



Estamos Juntos in Mozambique

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Placement

Mozambique is a beautiful country set on the coast of the Indian Ocean. I spent my first two years in Chicumbane, a small community just 15 km outside of a provincial capital. Most people live off the land and men are often miners in South Africa, traveling back and forth.

I spent my third year in the capital city of Maputo. Mozambique has a population of 28.3 million people. Mozambique is twice the length of California. Portuguese is the official language, but there are 40 local languages spoken throughout the country.



My yard in Chicumbane, Gaza complete with five mango trees, two lemon trees and an avocado tree.



Sunrise over Maputo City, the capital of Mozambique.

Agencies

- Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF)
 - EGPAF is an international organization dedicated preventing pediatric HIV infection and eliminating pediatric AIDS through research, advocacy, and prevention, care, and treatment programs.
- Crianças Artistas Contra HIV e SIDA (CACHES) Young Artists Against HIV and AIDS
 - CACHES is a community based organization that provides health education to children 5-15 years old through the art, music, theater and sports.
- Stomping Out Malaria
 - The Stomping Out Malaria Initiative connects Peace Corps Volunteers, malaria-focused organizations, Ministries of Health and the President's Malaria Initiative, a collaboration of CDC and USAID, to prevent and treat malaria in affected countries throughout Africa.



Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

Organizational Development and Individual Capacity Building

- Implemented a health information system at the Rural Hospital of Chicumbane pharmacy for over 7,000 patients living with HIV.
- Trained three staff how to use the system resulting in decreased wait times for patients when picking up medication in the pharmacy.

Community Adherence Support Groups for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS

- Collaborated with hospital staff to promote Grupos de Apoio para Adesão Comunitário (GAAC) - Community Adherence Support Groups, and designed promotional posters.
- Collaborated with GAAC focal person at the hospital to reorganize the filing system in the hospital's reception and pharmacy in order to give priority to GAAC patients.
- Worked with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), PC staff and other PCVs on a new GAAC Toolkit, designed to help the Ministry of Health expand the GAAC program nationwide, easily assess the readiness of each health center, and design an appropriate strategy to implement and expand the program.

Psycho-social Support to Maternal, Infant and Child Health

- Worked with a nurse to organize at least 10 weekly nutritional demonstrations and presentations when ingredients were available.
- Worked with EGPAF Psycho-Social Fellow to organize four monthly support group meetings for HIV Positive children and their mothers.
- Created and distributed 80 invitations for partners of HIV positive pregnant women encouraging them to come to the hospital for testing.
- Supported the nurse in Maternal and Infant Health with general counseling.



My co-workers and I on my last day at the Rural Hospital of Chicumbane.

Activities and Outcomes

Crianças Artistas Contra HIV e SIDA (CACHES)

- Worked with CACHES President and five Volunteers to restructure the organization, establish a regular schedule of meetings and program of events, and implement regular programming.
- Collaborated with two volunteers to lead weekly health lessons to an average of 40 children each week about nutrition, malaria, hygiene and HIV/AIDS.
- Organized special events at the organization including Children's Day, World Malaria Day and World AIDS Day.
- Coordinated and facilitated 20 weeks of agriculture and nutrition classes for 10 community health workers from local organizations.
- Coordinated with a local artist to implement mural projects in three different communities.
- Worked with a group of 10 teenagers to write and present a health related skit in English for two consecutive years as part of English Theater.
- Co-facilitated a JUNTOS group, a group of seven teenagers focused on learning about health topics through the medium of theater.



Above: The English Theater group I worked with after we won 2nd place. Below: Two of the CACHES volunteers facilitating a session on malaria.



Peace Corps Mozambique National Malaria Coordinator

- Coordinated the PC - Stomping Out Malaria initiative in Mozambique, managed the Malaria Task Force, a coalition of regional PCV representatives to advise, support and evaluate volunteer-led malaria projects.
- Served as a liaison with the President's Malaria Initiative's (PMI) CDC and USAID Resident Advisors and the Mozambique Ministry of Health's (MISAU) National Malaria Control Program (NMCP).
- Established a private-public partnership between Peace Corps and Vodacom to provide MISAU-approved long-lasting insecticide treated nets and behavior change education nationwide.
- Facilitated PC Mozambique's relationship with other leading malaria prevention and education partners including World Vision, Malaria Consortium, UNICEF, etc.
- Managed \$37,500 of PMI funding for PCV-led malaria prevention and education projects.
- Organized and facilitated the malaria training of all PCVs in country during all trainings.
- Attended an intensive 10-day malaria "boot camp" in Theis, Senegal.
- Represented PC on a national Behavior Change Communications Group through the NMCP.
- Coordinated a national World Malaria Day event with the NMCP, Vodacom and other malaria partners.

Peace Corps Mozambique Grassroot Soccer (GRS) Focal Person

- Attended week-long training at Grassroot Soccer in Cape Town, South Africa
- Organized and co-facilitated two regional trainings for 28 PCVs and 27 Counterparts.
- Translated necessary material for the training and program into Portuguese.
- Supported PCVs throughout implementation of the GRS curriculum in their communities.
- Reviewed the monitoring and evaluation of all Volunteer-led interventions.
- Served as liaison between Peace Corps Mozambique and Grassroot Soccer Headquarters

A group of youth performing their original music about malaria prevention at the World Malaria Day event hosted in Xai-Xai, Gaza.



Skills Utilized/Developed:

- Grant writing
- Facilitation Skills
- Program Management
- Community Organization
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Classroom Connections:

- I took SW 701, International Social Work, before I left for Mozambique and that really introduced me to the ideas of cultural competency and humility.
- Through the Community Organization classes I took, I learned how to enter a community, engage community members in a needs assessment and work together toward a common goal.

Lessons Learned:

- Live simply.
- Even learning just a little local language gives you some street credit.
- Behavior change is hard. Really hard.
- It is so important to just sit and be with people.

Career Connections:

- Flexibility
- Management of expectations
- Interest in interpersonal practice and intersection with macro social work

Advice:

- Ask questions.
- Be present. Live in the moment.
- Know that it is okay if a project fails. You are not a failure.

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