

Peace Corps TIMES

January — June 2016

**Building Community
After Displacement**
Volunteers support
internally displaced people
in post-conflict areas



A photograph showing a man with a beard and a blue zip-up jacket standing behind four young boys. The boys are dressed in casual clothing like plaid shirts and sweaters. They are all smiling at the camera. The background shows some buildings and trees.

**Peace Corps
Response turns 20**

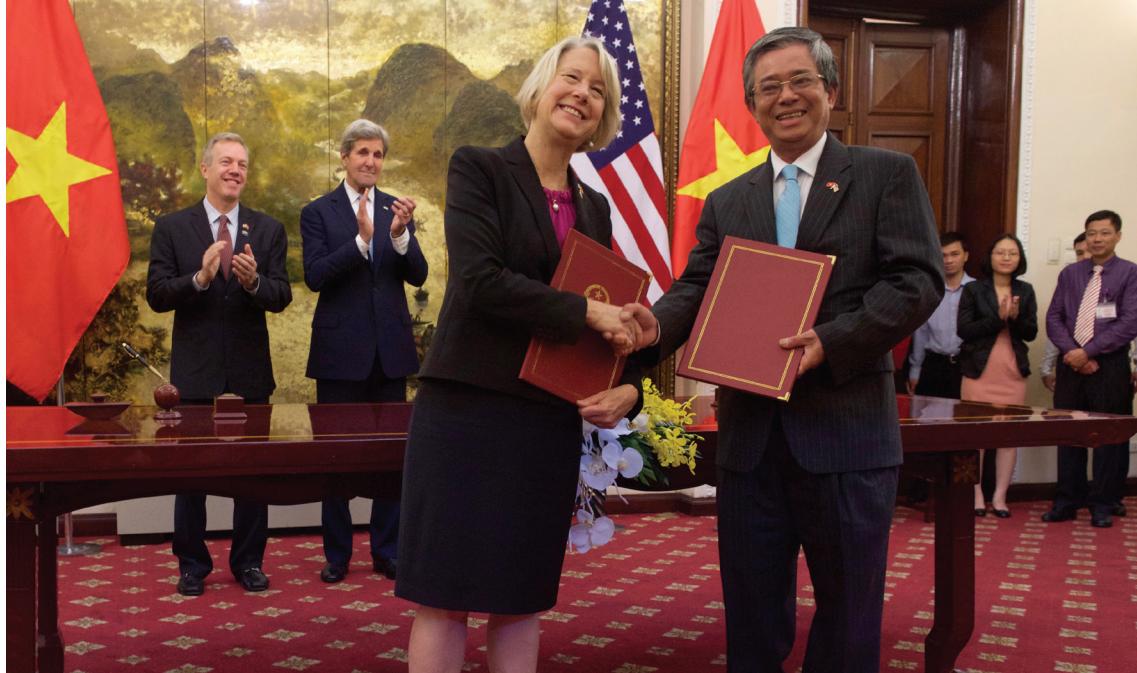
**Peace Corps
gets a new look, logo**



**Peace
Corps**

NEW ERA

Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet shakes hands with Viet Nam Ambassador to the U.S. Pham Quang Vinh, while U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Ted Osius (left) and Secretary of State John Kerry applaud. The two countries signed an agreement in May for the Peace Corps to send Education Volunteers to the Southeast Asian nation starting in 2018.



Viet Nam to welcome Peace Corps

Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet and the Government of Viet Nam announced in May an historic partnership to establish a Peace Corps program for the first time in Viet Nam. The announcement coincided with President Barack Obama's trip to Viet Nam and underscores the United States' broader commitment to supporting the people of Viet Nam through English language learning.

"The Peace Corps' partnership with Viet Nam is an opportunity for our countries to continue to develop a strong and enduring relationship, and build friendships that will last a

lifetime. I am excited to welcome Viet Nam as our 142nd Peace Corps country," said Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet. "We're grateful that the government and the people of Viet Nam have invited Peace Corps Volunteers to serve in their country. This new partnership will further strengthen and deepen our two countries' people to people engagements, and the Volunteers will learn the rich traditions, culture, and history of this great nation."

The Peace Corps' efforts in Viet Nam will focus on English language education.

Let Girls Learn marks one year, expands in scope and countries

In March, the first anniversary of Let Girls Learn, the Peace Corps announced 23 new Let Girls Learn countries, more than doubling the number of participating countries and expanding the initiative to thousands of Peace Corps Volunteers and girls around the world. Launched by the President and First Lady on March 3, 2015, Let Girls Learn is a U.S. government effort that aims to address the range of challenges preventing 62 million adolescent girls from attending and completing school.

"In just one year, we've doubled the number of Peace Corps countries participating in Let Girls Learn, ensuring that even more girls around the world will have the resources and opportunities

they need to succeed," First Lady Michelle Obama said. "I am so inspired by how many Peace Corps Volunteers are committed to Let Girls Learn. Their efforts exemplify our resolve to help girls everywhere get the education they need and deserve."

Throughout the initiative's second year of operation, Peace Corps' Let Girls Learn program will focus on knowledge and skills-building. The agency will hold five regional Let Girls Learn Summits in 2016—three in Africa, one in Asia, and one in Latin America. Through these summits and increased training, the agency anticipates more than 1,500 Volunteers participating in this cascading training model, reaching over 30,000 girls and local community leaders.

To date, the Peace Corps has funded more than 100 Let Girls Learn projects in 21 countries. In addition, more than 800 Peace Corps Volunteers have already received training to become catalysts for community-led change to improve girls' access to education and empowerment.

The Peace Corps' Let Girls Learn countries now include Albania, Armenia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, The Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Jamaica, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Panama, Peru, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu, and Zambia.



Editor's Letter

A publication for Peace Corps
Volunteers serving worldwide

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Welcome to the latest issue of Peace Corps Times. As ever, this is a labor of love. We hope you enjoy it. There are some changes this issue, one of which you likely already noticed on the cover: The Peace Corps has a new logo and branding. This has been a long process, starting with market research in 2014, through working with a creative firm, to the brand roll-out on June 1.

With the new logo, we also rolled out a new website, the first refresh of our online presence in nearly a decade. Our legacy logo—which will now be used as the agency seal—served us well since it was adopted in the mid-1970s. (See the center spread on page 12 for more on the logo history.)

With this issue of Peace Corps Times, we worked to bring in the look and feel of the new brand rollout, reflecting the bold communications and the cleaner overall design. As always, we kept the lens of, Would it interest a Volunteer? Why? Can Volunteers find the information elsewhere?

Beyond the new branding, there is other news since the last issue: We announced a new program opening in Viet Nam, as well as the suspension of programs in El Salvador and Mali. We launched a new partnership with IBM and Let Girls Learn celebrated its first anniversary. Our deputy director was confirmed, and we hired a new victim advocate. We announced the expansion of the Global Health Service Partnership to two new countries, and the retirement of the Master's International program.

And there's one other transition: This is my last issue as editor of Peace Corps Times, as I'm leaving (and in the Peace Corps, we all do) to take a position with U.S. Agency for International Development. I have thoroughly enjoyed creating, expanding, and revamping Peace Corps Times in the almost four years that I've been here; I do so hope that you have enjoyed reading it. One of the best part of my job here has been to connect with Volunteers in the field, learn about their work and experiences, and get to tell their stories. It's both humbling and inspiring to get to share what you are doing in your communities, and to help keep you abreast of what's happening at headquarters. I trust it will be in good hands in the future.

As we finalized this issue, in June, the day after Director Hessler-Radelet and myself led 100 people to walk in the LGBTQ Pride parade in Washington, D.C., the mass shooting at a gay bar in Orlando happened. For all the progress we have made on human rights, equality, and peace-building, it's a stark reminder that we have much work to do—at home and abroad. It's hard to reconcile—to come to work at an agency dedicated to building peace and friendship knowing that there are so many who are advocating intolerance and violence and carrying it out against our communities, our friends and loved ones, those who might share our beliefs, our young people, our co-workers and peers.

As hard as it is to process the violence, we are reminded that the work of the Peace Corps is vital and gravely needed.

Thank you for your service, for reading, and for contributing. Keep up the awesome work you do.

Sarah Blazucki
Editor

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Agency News

Master's International to retire

After nearly 30 years, the Peace Corps announced in May it will discontinue the Master's International graduate school program. Applications to the program will be accepted for the final class through September 2016.

Master's International students who begin their program by fall 2016 will still be able to apply to the Peace Corps and serve as a Master's International student if selected.

The Master's International program allowed students to pair their graduate studies with Peace Corps Volunteer service: attending classes on campus for two years, serving as a Volunteer for two years, then finishing any remaining credits or requirements for graduation.

When founded in 1987, Master's International was a way to pair graduate students holding advanced sector-specific training and skills with relevant Peace Corps Volunteer opportunities.

The Peace Corps will be ending its memoranda of agreement with 96 graduate universities across the U.S. in September.

"We are incredibly grateful that this program laid the foundation for strong relationships with so many universities," Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet said. "Although the Peace Corps has outgrown the goals of the Master's International program, we're looking forward to continuing our collaboration with our valued university partners knowing there are so many opportunities to unite their strong academic competency with our core mission of sustainable, positive change."

With the closure of the program, the Peace Corps will focus more resources on the Peace Corps Prep program and the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows graduate program.

Peace Corps Prep is an undergraduate certificate program that allows students to focus on sector-specific skills, foreign language proficiency, intercultural competence, and professional savvy and leadership, which gives them a competitive edge when applying to the Peace Corps. The agency currently has Peace Corps Prep partnerships with more than 50 academic institutions.

The Paul D. Coverdell Fellows program works with some 100 graduate institution partners who provide financial assistance to returned Volunteers pursuing a graduate degree. Fellows complete internships in underserved American communities, allowing them to bring home and expand their skills they learned in service.

Carlos Torres sworn in

In December 2015, Carlos J. Torres was sworn in as the agency's new deputy director at Peace Corps headquarters.

Torres began his work with the Peace Corps as a member of the Peace Corps' Comprehensive Agency Assessment Team in 2010. He then transitioned into the role of regional director of the Inter-America and Pacific Region. In December 2013, Torres was named associate director for Global Operations.

Torres has 30 years of experience in international business development, trade and investment, and micro banking. His work has been primarily carried out in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union.

In 1984, Torres founded Carana Corporation, focused on international economic development consulting, and served as its president until 2000. He has a bachelor's degree in finance and a master's degree in management.



Peace Corps & IBM partner

In December, the Peace Corps and IBM launched an innovative public-private partnership to allow corporate professionals to serve in short-term, high-impact pro bono consulting assignments through the Peace Corps Response program.

The initiative is one of the first of its kind and set to launch in three countries this year.

Created in 2008, participants in the IBM Corporate Service Corps spend four weeks in groups of 10-15 working collaboratively with their host government and community counterparts to develop blueprints to address economic development, energy, transportation, education, and health care. The program is managed by IBM Director of Corporate Citizenship Initiatives Gina Tesla, who served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Panama from 2000-02.

El Salvador suspended

In January, the Peace Corps announced the suspension of its program in El Salvador due to the ongoing security environment. The agency will continue to monitor the security situation in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador to determine when the program can resume.

More than 2,300 Peace Corps Volunteers have worked on community and youth development projects in El Salvador since the program was established in 1962. As of September 30, 2015, 58 Volunteers were in-country.

Mali suspended

In November 2015, the Peace Corps announced the temporary suspension of its program in Mali due to escalating security concerns. The agency continues to monitor the security environment in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy in Bamako to determine if and when Volunteers can return.

There were 35 Volunteers in Mali working on projects in community economic development and health. More than 2,645 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Mali since the program was established in 1971.



ACTIVISM ABROAD

Counterpart Bogdan Globa (top) at a World AIDS Day event in Kyiv, Ukraine. Dustin Manhart (bottom, from left) and Globa demonstrate their suit skills.

Peace Corps Response turns 20

By Sarah Blazucki
Editor

The first assignments for “Crisis Corps” were true to its name: 10 PCVs, including hydrologists and logisticians, traveled to Namibia in 1992 to respond to a drought. Next came a response to the Rwandan genocide in 1994 when five PCVs transferred to a refugee camp, working with the International Rescue Committee, training community health workers and refugees to grow their own food. Next was in 1995, when eight RPCVs re-enrolled in the Peace Corps after Hurricane Luis struck Antigua, helping to rebuild homes and train youth on hurricane-resistant construction.

Twenty years ago this June, President Bill Clinton and then-Peace Corps Director Mark Gearan made the program official, christening it Crisis Corps.

Renamed Peace Corps Response in 2007, the program sends returned PCVs and highly skilled professionals for short-term, high-impact projects. As of March 2016, over 2,875 Peace Corps Response Volunteers have served in 79 countries. Two of the largest mobilizations were in response to natural disasters: 73 Volunteers went to Sri Lanka and Thailand after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and 272 Volunteers participated in the U.S. response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

Today, PCRVs comprise 4 percent of the Volunteer cadre—a number that grows every year—and, in



addition to disaster risk mitigation, serve in all six sectors: Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development. Further, PCRVs are often the first presence to open a new country, re-open a suspended country, open a new sector, or pilot new partnerships.

One such partnership is the Global Health Service Partnership, which sends doctors and nurses to low-resource countries as educators to scale up the country's health-care capacity. Launched with PEPFAR and Seed Global Health in 2012, the program presently operates in Malawi, Tanzania, and Uganda, and will expand to Liberia and Swaziland in 2016.

“Since the program launched, 97 physicians and nurses have served through the Global Health Service Partnership,” said Kate Beale, director of Peace Corps Response. “Nearly one-third of 2015 Volunteers have requested to extend their service past their 12-month

‘Demand for PCR has steadily increased over the past five years. Last year, we fielded the largest number of PCRVs ever—332. More posts have PCR coordinators—a total of 13 now.’

Kate Beale, director of Peace Corps Response

commitment. We received a record number of applications in 2015, and we are excited for the expansion of the program to include additional countries and partners in 2016.”

Some of the targeted assistance Peace Corps Response provides ranges from supporting development of Burundian refugee youth in Rwanda to language and culture preservation in Vanuatu, from climate change mitigation in Samoa to jaguar tracking in Panama.

Focused capacity-building for organizations serving key populations is another role of Peace Corps Response. Dustin Manhart served in Ukraine from 2012–13, working with a nongovernmental organization that provides services to people with HIV/AIDS, with a focus on men who have sex with men. In addition to case management, counseling, and HIV-testing referrals, the organization provided resources for sexual orientation and gender identity minorities in Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

“In Eastern Europe, both groups—LGBT and HIV-positive—are stigmatized,” Manhart said. “At that time, there were anti-homosexuality laws on the books, so that meant these vulnerable populations were at greater risk for backlash and challenges finding adequate health care.”

Although Manhart was only in-country for six months, he said the impact of his work—and that of the PCRV who followed him—continues. Beyond showing his counterpart how to get international funders to take him seriously (pro tip: wear a suit), Manhart helped his counterpart develop relationships with international groups, the Department of State, and U.S. organizations that can build awareness, further develop capacity, and provide grants.

“The relationships they were able to develop with other groups will be carried forward by my counterpart,” Manhart said. “The networking part was huge. Making small changes was imperative—they know what they need, not me. And we gave everyone exposure to the Peace Corps—the LGBT community and the HIV community [in Ukraine], showing there are positive relationships we can develop.”

After his departure—Manhart is now a recruitment and placement specialist for Peace Corps Response—another PCRV worked with the NGO as it broadened its mission to include advocacy for LGBT rights. “The second Volunteer did a

great job working with the NGO to help them expand their mission and meet the changing needs in Ukraine,” Manhart said.

Growth and expansion often plays heavily into Response positions, and they can range from requiring specialized to highly specialized qualifications. A few recent openings included an autism spectrum disorder specialist, a developmental basketball coach, an archeological education outreach specialist, a shark and ray marine biologist, and a literacy teacher trainer.

Despite the growth Response has undergone since its founding, disaster response is still a key component of the program, with a focus on risk mitigation and rebuilding. In 2013, 20 Response Volunteers served in the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan. Starting in December 2015, Response Volunteers went to the Federated States of Micronesia following Typhoon Maysak, with more slated to depart in July. Currently, there are 17 PCRVs serving in the Philippines and Micronesia working on Disaster Risk Mitigation. And, there’s a disaster management information technology specialist heading to the Eastern Caribbean to work on an emergency warning communication system.

As a program, one of the strengths of Peace Corps Response is its flexibility, allowing the agency to address short-term, specific requests that will have greater impact.

“Demand for PCR has steadily increased over the past five years,” Beale said. “Last year, we fielded the largest number of PCRVs ever—332. More posts have PCR coordinators—a total of 13 now. And we are seeing larger numbers of non-RPCVs serving as PCRVs, though they are still a minority of the total PCRV community.”

“In the past few years, Peace Corps Response has reopened Volunteer activities in Mali, Comoros, Ukraine, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone in March,” Beale said. “We reopened Palau as a PCR-only country, without a two-year Volunteer presence. And, in the past year, we supported posts with PCRVs to open new technical sectors, such as Community Economic Development in Colombia and Kosovo, and are planning on helping open Health sector activities for Sierra Leone later this year.”



MAKING NEW HOMES

In the IDP settlement of Tserovani, displaced Georgians have worked to make new homes, and new lives.

Building community after displacement

Volunteers support internally displaced people in post-conflict areas

By Sarah Blazucki
Editor

In 2015, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated there were 15.1 million refugees globally—the highest number in 20 years. But the numbers for internally displaced people—forced to leave their homes but living within their country's borders—were more than double that, reaching 38 million at the end of 2014, not including those displaced by natural disasters.

Of this number, 11 million are newly displaced, with the majority of the increase due to conflicts in Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria—with these five countries accounting for 60 percent of the newly displaced. Among the numerous countries with IDPs are several active Peace Corps host countries, including Armenia, Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kosovo, Liberia, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Senegal,

Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, and Ukraine.

Currently, PCVs in at least three countries work with IDPs who fled conflict zones: Colombia, Georgia, and Ukraine.

In Colombia, there are 6 million IDPs, displaced by ongoing internal armed conflict, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Since the post opened in 2011, some 150 PCVs have worked with IDPs, either teaching English or in Community and Economic Development. Currently, about 15 PCVs live near or in IDP settlements.

In Ukraine, the IDMC estimates there were 1.4 million IDPs, displaced due to the separatist conflict in the east of the country that began in 2014. Current IDP estimates are around 750,000.

Pilar Robledo, Peace Corps/Ukraine director of programming and training, said that a few Volunteers are currently working with organizations that serve vulnerable populations of IDPs—but added many

RPCVs are part of the humanitarian response, and there's a great opportunity for targeted PCV placements supporting IDPs once the situation stabilizes further.

To the east of Ukraine, PCVs in Georgia have been working in targeted placements with IDPs since 2012.

In August 2008, some 127,000 people were internally displaced in Georgia due to the conflict in South Ossetia with Russia. While the majority of them returned home, others joined IDPs who had been displaced in 1992-93 in the conflict in Abkhazia, living both in "temporary" government settlements of abandoned military barracks, hospitals, and schools, and in hastily built cottage-style homes. In 2014, the Georgian government reported 262,000 IDPs in the country.

Those who were displaced during the conflict in South Ossetia weren't expecting to be gone from their homes long, much less spend eight years or more in the settlements, relying on government benefits and promises of jobs that never materialized.

"They had never in their mind considered that they would never go home," Volunteer Kim Dixon said. "They didn't take their wedding pictures, their jewelry. They had no idea. It was an incredible shock. It was in the summer, and they lived in kindergartens. People started coming and brought clothes and food. One neighbor told me they didn't have any plates or silverware; they would eat stew out of their hands."

Carmen Sheehan, director of programming and training for Peace Corps/Georgia, said post staff met with the Ministry of Internally Displaced People and the Ministry of Education of Abkhazia to discuss potential opportunities, and Volunteer placements in Education and Individual and Organizational Development followed. Currently, 13 PCVs are working with Abkhazian and South Ossetian IDP populations.

"IDP communities fall among the vulnerable and underserved populations of Georgia," Sheehan said. "PCVs living and working in these communities not only bring a lasting capacity-building element, but also are uniquely placed to connect the IDP population with outside opportunities, networks, access to information, and a sense of hope that they may not otherwise have had."



Dixon, who has been in Georgia since 2014, works with IDPs who were resettled after the 2008 conflict, in a village about 35 minutes outside of the capital Tbilisi.

"When they got to the settlement, a lot of organizations and governments, including the U.S., came in and renovated the buildings" of a deserted ex-soviet military base, Dixon said. "People were afraid to open their doors. International aid would come with flour and oil, but the people were in a state of shock and were afraid to open their doors."

Dixon said the 2,000 IDPs in her settlement came from an area in South Ossetia with deep culture, successful farmers, beautiful vineyards and farmlands, and centuries of history.

"If you ask, they will tell you they would love to go home," she said. "They had their grandparents' vineyards, beautiful farmland, beautiful big homes, family homes for centuries. They would say they would love to go home, but I think they are much more resigned now."

Though the land in her settlement is difficult to farm—it's hot and dry—the community recently was awarded a grant to combine four small farms into a co-op—literally putting down roots.

The grant will "sustain 30 people with crops for sale, two new wells and water tanks, and organic food production."

"This is a big step for post-Soviet residents who are not comfortable with the term 'co-op.' So we call it a 'unity farm.'"

"We are also starting a community garden to feed some of the families in the settlement that are older and less fortunate and to make a fun experience for the young people who aren't so interested in learning to farm."

Because Dixon is the second PCV at her settlement, she said the community education center she works with had progressed well with organizational development. So Dixon focused on developing programs to foster individual development, such as the farm grant, a healthy living youth leadership initiative, and a social enterprise selling handicrafts.

Dixon said the social enterprise, Art-Koda, had been established as a way for alumni of the center's handicraft training to sell their products, including felt toys, scarves, and enamel. Using her marketing background, Dixon was able to provide training in product design, financial analysis, management, and marketing.

"Today, we have about eight women making almost a living wage," she said. "We have increased sales in the past year through new marketing channels, improved product design, and some financial analysis. I was happy to create new processes and teach some basic financial analysis to the management so they can make better product and pricing decisions. They have really grown in their management and marketing, and we are training more and more women and men."

For the youth, Dixon said the English language clubs have been instrumental.



BUILDING TIES

Charity Humanitarian Centre Abkhazeti staff conducts outreach to IDP villagers about the activism and self-governance program (from left).

Ioseb participated in a small business development micro-loan program hosted by PCV Sara Feldman, then opened this shoe store.

PCV Kim Dixon and her host grama make churchkela, a Georgian grape and walnut snack.

Her projects included writing grants for a bookmobile (which also travels to three other settlements) and a Democracy Commission project, a jewelry-making social enterprise, and a café, as well as a professional development series for youth that helped young people prepare for and find internships in the settlement and neighboring cities.

"The organizational development we achieved for my NGO was the biggest success," she said. "When I came in we had no projects" and the founder was the only staff. "Through fundraising, we hired a program manager, set up a board for the NGO, produced an annual report, and worked on performance evaluations."

"By the end, we had two paid staff and now have five women who are making jewelry for a steady income, plus two people at the café and two people at the bookmobile."

Moses said that at her settlement—like many others—the biggest challenges were employment opportunities and reintegration.

"The approach my NGO took was to work on the building blocks: 'We can't have peace if people don't have jobs, if they can't feed their families.' So, we focused on economic opportunities and civil society."

Melody Jensen, the next PCV to serve at Moses' site, has continued the work with the NGO, and added more projects.

"We're working on the café, expanding that as much as we can," Jensen said. "We

"We have had some nice successes with our youth going off to the universities, to international learning experiences, to open enterprises in the settlement, and for international volunteer opportunities. And their English competency got them placed."

Sara Feldman has worked with the leading national IDP nongovernmental organization in Georgia, Charity Humanitarian Centre Abkhazeti, since 2014. As an Individual and Organizational Development Volunteer, Feldman worked with CHCA to expand its capacity to support integration and independent living for IDPs, as well as other socially vulnerable populations.

"My counterpart and I work on creating and supporting projects that target this population through education, livelihood development, and advocacy," Feldman said.

One unique challenge that IDPs face is that they are often visually homogenous with the rest of the population, but are treated differently.

"At first, it was quite hard for me to understand the IDP experience and how they were perceived by society at large," Feldman said. "IDPs here are indistinguishable from local Georgians, yet they are perceived as entirely separate. Understanding this perception became an important component in developing programs that would help address this disparity."

Among the national projects that Feldman worked on were a Youth Participation and Development project,

which established clubs in eight communities focused on environment, civic engagement, math and science, and healthy lifestyles; a project that trained teachers from eight schools to work with disabled students; a financial literacy training for youth; projects on micro-lending, social enterprises, technical innovation, and education; and a project to facilitate activism and self-governance in eight conflict-affected villages.

This last project, funded by the U.S. embassy, will help IDPs to better understand and apply self-governance concepts.

"The goal of the program is to enhance and enable 40 active community members in eight conflict-affected villages to promote Georgia's new self-governance law at the grassroots level by encouraging local communities to become more active and understand their rights, identify problems and priorities, and map community needs," Feldman said, "and develop eight grassroots advocacy campaigns that will facilitate stronger and more effective democratic participation in the new local self-governance process."

Kristen Moses was assigned to the largest IDP settlement in Georgia, about 20 kilometers from the capital Tbilisi, home to some 7,000 residents. As one of the first PCVs placed with an IDP settlement in 2013, she worked with a NGO to provide opportunities for women and children, in employment, education, and peacebuilding.



serve 100 people per month, traditional Georgian food—khachapuri, lozi, pizza, hot chocolate, tea, coffee. We cater training events in the area, have special lunchtime menus, and host cultural events.”

Since she arrived, Jensen has been working on a Let Girls Learn event and coordinating youth clubs for animation, coding, and sewing.

She also worked on implementing the Democracy Commission grant from the U.S. embassy, which trained youth in four IDP settlements to be more civically involved.

“We held a series of professional development and advocacy and project design trainings, and now they are implementing the projects themselves.” Jensen said the youth wrote project plans for mini grants, and they selected one per settlement to implement.

“At the end of February, we evaluated and picked the top project per settlement,” Jensen said. “One of them is planting trees. The settlements went up in fields mostly, so there aren’t any trees.”

“The biggest challenge that IDPs face is that they never want to give up hope to go back,” she said. “Because of that, some people don’t want to be too attached to where they are now or plant too solid roots. But it’s been seven, almost eight years in August. It’s becoming more

permanent. Some have accepted this as the reality and are moving forward. Others struggle with motivation.”

“Once in a while they will mention the war and things I’ve never been through,” Jensen said. “It’s humbling at times. It makes me more grateful to work with them, to see how far they’ve come. Especially the people in my organization—they are forward-thinking and not bitter.”

“If the situation changes, they would love to go back. Others, their homes were destroyed, and they don’t have a home to go to. I can’t speak for everyone, but some are home here, some are waiting to go back, and some have a foot in both worlds. It’s quietly tumultuous.”

Since 2014, Kala Sellers has served as an Education Volunteer in an IDP settlement established about 20 years ago, after the conflict in Abkhazia.

Since her settlement is older, Sellers said the population of 2,000 is now a mix of IDPs and non-IDPs. As the first PCV to serve there, Sellers said it’s been a challenge to get to know her community. But, at her school, she’s worked with two English teachers on their English mastery; held English, cursive, drama, and homework help clubs; helped start an English book cabinet; and was

competition manager for the National English Spelling Competition—Georgia, which culminated in a national round with 44 students from 11 regions.

From Sellers’ perspective, “Our biggest issue is a lack of encouragement for the new generation. Very few parents take an interest in their students’ education at my school.”

For the parents, “Lack of jobs seems to be one of our biggest problems,” she said. “Though it’s incredibly easy to get in and out of the settlement, most of the men and many of the women don’t have work.”

She continued, “Though some of my community members work in town and such, most of my community is discouraged from really integrating into society. This manifests itself not only mentally, but physically as well. For one, we literally live on the edge of the town. As another example, my host mother works at the bazaar. She has a stall with a few other women, most of which live in the settlement. Their stall is not along the main ‘thoroughfare’ as it were, where 90 percent of the food stalls are. They are, again, on the fringes. Which has its own set of challenges: Fewer people come by, thus they sell less, thus they make less money.”

If anything, Sellers hopes that she has instilled some optimism in her students and

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Kristen Moses and, later, Melody Jensen helped residents launch the Hello Cafe (top left), which now serves 100 people a month.

PCV Melody Jensen, counterpart Nana Chkareuli, U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Ian Kelly, and Bookmobile coordinators Nanuka Katchashvili and Thoma Sukhashvili meet during Kelly's bookmobile visit in March 2016 (right).

The American Corner Bookmobile (bottom left), funded by the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, brings books, resources, games, and movies to four IDP settlements in Georgia, spending one week in each. When the bookmobile visits, coordinators work with children, providing homework help and hosting English clubs.

envious of those who got cottages in other settlements."

Another factor that impacted Shepherd's community was that many of the residents had been farmers in South Ossetia and, in the settlement, had rudimentary housing and minimal land.

"With very limited plots of land and different soil and weather conditions, many found it very difficult to subsist in the way they had grown accustomed," she said. "Often one of the men of the family—the father or an older brother—would remain in South Ossetia. This way they could protect the property from being taken and could continue to farm the land. There were a number of households with only women and children in them."

Despite these challenges, Shepherd had several successes in her community, including working to bring the bookmobile to visit her settlement, creating an English cabinet, leading a GLOW—Girls Leading Our World—camp, serving as regional coordinator for the National English Spelling Competition—Georgia, and hosting a boys' mentorship day, which included shadowing mentors at their jobs in Tbilisi. Another major project Shepherd worked on was creating a video about the impact of early marriage on girls, which Volunteers use to raise awareness about the issue.

In Georgia, Shepherd came to appreciate the "small impact" she was able to have.

"I think I conveyed a bit of hope to them to have someone stay for a sustained period of time, where they were used to seeing people come and go," she said. "For the students, I hope to have



the importance of trying out new ideas.

"One of my counterparts and I have taken to saying, 'We've got to try it once!' any time we have a new idea or activity," she said.

"The idea that it's never too late to start is something that I've tried to press upon my students from the very beginning. Kind of a 'Do what you can with what you have where you are' philosophy."

Brenna Shepherd, an Education Volunteer who was one of the first two PCVs to be placed in a Georgian IDP settlement in 2013, also noted the lack of emphasis on education.

"Education did not seem to be a focus of most families' daily lives," she said.

"There were more pressing concerns that they faced on a daily basis that may have impacted how important education was. Additionally, many of the parents did not achieve high levels of education, so were unable or not particularly invested in helping their children focus on their education."

She continued, "[Lack of] motivation was one of the biggest challenges that I faced as a teacher. Finding ways to encourage students in my community to understand and strive for their goals was of great importance to me."

Shepherd noted how this lack of interest

in education negatively affected the community of about 1,000, located 35 minutes outside Tbilisi.

"Because of a lack of education and job opportunities in the community, unemployment was high, and there were not a lot of role models that the students could look up to. This kind of cycle of poverty seemed to be prevalent, wherein children lose motivation throughout their schooling and begin to focus less and less on their education and possible university or career opportunities after finishing high school—if they do finish."

Shepherd also found that many in her community found it hard to integrate and some were resentful.

"There is also a persisting sentiment of nostalgia for their old villages/towns, which has made settling into their new surroundings difficult," she said. Further, "There was also a sense of hierarchy a bit between the different settlements. There were others that were much more established and developed, offering better amenities and opportunities. My village, however, was up in the mountains a bit, with bad land quality, very limited infrastructure, and a poor school system. Even within the IDP community, I think those in my settlement felt they got an even worse deal out of it, and were



increased their motivation to learn and their interest in English. While the changes may have been incremental, I think I was able to open up the possibility of exploring new ways of learning to my students and other teachers."

Darlene Ugwa began her service in 2015, living in a small settlement of 200 families, about an hour and a half outside of Tbilisi.

As an Individual and Organizational Development Volunteer, Ugwa works with an NGO in the community education center, focused on helping youth and adults with literacy, employability, and education.

So far, she's worked on a healthy lifestyle and leadership project, screened

a documentary on domestic violence, started an English club, and is working on a robotics camp for girls from the different ethnicities who live nearby: Georgian, Armenian, and Azeri.

"My settlement is unique because of the other ethnic groups around," she said. "Most of the time they identify as Armenian or Azeri, and don't speak Georgian. Assimilation is a huge part of IDP work. Communities aren't transient. When you have a whole new group of people who move in, how do you assimilate into this new community?"

In addition to the difficult hurdle of starting over, Ugwa also sees the

BUILDING YOUTH RESOURCES

PCV Brenna Shepherd (top) works with students in the library.

PCV Darlene Ugwa (left) poses with IDP Healthy Lifestyle/Leadership Campers.

resiliency of her community members, which gave her insight regarding her family in the U.S.

"My family is Nigerian; my mom and her siblings went through a war," Ugwa said. "For me to be here, it's very eye-opening, to see the journey it took to come here. People are very resilient. Most of the time they will better themselves when the opportunity is presented. Everyone's journey is different. With the right assistance and support, people can overcome a lot of things."

"Beginning to end, it's a sad story. There was a war, people were removed from their homes for their safety, and told they could go home at some point," she said. "It's a very familial based culture—people were in their homes for generations. Their identity is based on where they come from. Some still have family in South Ossetia."

"Starting over is the biggest challenge for a lot of people: They don't know where to start," Ugwa said. "I find that that tends to be an issue—restarting their lives at 50, 60, 70. Starting over is the biggest hurdle."

PEACE CORPS LESSON

Accountability & health care access

By Sarah Blazucki

Editor

Before she joined the Peace Corps, Latanya Mapp Frett had gone to South Africa to work at the Legal Resources Centre while she was pursuing a law degree with a focus on human rights.

It was there, in post-apartheid South Africa just before Nelson Mandela became president, that Frett—now executive director of Planned Parenthood Global—began to forge her career path.

"Big changes were happening in the country—and they were trying to get a Peace Corps program established," she said. "Apartheid was ending, and the country was trying to prepare for the future. People were optimistic, working together to improve their country."

In South Africa, Frett said that she "learned that honest, true international development work required long-term commitment, which is why I decided to apply for the Peace Corps."

Though the Peace Corps didn't have a South Africa program yet (it opened in 1997) and she wasn't sure if a law school grad could serve, Frett applied. She was sent to Lesotho—a tiny country enclaved by South Africa.

While in service from 1996–98, Frett developed education and community programming, created trainings, and sharpened her advocacy skills.

"One of the most rewarding experiences in Lesotho was learning that one can hold people and governments accountable for laws without ever going to court," she said. "One can work to popularize concepts on human rights and promote awareness of the laws."

After her Peace Corps service, Frett worked for UNICEF on human rights issues in Lesotho, Ethiopia, and Pakistan. It was in Ethiopia that Frett realized that access to sexual and reproductive health care was one of the biggest human rights issues of our time.

"That's where I met 16-year-old Truwork, an HIV-positive young girl who was pregnant, not on treatment, and living on the street," Frett said. "She had been a survivor of sexual trauma and trafficking, issues that made our work harder



PLANTING SEEDS

Latanya Mapp Frett (RPCV, Lesotho, 1996–98) is the executive director of Planned Parenthood Global. During her Peace Corps service in Lesotho (above), she created education and community programming.

because of the lack of systemic support for survivors of these types of abuses. It was then that I vowed never to leave reproductive health out of programs I was involved with in a professional way."

After UNICEF, Frett joined the Foreign Service with U.S. Agency for International Development, taking assignments in Botswana, Mali, Nigeria, and Egypt. In Nigeria, Frett was mission director; in Egypt, Frett worked on the largest USAID program in the region.

At USAID, Frett found herself moving further from program implementation as she rose through the department—one of the reasons she joined Planned Parenthood Global.

"The idea of doing this work from the United States was also something I had never done before, and my experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer really set me up to lead international development work from the U.S. with the necessary cultural competency skills."

Frett now heads a subsidiary of Planned Parenthood Federation of America that works to ensure people in neglected areas overseas have access to health care.

"We work to empower partners in Africa

and Latin America to stand on their own. We help grassroots organizations develop solid reproductive health programs, identify other sources of funding, build their communications and advocacy skills, and develop strategic plans. We work with local partners to create change in people's lives every single day—something that the Peace Corps also aims to do."

She credits her service with helping her find her passion.

"My time as a Peace Corps Volunteer set me on the track that I am on now, working for sexual and reproductive health and rights around the world."

Beyond advocating for sexual and reproductive rights globally, Frett has also advocated for Peace Corps Volunteers who came after her, including supporting the Peace Corps Equity Act of 2013.

"During my time as a Volunteer, I saw many women experience sexual violence—rape, assaults, you name it. Many of the women who were survivors of these assaults were sent home and didn't get the support to come back. Now, women in the Peace Corps have access to contraception and abortion access—one of the campaigns I was happy to be part of."

teachers, for about five more
bottles in the wall. We w
middle school and high scho

Peace Corps Turns 50



From the poster, the U.S. Postal Service created a stamp commemorating the 10th anniversary. The poster and stamp were the genesis of the Peace Corps logo.



In the 1960s, there was no consistent Peace Corps branding.



In 1971, David Battle created the winning design for a poster contest for the agency's 10th anniversary.



In 2003, an ad agency created the patch logo as part of the "How far will you go?" campaign.



In 2016, the Peace Corps worked with an ad agency to create a new logo, designed to adapt to a digital environment (and small screens).

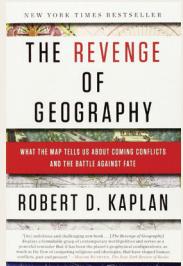


EVOLUTION OF A LOGO

BOOK SHELF

Humankind: Progress and destruction

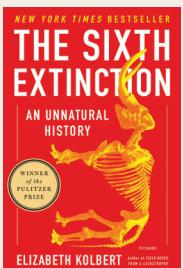
Humanity may think we are the smartest animal on the planet, but we are also the most destructive. From geopolitics to corruption, here's a snapshot of humanity at our best and our worst. Perhaps our greatest challenge may be avoiding our own self-inflicted destruction.



The Revenge of Geography

By Robert D. Kaplan

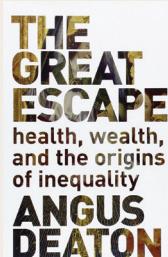
State lines, territorial disputes, topography, farmland, trade routes, and sea-lanes all contribute to geopolitics in the 21st century. Starting from the 1800s, moving through WWII, the Cold War, and into the current Middle East situation, Kaplan uses geography to discuss previous, current, and possible future territorial disputes and conflicts.



The Sixth Extinction

By Elizabeth Kolbert

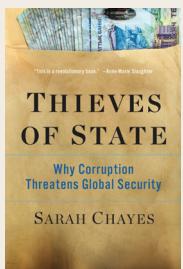
In the course of history, there have been five mass extinctions marking dramatic contractions of diversity of life on earth. Scientists are now observing the sixth: humanity. From coral reefs to bats, from rhinos to Neanderthals, Kolbert lays out how humans have caused devastating loss of species.



The Great Escape

By Angus Deaton

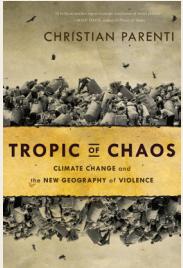
While people are living longer, healthier lives, global efforts to address health issues are uneven, in both inputs and outcomes. Deaton parses myriad data to discuss what has worked and why, and teases out why some inputs are disproportionate to their outcomes.



Thieves of State

By Sarah Chayes

Chayes, a Morocco RPCV and a former special adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, makes the case of how corruption has contributed to the destabilization of nations and the increase of extremism. Winding through history and across the globe, Chayes outlines four types of kleptocracies—and how existing tools can combat corruption.



Tropic of Chaos

By Christian Parenti

As climate change accelerates and is more evident, Parenti argues that weather extremes spur violence and civil unrest, from Kenya to Afghanistan to Brazil. Calling it a fundamentally a political problem, Parenti posits that solving the climate crisis requires a re legitimization of the state's role in the economy.

PUZZLE PEACES ANSWERS

Games on page 24

ACROSS

1. Snapchat
4. Leu
6. Sesotho
7. Female
13. November
15. Fifty fifth
17. Côte d'Ivoire
19. Twenty eight
21. Dia de los muertos
23. Namaste
24. Washington

DOWN

1. Sixty two
2. Dove
3. TEFL
5. Zendaya
8. Eighty seven
9. Alex and Ani
10. Cambodia
11. Twenty three
12. Girl Scouts
14. Carlos Torres
16. International
20. Vermont
22. Jog

SUDOKU ANSWERS

EASY

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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



COS TRIP: Croatia

SAIL AWAY

Sailboats anchor off of islands near Dubrovnik.

By Kristen Moses
RPCV, Georgia

Situated along the Adriatic Sea, across from Italy, Croatia has become a popular beach resort for Europeans, but tourism hasn't overrun the local charm and beauty of this out-of-the-way country. With hundreds of islands and stunning historic cities along the coast, it's easy to find a holiday paradise to fit your interests. Convenient bus lines stretch across the country, so the natural beauty of the mountainous interior is drawing more hikers and bikers. A delicious blend of Central European and Mediterranean flavors gives Croatian cuisine a unique flavor. And did we mention the local wines? Take a week to explore and unwind.

Getting There

Croatia's largest international airports are located at opposite corners of the country, in the capital of Zagreb and the beach towns of Dubrovnik and Split. Many of Croatia's cities are served by budget airlines, although flights may be limited to the summer tourist season (May–September). While flying is the easiest way to get into Croatia, Zagreb's main train station, *Zagreb glavni kolodvor*, is connected to major European cities with direct connections to Vienna, Budapest, Zurich, Munich, Salzburg, Ljubljana, and Sarajevo.

Unlike other European cities, buses—not trains—are the best way to get around within Croatia. The bus system is cheap, reliable, and extensive. Traveling from the capital (in the interior of the country) to the coast only takes three hours, and the buses running along the coast are a scenic experience in and of themselves. You can book your tickets online with a number of bus companies or buy them from the local bus station. In a pinch, you can just get on a bus, and the conductor will sell you a ticket.

Croatia's 1,000-plus islands are accessible via public ferries that offer cheap fares to foot passengers. Faster catamarans

service some of the most popular routes, but tickets tend to sell out a day or two in advance. If you have good sea legs, look into coastal tours. The largest ferry service, Jadrolinija, offers summer trips from Rijeka to Dubrovnik, calling at Split, Hvar, and Korčula on the way. Private charters and tour packages can also be arranged. If Croatia isn't enough for you, you can also slip across the Adriatic on an overnight ferry bound for Italy.

Visa and Vaccination Information

Customs regulations in the Republic of Croatia are almost entirely harmonized with European Union regulations and standards. The only ID required is a valid passport, and U.S. citizens are allowed to enter Croatia visa-free for up to 90 days. Keep your passport handy while traveling around the country, because hostels will often ask to see it when you check in. Croatian authorities require all foreigners to register with the local police when they arrive in a new area of the country, but this is a routine matter normally handled by the hotel, hostel, campground, or agency securing your private accommodation.

No vaccinations are necessary when traveling to Croatia, and the tap water is drinkable throughout the country.



Dubrovnik



Plitvice Lakes National Park



Zagreb



Plitvice Lakes National Park

PLACES TO VISIT

Zagreb

Zagreb can trace its history to the Roman Empire, and its medieval Upper Town, *Gornji Grad*, is still a charming block of pastel houses and cobblestone streets set on the highest point in the city. Stop in Dolac Market, the largest farmers market in Zagreb, for some food and souvenirs before making the climb to Zagreb Cathedral. Connecting the historical district to modern Lower Town is one of the steepest funiculars in the world. Should you need a break, the city is known for its vibrant cafe culture and, on summer evenings, free concerts are held in the square below Lotrščak Tower. The museums and galleries of the Green Horseshoe are worth a visit, but Zagreb's less traditional museums are attracting more visitors every year. Among them, the Museum of Broken Relationships tops the list. Dedicated to failed love, its exhibits include donated personal objects left over from former lovers, accompanied by brief descriptions. If you need more catharsis after touring this museum, take a stroll on the paths of Maksimir Park.

Best time to visit: May–June and September–October

Plitvice Lakes National Park

Conveniently located between the capital city and the coast, Plitvice Lakes are the perfect picturesque hiking stop on any tour of Croatia. With a series of 16 terraced lakes and cascading waterfalls surrounded by miles of wooded trails, this UNESCO World Heritage site draws thousands of visitors every day. However, don't be intimidated by the size of park: Most of the scenic views are easily accessible and the plank walkways are crowded with the young and old, as well as the diehard hikers. It is possible to complete a 10-mile tour of the lakes in a day trip, but an early start is recommended. The park is open daily all year, with longer hours in the summer (usually 7 a.m.–8 p.m.). The entrance fee of around \$32 per adult in peak season also provides you with a voucher to use on the ferries and shuttles in the park. One note: While tempting, swimming in the lakes is not allowed, so save your swimsuit for the coastal beaches.

Best time to visit: May–June and September–October

Dubrovnik

You may do a double take when you first arrive in this medieval coastal city: Dubrovnik's white stone buildings and well-preserved fortress walls have brought Westeros to life as the set of King's Landing in "Game of Thrones." There are many filming locations around the city, and organized tours help you find them all. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, Dubrovnik offers stunning architecture and sculptural detail. Although it was heavily bombed during the Croatian War of Independence from 1991–95, almost all of the damage has been repaired. For a small fee, you can get a view of the whole harbor from the city walls between 8 a.m.–5:30 p.m. It takes about one hour to walk the entire wall. There are public beaches both within the city limits and a few miles outside of town. If you want to escape the crowds, take the ferry to Lokrum Island, where you can choose your own spot among the rocks to sunbathe and swim. Don't forget to try Croatia's version of squid ink risotto, *crni rizot*, with a glass of local red wine.

Best time to visit: May–June and September–October

CORPS INNOVATION

Teaching Duolingo new languages

By Patrick Choquette

Director, Office of Innovation

Raise your hand if you created a Peace Corps training resource that is sadly underused (or forgotten!). Too often, the outstanding content created by staff and Volunteers ends up on an old hard drive or a dusty shelf at a sub-office—only to be re-created by the next eager trainee. A team of language trainers in Ukraine set out to tackle this problem and created the most widely used training resource in the history of the Peace Corps with over 882,000 users to date.

How did they do it? They put their resource on social media and, more importantly, at the top of a Google search.

Arguably, the Peace Corps' greatest asset is our language instruction knowledge and expertise. The Peace Corps teaches Volunteers 272 languages every year and employs some of the most talented language instructors in the world, the majority of whom are native speakers. The blend of near one-on-one tutoring in PST and full immersion has been a wonderful formula for success.

With the rise of connectivity and access to mobile phones, the opportunity for innovation is how to share our outstanding training with the world so more can benefit from this wealth of talent and resources.

In 2012, Peace Corps/Zambia Volunteers took the training materials created by their language team and put them on an Android app built by local coders. The resulting free app, Bantu Babel, was downloaded 2,000 times and garnered World Bank attention and a video feature on CNN.

The trend of moving our training materials out of static documents and into more engaging and accessible platforms continued with Volunteers and staff creating digital flashcards, online courses, and video sign-language dictionaries—all with varying levels of success and reach.

By 2013, the Peace Corps was looking for more. We had proven we could create digital tools, but how do we get these tools into the hands of hundreds



LANGUAGE LEARNING

The Ukrainian Peace Corps Duolingo language team Serhiy Guk (left) and Volodymyr Kondratyuk the day their courses graduated from beta.

of thousands instead of just hundreds? Now, if you want your tool to be found (and used!), it needs to show up in a Google search. When potential users type in "Learn Ukrainian," Peace Corps materials need to be in the top results or we are limited in the number of people we reach.

So we Googled it. And we found that, more often than not, the new language learning platform Duolingo was at the top of the search results. Duolingo had separated itself from other platforms because it is fun and free. In fact, there are more people learning a language on Duolingo than in the entire U.S. public education system. The app, which earned Apple's iPhone App of the Year in 2013, uses gamification to hook users and make it easier to stick to a practice schedule. It also uses an alternative business model that doesn't rely on advertising or charging for downloads. This is key for both Peace

HOW TO USE DUOLINGO RIGHT NOW

Top up your skills. Duolingo currently teaches 48 languages and is available for free at duolingo.com or in your app store.

Use it with your students. Duolingo offers a free teacher dashboard for easy tracking of students' progress. Visit schools.duolingo.com.

Help someone get certified. Do you know students or community members at your site with excellent English skills? On Duolingo Test Center, they can test their fluency and receive an English certification. Visit englishtest.duolingo.com.

Corps Volunteers and our community counterparts, so there isn't a financial barrier between them and the resources they need.

When the Office of Innovation reached out to the Pittsburgh-based company to make the case that allowing the Peace Corps to put our content on their platform would be a win-win, they quickly agreed. Soon, we were off to work on our first collaboration: a Ukrainian course.

Peace Corps/Ukraine staff, led by training manager Iryna Krupska, took advantage of a Duolingo incubator that allowed for native speakers to create their own courses on the platform. The staff were quick to pick up on the cutting-edge technology and created two courses: one for English speakers learning Ukrainian that Peace Corps trainees could use to supplement their language classes and one for Ukrainian speakers learning English that Volunteers could use to help their counterparts and schools incorporate into their teaching.

In all, they translated over 10,000 sentences and recorded the audio themselves to make sure the pronunciation was just right.

Even more powerful, by choosing the popular open platform, the course would be available to everyone in the world for free. Now, average American citizens can benefit from the Peace Corps' expertise and use the tool to learn Ukrainian; further, those in Ukraine wishing to learn English can use the course to teach themselves, expanding the reach of the Peace Corps beyond Volunteers themselves. By press time, a total of 882,000 combined have used one of the two courses, making these two courses the most widely used Peace Corps training tools ever created.

PCVs and staff are now in the process of creating two more courses. Paraguay Volunteer leader Roniann Laroque is collaborating with language trainers Pabla Garcia and Liz Concepcion Sanchez to create a course in Jopara, the first native South American language on



NEW LANGUAGE PLATFORMS

Tanzania language trainers Emilian Mbassa (left) and Rehema Mputa (right) worked with PCV leader Branden Ryan to build a Swahili Duolingo course, due out this summer.

the platform; in Tanzania, Volunteer leader Branden Ryan is working with language trainers Rehema Mputa and Emilian Mbassa to build a course in Swahili, the first African language on the platform. Both are due out by summer 2016.

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

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Hope in troubled times

By Shelley Savage

Peace Corps psychologist

Violence. Disease. Poverty. Disaster. These and other ills show how challenging our world can be. Bad news proliferates, often rolling over good news in its wake. Globalization brings a startling intimacy: Your problems and my problems are our problems. Shared sustainable solutions can deliver us from despair and perpetuate our survival as a species, but where can they be found?

We take up an inquiry discussed long ago. Ancient Greeks pondered the ills of humanity and possible cure. They spoke of the unwitting release of evil in the world from a divine vessel (or "box"). Pandora managed to hold onto one creature—Elpis, who unlike the others, remained behind—voluntarily or involuntarily is up for debate. Elpis is known by another name, Hope. Did hope help the Greeks face the adversities of the ancient world? Can hope help us face the challenges of contemporary society?

Hope is defined as an optimistic attitude, stemming from an expectation of positive outcomes in the face of life events and circumstances. Hope may be seen in our reply to the question "What are you doing today?" (Answer: "First I plan to do A, then B, then C.") Hope may be observed in the face of a crisis as we marshal courage, creative thinking, and action in the deployment of resources (physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and technological). Humanity has the capacity for hope. So, how do we harness hope to face challenges and produce positive outcomes?

According to positive psychologist Charles Richard Snyder, author of "Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths," hope is a strategy that can help us meet challenges in education, work, and health. His theory builds on the premise that people believe goals can be met. He identified two components of hope: agency and pathways. Agency engages an expectation of successful goal orientation: "I have met goals in the past. I can meet goals in the present. I will meet goals in the future." Pathways

involve an expectation of successful goal-directed planning: "I will try A. If A does not work then I will try B. If B does not work, then I will try ..." Snyder's research observed higher levels of hope among individuals who can define clear goals, develop multiple pathways for success, and persevere in spite of challenges—and higher success in achieving those goals.

Many of us joining the Peace Corps do so, in part, to make the world a better place and to help others. Sometimes we may experience a sense of goal-direction but no clear pathways to achieving the goal ("I want to accomplish X but see no clear way to achieve it.") Alternatively, we may identify pathways yet have no goal-directed agency ("I have all these resources but do not know what I want to achieve or how to start.") Thus we must engage repeatedly in a discourse of clarifying goals ("Can I break this big goal into smaller ones? Do I need to make sure everyone shares this goal?") and develop realistic pathways to accomplish them ("If Plan A does not work, what is Plan B? Who can help me achieve this goal?").

Barriers interfere with our ability to achieve our goals, and we can respond one of two ways: give up or use pathway thoughts to create new routes to achieve our goals. Those with more hope view barriers as challenges and work to create new routes to goals.

It's helpful to recognize that barriers can be relatively small setbacks (person X hasn't completed their task and we'll need to delay part of the project) or major obstacles (my country is being evacuated because of a tsunami). If you can work to see a path through the barriers—and recognize that some events are out of your control—you will be more successful in reaching your goals. And because Volunteers goals support the Peace Corps mission and the host communities we serve abroad, when you reach your goals, you will be helping others to reach their goals.

As Peace Corps Volunteers, we bring hope to our host communities seeking to improve their quality of life and, in return, foster hope that one person can make a difference in our global community.

If you can work to see a path through the barriers—and recognize that some events are out of your control—you will be more successful in reaching your goals.

For mental health support, contact the Counseling and Outreach Unit at 202.692.1470.

When your service ends early

By Jodi Hammer*Career development specialist***Dear RPCV****Career Counselor:**

My former site mate and I are concerned about how employers will regard our Peace Corps service since it was cut short prematurely. She was medically separated after 12 months and, just two months later, the Peace Corps suspended operations in our assigned country for safety and security concerns, which abruptly ended my service almost a year early. How can we make sure employers understand our shortened service was not our fault? And what do we list as accomplishments in our résumés and when interviewing, given many of our projects were unfinished when we left?

Dear RPCV:

Rest assured whatever time you spent in-country is valued and valuable and will be impressive to most employers. Many employers do not even realize that the standard Peace Corps service is over two years, so to them the fact that you did Peace Corps itself will be impressive.

Those employers who know the standard length of Peace Corps service are often RPCVs themselves or at least familiar with the Peace Corps, and they will likely understand the many reasons why Peace Corps service can be cut short through no fault of one's own.

There are several things you can do to clarify that your service was shortened for reasons beyond your control. In your résumé, you can include a descriptive bullet under your Peace Corps entry such as, "Program suspended as of January 2016 due to safety and security concerns" or list that in parentheses next to your service dates. This will make it clear that leaving service early was not your choice.

In regard to your concern about not having tangible accomplishments to include under the description of your Peace Corps service on your résumé, consider inserting a bullet about your pre-service and/or in-service trainings, quantifying the extensive technical, language, and cross-cultural training you received. Add a bullet about the community needs assessment you conducted to identify the most pressing needs in your village, and you've already got two solid bullets.

When describing projects that were unfinished when you left, be sure to highlight whatever work you did to support each initiative before leaving. If you wrote and received funding for a SPA grant to build a community library but were evacuated before construction began, you could still include a bullet under your Peace Corps service referencing the approved grant, i.e.,

"Wrote and received a \$1,000 USAID-funded grant to build a community library in a village of 500." If you keep in touch with your community and learn that the project was completed later, you could also note those eventual results in your résumé bullets.

When interviewing, you can easily address your shortened Peace Corps service when responding to the typical "Tell me about yourself" question that seems to kick off most interviews.

For your site mate who was medically evacuated, there is no need for her to provide specific details about the medical condition that precipitated her evacuation: That is private information and none of their business. Of course, many RPCVs feel comfortable with their situation and have chosen to reference their broken arm or other such accident in their explanation; it is ultimately up to the RPCV to decide how much, if any, they wish to disclose.

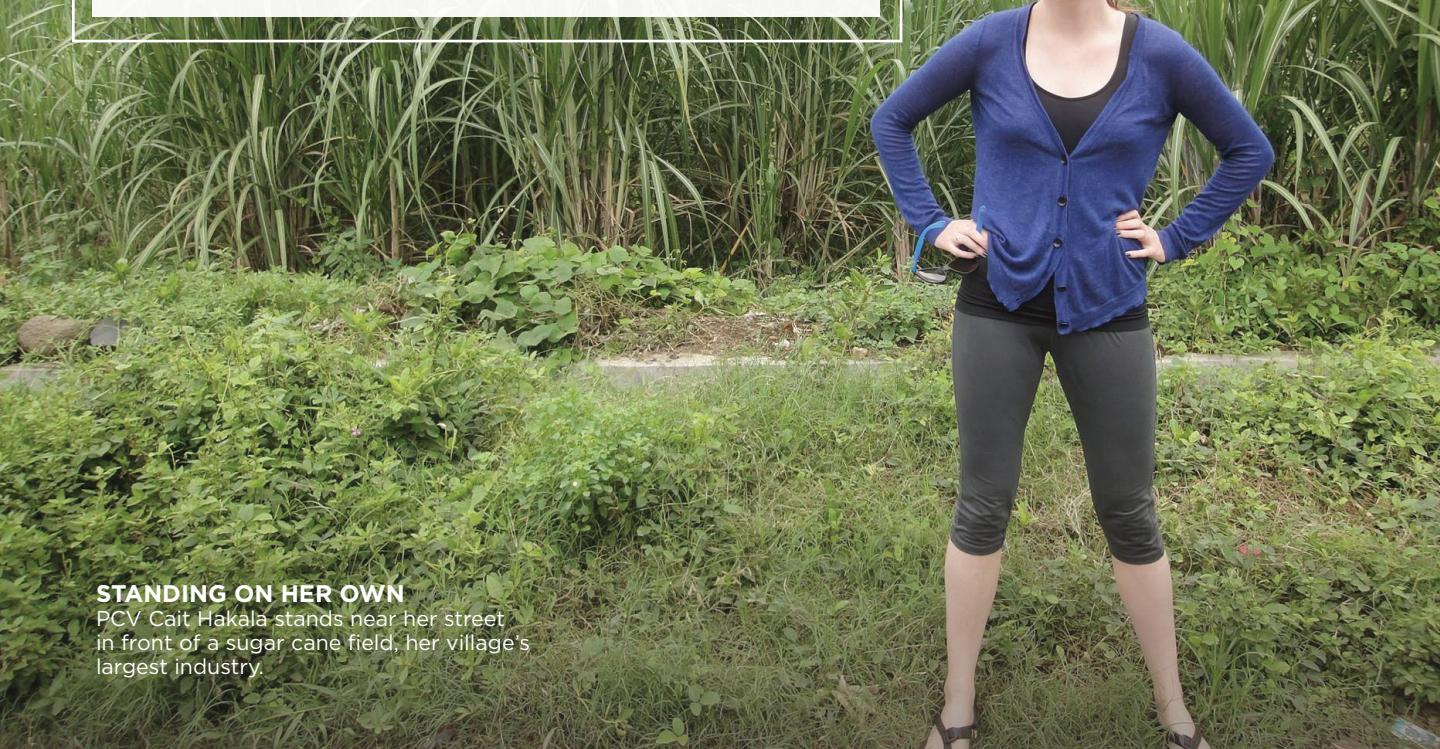
Your shortened service can actually be used to support your responses to some of the standard behavioral interviewing questions like "Tell us about a time you demonstrated flexibility in a stressful situation." Be sure to focus on the positive aspects of whatever you share about your shortened service. Although it is OK to mention you were disappointed that your service was cut short, keep the focus on how grateful you were for the experience and how proud you are of those things you were able to accomplish during your time there. This will go a long way in painting you as a positive, hardworking professional—someone who would be a great addition to any team.

Best wishes.

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

VOLUNTEER LIFE

Overcoming discomfort in service



STANDING ON HER OWN

PCV Cait Hakala stands near her street in front of a sugar cane field, her village's largest industry.

By Cait Hakala

PCV, Indonesia, 2014–17

For about a month last year, my bike commute to and from school was what I dreaded most about every day at site. There was a road project going on and a foreign woman riding by caught the eye of every construction worker present. I couldn't even hear all of what they were saying for the sheer number and volume of their catcalls. No matter what I yelled back or how many times I got off my bike to give them a stern, culturally appropriate (more or less) talking-to, nothing helped. I felt humiliated and powerless every day. I was certain that "serve in times of hardship" wasn't written with these construction workers in mind.

Before I left America, plenty of people told me in ominous tones to "be careful" in Indonesia. When I mention that I was sexually assaulted during my Peace Corps service, I think most envision me being accosted by a host country national in my village—in reality, I was assaulted by a Western man while on annual leave out of country. It's always someone else or somewhere else that "doesn't treat their

women right," a bizarre standard for civility that I've heard cited by people of various nationalities. I recently asked a question during an English club: "Do Indonesian women experience a lot of harassment?" One of my best male students, a professor of law, rambled on about how women are very respected here and how that sort of thing doesn't happen in Situbondo, East Java. I turned to the only female student in the club and asked her if she experiences harassment in her daily life. Much to the law professor's surprise (and not at all to mine), her answer was a resounding yes. She and I complained about the men who call out to us, who expect us to talk to them, who ask us inappropriate questions, and the law professor clarified for us, "Oh, that's not harassment. That's just men!"

Being a Peace Corps Volunteer is all about being uncomfortable, but in returning to site, I had to recalibrate myself to recognize the difference between discomfort and danger. Catcalls that would have merely annoyed me before started infuriating me. I was angry every day. The shouts from that construction site I passed got so bad that I eventually



went to the police; they promised to talk to the workers but the harassment escalated. It only ended when I broke down crying in front of my host mom. My reaction would have never been this strong before my assault. My host dad told me I should have come to him first, and I never heard another peep out of those construction workers. He also told me that those men "weren't from around here. They're from other villages, other districts, and just come here to work," as if being from somewhere else should explain their behavior.

Women everywhere experience harassment like this. Living in Indonesia, I certainly experience more unwanted attention as a foreigner. For a long time I thought the harassment was purely to do with being foreign; however, I know Indonesian women deal with the same behaviors. Indeed, women in America deal with them, too. The difference is if I respond angrily or too directly, I get a pass because I'm a foreigner. Some of my female friends here have told me they that they could never respond the way I do: It's simply not Indonesian. When I was sexually assaulted on vacation, I got a medevac and a reprieve from the daily catcalls, the texts and Facebook messages from strange men, the unwelcome touches on public transit—a luxury that Indonesian women are not



afforded. At any moment I could decide it's too much and end my service. End the discomfort. End my time as a guest in this country and go back to my "real life." Indonesian women cannot; there's only one life they live, and this is it.

In returning to site after my medical leave, I had to make a choice about how I was going to treat the remainder of my service. The daily challenges and stresses of Volunteer life are quite enough as it is, let alone while living as a survivor of sexual assault. It's a lot to ask of a Volunteer to recover in only 45 days and then go back to such a challenging environment. I always knew in my heart of hearts I would return, but the first few

TIME WITH FRIENDS

Cait Hakala stands taller than her local English professor friends, Yusuf (top, left) and Firqo, at a local university on a trip to Jember. Hakala and Firqo get ready to eat noodles at their favorite roadside restaurant.

months back were full of frustration and adjustments. Not only was I more on edge around unknown men, but I could not explain the real reason for my leave of absence for fear of judgment and a lack of understanding from my Indonesian friends and colleagues. It was imperative for me to parse out which of my feelings were normal service woes and which were a result of my trauma. After many months I recognized that discomfort doesn't always mean danger and that embracing that discomfort is truly the only way to feel comfortable. I adopted some of the techniques my female friends here employ to deal with harassment in an effective, culturally appropriate way. I have the tools, both from my recovery in Washington, D.C., and those learned from my female friends here, to continue my service even past the 27-month mark: I'm extending for a third year. I constantly remind myself that I choose to be uncomfortable in a sense by choosing to be a Peace Corps Volunteer. I choose to continue my Peace Corps service because I know I am not finished yet.

Notes from the Field

Armenia

Hero Trees Nurture Female Empowerment

PCV Madison Lane (2014–16) encouraged girls in her community to identify female heroes and gender inequality during an empowerment workshop at a local high school in Armenia. Students made “hero trees” and discussed the characteristics of the women they chose, which Lane hopes will help them recognize their own potential.

“If I encouraged any girl that day to embody the characteristics of a hero that we talked about, I was successful,” Lane said. “If they recognize gender inequality when they see it instead of just passing by, I was successful. If they do something about it, I was super-successful.”

Benin

Permagardening Benefits Farmers, Increases Crop Yield

PCV Emma Edwards (2015–17) learned technical skills in permagardening that will help her address food insecurity in her village. Permagardens provide nutritious food year round but require volunteers to assess site conditions to use existing resources and boost crop yield, up to 700 percent.

“Many women and families know that they are supposed to eat vegetables and fruits for their health, but vegetables and fruits are extremely expensive, if they can even be found, during the dry season, which lasts for most of the year,” Edwards said. “Intelligent use of water can help a garden produce nutritious things all year long.”

Madagascar

Teaching English, Challenging Gender Inequality

PCV Gabrielle Skillings (2014–16) is participating in a TEFL pilot program to earn a TEFL

certification at the end of her service. Her work encompasses implementing dynamic, student-friendly teaching techniques to spotting gender inequality within her school.

“One issue I presented involved the Monday morning flag assembly, at which only boys raised the flag,” she said. “The next week, four smiling, confident girls pulled the cords to lift up the Malagasy flag. Since then, girls have been elected to student leadership positions, won business competitions, and scored at the top of their classes.”

Nepal

Tree-Planting Initiative Provides Income, Nutrition

PCV Steven Fosher (2013–15) and his counterparts collected and distributed 12,000 trees to schools and individuals—primarily women—in his Nepal community. The project focused on teaching planting techniques and the positive environmental impact of trees, and an added benefit: The trees, which included fruit and forest trees, are an additional source of income and nutrition to over 2,000 villagers.

Peru

Waste Management to Protect Environmental Health

PCV Mark Goldy-Brown (2015–17) is working with his neighbors to save the community’s farmland and canals from improper disposal of trash, battling Peru’s biggest conservation issue: trash management. Goldy-Brown created awareness campaigns for conservation techniques to make the village a greener place to live.

“In my community, many sites don’t receive a trash collection service, and even if they do, many people simply burn their trash, throw it in

the water canals, or bury it in their farmland,” Goldy-Brown said. “My efforts in trash management have been largely focused on increasing awareness about separating trash, recycling, and the consequences of littering and environmental pollution.”

The Gambia

Manual Makes Health Accessible

RPCV Kara Horowitz (2013–15), a counterpart, and several PCVs, created an illustrated health manual for fellow PCVs and community health leaders in her village. The booklet covers 30 topics, each highlighting up to 10 essential messages for health workers to focus on, and sparked community learning sessions.

“We meet every day to learn a few new pages of the book,” Horowitz said. “They keep knocking on my door, showing up early for meetings and asking questions. They have their own tool to learn and share their knowledge.”

Vanuatu

Bracelets Promote Global Peace and Friendship

PCV Lynda Mae Wilson (2014–16) fostered international friendship between Girl Scouts in Kentucky and students in her Vanuatu village. After the troop leader contacted her, Wilson arranged for RPCVs to visit the Scouts, who then sent her 150 colorful friendship bracelets. She then distributed them to her students.

“This has been one of my favorite projects,” Wilson said. “Young girls gained leadership skills by using a skill they enjoyed, they shared their culture, the ni-Vanuatu children learned about America, and they are now able to promote their new friendship with bracelets.”



A student creates a “hero tree” at a workshop in Armenia.



Emma Edwards demonstrates her permagardening skills, to increase crop yields in Benin.



Gabrielle Skillings teaches students gender equality in Madagascar.

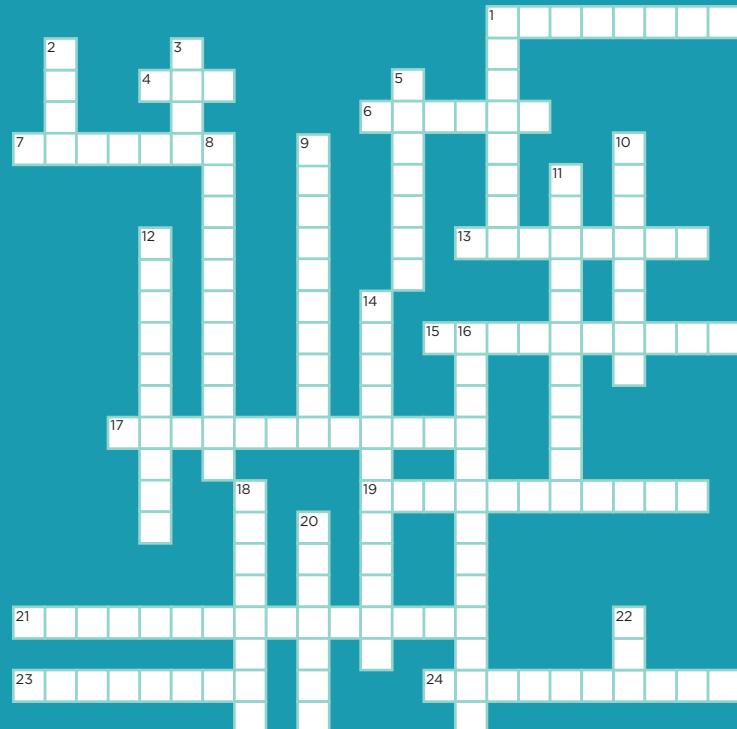


Villagers distribute trees in their community in Nepal.



Ni-Vanuatu students show off their Girl Scouts bracelets.

PUZZLE PEACES



Crossword

See page 14 for answers.

Education for everyone

Across

- Peace Corps HQ started using this social media platform in February
- Currency in Moldova
- A national language in Lesotho
- More Volunteers of this gender are currently serving
- This month honors Native American heritage
- Peace Corps celebrates this anniversary in 2016
- Country whose flag is nearly identical to that of Ireland
- The average age of a PCV
- Holiday in Spanish-speaking countries that celebrates the dead
- Friendly greeting in Nepal
- In 2016, the University of _____ ranked No. 1 for the highest number PCVs

Down

- _____ million girls don't have access to education
- Iconic symbol of peace
- Participants in this pilot teaching program will receive certifications at the end of their service
- Former Disney Channel star who helped produce a song for Let Girls Learn
- Age of the oldest currently serving PCV
- Jewelry store that created a bracelet to support girls' education
- "Did you eat rice yet?" is a common question in which country
- There are currently _____ open posts Africa
- The Peace Corps partnered with this nonprofit for World Thinking Day
- The new deputy director of the Peace Corps
- Master's _____ is a Peace Corps program that will be discontinued after this year
- Common type of dwelling in Botswana
- Per capita, this state produced more Volunteers in 2015 than any other
- Director Hessler-Radelet does this with her husband almost every morning

SUDOKU

EASY

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

MEDIUM

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

HARD

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

Arroz con leche

Ingredients

8 ounces (1 cup) rice
 2 cups water
 1 stick cinnamon
 1 cup sugar
 1/2 t salt
 1 liter of milk

Optional toppings

Ground cinnamon
 Raisins

Instructions

1. Rinse the rice.
2. Add 2 cups water and cinnamon stick, bring to boil, then simmer for 20 minutes.
3. Add milk, sugar, and salt and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Remove from heat and allow to cool briefly.
5. Top with cinnamon and raisins, if desired, and serve.

Makes 4 servings.



LIFE HACK

Mobile phone hacks

Save your battery

Wi-fi and cell service drain your battery when struggling to find a signal. Turn them off when in low-coverage areas for extended periods (but, they don't drain your battery with good connectivity).

Monitor background services

Aside from saving on battery life, disabling location tracking, push notification settings, and background streaming can help safeguard against expensive data usage.

Use Opera's mini browser

Opera mini uses data compression to deliver smaller-sized pages to your device. It's available for Android, iOS, Blackberry, even Java-enabled feature phones.

Use your smartphone as a hotspot

It's not always necessary to buy a 3G/4G dongle if you have an unlocked smartphone and can use it as a hotspot. Opt for a physical connection over Bluetooth: It's faster and more reliable.

Use a VPN for safety

Virtual private networks encrypt your connection even in open wi-fi networks (like in cyber-cafes) and ensure you have end-to-end security. There are some free ones, though reliable ones will cost a little money. Or check with your college or university as many have alumni VPN accounts for free.

Download offline-friendly apps and content

Use the storage in your smartphone or SD card to hold offline apps like Wikipedia (kiwix.org), offline dictionary apps, and fun things like knot tying and stargazing.





The View from Here: My Commute

Next issue: My host family

Send photos of your host family to pctimes@peacecorps.gov. Include your name, country, and service dates. Make sure your photo is 300 dpi and at least 3 inches wide.

Jade Patolo | Belize



Joel Wright | Lesotho

Brian Drake | Tanzania