Demographics
Lesotho is a land-locked country surrounded by South Africa with a population of just over two million. Also referred to as “The Kingdom in the Sky”, Lesotho has mountainous terrain and overall high elevation in rural areas, where about three quarters of the population lives. More than 85% of the labor force works off the land, as Lesotho is an agrarian economy. According to the CIA fact book, unemployment is approximately 30%, life expectancy is 52 years of age, and 23.6% of the country is living with HIV/AIDS - the second highest HIV prevalence rate in the world.

Framework for Youth Development Volunteers in Lesotho
1. Educate youth about HIV/AIDS and sexual health
2. Support HIV+ peoples
3. Mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS

Host Country Partner
I was assigned to the community-based organization the Anti-Drug Abuse Association of Lesotho (ADAAL) in the town of Mafeteng, Lesotho. The goal of ADAAL is to prepare youth, especially orphans and vulnerable children, with life skills and healthy practices that will guide them in the future. ADAAL also supports children and their families with education- and needs-based financial assistance.

Project Activities
A list of my primary activities in my two years of service included:
• Planning and facilitating summer and winter camps for 60+ youth at a time who attend primary and secondary school
• Facilitating youth activities in and out of schools throughout the community including after-school meetings, creative writing competitions, Grassroot Soccer (GRS) interventions, career planning sessions, and a youth sports club
• Capacity-building through the creation of partnerships in the community with local business, organizations, and volunteers to share ideas and resources for improved collaboration and service delivery
• Assembling a group of eight women in my village for economic empowerment through needs assessment, proposal writing, and business skills development to start an income-generating project for women who are affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and/or take care of orphaned and vulnerable children.

Skills Development
• Cross-cultural communication
• Utilizing assessment in all parts of program development
• Group facilitation
• Improvisation

Lessons Learned
Good relationships are the foundation of organizing work
Development work takes time; 2 years is little time!
NGOs in developing countries have unique challenges and barriers that need to be understood before giving money to and developing their programs

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