



Clubs & Sports in the Kingdom of eSwatini



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Location: Hlathikhulu, Kingdom of eSwatini

The Kingdom of Eswatini is a small country, within South Africa, in the continent of Africa. It is home to approximately 1.2 million people. The official languages spoken are SiSwati and English. Christianity is the predominant religion.



Important Facts

- The Kingdom of eSwatini is one of the world's last remaining absolute monarchies.
- Prince Makhosetive was crowned in 1986, at the age of 18, and assumes the title as King Mswati III.
- The Kingdom of eSwatini was granted formal independence, within the Commonwealth, in 1968.
- The country was formerly known as Swaziland. Country name was changed by the king in April 2018.
- According to UNICEF, the Kingdom of eSwatini has the world's highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate at approximately 26%.



Global Field Placement

My first 2 years of Peace Corps service was in the Ebenezer community as a Youth Development Coordinator. During that time, my counterparts and I promoted English literacy and incorporated life skills through boys and girls club, respectively. The boys club, Broadening minds, Redefining manhood, Obtaining success (BRO), addressed issues around male identity, HIV education/sexual reproductive health, fatherhood, drugs & alcohol, relationships, and gender equality. The girls club, Girls Leading Our World (GLOW), focused on self-esteem, women empowerment, HIV education/sexual reproductive health, and gender equality.

Secondary Project: BRO

I was a Co-director of the BRO committee. BRO stands for Broadening Minds, Redefining Manhood, Obtaining Success. Our goal was to address the issues boys and men face in their community such as drugs & alcohol abuse, unemployment, peer pressure, bullying, lack of positive role models, and lack of awareness regarding their sexual reproduction health. My role was to establish ways to make clubs sustainable without volunteers. I helped organize trainings for new counselors, where we informed prospects of the BRO mission & values and provided additional resources to promote club sustainability. I also assisted in the fundraising of two BRO camps. Furthermore, I wrote a grant for BRO Training of Trainers (TOT). The training prepared 30 counselors for an annual weeklong camp. During the training, we worked very closely with several counselors in helping them design lesson plans and improving their facilitation skills.

BROSwaziland

Broadening Minds. Redefining Manhood.



3rd Year of Peace Corps Service

During my 3rd year of Peace Corps service, I worked for the Swaziland National Sport & Recreation Council as a Community Sports Coordinator of a multipurpose sports center. My role was to manage the facility and implement as many sports program as possible. I wrote a grant and fundraised to provide sports equipment for basketball, tennis, badminton, squash, soccer, and volleyball. My counterpart and I organized sports program for all ages.

Skills Developed

- From my 3 years of service, I developed the ability to:
- Write grants and budget
 - Fundraise for projects and sports equipment
 - Manage a sports center
 - Organize and implement capacity building trainings
 - Play tennis
 - Coach basketball



Classroom Connections

Classroom:

- SW 503: Social Work and Sports

This course open my eyes to the endless possibilities within the social work field. The focus went from youth participation in sports to looking for ways to encourage people of all ages to participate in physical activities. I went from teaching youth how to play basketball and tennis to working with older community members. In addition, my counterparts and I utilized yoga, zumba, and aerobic to target community members who are not heavily involved in sports.



Lesson Learned

- Failure is a part of life and the lessons learned can lead to your success.
- If a project is being driven by you, it may not be sustainable.
- Try to involve as many counterparts as you can in a project.
- Take it one day at a time.
- Take care of yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Do not compare yourself to other volunteers.

Career Connection

Serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer, I could not have imagined that I would have the opportunity to do so much with basketball and other sports. It truly shaped my service and career aspirations. I would like to utilize sports as a way of reaching out to community members and educating them on relevant issues.



Advice

- I would recommend doing some research about the country you plan to do your global field placement before you arrive.
- Reach out to other volunteers who are in country and/or have return. The more questions you ask, the more informed you will be.
- Try your best to learn basic greetings of the primary language spoken. It really helps you establish rapport if you show a willingness to want to learn and speak the language.
- Run your own race and try not to compare yourself to others. No one is better at being you than you are.

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