enough to establish lasting relationships and create programs that are sustainable long after they are gone. In a world filled with so much uncertainty, the key to a better, safer world is to learn from those strong relationships, and make a commitment to remain engaged.



*Andrew Kraus is director of Veterans Outreach for the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition*

# DIGITAL PEACE CORPS

Common ground and a challenge for the tech community and the President-elect

Brian Forde

**L**ike many of my friends in the tech community, I'm faced with the reality of a Trump presidency and searching for a way to honor the calls of President Obama and Secretary Clinton for national unity and a chance for the president-elect to lead.

My struggle comes from looking for common ground with a president-elect whose policy goals I largely do not support but recognizing from my time working in the Obama White House just how ineffective obstructionist politics can be for Americans who rely on a functioning federal government.

As we seek to unite a divided country, one unconventional area where we might find common ground, and discover a hidden opportunity for the tech community, is updating a historic government agency—the Peace Corps.

## When Carrie met Reed

In December 2013, President Barack Obama was preparing to meet with a group of U.S. tech leaders at the White House. I was the senior advisor for mobile and data innovation at the White House, and I asked Reed Hastings, the chief executive officer of Netflix—and, like myself, a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer—if he would like to join me for breakfast with the director of Peace Corps, Carrie Hessler-Radelet.

Reed enthusiastically replied, "Yes!"

Carrie and I met with Reed the morning before his meeting with the President, and then I walked him to the West Wing. Reed seemed to relish his discussion with the President, jokingly offering the President a cameo in House of Cards. But I didn't think much else of Reed's visit until I saw media reports the following day. To everyone's amusement, Reed considered the highlight of his day

to be his breakfast with the director of the Peace Corps, where they discussed how the agency had been influenced and changed by technology.

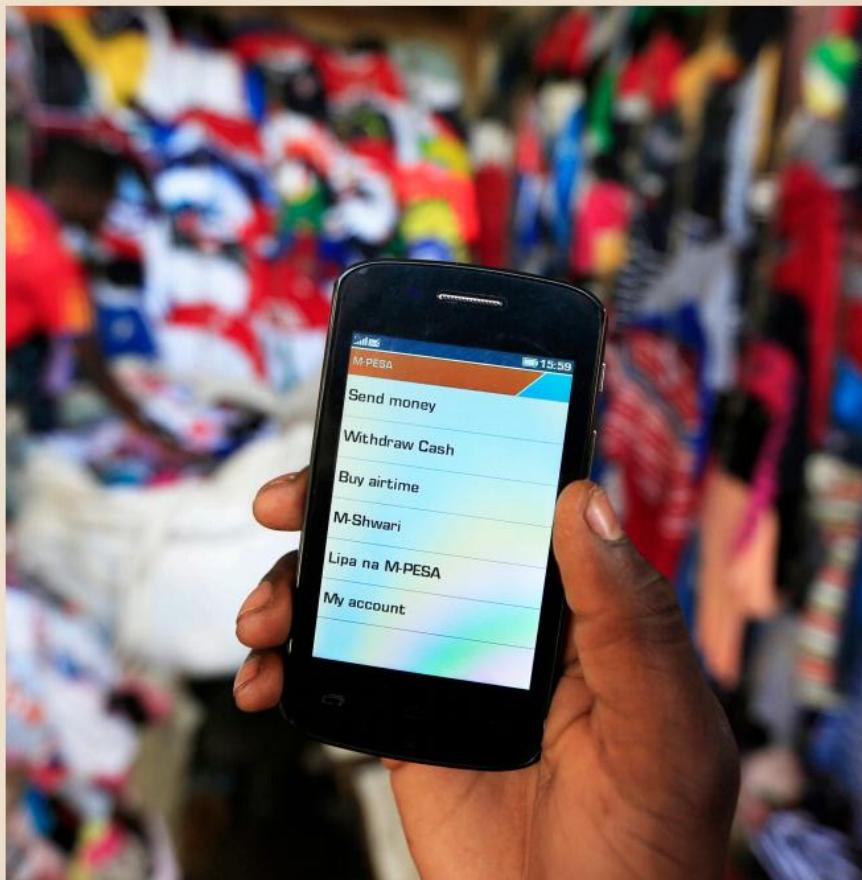
Reed's conversation with Carrie at breakfast that morning sparked two new questions:

As the length of time a new tech startup goes abroad has been condensed from 4-5 years to 12-18 months—could

recently Returned Peace Corps Volunteers supply the boost Silicon Valley needs to grow businesses successfully and responsibly in the most remote parts of the world?

The other question concerns the fact that before the end of the next president's first term, it's estimated that there will be 99 percent cell phone adoption worldwide—and 6.1 billion smart phone users. How

So can the Peace Corps supply the boost that Silicon Valley needs to grow businesses successfully and responsibly in the most remote parts of the world?



A customer makes an M-pesa mobile money transaction in a digital device invented in Kenya.

NOOR KHAMIS/REUTERS

... the next director needs to make technology a priority in every facet of the organization, from staffing and training to the partnerships it builds.

should the Peace Corps staff up, train up and partner up to better leverage and teach tech in the most remote regions of the world?

#### **Peace Corps' got Entrepreneurial Talent**

Every year more than 3,500 Americans finish their Peace Corps service, mostly in rural areas in more than 60 countries. The Peace Corps has long acted as the last mile

of international development, but it could also become the last mile of critical tech training. It has an unrivaled footprint of Volunteers canvassing the planet—they are ambassadors of culture, teachers of water-saving agricultural techniques and emerging leaders in their own right. They're building deep, meaningful relationships with local communities.

Historically, federal agencies, non-profits and non-governmental aid organizations have heavily recruited this rich talent pool of international experience and resilience. One of the many positive side effects of the tech community working closely with Peace Corps is the ability to tap into this rich talent pool of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. These resilient Americans can supply the boost tech companies need to grow businesses successfully and responsibly in the most remote parts of the world.

As an example, more than 13 years ago I served as a business and technology volunteer in Nicaragua. Based on the challenges my neighbors and I faced in making calls to the United States, I co-founded a small phone company in 2005. We erected 80-foot internet towers in rural villages to enable Nicaraguans to call the United States and other

countries at a tenth of the price charged by established carriers. Eventually our company, Llamadas Heladas, became one of the largest phone companies in Nicaragua.

I am not alone. Other Peace Corps Volunteers have also gone on to start much more successful tech companies, including Reed—who served as a high school math teacher in Swaziland—and Amy Pressman, who served in Honduras before co-founding her billion-dollar tech startup, Medallia. And it's not just tech startups. Knight Foundation, with more than two billion dollars in assets to support, among other things, the development of civic tech, is run by Alberto Ibargüen, who served in Venezuela.

#### **Building a Digital Peace Corps**

President-elect Trump should choose a Peace Corps director with technology in his or her DNA. Critically, the next director needs to make technology a priority in every facet of the organization, from staffing and training to the partnerships it builds.

Why? Great, tech-powered, business ideas can come from anywhere. Take Lyft, for example, a billion-dollar Silicon Valley company modeled after the successful ride-pooling in Zimbabwe. Or consider Ushahidi—a popular crowd-mapping tool used during domestic disasters—created in Nairobi. Facebook powers more than a billion people's social media identities but the Government of India built the world's largest biometric identity system for more than 1.2 billion people in a fraction of the time. One of the most successful mobile money companies, M-pesa, was not founded in America, but in Kenya. Analog versions of Deliveroo, Postmates and Munchery were implemented decades ago in countries such as India and Nicaragua.

Ultimately, by bringing the Peace Corps into the 21st century, we can empower communities across the globe to take advantage of emerging technologies that can positively impact their lives.



Llamadas Heladas was started by the author following his Peace Corps service and grew to become one of Nicaragua's largest telephone companies.

### Digital Peace Corps (beta)

Peace Corps Director Hessler-Radelet has made dramatic improvements at the agency, including significant structural changes that make it easier to apply to serve as a Volunteer—reducing the application process from several days to less than an hour. Peace Corps has also expanded its digital footprint and improved its outreach, recruiting and marketing, resulting in a 100 percent increase in applications over the last two years.

The agency's former director of innovation, Patrick Choquette, has formed strategic partnerships with software firms such as Duolingo, a language training software company. Peace Corps has also been leveraging local knowledge to crowdsource invaluable geographic information that can be incredibly helpful in the wake of disasters.

Building on these successes, the next director has the opportunity to make Peace Corps an important player in spreading the benefits of emerging technologies—enabling this historic agency to have as much impact in the 21st century as it had in the 20th. The wave of technology change is only growing. Whether it lifts or further isolates many parts of the world is being decided now.

The next Peace Corps director could help shape this future in the following ways:

#### >>STAFF UP

- Establish a Tech Corps—Similar to the Obama administration's recruitment of tech talent after the Healthcare.gov meltdown, the Peace Corps should recruit 80 technical Volunteers—10 for each region of the world where volunteers serve—building open-source tools other regional volunteers can leverage.

- Launch Open Source software competition—Peace Corps should host an annual contest to identify the Top 10 open-source projects, built by members of the Tech Corps, and give winners financial and developer support to deploy their tools worldwide.

The wave of technology change is only growing. Whether it lifts or further isolates many parts of the world is being decided now.

- Partner with USAID and local NGOs—The U.S. Agency for International Development is building technical solutions—from mobile money to blockchain—that will need practical and technical assistance on the ground. Tech Corps and other volunteers could help train locals to run and maintain the technology being implemented.

#### >>TRAIN UP

- Expand TechHire globally—My last assignment at the White House was creating TechHire, which brings together businesses, coding boot camps and local governments to help those without a college degree learn to code and fill more than half a million vacant tech jobs. The Peace Corps, in collaboration with USAID, could expand TechHire globally—supporting the development of coding boot camps around the world.

- Build makerspaces—Work with local organizations to establish and build out makerspaces to teach locals about invaluable technologies such as 3-D printing, robotics and solar power.

- Put artisans online—Teach local artisans how to sell their goods on sites such as Etsy, eBay and Shopify, or show them how to successfully crowd-fund to acquire working capital needed for business growth.

#### >>PARTNER UP

- Form partnerships with U.S. tech companies—Many of these tech companies have not only developed some of the world's most innovative software and hardware but have also expressed lofty goals to make a difference in the world. The Peace Corps should work with companies like Twilio or telecoms, for example, to donate text messages for use

by local healthcare clinics and others, similar to ChatSalud.

- Launch e-book drives—Partner with Amazon, Kobo and other major e-book merchants to allow consumers to donate e-books to students abroad exploiting the proliferation of smartphones that have dramatically lowered barriers to accessing e-book content.

- Establish a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer innovation fund—The top social entrepreneurs and accelerator programs—such as Echoing Green, Knight Foundation, Omidyar Network and Skoll Foundation, among many others—could host an annual event to review applications to fund the best ideas from volunteers on the verge of returning, giving them a path to stay in their local countries to make even greater impacts.

This is just a starter list for ways Peace Corps Volunteers could leverage the latest tech tools to help the people serve throughout the world. Feel free to share additional ideas: brian@forde.com

Finding common ground with someone whose policy goals you may strongly disagree with is incredibly challenging. But this isn't about any one of us or the president-elect. This is about coming together as Americans, with the Peace Corps and the National Peace Corps Association, to help evenly distribute our future to the people who need it most—the communities Peace Corps Volunteers are uniquely trained to serve.

**Brian Forde** is senior lecturer at MIT Sloan School of Management and the former senior advisor for mobile and data innovation at the White House. This article was written in the author's personal capacity and does not reflect the views of MIT or his colleagues.





### MUSOO KEBA

Musoo Keba is a Mandinka term of respect for an older woman of a village. The photograph of Naa Gibba is by Beth Eanelli, a community health Volunteer in Nyakoi, The Gambia from 2013 to 2015. Eanelli believes Gibba reveals the strength and resilience of so many Gambian women. Eanelli often visited Gibba in the neighboring village of Mademba Kubba where Gibba spent her life providing food, farming the land and raising the children of her compound and the village. The portrait was part of a summer exhibit of photographs taken by 15 returned and serving Volunteers shown at 70 South Gallery in Morristown, New Jersey. The exhibit, Spirit, demonstrates the ties between Peace Corps Volunteers and the people they served. The gallery hosted the show in cooperation with Peace Corps and National Peace Corps Association to increase awareness of the Peace Corps on its 55th anniversary. The works are for sale and can be found on the gallery's web site at [70southgallery.com/spirit/](http://70southgallery.com/spirit/)

# NEW PROTOCOLS

Sixties optimism could cope with new threatening ideologies

*John Coyne*

In 21st century presidential campaigns we've become accustomed to candidates stating their priorities by saying what they'll do on Day One. On that day, he will end Obamacare or defund Planned Parenthood. What John F. Kennedy did, on the first day of the second month of his administration—March 1, 1961—was sign an executive order creating The Peace Corps.

This grassroots, volunteer approach to the social and economic development of Third World countries "symbolized what America wanted to be, and what much of the world wanted America to be: superhero, protector of the disenfranchised, defender of the democratic faith," wrote Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman in her 1998 book, *All You Need Is Love*.

In the United States in 1961, a new generation of citizens took it as a challenge and a gift when Kennedy called on Americans to "ask what you can do for your country." Young Americans who volunteered knew impoverished countries only as places where their fathers had waged wars and missionaries had sought souls.

Now, they could take their skills, knowledge and altruism to developing countries and meet strangers not with a rifle but a handshake—not with diplomatic protocols but with Peace Corps' willingness to work alongside others, sometimes of different races, while learning about and growing to understand new cultures and religions.

Today, five decades after Kennedy lit the torch, it's very clear: The current generation of Volunteers needs new protocols for service in an increasingly troubled and hostile world. Sixties optimism needs to be reengineered to oppose the threatening ideology of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

Here are eight ways the next administration could improve the agency.

## Teach in refugee camps

To help alleviate the refugee crisis, PCVs

could be assigned to refugee camps as teachers and healthcare providers with other agencies. In that way, the Peace Corps vision could be blended with that of other international and domestic refugee workers.

## Face natural disasters

Earth is imperiled. We are living in an age of unprecedented degradation of biological diversity, the greatest period of mass extinction since the dinosaur era. At the same time, we are experiencing dangerous levels of temperature rise owing to climate change and seeing an increasing incidence of major natural disasters.

The Peace Corps could help by deploying its expertise in appropriate solutions: installing solar and wind energy, promoting agro-forestry and permaculture practices and helping communities devise strategies to deal with loss of wilderness and habitat areas.

## Give Volunteers freedom

Some PCVs have always been most successful when allowed to operate on their own, and given the communications wonders of the 21st century, more of them could now exercise that option.

## Bring back the Crisis Corps

Like the Canadian Forces Disaster Assistance Response Team, reinstate the Crisis Corps to assist in international disasters. PCVs can be specially trained and equipped to offer aid and assistance post-disaster.

## Broaden the scope of work

Americans with certain qualifications or expertise could be given the opportunity to obtain career experience while achieving tangible results. These opportunities could range from one month to one year. The range of projects might include food security, civil engineering, information systems, library science and university-level teaching.

## Send them in harm's way

We need to place Volunteers in local settings to work with families and educate the young to know that, beyond radical jihad, there are other paths to personal happiness and salvation. This requires putting Volunteers in harm's way. The risk may be greater today but that isn't new to Peace Corps Volunteers.

## Partner with UN volunteers

Based in Bonn, Germany, the United Nations Volunteer effort includes 6,500 active volunteers in 130 countries. UN volunteers comprise one third of all international civilians working in such operations. Joining with the United Nations, Peace Corps Volunteers would blend into the societies of developing countries, helping the United Nations to succeed.

## Birkenstocks on the ground

These proposals are intended to re-start an incredibly valuable resource in America's ideological war with ISIS and the rest of radical Islam. These proposals are intended to rejuvenate a vibrant agency by exploiting the technologies that are bringing generations and nationalities into closer proximity.

The Peace Corps is a terrible thing to waste. Expand the agency, in terms of funding dollars and enrollment numbers, yes, but also in terms of its responsiveness to current developments. In a world increasingly peopled by displaced multitudes and ruptured by despots and jihadists, the Peace Corps can again step forward to be, as Elizabeth Hoffman once wrote, "protector of the disenfranchised, defender of the democratic faith."

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**John Coyne** is a contributing editor to the magazine. He writes and edits [peacecorpsworldwide.org](http://peacecorpsworldwide.org). He taught school in Ethiopia from 1962 to 1964 and worked on the Washington, D.C. staff, and he has published thirteen novels.

# OUR DIGITAL DIVIDE

Should Volunteers go social media? A Moldova blogger asks

*David Jarmul*

**W**hen Ken Whiting was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Micronesia in 1969-1972, he had no “access to any communication for weeks at a time. The only way to communicate to friends and family was by mail—and I only received mail every few weeks.” In the evenings, he and his village neighbors “would talk for hours.”

I remember that feeling, too, as do thousands of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who served years ago. We were vastly less connected than Volunteers today who have smart phones, laptops, maybe even a Netflix subscription. When I served in Nepal in the late 1970s, I’d mail aerograms home and wait a month for a response. I didn’t make a single phone call. The internet didn’t exist.

Now I’m serving again, this time in Moldova. In addition to my iPhone and laptop, I have a Kindle and a portable wi-fi router. I watch YouTube. I Skype with my grandkids. I love my gadgets but I do wonder sometimes whether their impact on my Peace Corps service is entirely positive. Am I spending too much time online and not enough with my neighbors?

I explored this question on my blog, [notexactlyretired.com](http://notexactlyretired.com), and was amazed by the response it elicited from both returned and current Volunteers. It turns out a lot of us have been thinking about this.

Some Returned Peace Corps Volunteers responded with their own memories of isolation. Scott Lee, who served in Liberia from 1983 to 1985, was “forced to deal with being cut off and grapple with the fact that I had to find a new path and discover my inner strength.” Beth Egan, who served in Yemen 1979-1981, recalls “it took six weeks to get a letter from home. I spent a lot of time with the Yemenis and treasure my memories.”

## Climbing termite mounds

Some newer Volunteers told similar stories, too. Ben Welna, who recently completed his Tanzania service, had “a smartphone, slow-slow 2 gigabytes, a long walk to buy phone credit and unreliable electricity. Sometimes when I was lonely, I’d look at the frozen Facebook feed saved on my phone, a 21st-century equivalent to listening to static on the radio.” Madeline Moore, who served in Zambia a few years ago, would ride her bicycle 10 miles “to a large termite mound, climb up it and wave my phone above my head until I got signal enough to send a text message or (if I was lucky) make a quick phone call. My second year we got decent cell service in my village.”

“Social media takes you out of the moment,” he writes. “It takes you out of the here and now and connects you somewhere else into an artificial online community which is not where you need to be or where you’re supposed to be as a PCV. Being on Facebook is a distinct disadvantage to a Peace Corps volunteer whose primary job is to integrate into his real community.”

Former Uganda Volunteer Lynne McDermott called many of today’s Volunteers “way over-connected,” recalling one Volunteer whose mother Skypes her every night. “Her mom needs to have her own Peace Corps experience,” Lynne said.

“Many parents of PCVs these days hover too much,” agreed Rob Carr, a former Liberia volunteer who described current



Madeline Moore shells corn with neighbors before a child nutrition workshop in her Zambia village.

The trend toward new technology is clear, though, and some of my RPCV friends wonder whether it’s a good thing. “Contrary to what a lot of people might claim about social media connecting them to the rest of the world, it does exactly the opposite,” wrote Peter Giaquinta, who served in Nepal in the late 1980s.

Peace Corps staff “who get calls from parents if they do not get FaceTime or chat for a few days. A week is a 3-alarm panic.”

## Surrounded by smart phones

Still, when I look around my office or bus stop in Moldova, I’m not the only person with a smart phone. They are

omnipresent, and not only in eastern Europe. "Yes, some volunteers are too distracted with modern gadgets and such," wrote Craig Chavis Jr., who recently completed his Peace Corps service in Peru, "but Peace Corps could not proceed the way it used to with today's current laws, generational lifestyles and expectations."

"Social media and cell phones are pretty much everywhere and being used by people of all ages the world over," agreed another recent returnee, Mark Largess, who served in Kazakhstan. "We can't have Peace Corps with volunteers 'off the grid'

#### THEN AND NOW

Sara Feldman say she is "in the fortunate position of having experienced both extremes. As a Peace Corps Volunteer on outer islands of Yap (Micronesia) in the early 1980s, I had no electricity and no communication with the outside world for months at a time, other than a shortwave radio net that we used once a week and was confined to islands in Yap. Letters came every three or four months or so on a ship. I'd answer them and send them on the next ship three months later.

"Now, at the other end of my career, I just finished two years as a 50+ Peace Corps Volunteer in Georgia. I served in a medium-sized city and had reasonably good Internet access the entire time, both at work and at home. I used Facebook, watched TV and movies, sent emails, kept a blog ... I was very connected. I never felt it impeded my integration or work within the country. In fact, I would say that my work here was much more successful than when I was in Yap.

"While there's no doubt some volunteers may immerse themselves in the e-world to their detriment, I think most volunteers use it as both a support system and a tool to further Peace Corps' third goal, via blogs, Facebook and many other platforms. To me, the sole thing is the work. If you are doing good work and having success, then as far as I'm concerned you can look at Facebook all you want because obviously you are doing something right. I'm not gonna judge."

like in the 1970s, because the world as a whole, especially the developing world, is simply not like that any more."

Being connected, moreover, doesn't necessarily mean ignoring your neighbors. A fellow volunteer in Moldova, Sarah Haas, said, "I spend a lot of time hanging out with locals and conversing. While I chat with friends at home, I know I need friends here. Face time is different than FaceTime. I need the human interaction face to face."

And as for volunteers isolating themselves from their neighbors, well, I remember seeing that in Nepal long before anyone had a smart phone. "Put it this way: The guy or girl on Facebook instead of talking to their neighbors in the shade is the same guy or girl 20+ years ago, holed up with paperbacks and rambling letters instead of talking to their neighbors in the shade," wrote Ronald Meyer, who served with his wife in Tanzania.

Yes, new technology may compound the problem. "If I had social media back then, I was such an introvert and very homesick, I would probably not have connected well with my host family or village and probably would have ET'd," said Mary Beth Cox, who served in Togo 1999-2001, a sentiment that others echoed.

#### Doing the job

But social media and other new technology are now unavoidable, and I see every day how volunteers are using them to speed development. Peace Corps Volunteers and their partners around the world can now download lesson plans, research HIV programs and help women entrepreneurs find new markets.

"Life is what it is," says Barbara Corrigan, who served with her husband in Morocco from 2013 to 2015. "Younger PCVs aren't joining Peace Corps for reasons that are any different than pioneer PCVs, but communication has completely been transformed. Today's Volunteers come with the usual passion and technological know-how, which is great for their communities."

Personally, I think Volunteers have no choice but to embrace new technology—

**Madeline Moore rode her bike 10 miles to hike up a small termite mound 'and wave my phone above my head until I got signal enough to send a text message...' The next year her Zambia village received cell phone service.**

and should be supported in doing so regardless of whether some of my fellow old-timers prefer aerograms and shortwave radios. I agree with Paul Box, a Tanzania returnee who said "Social media and constant connection make for a different experience than what we older Volunteers had, but that's the reality of today. The job is to be the most effective and best possible Volunteer you can be in 2017, not to replicate what people did in 1985 or 1965."

I also agree with Mark Largess, who said, "Peace Corps isn't a camping trip or a spiritual retreat. Anything that helps PCVs to deal with the world as it is should be encouraged, with thought put in to proper guidelines for use."

My favorite answer came from Steve Bennett, who served in Kenya a decade ago: "I think we should be careful when comparing service and experience; everyone's experience is their own and should, in some ways, stand on its own merits. I'd hate to bemoan advancements in other countries simply because we don't get the experience we wanted. There is something oddly very Western and very privileged about going to another region of the world that probably at this point uses technology and saying, 'I'm not going to use it so I can get the real experience.' The world is progressing. Go with it."



**David Jarmul** was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal from 1977 to 1979 and is currently serving again with his wife, Champa, in the Republic of Moldova.

This article is derived from posts on his blog, [notexactlyretired.com](http://notexactlyretired.com), and related conversations on Facebook.

# THE HÔTEL PARADIS

## The risk of swimming in Egypt

Pamela Hartmann

We are nothing if not flexible, we Egyptians. We have welcomed travelers to our land for five thousand years. We understand change, and due to this, we have survived, *alhamdulillah*. So it was that my Uncle Hakim and my Auntie Fouada were able to deal with the disaster that fell upon them and their establishment, the Hôtel Paradis.

The hotel is small. It is clean. That is perhaps the best that can be said of it—that and the presence of a swimming pool, also small, installed at great expense by the collective effort of all the uncles in the family. Lacking amenities and a location near sites of interest to tourists, the hotel is not one that attracts the wealthy western Europeans and Americans, so free with their money. Instead, it serves as a hostel for youth from many countries and for families from the less wealthy countries of eastern Europe, although in such difficult economic times, there are few enough of them, and the hotel is often half empty.

Foreigners that they are, they bring with them ways of thinking and behaving different from ours. If, for example, my Auntie Fouada were to suggest taking either of her daughters, Shada or Khadija, on a journey alone, without her husband Hakim (which she would not do), my Uncle Hakim would slap his jowls with both hands and exclaim, "But they are such flowers! They might get *picked*!" and that would be the end of it. So when a woman from eastern Europe and her daughter of fourteen remained alone at my family's establishment for one week, *without* the lawful father of the child, my uncle and auntie did not approve, but they did not point out the impropriety. They had seen far worse. These were foreigners, after all. What can one expect?

The disaster occurred several weeks

after the woman and her daughter returned to their country. A reporter from *Afaqarabia* and another from *The Daily Star Egypt* arrived at the Hôtel Paradis to ask my uncle for comment on the lawsuit being brought against him by an eastern European lady. Was there truth, they asked, in the claim of Mrs. Atanasia Filipescu that the hotel swimming pool had impregnated her daughter?

My uncle's eyes grew wide, and he slapped his fleshy cheeks in horror. A foreign flower, in *his* swimming pool—picked.

The reporters clicked photographs of the offending swimming pool, and the next morning, articles appeared on newsstands across the city. My father and the uncles rushed to the hotel to confer with my Uncle Hakim. Over many cups of tea, they discussed the financial, moral, and spiritual implications of this disaster. All the while, my Uncle Hakim held his head in his hands and moaned.

The solution came from neither tea nor moaning but in the person of Umm Kamal, a neighborhood woman of impeccable virtue, who arrived in severely modest *niqab* and quietly asked to speak with my auntie. Her daughter Ghazaia, it turned out, had been married for five years and was still without child, mercy be upon her. "As we know," she said, "the Prophet (peace be upon him), taught that 'whatever affliction God has created in this world, He has also created its remedy.'"

My Auntie Fouada nodded in grave agreement.

Perhaps, in his wisdom and compassion, God was providing healing waters right here in the neighborhood. It would not be necessary to journey to Mecca for water from the well of Zamzam.

Again, my auntie nodded.

Would it be possible, Umm Kamal

inquired, to arrange a private dip in the swimming pool at a time when there would be no men present? The family would, of course, engage a room at the hotel for this occasion.

My auntie assured her that something could be arranged.

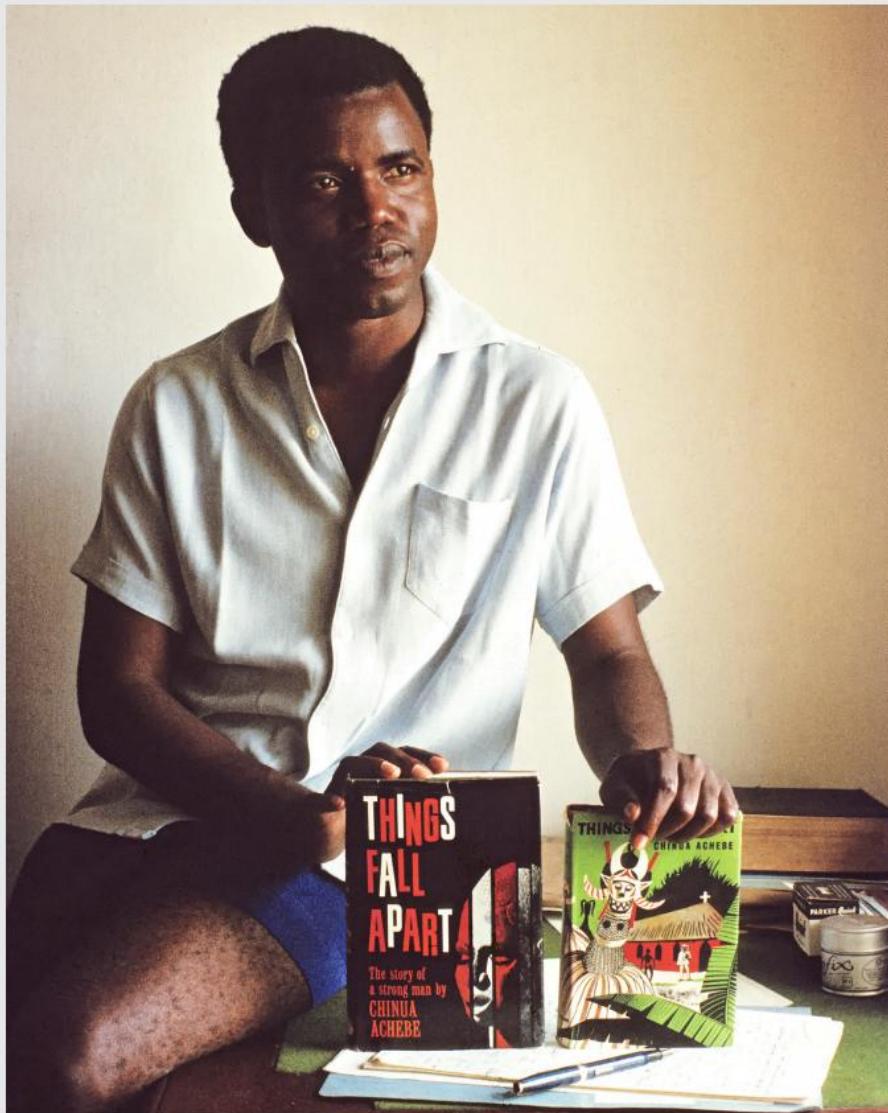
So it was that my auntie's position at the hotel shifted, over the next few months, into that of Manager of Scheduling, for as word spread of the healing powers of its waters, the Hôtel Paradis became a magnet for barren ladies of the city and their families, who have filled every room since Umm Kamal's daughter became with child, *alhamdulillah*, and the establishment has not even been able to accommodate foreign visitors due to the demand.

My Uncle Hakim and all the uncles sit over tea and contemplate the possibility of other afflictions for which the swimming pool might be therapeutic, although, having been so blessed, they are careful to remind one another that "Riches are not from an abundance of worldly goods, but from a contented mind," as we know from the Prophet, peace be upon him.

In a country with a large population and concerns that otherwise occupy many people, it has as yet gone unnoticed by those who collect such figures, but we in this quarter of Cairo know to what the increased birthrate may be attributed. *Inshallah*, may the future hold still more miracles.

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*The author taught English as second language in South Korea from 1973 to 1975, has written many textbooks on teaching, and lives in Cambria, California. This is her second piece of fiction and was published in Everywhere Stories, Short Fiction from a Small Planet, Volume II, edited by Clifford Garstang. Garstang is a fiction writer and former World Bank lawyer. He taught English as a second language in South Korea from 1976 to 1977. The book is published by Press53 and is available from Press53.com or Amazon.com.*



ELIOT ELISOFON PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE/S/SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART

### CHINUA ACHEBE

Eliot Elisofon was a LIFE magazine photographer from 1943 to 1964 and after a five-month assignment in Africa, devoted much of his professional life to photography in Africa. He died in 1973, having given his collection of African art and his photographic archive to the Smithsonian Institution. Nigerian author Chinua Achebe was 29 years old when Elisofon photographed him in Lagos. His new book, *Things Fall Apart*, was to become the most widely read novel in modern African literature. This and his later novels, such as *Arrow of God* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, reflected his Igbo culture of southern Nigeria. They were all written in English. He advocated for Biafran independence, engaged in Nigerian politics and later taught at Bard College and Brown University. In a 1975 lecture he called the author of *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad, "a thorough-going racist." He died in Boston in 2013.



On a beautiful late September afternoon, Peace Corps community leaders gathered in our nation's capital for the Affiliate Group Network Annual Meeting, a day ahead of the annual Peace Corps Connect gathering. More than 80 affiliate group leaders, half of them official delegates, learned about new NPCA initiatives and projects, shared best practices to tackle common challenges, and most importantly, expanded their leadership network and knowledge.

The National Peace Corps Association's president, Glenn Blumhorst, announced the launch of SilkStart, the NPCA's new community builder platform that allows groups to maintain their own websites and improve database management capabilities through links with the national system. The NPCA Community Fund and Partnerships coordinator, Amanda Silva, showed how the SilkStart platform empowers affiliate groups to increase their fundraising and achieve greater impact in their communities, similar to such campaigns as the Ebola Relief Fund. The fund was an alliance between "Friends of" RPCV groups from the three West African countries and the NPCA that raised an estimated \$90,000 from the broader Peace Corps community to help Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which were devastated by the virus in 2014.

In one of the most popular roundtable discussions, Ella Dowell, the webmaster for the Northern California Peace Corps Association, explained their groundbreaking process of merging their data on the SilkStart platform and using it for communications and fundraising.

The Affiliate Group Network looks forward to more discussion of the process and benefits of engagement on the SilkStart platform through the AGN webinar series, Facebook group, other platforms, and the next Affiliate Group Network Annual Meeting at Peace Corps Connect in Colorado scheduled for August 4-6, 2017.

*Maricarmen Smith-Martinez*

## TURNING TO SILK

Affiliates celebrated Internet success together in Washington

*Jonathan Pearson*

The success of this year's Peace Corps Connect in the nation's capital was to a large degree due to the work of nearby geographic affiliate groups which were there with the NPCA every step of the way. The **RPCVs of Washington DC**, the **Northern Virginia RPCVs** and the **Maryland Peace Corps Associations** played an essential role in publicizing the national gathering, mobilizing a wide array of volunteers for the five days of activities and recruiting participants to take part in the Capitol Hill advocacy day. Leadership of these groups were involved in months of planning and execution of a highly successful event. For other groups, the conference was even better because affiliates were able to attract members from all over the nation to attend their own annual gatherings to focus on their countries of service and many Peace Corps reunions.

### A NIGERIA GATHERING

More than 80 Peace Corps alumni with **Friends of Nigeria** attended meetings at the Marvin Center, and 96 gathered for a Nigerian dinner at The Mott House on the Thursday opening day of Peace Corps Connect. Speakers included Margee Ensign, president of American University in Nigeria, which was established in Yola by a former student of Peace Corps Volunteers. Other speakers included: John Campbell, a former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria, who assessed President Bukari's first year in office; human rights lawyer Emmanuel Ogebe, who aided in bringing to the United States some schoolgirls who had escaped during their abduction by Boko Haram extremists; and Roger Landrum (1961-63) who introduced a showing of the documentary, "Give me a Riddle," the 1966 cinema verite documentary by the late David Schickele (Nigeria, 1961-63) and featuring Landrum.

### MOROCCAN TRIFECTA

**Friends of Morocco** hosted three events for members during Peace Corps Connect. A Country of Morocco Update featured the Peace Corps desk officer for Morocco, and representatives of the Moroccan-American Policy Center, CorpsAfrica and the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies. The NPCA affiliate also hosted dinner at the Marrakesh restaurant honoring Ellen Paquette, who served two tours that were 20 years apart and totaled six years (the most recent tour ending in December 2015) as Peace Corps/Morocco director. Paquette was also recognized for her Peace Corps service in Liberia, and added tours in Peace Corps Washington as regional director for Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Friends of Morocco also gathered for a Moroccan potluck following the March for Peace which closed the conference.



Panelists at the Atlantic Council discussion of Iran included the director of the council's South Asia Center, Barbara Slavin, two RPCVs—former ambassador and hostage John Limbert and Villanova professor Thomas Ricks—and Dr. Trita Parsi and University of Virginia professor Farzaneh Milani.

## AFGHAN BAZAAR

During Peace Corps Connect, **Friends of Afghanistan** presented an Afghan Bazaar in the exhibit hall, selling jewelry and textiles to raise funds for a variety of their charitable projects in Afghanistan. The items available were donated by members or offered at wholesale prices on commission by Tika Imports. More about group projects are at [www.afghanconnections.org](http://www.afghanconnections.org).

Members were given a curated tour of an exhibit of the rebuilding of Old Kabul at the Smithsonian Institution's Freer/Sackler Museum on the National Mall. At the National Textile Museum, the group provided a presentation on the Friends of Afghanistan's Bamyan Textile Project, an effort to supply looms to women weavers who create a unique fabric called barak. Members were also invited for dinner at the Embassy of Afghanistan hosted by Ambassador Hamdullah Mohib.

## COMING OUT FOR CLIMATE

Peace Corps Connect served as a coming-out event for the recently revived **RPCVs for Environmental Action**, which regards the climate change emergency as one of its primary focal points. A well-attended workshop featured a multi-media presentation and call to action by Olena Horcajo (Nicaragua 2007-2009), senior program manager of the Climate Reality Project. Leaders of the new group moderated a discussion and next steps to engage the larger Peace Corps community.

## TIES THAT BIND

Members of the **Peace Corps Iran Association (PCIA)** organized "Ties that Bind: US-Iran Engagement and the Peace Corps Legacy," a program at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C. following Peace Corps Connect.

The event was moderated by Barbara Slavin, interim director of

the Atlantic Council's South Asia Center and was organized by PCIA and Atlantic Council member Thomas Huf (Iran 1967-1971). Speakers included: Ambassador John Limbert (1962-1964), who was among the 1979 hostages in Tehran and retired as former deputy assistant Secretary of State for Iran in the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs; and Dr. Thomas M. Ricks (1964-1966), scholar and professor emeritus at Villanova University, who discussed the few successful U.S. initiatives with the people of Iran after 1979.

Dr. Farzaneh Milani, professor of Middle Eastern & South Asian Languages & Cultures and Women, Gender & Sexuality at the University of Virginia discussed 20th century Iranian society through women's literature and the need for language translation. Dr. Trita Parsi, president of the National Iranian American Council, proposed how the large Iranian diaspora can engage with returned Iran Peace Corps Volunteers to support the nuclear agreement and open cultural and business exchanges. A 90-minute video of this event is available at the Atlantic Council web site.

## 160 STRONG

As 2016 comes to a close, the number of National Peace Corps Association affiliate groups continues to grow. The newest members of the affiliate group family approved by NPCA's Board of Directors Executive Committee are the central-Florida based **RPCVs of The Villages, RPCVs and Friends at the US Department of Agriculture, RPCVs at National Institutes of Health, and the Friends of Indonesia**. This brings us to 160 affiliate groups around the nation.

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

# RECORDING WHERE COWS GO

Lessons learned in Colombia's Orinoquia

Amanda Dickson

The morning after my flight into the sprawling, brightly-lit capital of Bogota, my escort drove me off the mountains to Villavicencio, a city in Colombia's northeast, a plain as flat as Illinois or North Dakota. You know what that is: a place where you can see for miles in every direction. The heat and the humidity took my breath away, and it reminded me of those long afternoons in Paraguay during Peace Corps when I escaped to a shade tree, fanning myself and drinking ice-cold terere, Paraguay's green tea.

My bosses at Purdue University's Cooperative Extension Service had asked me to teach record keeping to Colombian farmers for the U.S. Agency for International Development's venerable Farmer-to Farmer (F2F) program. For me, it was an easy fit after my agriculture work in Paraguay and Peace Corps and four years as an Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension worker in Morgan County, Indiana. This particular F2F program is implemented by the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) and Purdue University to help improve the lives of many smallholder farmers. I worked with two groups of farmers in two regions: livestock owners and flower growers, including a very clever hibiscus grower by the name of Bety. All were chosen by Purdue and its local partner, the Universidad de los Llanos.

My first stop was in Puerto Lopez, a small town three hours from Villavicencio on a two-lane, highway with no shoulders and lots of buses filled with people and swerving back and forth all over the road.

This region is prime flat ground for raising livestock. All around me there were cattle, chicken, and pig farms as far as I could see.

Halfway down the road to Puerto

Lopez, our driver stopped the car and told us to get out. The fan belt on my van broke, he said. We had to wait on the roadside for the company to send another van. Now, personally, I like to look for the positive in every situation, so there we were at a roadside stand where on Friday nights they hold cockfights. Today, though, they only sold an interesting new food I was eager to try: a mixture of ground corn, fresh cheese, and milk, mixed by hand and scooped into a cone-shaped banana leaf and boiled in water. It had a terrible smell but it tasted delicious. It was chewy and cheesy and just what the doctor ordered for our roadside wait. I also got to learn a bit about cockfights.

## Breaking the ice

My first class in record-keeping started the next day at 1 pm.

I thought I'd get their attention with my Paraguayan Spanish.

"Hi," I said. "My name is Amanda Dickson and I'm from Purdue University in the United States. I'm single and looking for a husband, so if you all know anyone you could introduce me to, I'd appreciate it."

All the cattlemen laughed. Then some of them pointed at Javier. He was single and ready to mingle, one *caballero* or cowboy said. It broke the ice and set the stage for the learning environment for the week. But his classmates teased Javier mercilessly for the whole week. You must prepare your home for a new wife, they joked, and you need to start thinking in dollars, not pesos.

About 60 percent of these farmers around here didn't keep any records at all, and those that did kept incomplete records. So, right off the bat, we started



Amanda and Ramon observing their afternoon ritual with cups of terere.

AMANDA DICKSON

with a sample farm selling similar products and we used the farmer's current methods to figure out if the sample farm was losing money. Needless to say, we couldn't determine if this sample farm was losing money or making it, or how much milk, pounds of beef, and chicken they were producing. So we started learning about the theory of and basic techniques for production and income/expense records.

At one point in class, one woman caught my eye. Her look had an authority about it. She turned out to be Bety, the association's president and a clever businesswoman. I was having a hard time explaining a complex procedure when Bety, a hibiscus grower, got it. She asked if I would mind if she spoke to the class and tried to explain it another way. It worked. I spoke with Bety one-on-one later about her hibiscus growing practices. She told me that the first year she grew hibiscus plants, she made a lot of money and her neighbors noticed. So everyone wanted to grow hibiscus as well. She decided that she would sell them the seed, but because she knew the market would be flooded with the plants, she decided to not grow any of her own that year. As Bety suspected, hibiscus prices dropped that year and the neighbors decided they wouldn't grow them anymore. Then of course Bety grew hibiscus the following year and benefited financially from a high demand and low supply market. Very clever, that Bety.

### Gaining altitude

The second week we headed to the mountains and an area where the majority of the fruit in Colombia is produced. Lejanias is a small town shrouded in a hazy fog at the base of the Andes Mountains—cool and damp like Bogota. Many of the farmers live on small farms of five to ten hectares filled with groves of fruit trees. Some were old and well-established orchards.

Colombian fruit growers face common supply-and-demand problems that result in plummeting prices and wasted fruit.

### The 14-year-old daughter tried to keep track in her head the number of cows in each pasture and for the most part she did a good job.

Imagine this: all fruit becomes ripe at about the same time, floods the market, and has a short shelf life. People get tired of eating the same fruit and cannot consume the quantity available. Therefore, a lot of tree fruit is thrown away. One of the areas where fruit producers could potentially benefit is making value-added fruit products.

The growers in my class were thinking about making fruit leather, pulp for juice, and dehydrated fruit, but they were unsure if these ventures would be beneficial, or if they should stick with what they knew. So a part of our class was figuring out how much each of these ventures would cost and how much potential income they could make. We wanted to see if the value-added products would be worth doing.

All but one of the growers who came to my record-keeping class were new growers. The exception was a dairy farm

family who invited me to spend a day at their dairy operation to help the family learn how to keep records of their herd.

To organize the cattle in an efficient manner, they sorted the cows into three pastures: bred, not bred yet, and milking. The family of four had no way of tracking which cows were in which pastures. They would just move the cows as needed when they checked them. The 14-year-old daughter tried to keep track in her head the number of cows in each pasture and she did a good job, but animals were frequently lost, misplaced. The operation was inefficient. They also needed a way to track when cows were bred and their expected birthing dates when they needed to be supervised in the barn. We agreed on a simple tracking method that worked.

### Terere keeps on giving

I had come to Colombia's hot plains with an ample supply of terere, a traditional drink in Paraguay using yerba mate, herbs, and ice-cold water and served to friends. A cattleman named Ramon recognized my terere and asked to drink with me. Ramon and I drank terere every afternoon and we invited others in the class to join us.

When I got back to Morgan County, I sent Ramon a packet of yerba mate and *bombilla*—the special straw for drinking it. I stay in touch on Facebook with the F2F project staff and the dairy farmer's daughter and get updates on their progress with record keeping on their dairy operation.

The Farmer-to-Farmer experience—the kindness of hardworking cattlemen and orchardists in the classes, being stranded along a road in the middle of the plains—reminded me of why I love to work in different cultures, in international development, and with farmers.

---

**Amanda Dickson** is an extension educator who works for Purdue Extension in Martinsville, Indiana. She served as an agriculture volunteer in Paraguay from 2003 to 2007.

# RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY

By Peter V. Deekle

## BOTSWANA

The documentary, "A House Without Snakes," produced by **Edward Pettitt II** (2006-2008), was shown at the 2016 Buffalo International Film Festival. The film documents the lives of two young men from Botswana. In his service as a Volunteer, Pettit helped to develop an HIV/AIDS prevention clinic and treatment program in a remote village.

## BULGARIA

The publishers of the Herald Community Newspapers appointed **Scott Brinton**



(1991-1993) executive editor of the Herald Community Newspapers in October. Brinton has 23 years of experience as a reporter, photographer and editor for the

17-edition New York newspaper chain in Long Island's Nassau County. Brinton helped to co-founded a community newspaper program at Hofstra University, where he also served as an adjunct lecturer in journalism.

## CAMEROON

**Melissa LaFayette** (2012-2014) is the administrative director of Power2Girls, which seeks to empower young Ghanaian women to reduce teen pregnancy and HIV transmission.

## COLOMBIA

**Rep. Sam Farr** (1964-1966) traveled to Colombia in September with U.S. Secretary



of State John F. Kerry to be present at the signing of a negotiated peace agreement between the country's government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of

Colombia. A national referendum narrowly rejected the agreement. Farr was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Medellin, Colombia.

**Bob Findlay** (1963-1965) is a master gardener and vice president for conservation of a century-old Olmsted-designed cultural landscape in Seattle's Dunn Gardens. The site is on the National Register of Historic Places. For their efforts, Findlay and a group of other volunteers who have been conserving the site received the Preserve America Award signed by First Lady Michelle Obama.

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

**Kelsey Martin** (1980-1982) was named dean of UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine in July. She earned an



undergraduate degree in English and American language and literature from Harvard University before joining the Peace Corps as a disease prevention and health worker in small villages where she wrote grants to fund measles vaccinations and organized outreach programs.

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

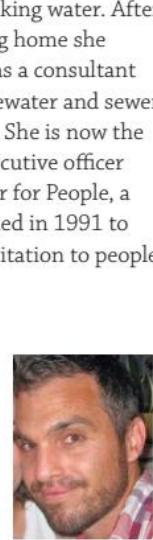
While serving as a water and sanitation volunteer in the Peace Corps, **Eleanor Allen** (1994-1996) began a crusade for



safe drinking water. After returning home she worked as a consultant for wastewater and sewer systems. She is now the chief executive officer for Water for People, a global nonprofit established in 1991 to bring clean water and sanitation to people around the world.

## EL SALVADOR

**Benjamin Williams** (2006-2008) and his wife, Stephanie, are currently posted at the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica. Their



next diplomatic assignment will be with the U.S. Consulate in Lagos, Nigeria. After his Volunteer service, Williams conducted Fulbright research in Nicaragua.

## GABON

**Robert A. Riley Jr.** (1979-1983) was sworn in as U.S. ambassador to Micronesia in August 2016. Following service as a Volunteer and volunteer leader in Gabon he became an administrative officer for Gabon and Mali and then the Africa region. In 1993 he entered



the Foreign Service and has served in embassies in Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, France, Spain, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi, Senegal and Gabon.

## GHANA

**Vira Lynn Jones** (1978-1980) is the founder of The Bedford Stuyvesant Museum of African Art. She taught English during her service in Ghana and later taught English as a second language as a UN Volunteer in The People's Republic of China.



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## GUATEMALA

**Kody Gerkin** (2006-2008) is founder and board president of Mujerave, a non-profit providing income generation, family nutrition, community education and safe home environments for women in indigenous communities in the department of Totonicapan, Guatemala.



## HAITI

**Jessica Hsu** (2002-2004) who for years as a Peace Corps volunteer lived and worked in Zabriko / des Abricots, in the Grand Anse, currently is Country Director, Haiti Communite. In October



2016 she returned to the town an hour and a half away from the local capital of Jérémie to help with recovery efforts following Hurricane Matthew.

## INDONESIA

Country and folk singer, songwriter, novelist and humorist **Kinky Friedman** (1966-1969) performed a September engagement in Denton, Texas. As a singer, songwriter and humorist performing over many years with the band, Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys, he has acquired a cult following. He toured with Bob Dylan and the Rolling Thunder Revue in 1976. He also wrote a series of novels and a column for *Texas Monthly* magazine and ran for governor of Texas.



## KENYA

**Leon Dash** (1968-1970) was inducted into the National Association of Black Journalists Hall of Fame in August. Dash teaches journalism at the University of Illinois. While a *Washington Post* reporter, he won a Pulitzer Prize and the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for an eight-part series about Rosa Lee, a black woman who lived in a public housing project in the city.



**Bob Thompson** (1983-1985) is a civil engineer with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Vermont. He received the President's Volunteer Service Award



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for contributing over 27,000 service hours. He taught agricultural mechanics and raised funds to construct a small irrigation system and other projects in his Volunteer service in Kenya. Thompson also participates in mission trips to Haiti.

#### KOREA

The National Peace Corps Association bestowed its first Advocate of the Year Award on **Richard MacIntyre** (1967-1969). MacIntyre has been a leader for



Habitat for Humanity's Global Village teams. He became one of NPCA's first state advocacy coordinators (Maine) and has been a regular at Capitol Hill advocacy

days over the past decade, assisting the NPCA staff in preparations for the National Day of Action. He helped re-establish an NPCA affiliate group in Maine, and has been essential in outreach for key advocacy initiatives elsewhere.

#### NEPAL

**Chris Wolz** (1983-1985) is a partner in Forum One, a firm that recently created a vivid flexible website for the Peace Corps, making extensive use of pictures and videos to show personal stories of how



to get a job using their experience working for the Peace Corps in the developing world. With half its online traffic from mobile devices, the Peace Corps needed a new website to engage millennials to apply, and to reach them with a website that worked well on phones. The firm's other clients include the Gates Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The firm's headquarters are in Arlington, Virginia.

#### NIGER

A \$12-million study of the use of epigenetics on sorghum and other crops during the California drought is being

directed by **Jeffrey Dahlberg** (1977-1980), the director of the Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center at the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Parlier. The center is the largest field station in the University of California system. The study is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy.

#### PARAGUAY

**Jeffory Buist** (2004-2006) travels frequently in Europe and South America and paints pictures in watercolor and oil to capture and share his experiences. His work was recently displayed at a café in Logan, Utah.



**Sean Allen** (1994-1996) turned his community development service in Paraguay toward affordable housing projects in Rochester, New York. He is currently involved in a variety of nonprofit arts and housing organizations in the Rochester region.



#### POLAND

**Kelley Keith** (1998-2000) is the dean of Mt. Hood Community College's adult

basic skills and Maywood Park campus director in Portland, Oregon. She uses her experience in teaching English to speakers of other languages to address adult education literacy and training needs in her local community.

#### REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Sister Gertrude Feick** (1997-1999) leads the Benedictine Institute at Saint Martin's University in Oregon. Prior to joining the Benedictine community at Mount Angel Abbey in 2000, she worked as a Peace Corps school and community

resource volunteer in the post-apartheid Republic of South Africa. Earlier she had a career in health and wellness services.



#### RUSSIA

**Jonathan Slaght** (1999-2002) is the Wildlife Conservation Society's project manager for Russia and Northeast Asia. He spends several months each year in the Russian Far East, working on projects to protect tigers, owls, and other species from illegal logging and the haphazard expansion of the region's many industrial roads. In 2015, Indiana University Press published his translation of the autobiography of explorer, soldier and naturalist Vladimir Arsenyev's *Across the Ussuri Kray*.

#### SURINAME

**Evan Delahanty** (2011-2013) served in the Amazon rainforest, where he was first introduced to acai fruit. He then founded Peaceful Fruits, helping communities in the rain forest make a business of harvesting the local acai fruit. The enterprise provides training for people with developmental disabilities.



#### SWAZILAND

**Steve Berman** (1975-1978) is a retired University of California at Los Angeles neuroscientist and the president of Songmakers, a multi-county, Southern California-based nonprofit made up of mostly acoustic music-makers.

#### TANZANIA

**George Schilling** (2010-2012), is currently a student at the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. His article on "Medical Misinformation Can Be the Difference between Life and Death" was published in the *Observer-Dispatch* (NY) and contrasts the impact of science literacy in Africa and within the United States.



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### TOGO & THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

**Prairie Rose Hyde** (1995-1996, Central African Republic; 1996-1997, Togo) has been recognized by the YWCA of Olympia, Washington with a 2016 Women of Achievement award. She and her husband founded Alaffia, a company that imports bulk products harvested, prepared and packaged by the women of Togo. Alaffia has funded 4,142 births in Togo and saved many lives in the process through donations to its Maternal Care Project.



### UKRAINE

**Michael A. Dixon** (2011-2014) has practiced architecture in St. Charles, Illinois for 32 years with a focus on historic preservation.

While serving as a Volunteer in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Republic of Kosovo, he developed restoration drawings and specifications for a 1455 AD open-air mosque in Prizren, Kosovo and the 14th century Lubart Castle, in Lutsk, Ukraine.



### ZAMBIA

**Shelby Maldonado** (2011-2013) became the first Guatemalan-American elected to public office in Rhode Island when she won a seat as a state representative.



### ZIMBABWE

A retrospective exhibit of photography, *Retro Providence:1985-1990*, by **Tom Chambers** (1993-1995) is open until December 14, 2016. The exhibit of 60 photographs were taken during the period when Chambers held the position of city photographer. He was a Volunteer at the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare.

# THE REVOLUTION IS NOT OVER

## Reading de Tocqueville in Havana

Patricia Edmisten

I taught Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* in my Sociological Foundations of Education classes. If there's one theoretical framework for my analysis (with much latitude and some imagination), it is that the Frenchman's observations enabled me to grasp and accept the positive relationship between what he called a country's "social conditions" and democracy. After innumerable readings, I understood, at a visceral level, the dynamics behind the armed conflict in Peru, where I had served as a Peace Corps Volunteer; behind the revolution in Nicaragua, where I had done research for my book, *Nicaragua Divided: La Prensa and the Chamorro Legacy*; behind other Latin American rebellions; and, maybe by extension, behind world conflict in general. Consciously or unconsciously, Tocqueville's writings helped me to understand Cuba.

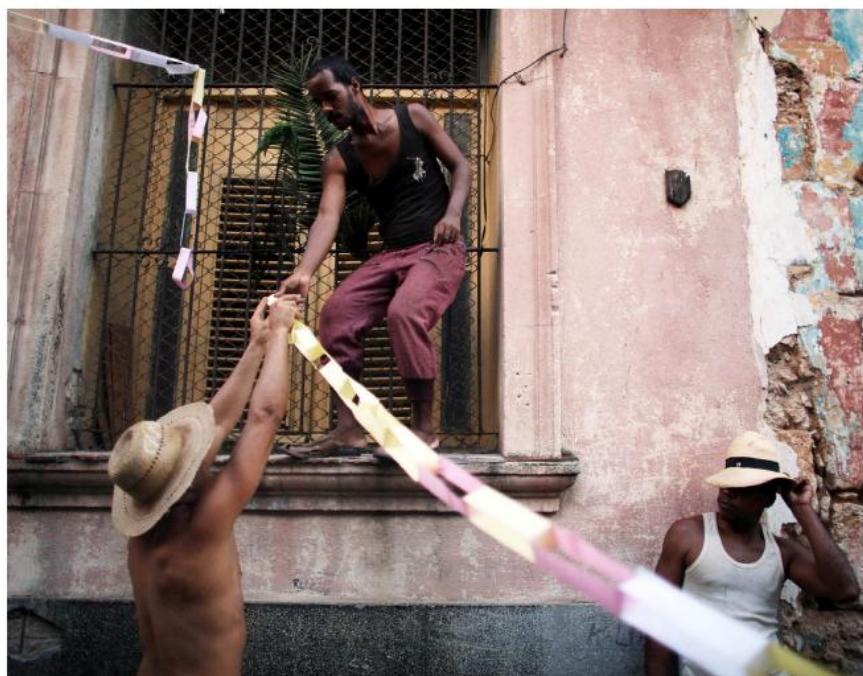
For Cubans, the social conditions that gave rise to the revolution have not been forgotten. The revolution itself still beats in the hearts of Cubans who remained on the island and in those born since. A living thing, it marches on as inexorably as the waves that crash against the cement walls of the Malecón in Havana. To understand the nearly biological ties they have to it, we might imagine the American Revolution as having happened in 1959 instead of 1776. The Cuban Revolution still has its living heroes, the greatest among them, Fidel Castro, who still gives lofty, hours-long speeches at ninety. The memory of Ernesto "Che" Guevara is fresh, as though he died last week. His remains, retrieved from Bolivia where he was executed by a Bolivian soldier, rest within a cave-like mausoleum, in an enormous square in the city of Santa Clara, where Che and his rebel fighters won a major battle against Batista forces and

turned the tide of the revolution. Visitors silently pass by his tomb and the eternal flame that bears witness to his legacy.

Cubans who rejected the principles of the revolution, those fearing retaliation or execution and those standing to lose the most under the new system, fled the island, leaving a population who were loyal to Fidel. Continuing with my analogy, after having been defeated by

or any outside group, to come back and dictate the terms of doing business in our country? How easy would it be for Cuban-Americans to make understood their demands upon the Cuban government?

To instill in Cubans the idea that the revolution was not won with battles alone, "Che" Guevara used the slogan, *Hasta la Victoria Siempre*, or Onward Always to Victory. Revolution is on-going. The government may turn the screws on its people or open its fist, finger by finger, but it's the government that will determine what is good for the Cuban people. We in the United States, however, want to pry those fingers open all at once.



Havana neighbors decorate their road for the September 27 celebration of the 56th anniversary of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

the Patriots, the Tories, still faithful to the British Crown, left for other British territories, leaving behind true believers in the American cause for independence. These were people who had united to defeat an oppressive regime that ruled them unjustly. How easy would it be today for the descendants of those Tories to return to the United States and make demands on our economic and judicial systems? How easy would it be for them,

Future tourists who claim they want to visit Cuba before "McDonalds gets there" don't have to worry. It's unlikely that many U.S. franchises will want to do business with a government that will own fifty-one percent of all foreign businesses.

### Doing business with Cuba

Using its five-year planning process, the Cuban State is refining its policies, like the sugar it refines for its delicious

ALEXANDRE MENECHIN/REUTERS

rumbs, but U.S. entrepreneurs, chomping at the bit to get in while the getting appears to be good, should temper their expectations. Cuba is making it easier for its citizens to begin their own businesses, but it's unlikely that the gradual lifting of restrictions on them will mean similar favors for outsiders. The government knows how to take its share of profits to advance the course of the revolution. No foreign company can own a bank or mining operation outright, for example. The State will be the major owner.

It would be easy for a tourist who enters Havana on a U.S. cruise ship to think that Cuba has accepted full-throated capitalism. They would be deceived, even with the number of self-employed hawkers at a handicraft warehouse next to the port. These self-

**To instill in Cubans the idea that the revolution was not won with battles alone, "Che" Guevara used the slogan, *Hasta la Victoria Siempre*, or Onward Always to Victory. Revolution is on-going.**

employed persons, known as *propistas*, are helping their families put food on the table, but they're also lightening the burden on the State. There is capitalism but capitalism up to a certain point.

During my visits in 1986 and 1994, there were no *casas particulares*—private homes that offered lodging. There were no *paladares*, privately owned restaurants in private homes that sold meals to visitors, although there were a few communal restaurants for workers. There were no bicycle taxis—*bicitaxis*

—to transport Cuban folk or shuttle children to and from school. I did see some changes, in 2002, however, when I returned with the Cuban Health Network. In the city of Trinidad, the lovely colonial town near the southern coast of the island, I negotiated three rooms in private homes for members of our group. The owners had State licenses to lease one bedroom each with breakfast. Remember the analogy of the fist. First the baby finger opens. Although our landlady was forbidden from offering us any other meal than breakfast, she did suggest that, for a price, she could provide a lobster dinner for all of us if we kept it quiet. Her son, who worked at a State-owned cigar factory, surprised us by bringing home a box of Cohibas he hoped we would buy. "The government steals from us, and we steal from the government," he said.

Today *bicitaxis* appear to be ubiquitous except in Havana where old cars rule. Horses and carts, nevertheless, still carry people in most small and mid-size communities. The skilled driver of our Chinese-made, modern tour bus gracefully navigated around the horses and the various contraptions they pulled, most carrying people or produce. City roads are extremely narrow, making it difficult for buses, but during this nearly two-week visit, our driver never blew his horn at men peddling *bicitaxis* or at those with reins in their hands. The gentleness I saw in our bus driver reflected the overall impression I have of the average Cuban: gallant, generous, hospitable, and hopeful—especially after President Obama's March 2016 visit.



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**Patricia Edmisten** is the author of several books including Waterskiing in the Amazon and Nicaragua Divided: La Prensa and the Chamorro Legacy. This article is excerpted from an essay that originally appeared on [peacecorpsworldwide.org](http://peacecorpsworldwide.org). She was director of international education at the University of West Florida.

# THE RIGGED WORLD

Donald Trump didn't invent the complaint of a political fix

*David Arnold*

**M**ichael Svetlik is vice president for programs at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, a non-governmental organization in northern Virginia that assists election administrators in more than 25 countries on how to improve the way people can choose their governments. Their efforts are supported by the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the governments of Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Svetlik says their goal is "to give people a voice in who governs them and how they are governed." After 30 years in about 145 countries, they've seen lots of elections in which candidates have said the election was rigged, in case they don't get enough votes to win.

During his presidential candidacy, Donald Trump charged that the U.S. electoral system was rigged—from primaries to the conventions of both major political parties and to the manner in which the secretaries of 50 states can rig this 2016 presidential election.

The people at IFES probably know all there is to know about the rigging of elections in other countries.

"The idea of elections being rigged in the United States on the national stage is outlandish and outrageous," Svetlik says. "It just hasn't happened."

IFES has worked with all kinds of political environments. Take Nigeria, where a Christian from the south peacefully turned presidential powers to the winner, a Muslim from the north. Or, Zimbabwe, where a 92-year-old president has managed to keep his political opponents divided for most of his 19 years in office as the nation's economy stumbles.

It's not always a question of who has the best platform, the best campaign or the best

candidate. Millions of voters will make that decision. IFES focuses on how the electoral system must be free and fair and open.

## The art of rigging

Trump didn't invent the concept. Politicians who face loss around the world have made the claim and, possibly, weakened their system in the process.

A *Washington Post* op-ed in early September expressed concern with Trump's frequent and unsubstantiated charges and offered some examples from other countries.

William Sweeney, was a co-author of the editorial. He cautioned that the credibility of elections—and a stable voting environment—depends on "the ability of electoral institutions, and in particular the election dispute resolution process, to withstand increasingly sophisticated political manipulation."

Sweeney also wrote about Prabowo Subianto—former military leader and ex-son-in-law of longtime president Suharto—who charged that his electoral failure in Indonesia was caused by



NINO KAKABADZE/EFE

On the eve of Georgia's 2012 national elections, a cleric of the Georgian Orthodox Church in Tbilisi appealed for the protection of the voices of all voters in a post-Soviet nation struggling with political and economic reforms.

Three years ago in Afghanistan, Abdullah Abdullah cried out that the rigging of his defeat was "industrial scale." His supporters threatened violent demonstrations. Abdullah boycotted a straight-forward legal challenge and by threatening to set up a parallel government, managed to broker an agreement in which the voting results that showed Ashraf Ghani's million-vote level of victory were never published and the voters would not learn the size of his loss in the election.

The president of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems,

"massive, structural and systematic" fraud in the process. Before the count was finished, he withdrew from the race and claimed victory. There were weeks of televised courtroom drama before nine judges found for his opponent, Joko Widodo.

Widodo won a fairly run election, Svetlik says. He was a former mayor and the first elected president who did not come from the nation's political and military elite. "But his opponent used the charge of fraud to cast doubt on Widodo's victory," says Svetlik.

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### Souvenirs

On a shelf in his northern Virginia office Svetlik displays an invitation to the 2011 independence ceremony for the Republic of South Sudan. On a bookshelf stands a silver statue of Vladimir Lenin. Svetlik picked up the statue traveling in Armenia. Both are souvenirs of global work that began with his years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Poland from 1992 to 1994.

"We like to distinguish between fraud on the one hand, in which there is the intention to subvert the will of the people, and malpractice, which is perhaps the result of poor training and poor preparation that impact elections. The question is whether it has a material result on the election."

"Rigging covers a number of practices from more crude things like ballot-stuffing, where there are more ballots in the box than people showing up to vote. Other rigging might be the systematic manipulation where you create a law that creates barriers that favor one party over another."

In a few cases, international communications strategists have persuaded candidates to cast doubt on the integrity of an electoral process in order to manage it, says Svetlik. And they've initiated post-election litigation "challenging the results and taking advantage of vulnerabilities in the process to derail or establish lasting doubts about the legitimacy of the outcome."

The intent of the foundation's work is not to monitor elections but to assist over a much longer period than a single election on a government's creation of an electoral system—commissions, constitutional amendments and regulations that establishes an open and efficient process for each election. They are increasingly looking for ways to improve a government's efficiency and timeliness. "Often there's an assumption that the longer it takes to count the ballots, people assume there is funny business going on."

### A slow process

Svetlik declines to discuss some of their clients, but offers views about some of the

best and the worst of democracies where elections have worked. He praises Nigeria, Burma and Indonesia.

"What's happened in Burma in the last two years is really pretty astounding." The military rulers permitted an election that turned an opposition leader who spent a couple of decades under house arrest into the foreign minister of a new government."

Venezuela, Turkey and most of the Central Asia democracies are a cause for concern, he says. So, too, is the Democratic Republic of Congo where Joseph Kabila did not step down after his two terms expired. Svetlik worries about Congo Kinshasa because, "It's a country that can continue to influence its neighbors."

The shining Lenin statue and the certificate on Svetlik's desk serve as reminders of what can go wrong in democracies.

There are many ways to achieve power in a nation through elections that do not meet the definition of elections IFES promotes. Svetlik says in a single decade Vladimir Putin achieved absolute control of Russia by creating laws to engineer the political parties and clamp down on media and their ownership.

"Over a decade, most political parties became less and less visible and the strong nationalism of Putin's government and the use of media and being the incumbent created a strong ruling party. The duma is no longer an active legislature, more of a rubber stamp for the Kremlin."

And there are ways to lose the power to govern. Svetlik was in southern Sudan a few years ago working on a peace accord, an election and a referendum for independence that would bring peace to the newest of African nations. Two weeks before the referendum, he saw a banner flying over a Juba polling station declaring, "For 30 years we fought in the bush and we are prepared to fight for 30 more."

He thought the banner was directed toward Khartoum and the Muslim north. It turned out to be a local message. After this year's bloody conflict, Svetlik now believes the banner was a warning of "long-standing cleavages within southern

Sudan between two groups, the Dinka and the Nuer, who came together to win independence from Sudan but now continue to battle each other."

That election eventually led to a conflict that has cost the lives of thousands, and forced more than a million—many of those who voted for

independence—to flee their homes

"There is no such thing as a perfect election," Svetlik says.

**David Arnold** is editor of *WorldView* and taught English as second language in Asbe Teferi, Ethiopia from 1964 to 1966.

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## We are not spectators

The Master of Public Administration in Development Practice (MPA-DP) engages emerging practitioners to develop, implement, and manage comprehensive approaches to sustainable development.

**Early Action:**

**Fellowship consideration:**

**Final deadline:**

**Nov. 2nd, 2016**

**Jan. 5th, 2017**

**Feb. 5th, 2017**

# EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

Mali's Ibrahim Sankare addresses peace and Peace Corps

If I was asked my opinion on this distinction, I was going to say that it is the Peace Corps Volunteers who should be congratulated because they are all, without exception, men and women of merit for sacrificing such an important part of their youth, their knowledge, and their love for others!

In my case, the dozens of Volunteers who have collaborated with me should all be congratulated. In particular, I must make special mentions to my nominators, Michèle Pare and Brigid Andrew who are here with me now.

Indeed, who would have imagined that in 1988 when I returned to my village to answer the call of our citizens, that I would now find myself in Washington D.C. in front of the world's key decision makers.

At first, I was proud of my agricultural engineering degree, but I was without experience. I was without the tools to face the political, socio-economic, and cultural issues that awaited me. I quickly realized that I was a grain of fonio that had fallen on a rocky surface.

These Volunteers with exceptional qualities had the idea of pushing me to fertile ground. From near and far, their unbiased advice, love, and their moral and material support helped me little by little, and, in a way, fated me to become a tree that provides shade and fruit.

Today, the whole world knows me, but what the world does not know is the involvement of these two compassionate individuals and the ideas that they had planted within me for 24 years and with which I find the energy to transform obstacles into opportunities and opportunities into realities.

It is a shame that my country no longer is able to work with the Peace Corps. This peaceful force is worth more than a multitude of scholars, more than drones, more than

Kalashnikovs, more than experts of all kinds, and more than the billions of dollars spent on my country to dissolve its problem rather than to solve them. The decision to keep Peace Corps Volunteers out of Mali is for their safety, but my heart suffers with the thought that they are no longer there.

We are in even greater need today of Peace Corps Volunteers to help us spread love and justice throughout our communities of black African heritage, in addition to our communities of Berber-Arab origin. Because, in fact, this is what is happening in Mali.

Many are misunderstood in thinking that this is just a problem in the north or center of Mali. We are in need of love and justice to stabilize and integrate both socially and economically those who use weapons and who, by believing that they are defending themselves against this injustice, kill their brothers, kill innocents, or kill their allies.

Today more than ever, I see that I was right to refuse all of the offers to live in Europe or Asia, despite the suffering that I have lived through and the death threats that I have often received. In Mali today and increasingly around the world, insecurity is present everywhere. Every day there is a new chance of dying. But I stay there because every day is a new opportunity for me to help all of the rural masses of people to dispel of their

suffering, injustices, corruption, hunger, and inaccessibility to basic social services.

I believe that powerful forces should increase their presence in Mali and everywhere else to avoid a world in which, due to the migration of the most weak, becomes a large explosion of violent conflict which will consume humanity completely and bring back the savage forces from a thousand years in the past.

Today, more than ever, I believe that peace is possible in Mali if certain mentalities are changed. Who better than a Peace Corps Volunteer can help to change these mentalities by helping us develop federal projects for children and the young people? No one! Provided that they are Micheles and Brigids.

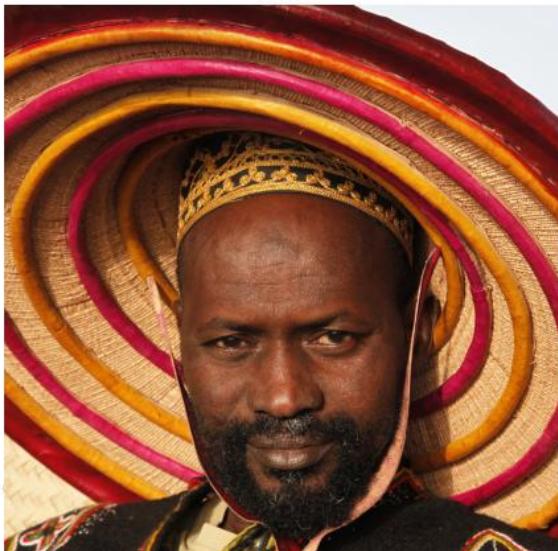
Today more than ever, I think that Africa is in need of her sons, but she is in even more need of sons from other, more developed nations.

Today more than ever, I think that a life that rests on the love of another, on the real belief in God, on the work well done and on patriotic commitment, leads infallibly to peace and to the prosperity of a country and not to violence.

Today more than ever, I believe that the white hands that help Africa should continue to do it even more and without reluctance, as their presence is a factor of success and of stability. It is because of this that we must protect them at all cost. I have never worried what award or how many awards I must receive in my lifetime; rather, of what good work, as small as it may be, I must do every

morning to liberate and strengthen my soul.

**Ibrahim Sankare** is secretary general of de l'ONG Delta Survie in Moïti, the Republic of Mali. He delivered an acceptance speech as he received the Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award at the NPCA's Peace Corps Connect gathering this summer in Washington D.C. This is an excerpt from his remarks, which were delivered in English and French.



## IN MEMORIAM

We remember those within the Peace Corps community who passed away in the last several months, and thank them for their service to our nation.

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

### STAFF

Robert Blackburn, 9/10/16  
 Jane Bonin, 7/24/16  
 Johney Brooks, 10/1/16  
 Dale Patrick Crowley, 8/26/16  
 Dr. Donald E. Guinouard, 9/26/16  
 Peter Menard, 8/23/16  
 Mary Ann Wolfe, 7/12/16

### MULTIPLE COUNTRIES OF SERVICE

Elizabeth Partolan-Fray (Swaziland; Malaysia) 8/2/16

### BELIZE

Ardith Gaylord Grover, 9/14/16

### BOLIVIA

Peter V. Gregg, 9/22/16

### BRAZIL

Cuyler Marshall "Buck" Adams, 10/2/16  
 James Glenn Kohl, Jr. 8/26/16  
 Julie (Nobles) Schumacher, 6/24/16

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Karen Moleski Kilpatrick, 8/24/16

### COLOMBIA

Kenneth Cocke, 7/20/16  
 Ronald Dunton, 7/19/16  
 Gloria Fleming, 7/26/16  
 Jan Schad, 10/3/16

### COSTA RICA

Timothy Bell, 7/23/16  
 Felicia Greier, posted 9/10/16  
 Michael Hanson, 7/30/16  
 Kenneth Krause, 7/30/16  
 Judith A. Leverone, 8/28/16

### EASTERN CARIBBEAN

Nina Jane Longley, 9/15/16

### ECUADOR

Gerald Strauss, 8/12/16  
 Bob Von der Ohe, 8/25/16  
 William Taylor Vickers, 9/15/16

### ETHIOPIA/ERITREA

Joe Old, 7/22/16  
 Herbert Siegel, 8/16/16

### THE GAMBIA

Jill Babcock, 8/31/16  
 Leone Griffith, 9/11/16

### GHANA

Brian Ternoey, 9/18/16  
 Ralph Clark, 7/21/16

### GUATEMALA

Edward Henry Laurick, 8/29/16

### HONDURAS

Thomas C. Keenan, 9/15/16  
 Lester Carl Lamm, 9/20/16  
 Raul G. Valdes-Fauli, 9/9/16

### INDIA

Norman L. Frohreich, 8/15/16  
 Kathleen Hoffman, 9/21/16  
 Jennifer M. Russell, 5/6/16  
 Nancy Jane Shestack, 9/20/16  
 Richard Walker, posted 8/17/16

### JORDAN

Ann Longwell Furr, 10/12/16

### KENYA

Richard Gray, 8/31/16  
 Roland Johnson, 8/24/16  
 Leon "Randy" Scott, 8/21/16  
 Cheryl Myers, 9/28/16

### KIRIBATI

Hazel Annette Johnson, 8/26/16

### KOREA

Paul Thomas Mulloy III, 10/9/16

### LIBERIA

Madeline Carley McMillion, 9/11/16

### MALAYSIA

Dr. Barry Morris, 8/21/16

### MICRONESIA

Catherine McCarthy, 9/9/16

### MOLDOVA

H. Dennis Maack, 8/6/16

### MOROCCO

Paul Sopchak, 8/29/16

### NEPAL

Christopher G. Clark, 9/9/16

### NIGER

James Madison Phillips, 10/5/16

### NIGERIA

Jan Bianchi, 8/20/16

### PALAU

Philip Dacey, 7/7/16  
 Arlene Fay Marans, 7/17/16  
 Frederick James Morgan, 9/12/16

### PERU

Pamela Kirsten Stormo, 8/23/16

### PHILIPPINES

John Francis Klein Jr., 8/25/16

### RUSSIA

Jerome Stonick, 7/20/16

### SIERRA LEONE

Thomas Quentin McClesky, 8/13/16

### SRI LANKA

John J. Walsh, 10/12/16

### TANZANIA

Geraldine V. Preston, 8/2/16

### SRI LANKA

Margaret Cole, 7/23/16

### TANZANIA

Neal Ossen, 8/8/16

### THAILAND

Dorothy Cann Hamilton, 9/16/16

### TOGO

Ruth V. Harvey, 8/6/16  
 Karen Wicks Helz, 5/24/16  
 Francis R. Knipp, 9/27/16  
 Wendy Elizabeth "Svana" Wilkens, 8/22/16

### TUNISIA

Michael J. Savonis, 8/8/16

### UKRAINE

Jonathan Marler Dalby, 9/14/16

### WESTERN SAMOA

David F. Marier, 8/17/16

### YUGOSLAVIA

William J. Mattek, 8/3/16

### COUNTRY OF SERVICE NOT SPECIFIED

Larry Woody Boehms, 10/1/16  
 Thomas J. Byrnes, 9/17/16  
 Katie Campbell, 8/20/16  
 James Forrest Freund, 9/25/16  
 Erdine Johnson, 8/25/16  
 Edwin L. Laing, 8/7/16

### BURKINA FASO

Burnis Lewis, 6/19/16

### CHAD

Stephen Lohm, 9/26/16

### COLOMBIA

David F. Marier, 8/17/16

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

William J. Mattek, 8/3/16

### GUATEMALA

Robert B. Sommer, 9/19/16



## Legacy of Peace

The National Peace Corps Association offers an opportunity for you to leave a legacy of peace by naming NPCA as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance policy or IRA. This is an opportunity for you to support the values and actions of the Peace Corps well beyond your lifetime. In addition there can be significant tax advantages to making a gift to NPCA from your estate. Learn more at [www.peacecorpsconnect.org/Legacy](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/Legacy).

*The National Peace Corps Association  
congratulates and thanks:*

Director **Carrie Hessler-Radelet**  
(Western Samoa 1981-83)  
for her tremendous leadership  
of the Peace Corps for the past  
three years.

Congressman **Sam Farr**  
(Colombia 1964-66)  
for being "Mr. Peace Corps"  
on Capitol Hill for nearly a  
quarter-century.

Congressman **Mike Honda**  
(El Salvador 1965-67)  
for his many years of public  
service and support of the  
Peace Corps.

More than ever, we need your voice to  
ensure the future of the Peace Corps.

Join us at [www.PeaceCorpsConnect.org](http://www.PeaceCorpsConnect.org).

