

15  
CELEBRATING 15 YEARS IN  
THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI  
15

   
**2018 ANNUAL  
REPORT**

15TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION





# A WORD FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to present Peace Corps Eswatini's 2018 Annual Report.

Peace Corps Eswatini is excited to celebrate 15 years of serving the people of Eswatini since its return in 2003 and renew the partnership we have had with the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini since 1969.

Since 1969, about 1179 women and men in total have served the people of Eswatini. Volunteers have worked with local staff to help build capacity in their respective communities/workplaces. Moreover, with the assistance of their counterparts, host families, community members, NGOs and the various ministries in the Government of Eswatini, they have imparted knowledge and skills, and implemented various projects to meet the needs of their communities.

Peace Corps Eswatini is grateful for the support we have enjoyed from the people of Eswatini, development partners and the Government of Eswatini. We have had an enriching experience in the year 2018 and this report reflects some of our accomplishments that we have shared with Emaswati.

Siyabonga kakhulu,



**GLEND A N. GREEN**  
COUNTRY DIRECTOR

# ABOUT THE PEACE CORPS

## PEACE CORPS

Peace Corps is an independent United States Government agency that provides skilled Volunteers to countries requesting assistance around the world. The agency traces its roots and mission back to 1960 when then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country by promoting world peace and friendship.

The reaction was both swift and enthusiastic, and since 1961, over 220,000 Americans have responded to this enduring challenge.

Peace Corps continues to demonstrate how the power of an idea can capture the imagination of an entire nation.

## PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers work with their communities to design, implement and monitor projects such as: establishing permagardens, libraries, youth clubs, HIV and Sexual Reproduction Health (SRH) education, and income generating initiatives.



PEACE CORPS ESWATINI

# DID YOU KNOW?

# IT'S OUR 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



*Peace Corps first arrived in Eswatini (Swaziland) in 1969 to focus on building capacity in the education sector. Due to the immense progress in the country's school system, Peace Corps ended the program in 1996. In 2003 Peace Corps received an invitation to re-open its program, in order to focus on the increasing HIV epidemic.*



*For 15 years Peace Corps  
Volunteers have been  
accomplishing the  
following goals:*



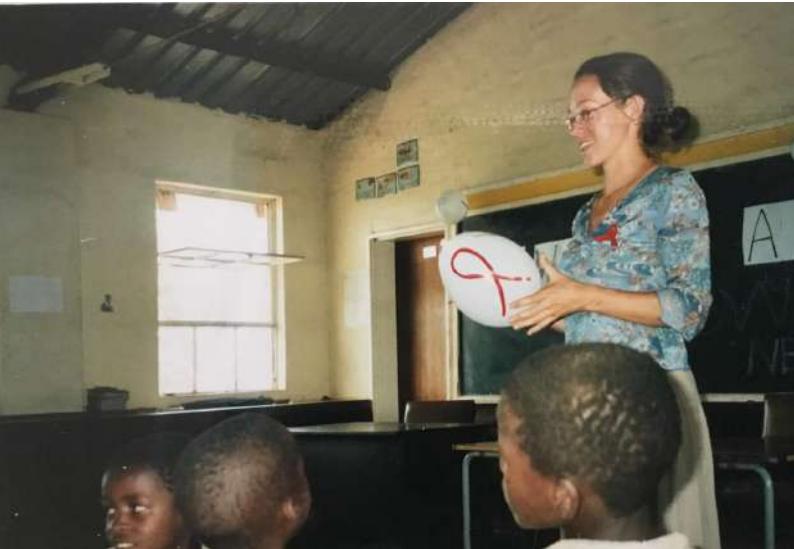
## ***GOAL 1***

*Help people of interested  
countries meet their needs for  
trained men and women.*



## ***GOAL 2***

*Help promote a better  
understanding of Americans  
on the part of the people  
served.*



## ***GOAL 3***

*Help promote a better  
understanding of other peoples  
on the part of Americans.*

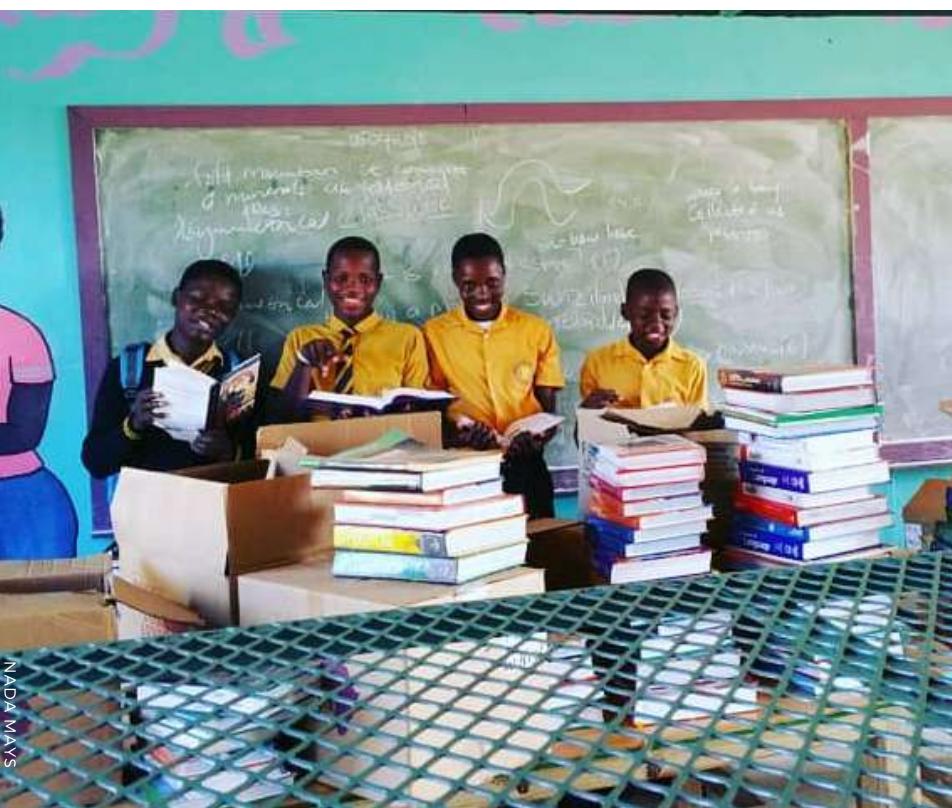
# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Peace Corps Eswatini launched the Youth Development Project in 2011 in co-ordination with the Ministry of Education and Training to help communities and schools address the needs of the growing population of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs) in the country. In Eswatni Youth Development Volunteers work with in and out of school youth to improve educational opportunities, gender equality, encourage healthy life choices, prepare them for the world of work, and develop important life skills. By working with the next generation of Swazis, Peace Corps strives to make a significant contribution to the direction of the country as a whole in 2019.



## 4,828

*Youth were given access to reading materials*



## 776

*of the Youth involved in the program display improved decision making and critical thinking skills*



NATHALIE JOSUE

## PROGRESS BY THE NUMBERS

**1,439**

*Youth displayed improved Positive Identity & Self Esteem*

**1,244**

*Youth trained in Employability Skills*

**915**

*Youth displayed increased levels of Physical Activity*

**910**

*Youth educated in Goal Setting*

**814**

*Youth displayed improved Emotional Health*

**494**

*Female Youth emerging as Leaders*

# COMMUNITY HEALTH

In 2003, Peace Corps returned to Eswatini with the Community Health sector, which aims to support Eswatini's National Emergency Response Combating HIV/AIDS (NERCHA) and other partners to halt the spread of HIV and provide better treatment and support to people living with HIV. The framework was revised in 2009 and again in 2014 to include initiatives addressing other health challenges. Community Health Volunteers work in sanitation and hygiene, food security and nutrition, prevention of communicable diseases, adoption of healthy behaviors to prevent non-communicable diseases, and a myriad of other areas, depending on the needs of the community.



## 1,728

*Of the individuals involved Adopted One Healthy Sexual Behavior to Reduce STI and Prevent Pregnancy*



## 859

*Individuals Sensitized and Mobilized to Seek HIV Testing*



UNICEF CORPS ESWATINI

## PROGRESS BY THE NUMBERS

**970**

*Individuals with increased  
SRH Knowledge*

**430**

*Priority Population  
HIV Prevention  
reached*

**392**

*Individuals Implemented  
Garden Practices*

# GLOBAL HEALTH SERVICE PARTNERSHIP

The Global Health Service Partnership (GHSP) program was introduced in the Kingdom of Eswatini in 2016 to strengthen the human resource for health through knowledge and skills transfer to local students, faculty and other health professionals. The Volunteers served for one year, teaching alongside local faculty and mentoring students in the clinical and community settings. In total, fifteen (15) Volunteers served in the country under the GHSP Program serving in three nursing schools: University of Eswatini, Mbabane Campus, Good Shepherd College of Nursing and Southern Africa Nazarene University (SANU).



# 179

*Students taught by  
the GHSP  
volunteers were  
expected to  
graduate in 2018*



# THE PROGRAM

The group's specialty included a mesh of Medical -Surgical Nursing, Community Health Nursing, Paediatric Nursing, Nursing Education and Leadership and Family Nurse Practitioner. In partnership with the nursing institutions. The GHSP Volunteers inspired local faculty and students to improve the quality of nursing by mentoring students in the classroom, clinical settings as well as in community and school health nursing . The Volunteers with their varied experience co-taught 46 courses from diploma level to master level from 2016 to 2018. Their volunteerism went beyond the GHSP call as they used their spare time to provide and serve disadvantaged poor communities with their counterparts and students in the Kingdom of Eswatini. Some of those communities were kaShewula Community in the Lubombo Region.

They strengthened the partnership with other local and international organizations for resource mobilization and student attachment. Such organizations included Jhpiego, Baylor Clinic, ICAP and Hospice at Home. The GHSP Volunteers also collaborated with Peace Corps traditional two year Volunteers in their community projects and activities. One highlight was the community health fair hosted by one of the two year Volunteers where the GHSP volunteers manned the "Ask a nurse" booth. They also supported the Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) and Boys Reaching Out (BRO) activities and camps, sharing health specific information.

**13, 537**

*service hours, were completed by the GHSP Volunteers.*

*Students had*

**1,650**

*patient encounters*

# RESULTS

In the two years the GHSP program was active, we were able to achieve:

## Curriculum development:

The team was involved in the incorporation of the TB/ HIV components into their nursing curriculum as prescribed by the Swaziland Nursing Council. They also refined the Pharmacology course and extensively worked on the master's degree for Family Nurse Practitioner program. This is the first master's degree offered in the nursing cadre in the entire country. The program was launched on June 27, 2017 at UNISWA, Mbabane Campus with prospective students and key stakeholders in attendance. They developed a Nephrology Nursing curriculum which has been approved-accredited by relevant institutions (Swaziland Nursing Council and Eswatini Higher Education Council).

## Skills lab:

SANU with the assistance of a GHSP Volunteer developed its first strategic plan for the skills lab with the assistance from one of the GHSP volunteers. They also helped in re-organizing the lab and working alongside the skills lab technician Mr Adam Dlamini, developed an inventory list for the prescribed procedures. An implementation plan to improve the lab was designed to be monitored by an established skills lab committee.

# 1,091

Students were supported by the GHSP Nurse educators.

## Classroom lecture and clinical mentoring:

The Volunteers formed a vital part of faculty within the partner institutions and were extensively engaged in lecturing students in class, mentoring and supervising them in the clinical setting, which among others included the maternity unit. They accompanied students for outreach services in sites such as kaShewula, Mankayane and the surrounding outskirts of Manzini, providing promotive, preventive and curative services.

## QI Projects:

The Volunteers also immersed themselves in quality improvement projects which included a hand-washing campaign at Raleigh Fitkin Memorial (RFM) Hospital to assist staff incorporate WHO Hygiene recommendations.

*There were 613  
students supported at  
SANU, 395 at  
UNESWA and 83 at  
Good Shepherd  
College of Nursing*



In the two years the GHSP program was active, we were able to achieve a great deal. Peace Corps Eswatini extends our warmest thanks to all the partners and Volunteers who made it a success.

# PEPFAR

Peace Corps, through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), works collaboratively with communities to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Eswatini.



## PROMOTE AN AIDS FREE GENERATION

Build target groups' HIV knowledge and skills by promoting healthy behaviors (Strong life skills) and HIV Prevention though:

- Camps, Clubs & Safe Spaces
- Adherence Support Groups
- Activities focused on Engaging Men and Boys
- Activities addressing gender norms and Gender Based Violence (GBV) Prevention
- Mentoring and Economic strengthening activities

Linking and referring target populations to key care, support and treatment services:

- HTC, Voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC), Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT)
- Youth Friendly Services
- Referrals Nutrition: Malnutrition & Breast Feeding Support

## TARGET POPULATIONS

Youth/ Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC):

- Adults Living with HIV (ALHIV)
- Adolescent Girls & Young Women (AGYW)
- In and out of School Youth

Adults:

- Parents/Caregivers
- People Living With HIV (PLHIV)

## WHAT IS OUR VOLUNTEER ROLE ACROSS THE 95/95/95?

### 95% OF ALL PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV WILL KNOW THEIR HIV STATUS

PCVs are trained on targeted testing strategies to promote knowing your status. They will refer to PEPFAR-funded facilities and partners for testing, VMMC (Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision), PMTCT (Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission) and other services.

### 95% OF ALL PEOPLE WITH DIAGNOSED HIV INFECTION WILL RECEIVE SUSTAINED ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY

PCVs strategically work with people living with HIV (PLHIV). They are working to ensure adolescents have clinical facilities that are youth-friendly

### 95% OF ALL PEOPLE WITH DIAGNOSED HIV INFECTION WILL RECEIVE SUSTAINED ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY

PCVs work with counterparts to promote viral load testing

# PEACE CORPS RESPONSE

The Peace Corps Response program started in 1996 as a “crisis response program” to assist in short term, high impact assignments in countries faced with disasters. The program has expanded to provide highly skilled expertise to countries with critical needs. The Volunteers work towards producing effective, measurable and sustainable outcomes within communities and the partner organizations they work with. The Volunteers’ assignment is from a duration of 3-12 months with an extension allowance.

In the Kingdom of Eswatini, the program was re-introduced in 2017 after being inactive for some time, to support the Community Health and Youth Development Frameworks.

Between the year 2017 and 2018, four Response Volunteers have provided high- level expertise and capacitated locals from different organizations within Eswatini. Two of the Response Volunteers worked with the High School for the Deaf, one with Good Shepherd Hospital and the last one worked with the Ministry of Health under the Health Management Information System (HMIS).

## 2017

*The Response  
program was re-  
introduced in 2017,  
after being inactive  
for several years*

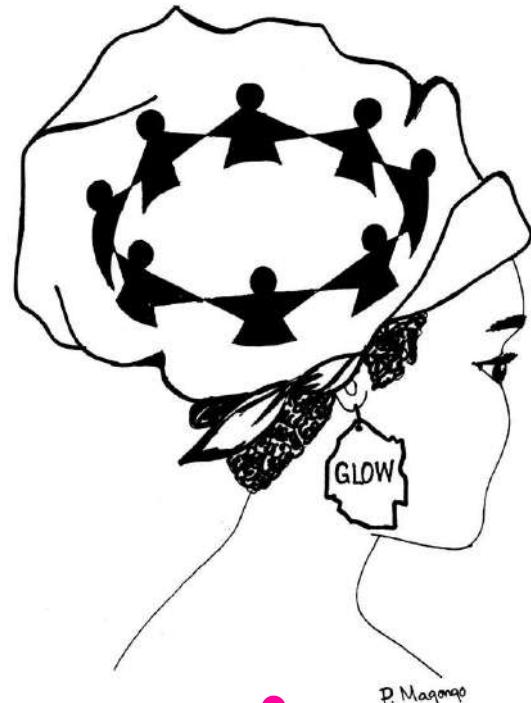


# GIRLS LEADING OUR WORLD

GLOW is a global project initiated by Peace Corps Volunteers and local counterparts to empower young girls and improve the status of women around the world.

GLOW Eswatini began in 2010, when Volunteers recognized the potential that GLOW has for helping to minimize, several of the life-threatening conditions that adolescent girls and young women face within the country.

GLOW clubs are designed to address, mitigate and prevent the challenges faced by these girls and young women through comprehensive SRH and HIV/AIDS education, readiness for the world of work and self-esteem programming.



3,926

*Active GLOW club  
Members*



120

*Active GLOW Clubs;  
92% of GLOW Clubs  
operate without regular  
PCV assistance*





## GLOW FOCUS

Gender inequality and social norms cause many women in Eswatini to find themselves with little personal independence. In addition to being at greater risk of HIV infection than men, they are also threatened by high rates of gender-based violence, abuse, inter-generational sexual relationships and unwanted pregnancy. These realities have significant impact on the present and future of the Swati girl child.

GLOW Counselors help girls construct "future stories" for themselves, where education builds empowerment to challenge stressors of poverty and create goals for future dreams and possibilities.

## GLOW CAMP 2018

GLOW Camp 2018 was a very special two weeks. 40 GLOW Counselors and 120 campers were in attendance, with the first week dedicated to older girls and week two for younger campers. Counselors, who taught and lead all of the camper sessions, went above and beyond with their engaging and interactive execution.

Older campers attended a Body Positivity Panel. Five professional Swati women passionate about the topic of self-confidence and identifying one's worth participated as panelists. This panel was deeply affecting; panelists had incredible words of wisdom that had a noticeable impact on everyone.

# BOYS REACHING OUT

Begun in 2014, Boys Reaching Out (BRO) seeks to empower Swati male youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to plan for their futures, realize gender equality and mitigate HIV transmission.

BRO does this by helping Peace Corps and Swati Volunteers to create clubs where male youth meet once a month or more to discuss male-focused issues and to role-model positive behavior.

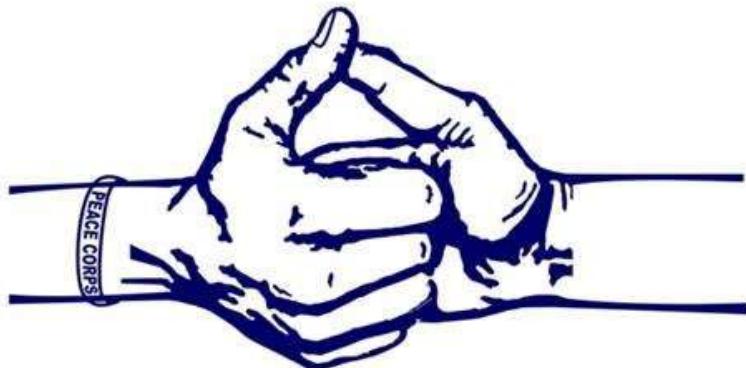
BRO is giving young men an opportunity to discover their voice and define for themselves what it is to be a man. The BRO Eswatini initiative has proved popular in communities across the kingdom with 60 active clubs established since 2014.

60  


Active BRO Clubs; 83% of BRO Clubs operate without regular PCV assistance

# BRO

Broadening Minds. Redefining Manhood.



1,160

*Active BRO club  
Members*





**51**

Communities host BRO clubs with **64** club Counselors

## BRO'S 2018 FOCUS

In 2018, BRO continued to shift its focus from national camps to supporting clubs and club counselors. While camp is a great opportunity to gather boys and teach lessons, the clubs reach many times more boys and play an integral part in role-modeling healthy attitudes and behaviors. In place of a national camp, BRO has implemented topical training's for club counselors, held its first BRO Braai to celebrate the Volunteer counselors, challenged club members to join creative competitions, and held a five day youth summit for older club members to discuss and debate important issues.

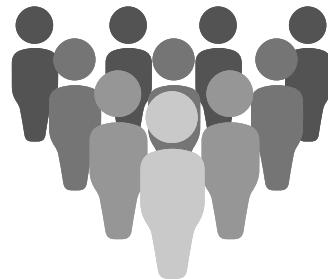
## BRO YOUTH SUMMIT 2018

BRO took a new direction as it held its first BRO Youth Summit where 40 young men gathered to explore life skills, leadership, male identity and respectful behavior. The five day summit culminated in a large debate where the youth demonstrated their knowledge and voice. In teams, they debated on the cultural topics of lobola and polygamy, but were challenged to make their arguments from the female Swati perspective.

# WALK THE NATION

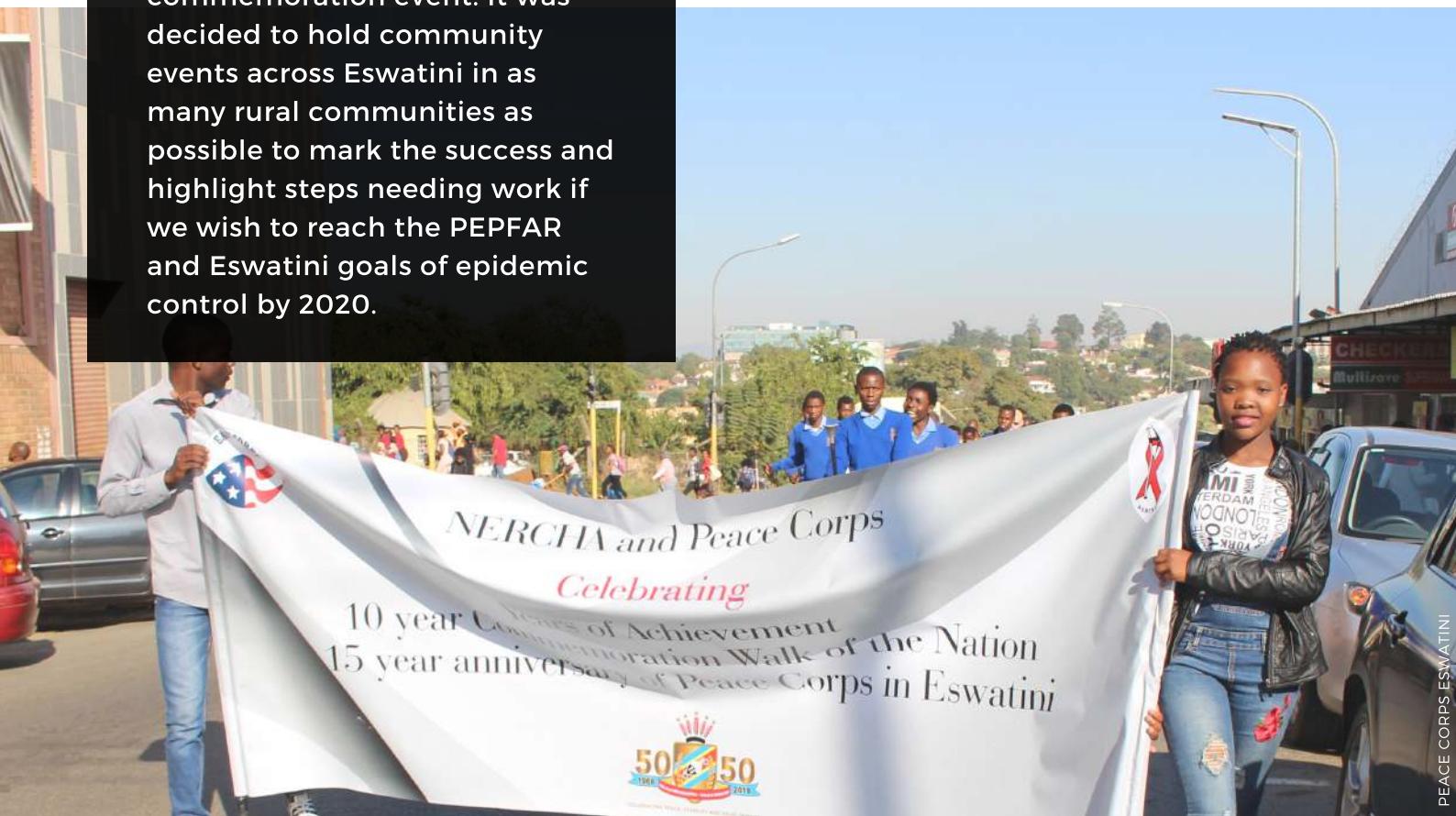
The first Walk the Nation event took place in 2008 with Peace Corps Volunteers organizing a 12 day walk across Swaziland from Mnlumeni border post to Sicunsa border-post. HIV education was held along the way as well as activities performed in association with Peace Corps partners. At the time the epidemic in Eswatini was not in control.

Now 10 years later work to control HIV and to eradicate AIDS in Eswatini is progressing well. To celebrate successes but keep an eye on future needs Peace Corps Eswatini in collaboration with NERCHA decided to hold a commemoration event. It was decided to hold community events across Eswatini in as many rural communities as possible to mark the success and highlight steps needing work if we wish to reach the PEPFAR and Eswatini goals of epidemic control by 2020.



# 5,000

*people were touched by these events and with the focus on youth displaying the hope of Eswatini to recover in full from this epidemic.*





PEACE CORPS ESWATINI

## WE WALKED THE NATION

27



communities did Walk the Nation Commemoration events within a week's time-span finishing with an event at Mavuso Trade Center at the end of the week.

1 KM



walk held by each community to commemorate the first walk then had activities ranging from relay and foot races, traditional dancing performances to soccer games



PEACE CORPS ESWATINI



PEACE CORPS ESWATINI

15



communities painted murals as part of their HIV community awareness strategy and Walk the Nation Activity.



PEACE CORPS ESWATINI



## PEACE CORPS ESWATINI VOLUNTEER STORIES

The following pages are dedicated to highlighting just some of their stories.

# GIRLS GOT GAME ESWATINI

Deacon Lam, G14

G3 Eswatini was started for one simple reason, to introduce girls in rural Eswatini to STEM. We do this by teaching them a computer programming language called Scratch. Scratch is an easy to use graphically based block programming language developed by the folks over at MIT. It's also free and works offline. This privilege of easy access to technology doesn't exist in Eswatini. Even in urban areas where people have more resources, fast reliable internet is rare. Mix this with the need for female representation in STEM careers and you get Girls Got Game Eswatini (G3 Eswatini).

20 Rural communities were brought together to host the first ever Girls Got Game Coding Camp. The girls learned what is inside a computer, discussed why STEM education is important, and heard about STEM careers. The girls returned to their respective communities with a G3 laptop loaded with all relevant software and tutorials. They were given the task to create a video game or cartoon using Scratch and return in six months for the Girls Got Game Summit.



## G3 SUMMIT

Competition inspires excellence, and the Girls Got Game Summit gave our girls the platform to showcase what they learned. First, we held a video game and cartoon design competition. The girls presented their Scratch programs to a panel of judges, their theme was to address a challenge that females face in Eswatini.

## STEM

STEM is used when addressing education policy and curriculum choices in schools to improve competitiveness in science and technology development. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

“

*This privilege of  
easy access to  
technology doesn't  
exist in Eswatini.*

# WHERE THERE IS NO GOOGLE

Kirby P. Riley, G14

There's a problem in rural Eswatini. It's a problem that plagues rural communities around the world. Students in rural Eswatini are expected to perform at comparable levels to their city dwelling counterparts. However, rural Swazi students live in communities that often lack resources. While teaching my students, I noticed that we are attempting to educate young people in the information age without access to information. As the internet became more robust and resourceful, I thought that everyone was benefiting from this information boom. I thought that everyone could "just Google it".

Two years ago, I moved to rural Eswatini and quickly realized that it's impossible to "just Google it" when your community lacks infrastructure for reliable internet connection.

The high cost of internet usage also factors into its accessibility to rural communities. I was not alone in this observation.

“

*I thought that everyone could just Google it.*

## KIWIX

For years, Wikipedia had done regular backups of its entire database which includes millions of articles and images spanning all the world's knowledge. Some time ago, Wikipedia decided that they would make these database backups available for download to the public. Several programmers began to design programs that could read and make sense of those Wikipedia datasets.

From these efforts, we have Kiwix, an offline browser and content reader. Kiwix turns Wikipedia datasets into a fully functional version of Wikipedia offline.



# THE SWAZI WARRIOR

Nathaniel Allen, C14

Participating in the Swazi holiday of Incwala has given me a completely unique perspective and appreciation for Swazi culture and the people of Eswatini. While the holiday is to celebrate the ripening of the first fruits for the season, it became clear to me very early that there is so much more to this holiday that dates back hundreds of years. The warriors, emabutfo, described Incwala to me as the way in which they can demonstrate their love for their country, their King, and their culture, all of which was clearly apparent to me over the course of several weeks. Incwala allowed me to spend time with Swazis who were more than welcoming and appreciative that I wanted to experience their culture, a culture that exists in a country the size of the state of New Jersey.

It allowed me to share with young boys and men about American culture and what the role is of the Peace Corps Volunteers in the country, discuss HIV prevention tactics with emabutfo while carrying a thorn tree at 2:00 in the morning under the light of a full moon.



It gave me the chance to build new relationships with men and boys from all over the country as well as strengthen existing relationships I have with community members and even students from my school. Out of all of the cultural activities I have participated and attended throughout my Peace Corps service in Eswatini, Incwala has been the one to give me the best appreciation for the country, its culture, and its people I am here to serve.

“

*The warriors, emabutfo, described Incwala to me as the way in which they can demonstrate their love for their country.*

# BLACK GIRLS GLOBAL EXCHANGE

Dawnita Brown, G14

Black Girls Global Exchange (BGGE) is a revolutionary peer learning and cross cultural exchange movement empowering girls across the world to tackle global issues through arts and service. Founded by Dawnita Brown (PCV Group 14) and friend Regina Salliey, the mission of the Black Girls Global Exchange is to bring the experiences of shared humanity to black girls from different countries through a celebration of the arts, culture, education, and service while promoting intercultural understanding. Areas of focus for this cross cultural exchange are: girls and women's empowerment; sisterhood/teambuilding; identity/self-awareness; promotion of education and arts; service; community development; health and wellness; HIV/AIDS awareness; leadership development; and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

BGGE impacted 73 BGGE "ambassadors", along with another 118 girls from rural villages in Eswatini.



## BGGE

The BGGE exchange week was full of many firsts for the participating girls (e.g. for some, this was their first time flying, first time outside of their communities, first time interacting with girls from another culture, first time partaking in specific recreational activities, and first time traveling internationally).

“

*The mission is to bring the experiences of shared humanity to black girls from different countries through a celebration of the arts, culture, education, and service...*





PEACE CORPS ESWATINI



## BGGE WAS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH:

**73**

*Ambassadors: 18 from Baltimore (USA), 35 from Soweto (South Africa) and 20 from Manzini (Eswatini) participated in the inaugural educational and cross-cultural peer exchange, including pre-excursion workshops, hands-on service, inspirational speakers, thought-provoking entertainment, group discussion, reflections, and artistic activism.*

**18**

*Girls in grades 8-12 traveled from Baltimore to Southern Africa this past March, in commemoration of Women's History Month as BGGE "ambassadors", and now have a greater sense of their identity and heritage.*

**300**

*People attended a Women's History Month symposium in Eswatini, where attendees were able to exchange through food, traditions, language, and various art forms.*

**3**

*Community Service Projects were completed during their in country visit.*

# GRASSROOTS SOCCER

Marshall Burkhardt, G15

Grassroots Soccer (GRS) is an activity based curriculum that uses soccer metaphors and other games to teach youth about HIV prevention. It is an innovative method of teaching that gets participants up from behind their desks and moving around.

With the help of my friend Muzi, a counterpart in my community, we spent eight weeks teaching 25 youth about the biggest risks of contracting HIV, how to use a condom safely and dispelling commonly held myths and gender norms. When we first introduced the program to the kids, they were skeptical and hesitated about spending two extra hours at school each week. However, after the first session they were eager for the next activity and energizer we performed.

By the end of the program, Muzi and I were impressed not only about the amount of information the children retained but how engaged they were, the level of questions asked and self confidence many had developed. Muzi and I are eager to resume the program with another group of students in a few weeks!

“

*By the end of the program, Muzi and I were impressed not only about the amount of information the children retained but...*



MARSHALL BURKHARDT



MARSHALL BURKHARDT

# PEACE CORPS RESPONSE STORY

Asam Kailie, PCRV G2

As a Response Volunteer at the High School for the Deaf in Eswatini, it has been my goal to help local educators build sustainable deaf education practices. This has come in the form of literacy workshops, partnering with teachers to discuss lesson planning strategies, and ensuring all students have updated medical histories. Students and teachers alike fight an uphill battle due to the late identification of deafness in Eswatini. I've been inspired daily by the passion teachers have for their students and the tenacity of these deaf learners. I feel grateful to have played a small part in their journey.

## SUCCESSES WITHIN THE HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, MATSETSA, ESWATINI:

### The School

An updated and organized library, with new strategies for teaching literacy skills to deaf learners Offline Wikipedia on all school computers and an understanding of techniques for teaching students to use search engines for research papers

### Myself

Fluency in Swazi Sign Language and the gift of embedding myself in both the Swazi and Swazi Deaf cultures The knowledge and skills of what it takes to work successfully within a culture so different from my own



“

*I've been inspired daily by the passion teachers have for their students and the tenacity of these Deaf learners.*



ASAM KAILIE

# BRINGING WATER TO MY COMMUNITY

Courtney Sipes, G14

From the time I arrived in my community, my counterpart has been dedicated to finding a solution to the recent water crisis. After years of drought in Eswatini, access to water has become increasingly difficult. As a country largely reliant on subsistence farming, the effects of the drought have been devastating, especially in the rural areas.

As part of a community-wide assessment during integration, my counterpart and I conducted homestead surveys, where families were given the opportunity to express their concerns and hopes for our community. Through these conversations it was quickly apparent that access to water was a common issue for which they wanted a solution. In fact, most homes are over a kilometer from the nearest water source, and at certain times of the year, even those have been known to run dry.

## LACK OF WATER

Hundreds of homesteads, schools, and the local clinic have all been affected by the drought. It is not uncommon to find that the schools aren't serving food because of a lack of water to cook with that day.

After attempts at other water projects were unsuccessful, my counterpart remembered a solution he had heard about years before: concrete water harvesting tanks. He couldn't remember the organization that conducted the training on these tanks, and had lost the contact to the representative, but we set out to find them regardless.



“

*Over the course of the training, three water tanks were built, and with each new tank, community members became increasingly responsible for the construction.*



COURTNEY SIPES

After checking with one organization in town, we were then pointed to Women in Development, the government organization that trains communities on the building of these concrete tanks. The organization offered to send trainers to our community and conduct the training over three weeks, as long as the community could provide lodging for the trainers.

The concrete tanks are a great solution to the water crisis because they are lower in cost and less fragile than the commonly used plastic Jojo tanks. The concrete tanks are also built to include a filter system to ensure access to clean water, a lid that is easily removed for cleaning inside the tank, and concrete gutters that make it affordable to catch as much rainfall as possible.

There was a lot of excitement around this project once it was announced, with up to twenty community members attending the meetings before the project began. On the first day of the project, my counterpart and I worried that the rains would keep people away, but by the end of the day, twelve people had come to begin construction on the first tank.

Over the course of the training, three water tanks were built, and with each new tank, community members became increasingly responsible for the construction.

This was the most important part of the training, as it guaranteed that the participants would be able to continue to build more tanks on their own, making the project sustainable. The locations of the tanks built during the training were chosen based on their accessibility. One tank was built at the chief's kraal, next to a garden benefiting the orphans and vulnerable children of the community. The other tanks were built at the primary school and preschool.

The concrete tanks have gained a lot of attention around the community as people have watched them being built. Several individuals, as well as the local high school, have expressed interest in having those trained build more tanks for them. As these tanks continue to build momentum, my counterparts and I are eager to see the positive impact they will have on our community.

# CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY

Brianna Dickinson, G15

Every February in American schools like clockwork, teachers gear their lesson plans towards Black History Month.

Although, there are many arguments & complaints against the month long observation. I personally do believe special recognition needs to be upheld. There are many marginalized groups that have been cast aside and denied credit, African Americans are one of them, especially in regards to contributions to the country's existence and progress.

Here in Eswatini though, I was very confused about why my Swazi kids weren't receptive or excited about celebrating Black History Month (BHM). Many local students wanted to learn about modern America (pop culture) which is understandable but I noticed a lack of knowledge about influential African figures. So after introducing the idea of BHM I decided to focus on African leaders to bring it "home" & show the students role models they can relate to.

## BLACK HISTORY

For a youth club session I decided to make our classroom a museum. After hearing this idea from a black Peace Corps Volunteer at another post I printed pictures & biographies of African influential figures from history and modern times and posted them on the classroom walls. The students walked around the room learning about men & women from this continent who have contributed to politics, technology humanitarianism, art and more worldwide.



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*Explaining the fact that I'm a black American, a new concept to many Swazis, and that there are black people all over the world.*



PEACE CORPS ESWATINI

Another small BHM venture I decided to make was a spotlight in the library. To showcase black authors' talents I found books like *Push*, *The Color Purple*, *Chains*, and more to display under a written description of BHM and why I was doing this. Of course the biggest disappointment from both the kids and myself were the lack of African authors available.

I also had the immense pleasure of bringing students to be a part of the *Black Panther* phenomenon here in Eswatini. After holding a writing competition about role models at school, five pupils and I joined over 70 other students from all over Eswatini to see this influential movie. These students got to see strong, intelligent, community oriented black American & African characters living in a African country that not only denied aid from others but had access to resources that could change the world.

For the writing competition we had about 15 participating but could only choose 5, so to reward the others for going the extra mile we had a private movie screening of *The Great Debaters*.

The smallest and most consistent "activity" I and other black PCVs do, not just for BHM but everyday living here is having conversations about race and diversity in America in addition to its tied history with Africa. Explaining the fact that I'm a black American, a new concept to many Swazis, and that there are black people all over the world; although exhausting, is an opportunity that many blacks before me never had.

# SOLAR ENERGY PROJECT

Nathaniel "Corbin" Johns, G14

This project began when we first heard about an opportunity to receive solar panels through Books For Africa. All Books For Africa recipients were informed that we could apply for a set of solar panels for our schools. Unfortunately, only one school would be selected so Mr. Dlamini, the primary school librarian, and I decided we wanted the panels for our library.

We discussed how best to use the panels so they would benefit students as well as teachers. Mr. Dlamini and I saw the potential they had in assisting students with researching assignments and improving their English skills. Our plan was as follows: in addition to providing light for the library, we would use the electricity for a stereo system so the students could listen to podcasts of different English speakers so they could hone their skills to hear and comprehend different speakers' accents. Eventually, we finalized the details of our plan and submitted it to the Books For Africa committee. We crossed our fingers and waited.

## GOING SOLAR

Several weeks later we received an email congratulating us on our successful submission. Ecstatically, we danced. Then reality set in. Our work would be cut out for us. Mr. Dlamini and I were informed we would be working in conjunction with a non-profit called Solar Kits For Change (SKFC). Shortly thereafter we were introduced to the leadership and representatives of SKFC, Fran Crotty, Harry Olupitan, Glen Goldsby and Marcus Larson. For over a year we coordinated and planned the implementation and sustainability of our solar project.



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*The most encouraging part of this project was seeing how the community responded to its potential, especially the bogogo or grandmothers.*



CORBIN JOHNS

Just before SKFC arrived they informed us they would also be including two refurbished laptops with Microsoft Office to assist the teachers with their lessons and recording for students in their studies. Also, PCV Kirby Riley contributed Wikipedia Offline software for students to be able to research assignments.

When SKFC finally arrived, we hit the ground running. Over the course of four days, teachers, students and community members, under the supervision of Solar Kits For Change, screwed in pvc piping, ran wire, cut wood, installed fuse boxes and wired solar panels. When all was said and done three sets of LED lights and two electrical outlets were installed. Glen also lead a technical training for 30 students and 9 teachers, using mini panels as teaching aids, instructing them on how solar panels work and the benefits of renewable energy. Glen graciously left the teaching aids for teachers to train future students. Glen then informed the library committee that the system itself wouldn't have to be serviced for 30-40 years and the LED lights wouldn't have to be changed for at least 20 years.

The most encouraging part of this project was seeing how the community responded to its potential, especially the boGogo or grandmothers. As the week progressed we saw many different people from the community come to see what all the commotion was about, some even came back to help with the solar installation. Each day there were at least 12 residents who contributed.

Their hard work and determination ensured the successful completion of this project. Before SKFC left they expressed their interest in partnering with Peace Corps to work on future projects in Eswatini. SKFC also shared their thanks for the warmth and hospitality offered by the Swazi people. The potential of solar projects in Eswatini is unlimited, due to ever-developing technological advances in the solar industry and the enthusiasm of communities. Solar projects in Eswatini will guarantee a bright and enriching future for all.

After completing our project, a Make (mother) approached me and congratulated me on doing such a great job. I told her that it was a team effort and I could not take full credit for the project. She then told me "the thread follows the needle." I was very humbled by this given that make was the wife of one of our community's traditional leaders.

# WORKING TOWARDS AN HIV FREE GENERATION

Lindsey Barter, G15

Here's a fact; adolescent girls and young women ages 15-24 are the most at risk population for acquisition of HIV here in Eswatini. Here's another fact; fourteen girls in this age group took three days out of their summer break to attend the Swazi Girls4Health training that we facilitated at the clinic here in Bhudla. These fourteen girls spent time in sessions learning to understand their HIV risk and discussing risk reduction strategies such as; correct and consistent condom usage, PMTCT (prevention of mother to child transmission), reduction of GBV (gender-based violence), partner reduction, and ART. They brainstormed skills to enhance their savings skills in order to assert their independence and in hopes of avoiding debt. They took the time to think about action steps in immediate timeframes so they can reach their current life goals.

All of these young women voluntarily took the time to gain knowledge and become advocates in their community, and I was elated to be along for the ride.

Swazi Girls4Health is a discussion based training that sets the groundwork for adolescent girls and young women to engage in conversation about HIV risk reduction strategies and financial literacy.



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*I don't take for granted how lucky I am to work alongside an extremely committed clinic staff.*



PEACE CORPS ESWATINI

Several partners worked together to produce this training such as; HC4, based at Johns Hopkins Centre for Communication Programs (CCP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and NERCHA with funding help provided through USAID.

Peace Corps Eswatini recently adopted Girls4Health as a program to be implemented by both Community Health and Youth Development Volunteers in country. The training was created by emaSwati for emaSwati and because of this, the information and discussion guides are relatable and relevant for the girls. I'm well aware that my experience as an adolescent woman growing up and living in the United States varies greatly from the experiences that girls are facing here.

Instead of pretending to know what it's like to be these girls, I can instead learn from them and we can work together to make HIV risk reduction strategies happen in their own lives.

I don't take for granted how lucky I am to work alongside an extremely committed clinic staff.

I attribute the success of our first Girls4Health training to the team here that understands the importance of sharing this knowledge and puts so much of their own time and energy into the betterment of the lives of people in our community.

All I can really say is that I'm extremely proud of our fourteen trainees. These young women are taking the responsibility of creating an HIV free generation into their own hands. It's a big responsibility, but as the training teaches and as these girls now know, "we can be a spark that lights a fire. Many times, the most effective activism happens in the course of normal life".

# RISE WITH KINDNESS

Victoria Rooks, G14

Early into my extension year I had the privilege of representing Save the Children on United Nations (UN) and Eswatini Government led national planning committees for both International Day of the Girl Child and the 16 Day of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. It was during these planning meetings that I realized I would not be present for World AIDS Day 2018. I was going back to America for the first time in 30 months in late November and would remain there until the new year. As excited as I was to return to New York, see friends and family, and eat tons of bagels I was upset by the reality that I would be missing such an important day here.

I joined Save the Children Eswatini as a third-year extension Volunteer in August 2018. As a member of the Child Protection Unit most of my work has been on our Violence Against Children and Children on the Move programs. However, every project we do features an HIV component as Eswatini has the world's highest HIV prevalence rate and that is felt in all walks of life. HIV is believed to be the largest driver of gender-based violence and domestic violence in families.

Over 200,000 children have been orphaned from AIDS and been left more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Ignoring this cross-cutting issue is not an option if we truly wish to promote children's rights.



VICTORIA ROOKS



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*I had the privilege of representing Save the Children on UN and Eswatini Government led national planning committees for both International Day of the Girl Child and the 16 Day of Activism Against Gender Based Violence.*

# Rise with Kindness



After talking with the Save the Children team we decided to plan a World AIDS Day event in New York, in addition to taking part in the Eswatini national event in Big Bend. My being in New York granted us a unique opportunity to reach an entirely new crowd, many of whom know little about HIV, and know nothing about what we do as Save the Children Eswatini.

I reached out to my former high school, where there is a Language and Culture teacher Mrs. McGinnis, who I have been communicating with throughout my service. She was thrilled at the idea of supporting this event. Together we got permission from the Principal and invited the student body, with specific attention spent on those interested in language, culture, service, and art. When I first arrived, I was able to meet with the Principal, as well as 5 classes to tell them about my Peace Corps Service and invite them to a viewing of the film *Liyana* on World AIDS Day.

*Liyana* is a film made here in Eswatini. *Liyana* gives a voice to our youth and highlights many of the struggles children in Eswatini face.

The film touches on issues like physical and sexual abuse, human trafficking, and HIV/AIDS all while managing to promote the strength, perseverance and hope that is so integral to the Swazi culture. After the film attendees were invited to a local restaurant where on two different dates, we led discussions about Eswatini.

Over the course of all the talks, we reached over 200 people with HIV facts, Save the Children goals, information about Peace Corps, and most importantly I was able to share information about the beautiful country I've called home all these months with people and places that built me.

# THE CROSSING OF CULTURES

Vibushan Sivakumaran, G15

I knew that my family coming to visit Eswatini from the U.S and Canada could be a challenge in terms of trying to accommodate everyone on the homestead due to limited rooms, one outdoor toilet, and no running water with just three tanks to hold water. Considering all this, when I brought up having my family visit and staying on the homestead, I could feel some nervousness of in terms of expectation from my Babe (host father).

My parents, and aunt and uncle, weren't born in North America. They hailed from the country of Sri Lanka and lived in the northern region called Tamil Nadu. All four lived in Sri Lanka under quite similar conditions as I was living currently. Homes were not huge and they housed quite a number of family members at a time. My family did have a running water system in their homes, but still had to get water from a well. Similarly too, my family even had chickens rummaging around the property and dogs for security purposes.

My uncle's and father's family even owned farmland and they would work in the fields growing corn and other crops throughout the year. However, in 1983 my family took the dangerous risk to move to Canada in search of a better life. This was the story for many Tamil Sri Lankans.

I say all this because with my family coming to visit, I had serious hopes they would come to my community feeling the familiarity of their roots in Sri Lanka. I wanted them to see that their lives back in Sri Lanka and the one I am living currently were no different, besides the foundation of the cultures.



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*It was incredible to see them feel at home even when home was over a 1000 miles away.*



I even had a dream to see my Gogo (grandmother) and my Appa working in the fields together tilling the soil for the upcoming rainy season.

Understanding all this, I knew I had to do something special to bring both worlds together. I figured what better way to cross the Swazi and Tamil culture then share traditional meals from both sides. My Babe liked the idea of the lunch and we both agreed to work together to make it happen. Knowing my immediate homestead family quite well, I thought it would just be us and my visiting family. About three weeks out, trying to finalize the day and preparations with my Babe for the lunch, he came to me with some unexpected news. He told me we had to invite our extended family too. Meaning our neighbors, cousins, aunts, uncles and a few close family friends. It was actually quite similar to something I would expect in Tamil culture too. You must invite everyone, or risk making someone upset. We were now up to over 25 people coming. I knew we had to make this event happen, no matter the situation. After breakfast at the lodge we headed to my community. It was time for the crossing of the cultures. When we got to the homestead all my worry washed away. My Babe along with my Gogo and aunties welcomed my family with open arms.

Both my families greeted each other as if they were family. Everyone was all smiles and I could feel a sense of bonding being formed. It was such a beautiful moment to finally see. After everyone got a chance to meet , we all got to cooking. I shouldn't have been as surprised, though I really was. Both my families put in the work and I could really feel the value and dedication on both sides.

From the beginning it all felt so effortless. Both sides just meshed and respected each other fully.

Even better, my family could feel the familiarity of Sri Lanka that I had hoped they would. From the chickens running around, the dogs barking at the gates, tractors going back and forth and even to the look of the country, it was incredible to see them feel at home even when home was over a 1000 miles away.

# EXTENDER VOLUNTEER STORIES



During my extension year, I am a Research Officer for the Lubombo Health Research Unit. I am currently working on a protocol document for the implementation of a Non-institutional delivery study in the Lubombo region which seeks to determine the burden of expecting mothers. In addition, I am assisting in the initiation of mental health educational trainings to nurses regarding depression.

-Darah Boucher, G14



Patrick has enjoyed stepping into the new BRO PCVL position. While he has spent the past two years working and supporting the BRO Program alongside other Volunteers, he is excited to step up the volume of that workload. Over the course of this next year, Patrick hopes to help BRO continue its transition away from national camps to sustainable and active clubs, to focus and develop better club monitoring and evaluation and to work alongside PCVs as they guide their BRO Counselors in taking on greater responsibility and leadership roles.

- Patrick Reed, G14



During my extension at Baylor Clinic in Mbabane I have managed and operated a clinical study on STI prevalence rates in HIV positive adolescents, helped manage two country wide TB prophylaxis treatment programs and created lab protocols for a new TB testing algorithm for children using stool instead of sputum. I am currently writing a manuscript for the STI study that will be published before I finish my extension, and I am attending the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Seattle to present our findings. My extension has given me invaluable experience that will help me accomplish my goals of enrolling in an MD/PhD program and becoming a medical doctor that specializes in immunological and microbiological research.

- Caitlyn Jasumback, G13



This is Gini Doucet who has extended for a second year as a Peace Corps Volunteer Leader working with the administrative and programming teams in Stakeholder Development and PCV support. She has been involved in organizing events such as Walk the Nation and GLOW and BRO activities in the last year. This year she is focusing on the Programming Teams activities organizing a new PCV Resource format supporting the new Peace Corps Eswatini framework and then organizing a Resource Fair for introduction and follow up for PCVs to have the opportunity to meet a variety of partners. In addition she is an active support for PCVs and PCV Extenders on a variety of topics from cultural issues, programming issues, and general living in Eswatini issues.

-Gini Doucet, G13



For my extension, my goal is to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, especially children. I am working towards this goal through various activities including working at a local school that focuses on children with special needs where I am working to establish vocational skills building activities for the students while creating partnerships with businesses that wish to support and promote awareness of disabilities. In addition, I am working outside of the school to support various organizations' activities that seek to promote disabilities in Eswatini.

-Nate Allen, G14



I serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer Leader for the GLOW Eswatini program. I worked as a GLOW leader during my 2 year service, and I'm proud and honored to be selected to continue work with one of Peace Corps Eswatini's flagship programs. The GLOW community is a powerful one - I get to partner with Swati women who are committed to helping girls and youth identify who they are, who they want to be and how to get there. No two days are the same, and every facilitator training, camp, awareness event and get together with these powerful women make for a rewarding experience.

-Lakia Poole, G14

# OUR PARTNERS

## ESWATINI BASED PARTNERS

- AMICAAL
- BANTWANA
- BOY SCOUTS OF SWAZILAND
- CABRINI MINISTRIES
- CHESHIRE HOMES
- COMPASSIONATE SWAZILAND
- DIABETES SWAZILAND
- FAMILY LIFE ASSOCIATION OF SWAZILAND
- GOOD SHEPHERD HOSPITAL
- GOOD SHEPHERD COLLEGE OF NURSING
- GUBA GARDENING
- HAMBA PHAMBILI
- INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
- JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT SWAZILAND
- KWAKHA INDVODZA
- LUSWETI HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS
- MANZINI PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL
- MANZINI PUBLIC LIBRARY
- MEN ENGAGE NETWORK
- NERCHA
- NEW LIFE HOMES
- ONE BILLION RISING
- PASTURE VALLEY
- ROCK OF HOPE
- SHISELWENI HOME BASE CARE DCS  
REFORM CHURCH
- SOUTHERN AFRICA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY
- SUPER BUDDIES
- SWADE
- SWAGAA
- SWANEP
- SWAZILAND COMPUTER SOCIETY
- SWAZILAND NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

- SWAZILAND NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE
- THE LUKE COMMISSION
- VUSUMNOTFO
- WOMEN IN LAW
- WOMEN IN STEM
- YEBO ARTREACH
- YOUNG HEROES
- YOUTH ENTERPRISE FUND ZOMBODZE

## ESWATINI GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

- PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
- MANZINI TOWN COUNCIL
- MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
- MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- MINISTRY OF HEALTH
- MINISTRY OF SPORTS, CULTURE AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
- REGIONAL EDUCATION OFFICE
- SIMPA
- IDM
- CHAPS
- UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

## US GOVERNMENT PEPFAR PARTNERS

- CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL
- DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
- DEPARTMENT OF STATE
- US AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- US EMBASSY

## INTERNATIONAL NGO'S

- ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT RELIEF AGENCY
- AFRICA'S TOMORROW
- BAYLOR COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
- BOOKS FOR AFRICA
- CHAI
- ELIZABETH GLASER PEDIATRIC AIDS FOUNDATION
- ENACTUS
- EYES ON AFRICA
- GRASSROOTS SOCCER
- INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
- MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRE
- MOTHERS 2 MOTHERS
- MOTHER BEAR PROJECT
- PACT
- PSI
- SAFAIDS
- SEED- GLOBAL HEALTH SERVICES PARTNERSHIP
- SEEDS PROGRAMS INTERNATIONAL
- UNFPA
- UNICEF
- WATER CHARITY
- WOMEN'S FEDERATION FOR WORLD PEACE
- WORLD FOOD ORGANIZATION
- WHO
- WORLD POSSIBLE
- WORLD VISION

## COMMUNITIES, LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND CLINICS

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT ESWATINI THAT HOST VOLUNTEERS AND TO ALL THE LOCAL SWAZI COUNTERPARTS WHO WORK TIRELESSLY ALONGSIDE PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS. WE ALSO THANK LOCAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND CLINICS FOR WORKING WITH OUR VOLUNTEERS TO IMPACT CHANGE WITHIN COMMUNITIES

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## **DATA SOURCES**

2018 VRT Data

DOS Data

Peace Corps Volunteer Stories

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

All Peace Corps Eswatini Staff & Volunteers who gave data and input towards the creation of this report.





*"...Small children are like sponges and want to soak up everything. Their enthusiasm makes me more enthusiastic about teaching."*

- JOHANNA KELLER, PCV

