



# The Exchange

ICT – September 2001  
VOLUME NO. 35

Peace Corps' Women in Development Newsletter

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HIGH TECH FUTURES: Girls' Club members in Ghana learn about computers at the District Assembly office as part of an information technology field trip.

Photo provided by: Trevor Harmon/PCV

## Girls in Ghana Get Computerized

By Trevor Harmon/PCV

"What is all this...singing?" asked the schoolmaster, squinting through his spectacles at eleven young women huddled around a laptop. "I thought you were teaching them computers." The girls ended their song — something about sending your daughter to school — and he watched closely as one of them tapped a key. Instantly the room filled with a digital recording of their voices, piped through the laptop's tiny speakers.

"But I am teaching them computers," I replied. The schoolmaster seemed perplexed, then frustrated, and finally said, "Please tell them to reduce the noise. They are disturbing my work." As he turned to leave, another girl pressed a different key,

and the recording was played again, this time at double-speed. The girls burst into laughter at the sound of their altered, high-pitched voices. The schoolmaster closed the door, shaking his head and looking slightly annoyed.

When I began teaching computer classes six months ago, I never thought that getting my colleagues to accept my unusual teaching methods would be a problem. But there were plenty of obstacles, as I discovered, in teaching computer literacy to girls in Ghana. In this article, I want to share my experiences and offer some tips on how to overcome the challenges of teaching computer skills in a developing country.

Girls in Ghana continues on page 10

# From the Editors

Dear Readers:

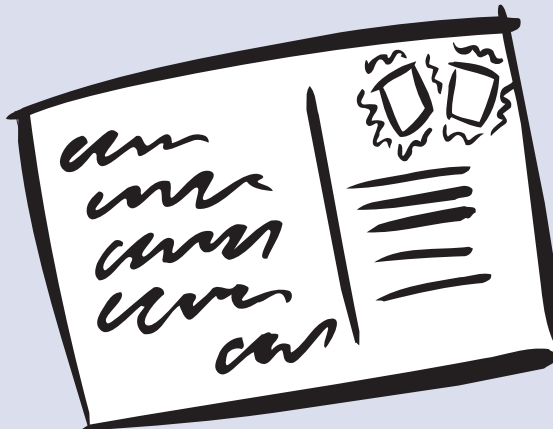
This issue of The Exchange focuses on Gender and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). The subject is timely as individuals, businesses, schools and governments have begun to experiment with exciting new media and utilize existing technology in innovative ways. Unfortunately, it has become clear that access to these technologies themselves, and the benefits that follow, can vary greatly between men and women. By fostering their access to and use of ICT, Volunteers and counterparts can help women and girls begin to master some of the tools advancing education, communication and entrepreneurship in the 21st century.

In this issue, there are stories about teaching young women how to use computers in Ghana, recycling old computers into schools in The Gambia, and the opening of an ICT center in Jordan. You will also find articles on youth conferences, International Women's Day, micro-financing, agriculture and a collection of quotes, stories and photos from your GLOW camps. In addition, The Exchange has a new email address of its very own! Articles and electronic photos should now be sent to the new email address: [TheExchange@peacecorps.gov](mailto:TheExchange@peacecorps.gov).

We would also like to say goodbye to someone who has contributed greatly to the quality and value of The Exchange newsletter. Matthew Emry has left the Peace Corps to pursue his graduate studies and we wish him well in his new adventures even as we welcome a new member to Peace Corps' global WID/GAD effort. Tammy Boger has begun work as the new WID/GAD and ICT Administrative Assistant. Her most recent position was as Assistant for the United Nations Volunteer program, and prior to that she extended her Volunteer service in Côte d'Ivoire as the WID/GAD Coordinator in that country. Congratulations to both Matthew and Tammy!

Teri Wingate  
Women in Development/  
Gender and Development Coordinator  
(Acting)

Tammy Boger  
WID/GAD and ICT  
Administrative Assistant



## Q & A

The Exchange is a publication of the Peace Corps. Letters to the editor are the expressed views of the individual writers and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Peace Corps. We reserve the right to edit for style, clarity, and length.

Dear editors,

As the small business development representative on the Women in Development (WID) committee in Morocco, I am interested in how WID operates in other countries. We are always looking for ways to improve upon what we have done. The Exchange provides some useful ideas, but is not all that frequent. One idea is to provide some sort of e-mail or regular mail list for WID members that wish to participate. I am interested in a variety of aspects of Peace Corps/WID, particularly the types of projects that are done. With respect to each country there are differences, but there are also commonalities, and I believe that we have a lot to learn about from other. As a city Volunteer I have easy access to e-mail. I am sure that more and more Volunteers have or will have access to e-mail as well, so this is a very feasible means of communication for myself and others. Thanks very much.

Jason Medeiros  
PCV  
Morocco

c/o Elvira Nistreanu,  
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## From Moldova's GAD Corner

By Michelle Haberer/PCV

Peace Corps/Moldova's Women in Development (WID) program has recently undergone a name change, from WID to the Gender and Development (GAD) program. The term "Gender and Development" expresses a philosophical change, which reminds us to focus less on the "development of women" exclusively, and more on development that includes a gender perspective. This will prompt us to ask questions about gender roles, concepts, solutions, and so on, before assuming that one notion or one system is correct.

What inspired this exciting change? Elvira Nisteanu, our program advisor, just returned from a training of trainers conference with the advice and ideas of administrators, host country nationals (HCNs), and Volunteers from around the world. Between that and the shared experience of Susan Brock, our new Programming and Training Officer, we have a myriad of new ideas with which to expand and develop GAD/Moldova.

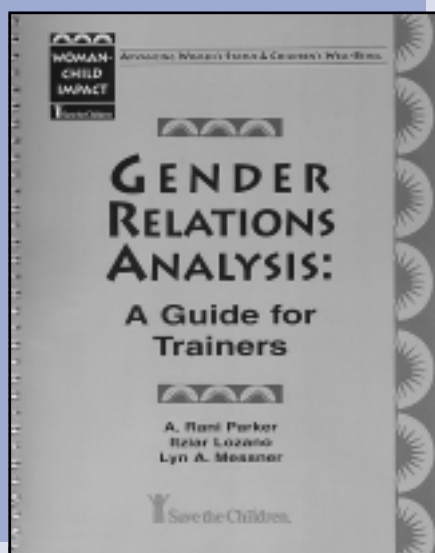
Because we have such an inspirational number of Volunteers eager to work with the men and women of Moldova to develop GAD projects, we decided to change our structure as well. Each sector committee has a representative who meets with the GAD coordinator to discuss why and how their program area can integrate GAD. The GAD committee also has designed a GAD Program Action Plan to define and measure the goals and progress of Peace Corps/Moldova's GAD program. Subcommittees are formed from the larger group and discuss the projects' timelines.

Our first activity as a redefined committee will be a self-esteem seminar. Future GAD events will be Camp GLOW, public relations and self-esteem seminars, a peer helpers workshop, and a breast cancer awareness campaign.

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## WID Reviews in ICE

WD138—Gender Relations Analysis: A Guide for Trainers. A. Rani Parker, et al. (Save the Children) 1995. 142 pp.



Gender Relations Analysis: A Guide for Trainers is a manual for systematic gender training. It emphasizes the link between gender roles and sustainable development, the role of access and power relations, and the need to extend gender considerations beyond the "project" context. This manual is divided into three sections: the first focuses on key concepts, the second on training sessions, and the third on training practices. Its contents include daily session plans and handouts. Many of these sessions have been used at the Peace Corps regional Gender and Development Team workshops.

If you would like to use this book and it is not available in your in-country resource center, you may order directly from ICE through your Peace Corps office. List your name, your sector, your address, the book title, and the ICE publication number, and a copy will be sent to you. Send your requests to:

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To locate other resources, please refer to The Whole ICE Catalog 2001/2002, which contains a complete listing of technical books and other publications from the Peace Corps ICE Resource Center for Peace Corps Volunteers and staff to use during their Peace Corps service. WID and GAD resources can be found on pages 163-171 of the catalog.

If you have a favorite ICE publication, The Exchange would like to share your reviews and comments on how you have used the resource. Please send to the WID office the title and catalog number of the resource; let us know what you thought about the book; how you used it; and how you think it could be used. If you have found helpful resources not currently distributed through The Whole ICE Catalog, please send information on them as well. Through this common sharing, we can continue to help Volunteers find useful resources.

# Information and Communication Technologies: Creating New Opportunities for Women & Girls

By Gini Wilderson, Information and Communication Technologies Specialist and Patrick Collins, Evaluation Specialist

**L**ineo, a young urban woman in Lesotho, is enrolled in a mass media course with a university in South Africa. The university mails her the videotaped lectures and she views them at home on her family's VCR. Last year, she responded to her assignments by snail mail, but this year, a new Internet café has opened in the capital and she is able to e-mail her assignments. One assignment asked her to interview a print journalist about the concepts of free speech and national development. With some help from the technicians at the Internet café, Lineo was able to locate a female journalist in the U.K. who provided her with some thought-provoking responses. The journalist directed Lineo to online news portals featuring the work of other female journalists. Lineo eagerly visited those Web sites, then began to wonder why so little of the content was produced by African women.

Lineo is not the only one in her family who improves her education at a distance. Her younger sister, Teboho, who is in primary school, listens to the radio every evening for supplementary math exercises.

Lineo's cousin Mampiti, the secretary for her community's Burial Society, just learned that the Ministry of Education will offer basic computer classes. Mampiti is very excited about participating in the classes because she believes they will help her better manage the Burial Society's finances. She becomes discouraged when she realizes that the classes are held when she is responsible for looking after her younger brothers and sisters.

The story of Lineo and her female relatives is based on numerous and increasing real-life examples reported by Peace Corps Volunteers and staff. Peace Corps reports and data from numerous other organizations confirm that the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is expanding rapidly around the world — although not as equitably for women and girls.

## Gender and Technology

Much has been written about the digital divide—the gap between those who have Internet and computer access and those who do not. This divide is most strongly felt in the non-industrialized nations where Peace Corps Volunteers live and work. Unfortunately, women in developing countries tend to feel the consequences of the divide even more acutely than their male counterparts and are less likely or able to participate in today's information age.

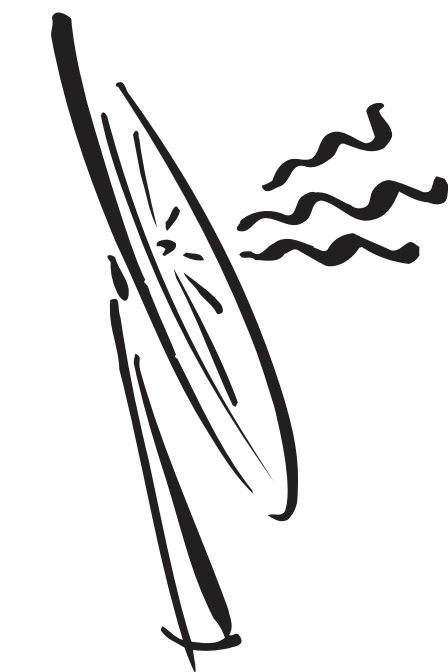
In an era when fax machines have gone from new technology, to common use, to virtual obsolescence in only about 10 years' time — and Internet café's have become commonplace in capital cities and in smaller

towns in nearly every country where Peace Corps Volunteers work — “women are still only 22 percent of all Internet users in Asia, 30 percent of those in Latin America and six percent of Middle Eastern users. No regional figures by sex are available for Africa.”<sup>1</sup> Women tend to participate in the low-tech end of adaptation (e.g., as data processors) rather than contributing to higher-end applications such as Internet content development, programming or Web page design. Women and women's groups do however, frequently use e-mail as an important tool for empowerment, sharing resources and networking.

## What are ICTs?

What do you think of when you hear the term “ICT?” If you are like most people, you immediately imagine a computer, possibly connected to the Internet, and how those two technologies could be harnessed to access and produce all sorts of interesting and relevant information. While this may be the more commonly held definition these days, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) actually refers to a BROAD spectrum of technologies that allow us to acquire, produce and share ideas and resources. It is useful to keep this concept in mind as we begin to strategize ways to use technology as a tool for leapfrogging stages of development. The following are descriptions of some other forms of ICTs and how they can be used to support Volunteers' work, particularly with the women and girls in their communities.

**Print:** Printing, whether it is from mimeograph machines or photocopiers, is the most common form of communication and information technology. Where there is a shortage of relevant print materials, Volunteers are often active in helping develop



<sup>1</sup> From the executive summary of “Gender, Information Technology and Developing Countries: An Analytic Study” by Nancy Hafkin and Nancy Taggart, Academy for Educational Development (AED), Washington, DC.

Information Technologies continues on page 5

resources, such as lesson plans and business brochures.

**Radio:** Radio is a fairly inexpensive and pervasive technology, yet it is often overlooked as a tool for development information and communication. In recent years, small community radio stations, which typically have a limited reception range, have increasingly been involved in broadcasting locally relevant development messages, such as health, nutrition, or civic participation. Several countries use a methodology called interactive radio instruction to provide educational instruction in remote areas where teachers are under-trained or unavailable. In addition, satellites can now provide radio reception to remote areas that were previously beyond reception range.

**Video:** Television signals are increasingly accessible in countries where Volunteers work. In areas beyond broadcast range, signals are often receivable using satellite dishes. In addition, video has become a fairly inexpensive and common technology. The price of video cameras has dropped dramatically in recent years, and movies or videos with development messages can be shown in the most remote areas using a portable generator or car battery. Because of the power of visual images, video — whether it is used for microteaching for interactive teacher training, or showing videos on effective health and nutrition practices — can be a very effective development tool.

**Computers:** There are several variations of computer technology. A basic level would involve a standard computer, monitor, and perhaps printer, with basic word processing, spreadsheet, and database software. Depending on the processing speed of the computer, software might also be available on CD-ROM. Spreadsheet and database software alone can improve efficiency in organizational record keeping. An additional level of computer technology is e-mail. The demand for e-mail access has expanded exponentially because of its ability to provide expanded communication possibilities — particularly across great distances quickly and at a relatively low cost. Another level of computer technology is Internet connectivity, which allows access to the World

Wide Web. The Web provides users with access to enormous amounts of information (e.g., scientific literature and development best practices), which might otherwise be inaccessible. The Web also allows interactive communication through the use of chat groups and bulletin boards. Currently, the most advanced form of computer technology is virtual reality, which allows users to interact in a computer-generated virtual world. Some promising applications for this technology are being developed, such as training in surgical techniques and allowing users to ride on atomic particles to demonstrate physics principles. However, this technology is prohibitively expensive for most development applications.

### What Can Peace Corps Volunteers Do?

In the year 2000, over 1,300 Volunteers worked with 750 host country organizations and over 14,000 host country counterparts and partners on information technology-related activities. Because of their computer, language, and cross-cultural skills, and the fact that they work on capacity-building efforts at the grassroots level, Volunteers are uniquely positioned to help individuals, organizations, and communities explore the use of information and communication technologies to improve their lives. Below are a few ideas to start creative thinking on ways in which Volunteers in all sectors can use ICTs to help create new opportunities for the women and girls, as well as the men and boys in their communities.

- Approach your community radio station, or even the Ministry of Information, regarding producing a dramatic serial radio program about the trials and tribulations of an enterprising female farmer, small business owner, teacher, or other profession.
- Design an America Online (AOL) Peace Pack activity specifically geared toward increasing women's access to, and production of, useful information on the Internet.



Be sure to submit your Peace Pack proposal through your APCD.

- At your next WID/GAD meeting, distribute a list of Web resources for women and girls (see “How To”, page 14). Make an arrangement with a local Internet café or telecenter (often located at teacher training colleges) for a group discount and hold a Web surfing day for a local women's group. Make arrangements for childcare so that women can fully participate.
- Explore ways to use computers to support future sustainability of forestry. Analytical processes for planning purposes, resources assessment and data collection, and on-the-ground forest management are some ideas.
- Local TV and radio stations are often starved for locally produced programming. In conjunction with your counterpart, community or local WID/GAD group, propose production of a weekly radio or TV talk show focusing on a different woman-owned small business each time. If it is a television program, get local female business owners to donate items to furnish your set, in exchange for on-air credit at the end of the show.
- Help set up and run sustainable community or school telecenters. For ideas on how to start this, see the recent UNESCO publication, “The Community Telecentre Cookbook For Africa: Recipes For Self-Sustainability.” [www.unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001230/123004e.pdf](http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001230/123004e.pdf).

- Video or audiotape mock interview sessions to help increase women's opportunities for landing a new job. Afterwards, review the tape with each individual to help her critique her own performance under pressure.
- Download free typing tutors from the Internet to increase typing speeds and increase job marketability. Just type "free typing tutor" in your favorite search engine.
- Design an e-commerce Web site featuring goods produced by women and girls. Use a free Web hosting service (there are still a few available!).
- Add an IT component to your Camp Glow activities (see "Girls Around the World Thrive at Camp GLOW", page 16). Collaborate with a local Internet café to provide access to the Web.
- Create a newsletter highlighting the ICT activities in your country. Post your newsletter on the Internet.
- Join IT Volunteers — a forum for Volunteers worldwide who want to exchange ideas, experiences, and information about working with technology. Peace Corps staff is also welcome to join. This group is moderated by Dee Siegel, country desk assistant at Peace Corps/Washington. Both Volunteers and staff are encouraged to join. To be added to the IT Volunteers group, please send an e-mail directly to [dsiegel@peacecorps.gov](mailto:dsiegel@peacecorps.gov). Include your name, e-mail address, title (Volunteer, APCD, etc.), sector, and country. You will receive a confirmation e-mail with instructions to access the Web page and additional information.

"We must recognize that this information technology is here to stay... What we have to decide is if we either play the game and turn it to our advantage or lose out completely."

— Fatma Alloo, founder,  
Tanzania Media Women's Association

## Ghanaians Gain Confidence Through Computers

By Sarah Danniger/Volunteer

Recently, a handful of Ghanaian girls participated in a weekend workshop designed to introduce them to basic computer skills, to build their confidence in using computers, and to promote their interest in information technology. The conference took place at Wenchi Secondary School, and was facilitated by the director of its computer lab and his two computer technicians.

The director started the workshop by introducing the girls to the lab and explaining its rules and etiquette. The girls had a wide range of computer experience, from never having seen a computer before to being familiar with some software.

The participants learned about the parts of a computer, and its basics operations. They learned how to use menus, and were each assigned a user name and a password for the local network. They were taught how to log in and look at the files in their directories. The girls also practiced the correct way to position their hands on the keyboards, which they abandoned for the hunt and peck method. The girls also played simple computer games, which provided a great way to break up the sessions and practice using the keyboard.

Another interesting session allowed the girls to send e-mail messages to someone in America. With the phone lines down, however, they were not sent in time to receive replies before the end of the workshop. The girls also took time to view the Wenchi Secondary School Web site, after which they learned about html (hypertext-markup-language) code and designed their own Web pages. The lab director took a photo of each girl to be added later to their personal pages.

One of the most enjoyable activities was a competitive game of scrabble over the network. The students seemed to really enjoy the weekend and all expressed interest in learning more about computers.

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# Jordan Opens First Community Information and Communication Technologies Center

By Ann Furr/PCV

The Prince Hussein bin Abdullah Community Center for Information and Technology is the first information and technology (IT) center in Jordan. The center was opened in the remote village of Safawi, Jordan, by His Majesty King Abdullah. Safawi is a village of about 2,000 people located in Eastern Badia in eastern Jordan. This area of the Badia is home to approximately 20,000 people, mostly nomadic or semi-nomadic Bedouin.

Since the doors opened and the computers were turned on, the center has been filled to capacity with young and old, all eager to learn. In deference to local custom, the Safawi schools have worked out a rotating schedule so that the boys' classes and girls' classes come on different days of the week to use the computers. Even the kindergarten classes march down the streets of Safawi to the center to use the computers. On the last day of the week and in the afternoons after school, the center is open for community use. The center has 15 computers, three with Internet access. The center is the result of a collaborative effort of local, national, and international organizations, and without this wide support, it would not exist.

The center is supervised by the Safawi field center of the Jordan Badia Research and Development Programme. A Web site is being built for the center that will provide information about the Safawi area, as well as pictures of local handicrafts for sale. The



STARTING EARLY: Kindergarten children learn about computers at an IT center in Jordan.

Photo by: Ann Furr/PCV



site will also provide information about the locations of the mobile medical and dental clinic and the mobile veterinary clinic that operate in the area.

In the near future, the center plans to offer computer-training classes to the community, and to issue certificates for successful completion of the course. Training provides the foundation for all IT center activities. Information technology training and the International Certificate are being considered for a teaching program. As the need arises, other specific courses can be added to the center's services, such as programming, network management, development software applications, and computer hardware repair. In addition, specialized workshops can be arranged for community members who have specific training needs. There is a waiting list of approximately 300 people, who want to take the classes. The center also plans to open a second room as a language laboratory for teaching spoken English and is considering the possibility of constructing a playground. This would provide a place for students to play while waiting for their turn on the computers. It would also allow

mothers to visit and use the center while their children played safely close by.

A teacher in Duluth Minnesota has built an interactive Web site, so that her American high school students can utilize the Internet to learn from students in Safawi about the Middle East. Her students are graded on their participation. The students of Safawi are able to practice their English language skills, as well as their computer skills in answering these questions. Community response to the center has been overwhelmingly positive. Elderly Bedouin come to the center from their black goat-hair tents and sit next to college students, both intent on learning computer skills for the twenty-first century.

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# Resurrecting the Dinosaur: Creating Networks to Recycle ICT Hardware in the **Gambia**

By Clara Soh/PCV

**Editor's Note:** On June 6th, Peace Corps Volunteer Clara Soh and three other winners of the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Stories Competition 2001 presented their stories and lessons learned at the 2001 Internet Summit in Stockholm, Sweden.

Further information about the competition and Clara Soh's article can also be found at [www.iicd.org/stories](http://www.iicd.org/stories). A shortened version of Clara Soh's article can be read below.

Last year, I noticed a magazine article discussing the difficulties that many companies face when upgrading their computer systems. Many people think that the actual purchase of new computers is the only costly step in upgrading. However, this article discussed the growing demand for adequate disposal facilities for dead computers; companies regularly pay upwards of US \$40 for the safe disposal of a single unit. The article further discussed the fact that while many schools and non-profit agencies constantly clamor for donations of computer equipment, no one wants machines that are obsolete.

Here in West Africa, the word obsolete does not exist. Cars that should have been retired years ago have been soldered and spot welded numerous times, and still function as bush taxis, ferrying villagers across the country each day. Before this project began, the only computer training facility outside of the capital city taught eager computer students on outdated computers. Several Peace Corps Volunteers and I realized that there was a missing link in the chain of supply and demand; therefore, we pitched in to try and bridge the gap between willing donors and eager recipients.

## Project Description

Initially, we focused on bringing computer equipment to Gambian Schools



through donations. Before a farmer in the village can tap the power of information and communication technology (ICT), he must first learn how to use the tools involved. We realized that by bringing computers to schools, and integrating them into the curriculum, we could foster an entire generation of Gambians who would be computer literate. This, however, is a daunting task. When Volunteers set out to select students for computer classes, one of the statements on the application was: Describe any previous computer experience. Among the most experienced students, one proudly stated that he had "once been in the same room while his uncle used the computer.

We wanted to alleviate the lack of IT resources by explaining to possible donors that any sort of computer equipment was highly valued. The Gambian community was convinced that they could tap into a wealth of hardware donations if together we could create a network between nongovernmental organizations, donor agencies, American schools, private individuals, Volunteers, and Gambian students to bring computer equipment to The Gambia. The project leaders used e-mail to communicate with donors, bridging previously insurmountable international gaps. Once the new partner-

ships were forged, project leaders in the community worked directly with donors to pay for and transport the new equipment to the project site. We helped the students set up Web sites to show donors the results of their philanthropy and taught students how to use e-mail to help solidify the newly formed links. The Resurrecting the Dinosaur project was even featured on a commercial Web site and in National Education newsletters, which helped to enhance its success. It should be noted that the Peace Corps was not involved in the payment for, nor the transportation of, the equipment. However, the project did receive the complete approval of Gambian government officials and Peace Corps/Gambia.

The idea that one man's trash is another man's treasure is not new, but many people do not realize that their outdated computers are an incredible resource to developing nations. Our project is unique because it strives to create a recycling network. In addition to creating connections between donors and recipients, we also worked to create networks of computer savvy host country nationals within The Gambia.

Bringing computer equipment to a country where the vast majority of the population lives without electricity has led to problems in maintenance and facility upkeep. The dependence on outside aid was discouraging. Facilities will sometimes be shut down for weeks at a time while a machine is taken from a rural province to the capital for servicing. More often than not, schools cannot afford the cost of servicing a computer, so the machine will lie collecting dust for a relatively minor problem.

With this in mind, we brought together Gambians from schools and health and governmental offices in each rural division and trained them in computer maintenance and repair. In this way, we formed a new network of people who can rely on each other for advice when a computer develops

Resurrecting the Dinosaur continues on page 9



a problem. We trained them to communicate with each other through e-mail and to access troubleshooting information over the Internet. By facilitating cross-sectoral cooperation and communication through the application of ICT, we have helped to alleviate reliance on outside aid, and have furthered sustainable development.

## Project Results

Before we began our effort to bring computers to The Gambia, the only computer training facilities in the country were private, for-profit enterprises. Since we began a consolidated push to bring equipment and computer literacy to The Gambia, eleven computer labs have been opened at primary, junior and secondary schools around the country. Students who were previously unable to afford classes at the private institutions have since been trained in basic computer literacy and to teach computer literacy as teachers' assistants to their fellow students. Introducing computer literacy to Gambians offers a chance to students to significantly improve their quality of life by teaching them a skill they can readily apply. In a few short years, students trained at Volunteer-initiated facilities have gone on to jobs in the computer field, such as at The Gambia's first Internet service provider (ISP), or as full-time computer teachers.

Volunteers engaged in this project have also made a conscientious effort to include both female and male students in the limited enrollment classes that are now offered. In the Gambia, girls are often married at an early age before they can finish their schooling. Therefore, by the time students have reached senior secondary school level, the number of male students far exceeds the number of female students. Additionally, in a traditional household, the male is the absolute head, especially when dealing with finances.

Considering this traditionally low status of women in The Gambia, girls trained at the computer facilities have made significant strides towards advancement, and have used their knowledge to become secretaries and teachers.

Finally, most schools are so seriously underfunded that they are unable to provide textbooks to even 10% of students in rural areas. Teaching students to access information over the Internet opens up a wealth of information and resources.

## Sustainability

The Gambia has been on the receiving end of numerous philanthropic and development projects, but many of the assisting agencies have not sought ways to make their projects sustainable. The result is that after foreign support has run out, the project falls into disrepair. We realized that many projects fail because they are viewed by Gambians as outside projects — projects initiated and carried out by well-meaning foreigners. In order to combat this trend, we sought ways to make the computer project sustainable. We decided that before we brought in donations of computers, we would encourage the community to take partial ownership of the project, so that when Volunteers left, the community would view it as their own. We did this by having schools pay for shipping and handling charges on the donated computers.

In the end, it turned out that having communities, or in this case, the schools, take ownership of the computers was not enough to make the project sustainable. After facilitating the acquisition of donations, we realized that most schools did not have the human resources to manage and maintain their computers.

Thus, we launched a second phase of our project to train computer resource persons throughout the country on computer repair, maintenance, and advanced literacy. Ensuring that our project is sustainable has been more difficult and time-consuming than bringing in the actual hardware. Through the efforts we have made in bringing computers to The Gambia, we have realized that development is not done by procuring materials, it is done by building the human resource base, and ensuring that the community feels included every step of the way.



## Development Aspects

Bringing in used, obsolete computers to The Gambia has brought information and opportunities to an entire generation of students. Computers are no longer viewed as mysterious machines by many students, and accessing information over the Internet and communicating with pen friends across the ocean has become a reality. Providing girls with the opportunity to explore additional roles other than just the limited role of child-bearer, by giving them a concrete skill that they can use to better themselves, has made a significant impact in furthering development. Today, the number of computer labs is still inadequate, with students constantly turned away from classes because they cannot be accommodated in the facilities available, so the number of students who have been reached by this project is limited. However, we look forward to the day when we can say that we have revolutionized an entire generation of students, as they have grown up with computers in their classrooms.

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Banjul, The Gambia

## Computer Classes with the Girls Club

During my first year in Ghana, I kept busy as a full-time math teacher, so I never really considered starting computer classes. But after I attended a Gender and Youth Development workshop sponsored by the Peace Corps, I picked up some ideas on starting a girls' club at my school. I was a little reluctant at first; I didn't know how the students and the staff would respond to a white male as the patron of a club for girls. In the end, I decided that by making computer literacy — not girls' health, girls' empowerment, or other sensitive issues — the major goal of the club, I could avoid the problem.

The first step, of course, was to find some computers. I had brought a laptop with me from home, but that was not enough for the fifteen girls who had signed up for the club. And although my town recently had been wired for electricity and was growing at a phenomenal pace, the only computers around were tucked away in a few nongovernment organizations' offices and in the hospital administration's office.

Luckily, the Ghanaian government had recently established over a hundred science resource centers across the country, each containing chemical solutions, dissection kits, magnets, and all kinds of equipment for teaching science. Also included were six computers for running educational software and gathering data from experiments. None of the science teachers knew how to use them, however, so they just sat in the labs collecting dry-season dust. I figured the girls' club could find a better use for the computers at our local science resource center.

After getting permission from the headmaster, the girls' club opened the school's first-ever computer lab. We carried the cases, monitors, and peripherals to an old storage room, dusted them off, and fired them up. At each station sat at least two girls, one operating the keyboard, the other on the mouse, both looking at me wide-eyed and ready to learn.

Because none of them had ever touched a computer before, I decided to start off slowly with the basics: a lesson on how to open and save files. That was my first mistake. Using the mouse and keyboard was so

natural for me that I had never thought about teaching it to my students. My lesson plan was soon scrapped as I discovered how fundamental my teaching would have to be. I felt somewhat like a little league baseball coach, instructing the proper hand grip of the mouse and finger form on the keyboard. Although my students needed a good twenty minutes just to master the art of the double-click, they left the computer lab the first day with a little more knowledge of the computer and a lot less fear of it.

The classes continued — one per week — as the girls discovered how to type their names (probably the all-time most popular lesson), how to launch programs, how to print, and even how to calculate sums and averages in a spreadsheet. They also studied definitions — ROM, RAM, and other acronyms — which are more important than ever now that their standardized graduation exam includes questions on computer literacy. Of course, they had equal time for fun stuff as well. After each lesson, the girls were given an hour to do anything they wanted: paint digital pictures, browse a CD-ROM about dangerous African animals, or record impromptu songs through the computer's microphone (which got me into a little trouble with the faculty, as I mentioned earlier).

Though my aspirations of helping the girls' club members become computer geniuses have long since faded, together we accomplished some big projects. For example, the club put together a two-page magazine of original essays and poems that they typed themselves. We formatted it newspaper-style and printed copies for all of the club members. Later that year, we went on a field trip to the local District Assembly (the Ghanaian equivalent of a city hall) to learn how the secretaries use computers for writing reports and keeping track of the local government budget. After the tedious hunt-and-peck experience typing up the magazine, the girls were shocked and impressed when the secretaries gave a



**MOUSE SKILLS:**  
Jamila (left) and Zenabu practice their computer skills at their school's new science resource center.

Photo by: Trevor Harmon/PCV

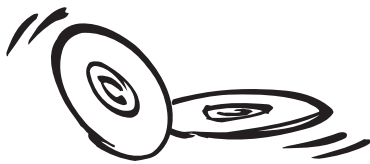
demonstration of touch-typing, their fingers flying across the keyboard.

Even if we had not pursued these projects, the most important goal was accomplished: The girls now have the desire to learn more about computers. Perhaps some of them will one day launch prosperous careers as consultants — not a far-fetched idea since computer training institutes have begun popping up all over Ghana. If nothing else, they can go on to teach their families, friends, and future sons and daughters a little something about the world of computers.

## Lessons Learned

If you are thinking of starting a computer class for young women, keep the following ideas in mind:

- You do not need a fully equipped computer lab to get started. Even a few computers can support around fifteen students if they triple-up. For larger numbers, you can teach the same lesson to different groups, or you can use the classes as a reward for good grades in school. (The best students may do the most with an opportunity to increase their computer literacy.) It is not ideal, but it at least gives them exposure to computers and can minimize any intimidation they might have in working with technology.
- Your lessons can never be too easy. You might think that a keyboard is simple once you explain what it does — you press a key and the letter appears — but what about capital letters? What does Tab mean? And why does the question mark key produce a slash instead? Remember: If it is not obvious to your students, it is not obvious.



FUTURE VOICES: Faustina, Alimatu, and Ayisha (from left to right) combine their singing talents with computer literacy by recording songs on a laptop computer.

Photo by: Trevor Harmon/PCV

- Classes without boys can make more of a difference than you might expect. I discovered that when boys are not around, the girls ask more questions, help each other more often, and generally seem to enjoy themselves a bit more. They also have the opportunity to draw pictures, sing songs, and do other girl stuff (sorry) without fear of being mocked by the boys. In my classes, I try to promote any activity that shows the computer as more than just an electronic typewriter.
- Self-learning is, I believe, the best learning. At the end of each lesson, I like to quietly excuse myself and let the students use the computer on their own, without any teacher looming over them watching for mistakes. These days computers are quite forgiving about mess-ups; they can give a polite error message without crashing (usually). Students are free to make mistakes and correct them independently, so the computer is an ideal tool for self-learning.
- Beware of cultural traditions that might confuse your students. In Ghana, for instance, students often bring to school a white board, which is a thin piece of wood about the size of a sheet paper, with one side painted white and given a clear varnish. The students write on it in pencil, then erase it using a mixture of soap and water. It saves them money because they do not need to buy paper for scratch work and practice problems. Naturally, my students carried this idea with them to computer class. Before shutting down for the day, they would carefully erase anything they didn't want to save by holding down the backspace key. I had to explain that simply closing the document and not saving the text would erase it instantly.

c/o Aba Sey  
APCD/Environment  
Peace Corps  
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Ghana

# Engendering Development

“Engendering Development” is an ongoing column that provides theories and tools for integrating a gender perspective into programming and training.

Previous issues of The Exchange have covered some of the basics in Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) theories and approaches, such as, WID and GAD approaches (Winter 1999), the differences between the terms gender roles and sex (Spring/Summer 1999), gender analysis (Winter 2000) and PACA (Participatory Analysis for Community Action) tools (Spring/Summer 2000).

This article will attempt to demystify “the bigger picture” at the Peace Corps, and why the Agency promotes Gender and Development approaches in Volunteers’ work. It will also provide an example of how the Agency is supporting the integration of GAD into Peace Corps’ programming and training worldwide.

## History of WID and GAD at the Peace Corps

The Peace Corps recognizes that development programs must address the significant roles and responsibilities that women have in countries where Volunteers serve. In 1978, the Peace Corps Act of 1961 was amended to include the Percy Amendment, which states:

“In recognition of the fact that women in developing countries play a significant role in the economic production, family support, and the overall development process, the Peace Corps shall be administered so as to give particular attention to those programs, projects, and activities which tend to integrate women into the national economies of developing countries, thus improving their status and assisting in the total development effort.”

The Peace Corps/Women in Development (WID) coordinator position was established to ensure that the Agency meets the mandate of the Percy Amendment by providing technical support to staff and Volunteers on addressing women’s and girls’ participation and gender needs in the Peace Corps’ development activities.

Initially, Women in Development Volunteers developed separate women’s projects, which was consistent with development methodologies of the time. Since then, the Peace Corps has recognized that successful and sustainable community development activities must take gender roles into account during project planning, design, and implementation. As a result, efforts now center on integrated projects that include women and men, boys and girls. These efforts address their different roles, rights, responsibilities, and priorities in project planning, design, and implementation.

The Peace Corps’ involvement with WID/GAD was originally funded by the Peace Corps’ 1994 Participating Agency Service Agreement (PASA) with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) for Women’s Organization and Participation. Under the agreement, the WID office developed the initial GAD materials and piloted them in Latin America and the Caribbean with country directors, associate Peace Corps directors, training officers, and Volunteers and counterparts. Headquarters personnel also received training. The result was the PACA Manual (ICE # M0053) and the Gender and Development/Girls Education manual (ICE # M0054). From those materials and pilot workshops in the Africa and EMA Regions, the Project Design and Management (PDM) (ICE #T0107) was redesigned, and Community-Content Based Instruction (ICE #T0112) created.

In 1999, in order to better support Volunteers in these efforts, the Peace Corps developed a regional GAD team strategy.

## The Peace Corps GAD Team Strategy

In 1999, the Peace Corps developed a three-year strategy to strengthen support of Volunteers in their work with community members, addressing the gender needs of men, women, girls, and boys. The GAD Team strategy builds three regional teams of select host country national Peace Corps staff to serve as mentors and trainers in Gender and Development. Currently, the Peace Corps is in the process of forming and supporting the three teams, one for each region in the Peace Corps: InterAmerica and Pacific (IAP), Africa, and Europe, the Mediterranean and Asia (EMA).

Host-country national GAD Team members provide sustainability within the Peace Corps and adapt Gender and Development concepts and tools to their country and program contexts. They are nominated by country directors and collaborate with Peace Corps headquarters, their region, GAD committees and local resources to support Volunteers, counterparts, and all stakeholders in their communities. The GAD Team members strive to integrate gender analysis into the Peace Corps’ programming and training to improve the Peace Corps’ role in community development.

GAD Team members are male and female staff who are program managers/APCDs, program assistants, or trainers who have expertise in agriculture, education, environment, health, language and cross-culture, small business development and training. GAD Team members support each other and other Peace Corps staff through staff exchanges and regular communication to provide training and program support (e.g., resources, tools, information) in response to Volunteers’ requests for ways to better integrate a gender perspective in their work.

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Engendering Development continues on page 13

## Gender and Development Teams

### — Africa GAD Team —

Maria Soumonni, Benin  
Claude Millogo, Burkina Faso  
Aba Sey, Ghana  
Mohamed Fofana, Guinea  
Susan Mugwe, Kenya  
Simon Okoth, Kenya  
Clement Lephoto, Lesotho  
Florina Pheko, Lesotho  
Dora Mwalwenje, Malawi  
Marieme Mint el Becher, Mauritania  
Custodio Langa, Mozambique  
Selma Imene, Namibia  
Assalama Sidi Dawalak, Niger  
Margaret Rugambwa, Tanzania  
Rose Kpomblekou, Togo  
Ignatio Chiyaka, Zimbabwe

### — IAP GAD Team —

Verolyn Richards, Belize  
Carla Carvajal, Bolivia  
Violeta Tavarez, Dominican Republic  
Sonia Flores, El Salvador  
Sheny Huerta, Guatemala  
Yamileth Alguera, Nicaragua  
Elias Ruiz, Nicaragua  
Inola Mapp, Panama  
Josefina Ríos, Paraguay  
Kilali Alailima, Samoa

### — EMA GAD Team —

Armen Tiraturyan, Armenia  
Rumana Ahmed, Bangladesh  
Nino Chelidze, Georgia  
Kazbek Aubakirov, Kazakhstan  
Elvira Nistreanu, Moldova  
Amina Fahim, Morocco  
Luzviminda Delumen, Philippines  
Ioana Negrau, Romania  
Yelena Melekhina, Russia Far East  
Zohre Ovezlieva, Turkmenistan

To date, activities in which GAD Team members are involved include:

- Developing strategic plans at post to incorporate a gender perspective in all projects.
- Assisting program managers/APCDs to better address gender needs in their project plans through gender analysis.
- Establishing and supporting WID/GAD committees, developing mission statements and by-laws with the committees, and serving as a liaison between the committee and other Peace Corps staff.
- Training Peace Corps program staff and trainers (including technical, language, and cross-culture trainers) in WID and GAD approaches, gender analysis and PACA tools.
- Designing and facilitating sessions in GAD, gender analysis and PACA tools with and for Volunteers during in-service training, mid-service training, all Volunteer conferences, and project design and management workshops.
- Working with training directors to strengthen the gender components in pre-service training (PST).

## What Does this Mean for Volunteers?

Volunteers have been an integral part of the GAD Team strategy. At each workshop, four Volunteers from the hosting post participate and provide input to the Team on how it can best support Volunteers' work. WID/GAD committees work with GAD Team members to strengthen the gender perspective of programming and training at post and lead training sessions.

If there is a GAD Team member at your post, learn more about their role and how you can support them and they can support you. If there is not a GAD Team member at your post, you can speak to your program manager/APCD or country director to find out how a GAD Team member can assist your post.

For more information on the GAD Team, contact:

Lyn Messner  
WID/GAD Coordinator  
Peace Corps  
Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters  
1111 20th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20526  
lmessner@peacecorps.gov

# How To...

## Search for Information on the World Wide Web

By Gini Wilderson, Information and Communication Technologies Specialist

### Purpose:

This Internet Search Engines Exercise<sup>1</sup> illustrates how to use various search engines and to how to identify relevant Internet resources supporting women's and girls' empowerment.

**Trainer Note:** When working with participants who have just begun using the Internet, it is a good idea to introduce and demonstrate only one search engine. This allows participants to understand the concept without becoming confused with the details. If the participants are ready and time permits, the trainer may wish to explain the types of search engines (those that do key word searches, those that organize sites into categories, those that use both) and demonstrate one more. This exercise assumes that the Volunteer or other facilitator has basic Internet skills.

### Materials and Setup Needed:

- Overhead projector or monitor connected to computer and the Internet.
- Flip charts, overhead, or PowerPoint slides with search engine addresses and Boolean terms — a search system that allows the user to look for sites using multiple words (see step #9 for definition).
- Handout with search engine addresses and descriptions.

### Doing the Exercise:

**Step 1:** Ask the participants what they think they should do if they do not know a specific Internet address that contains the information they want. Answer: Use search engines!

**Step 2:** Begin by describing search engines. The engines are available at certain sites; they are not software that needs to be installed on your computer. The search service is provided free to users in exchange for the advertising done at each site. Search engines sometimes specialize in a specific content area or geographic location. As the Internet evolves, more and more engines are being offered. Mention that each search engine is different.

**Step 3:** Demonstrate one search engine that uses key word searching (and Boolean terms for Step #9). Type the address for the engine as you would any other Uniform Resource Locator (URL) (address on the Internet). On the home page, show participants that there are two windows, one at the top for URL addresses, the other is for keywords and search terms.

**Step 4:** Begin a sample search for information on the host country. For information about Mali, type the word Mali and enter or click the SEARCH, SUBMIT, or SEEK button.

**Step 5:** Explain the search results. The search engine gives the exact number of sites that contain the word being searched. There is a description of the site in the results. It is usually the first words or sentences of a particular web site. This can be very descriptive or not all that helpful. The engine will also give you the size, which indicates how large the document is. The more complex and detailed the site, the larger the number in



<sup>1</sup> This exercise was taken and adapted from the forthcoming Information Technology Training of Trainers: Computer and Internet Use for Development, Participant Handbook, Peace Corps.

the size notation. Sites with video and sounds will be larger than those with plain text. The date signifies the last date the site was updated, in other words, how current the information is.

**Step 6:** Explain that when the cursor turns into an arrow or a hand over the subject or the actual address, it indicates a link. Go directly to the site by clicking there.

**Step 7:** At the resulting site, show that the URL has changed and the browser is no longer within the search engine. Recommend that the participants look at the contents of the site to determine whether it is pertinent. If so, read it and follow its links. If not, return to the search result index by using the BACK command. At the index, show that the site they just visited has become a different color.

**Step 8:** When back at the search results' index, show that there are several more pages with lists of sites from which to choose. Skip to the next page and look at the results.

**Step 9:** Introduce Boolean terms. Describe the concept of Boolean terms, a deductive logical system that is the basis of algebra — named after English mathematician George Boole — to mix and match key words for the computer to execute more advanced searches. Use the flipchart to illustrate Boolean logic. There are three key terms:

- AND, OR, NOT
  - Example for AND: Mali AND women
  - Example for OR: women OR girls OR technology
  - Example for NOT: Guinea NOT Bissau

**Step 10:** Ask the participants to think about how they would use this feature of the Internet in their organizations. Ask if there are any questions.

### Some Search Engines to Try:

Google	<a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a>
Alta Vista	<a href="http://www.altavista.com">www.altavista.com</a>
Metacrawler	<a href="http://www.metacrawler.com">www.metacrawler.com</a> (searches many search engines at once)
Aardvark	<a href="http://www.aardvark.co.za">www.aardvark.co.za</a> (an African search engine)
Ecila	<a href="http://www.ecila.fr">www.ecila.fr</a> (searches in French)
1Buscador	<a href="http://www.1buscador.com">www.1buscador.com</a> (searches in Spanish)

Some samples of the type of sites women and girls might search for and a quick description of each is listed in the sidebar to the right.

## Web Resources for Women & Girls

- The Center for Women and Information Technology  
[www.umbc.edu/cwit/index/html](http://www.umbc.edu/cwit/index/html)  
The Center for Women and Information Technology (IT) Web site, established by the University of Maryland Baltimore, offers an extensive, frequently updated collection of news articles about women and IT; summaries of books related to women and IT; as well as links to Web sites focusing on women or girls and IT, and to e-mail forums devoted to those issues.
- Digital Divide Network  
[www.digitaldivide.org](http://www.digitaldivide.org)  
The Benton Foundation and the National Urban League, with private foundations and companies from across the Internet, computing, telecommunications and software industries, have launched an initiative to coordinate information, strategies and efforts targeting solutions to the digital divide. This Web site offers a comprehensive clearinghouse on completed and ongoing efforts to expand access by underserved communities to the Internet and IT.
- Effect of Computers on the Gender Gap in Education  
[www-cse.Stanford.edu/classes/cs201/Projects/gender-gap-in-education/index.htm](http://www-cse.Stanford.edu/classes/cs201/Projects/gender-gap-in-education/index.htm)  
This site, created by several Stanford University undergraduates, explores three related topics: the current state of gender differences in education, the current state of gender differences in computing, and the effect of computers in the classroom, as well as how these issues interrelate.
- The Women's Technology Cluster  
[www.womenstechcluster.org](http://www.womenstechcluster.org)  
The WTC is a business cluster for IT and Internet startup companies with women founders or principals. The WTC assists entrepreneurs in launching their businesses and accessing funds on the Internet.
- United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement Of Women (INSTRAW)  
[www.un-instraw.org](http://www.un-instraw.org)  
INSTRAW promotes and undertakes research and training programs to contribute to the advancement of gender equality. INSTRAW's Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) serves as a virtual workshop for collaborative research, training and networking. Visit their site for a broad range of resources in six languages.

# Girls Around the World Thrive at Camp GLOW

The Peace Corps' Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) has become one of the most popular and successful Peace Corps activities worldwide. The excitement, creativity, and empowerment generated from these camps around the globe provide an impressive number of inspiring articles and photos from Volunteers and campers. So many articles flood The Exchange inbox, in fact, that rather than printing each article separately (which would take a whole issue of the newsletter alone), we have decided to provide a background of Camp GLOW and include a collage of the stories and photos that you have sent. If your story or photo does not appear in this article, we apologize. As always, we try our best to provide the readers with an accurate description of Volunteer activities around the world. Please feel free to continue submitting stories about your Camp GLOW experiences.

## Countries With Girls' Leadership Camps:

Armenia  
Belize  
Bulgaria  
Kazakhstan  
Kyrgyzstan  
Macedonia  
Madagascar  
Moldova  
Morocco  
Namibia  
Philippines  
Poland  
Romania  
Russia Far East  
Slovakia  
South Africa  
The Baltics  
Uzbekistan  
Zimbabwe



GLOW SOURVENIR: Girls in Russia show off their stylish Camp GLOW tie-dyed shirts.

Photo by: Emily Schuckman

## What is Camp GLOW?

Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) started in Romania in 1995. Three Volunteers and four Romanian teachers took 80 young women to a mountain campsite for a weeklong leadership camp. They spent the mornings working on skill building activities taken from Choices: A Teen Woman's Journal for Self-Awareness and Planning by Mindy Bingham (available through ICE# WD135). The purpose of this camp was to encourage young women to become active citizens by building their self-esteem and confidence, knowledge of themselves, and skill development in the areas of goal setting, assertiveness, and career and life planning.

Since the first Camp GLOW, Volunteers in 21 countries have adapted Camp GLOW to meet the unique needs of their communities. A Camp GLOW handbook is being developed and will soon be available through the ICE resource library.

Hosting a Camp GLOW is an ideal way to offer adolescent girls self-development opportunities in a fun and friendly atmosphere. Camp GLOW is often a life changing experience for both the adult and teenage

participants. The following stories and photos will provide more detailed information on Camp GLOW around the world.

## Camp GLOW Highlights From Around the World

### Macedonia:

Joellen Reineck/PCV

To help the campers learn about project planning, the facilitators had them organize an actual project. In this case, a high school dance. The campers began their project even before the GLOW seminar began. By collecting donations in their local community, the girls started learning about project planning. The day prior to the conference, the participants were formally introduced to the steps in project planning and goal setting, after they made the final dance preparations. Activities included setting up the decorations and refreshments. During the dance the girls took turns selling refreshments or collecting money at the door. The dance itself served not only as an active example of planning different stages of a project, it also provided the girls with a project idea that is easily achievable within their own communities. The money raised from the dance will

Camp GLOW continues on page 17



go to fund the next GLOW Leadership Weekend seminar. Editor's note: Peace Corps/Macedonia has been suspended.

#### Bulgaria:

Kimberly Flowers/PCV

Local students came each day to listen to workshops, play team-building games, and create community projects. The young girls discussed topics ranging from goal setting to diversity, and had the opportunity to listen to a special guest, the wife of the US Ambassador, speak on "Women and Leadership." During the camp, campers were required to break into teams and design community projects, present their ideas, and complete their plan within one month after the camp. This planning exercise gave the girls an opportunity to put into practice the leadership skills they were learning, and to fully realize their potential as future community leaders. One of the most successful projects was led by a team that cleaned and painted a local kindergarten. Several local papers and television stations featured this project on the evening news.

#### Burkina Faso:

Suzanne Longley and Mark Canavera/PCVs

We looked wistfully at The Exchange photograph of a day at Poland's Camp GLOW — smiling girls wearing life preservers and proudly displaying their oars before a boating trip. As much as we might have wanted to attempt a similar project here in Burkina Faso, the resources just did not seem available — there is no water to go boating on. However, we realized that putting on a girls' summer camp in Burkina was entirely possible, although it would entail its own set of challenges and restrictions of having to tailor the camp to Burkina's socioeconomic conditions.

We chose education as the camp's focus. We recruited young women who had just earned high school entrance and showed great promise, but who were unsure of their futures after graduation. The theme of the camp became, "What Will We Be Tomorrow?"

## In Their Words...

Provided by Elizabeth Specker/PCV

The following are quotes from the GLOW Campers' journals in Romania:

Silvia Manalache, age 13

The most useful lesson was how to think about yourself. Many women say, "I am thin and ugly and stupid, nobody will like me. I hate myself!" But now, I know to change this. You will say these words, "I am OK! I am OK!" and smile into the mirror.

Raxana Sandagurschi, age 13

This camp was very useful and very important to me because it helped me make new friends from other towns. I learned how to make important decisions and how to choose my friends. I found out some parts of myself, which I did not know are in my heart or in my mind. I think the most important session of our camp was about what we will be doing in the future...everyone has a goal.

Carina Tiran, age 12

For the first time I learned about women's rights and that women can sometimes be masculine or feminine and smarter than men. It is not a shame for a girl to be masculine...like to fight because you must defend your self. But the girl must be feminine too, like being sensible.

Ramana-Flarina Cazacu, age 12

I learned that in everything I do I have to be calm and relaxed because if I am nervous all the time I will not be able to do many things in my life. I learned that I can do anything I like, only with hard work because men have more opportunities than women. I learned more things about myself like what kind of person I am, and I will be.

The campers had the opportunity to examine what professional and academic options lay before them. Campers went on field trips to the town hospital, where they spoke to nurses, doctors, and midwives; to the local primary school teachers' training center, where the female dean of students gave them a tour and talked to them about enrollment procedures; and to the local nurses' training center, where the girls stood before a class of a hundred nurses-in-training and articulated their professional desires. The local vocational school called in some of its female students to give the campers a tour of the electricity, mechanics, and carpentry workshops and to talk about their experiences as women in traditionally male fields.

#### Poland:

Lindsey Rosenberg, Dana Krajewski, and Virginia Black/PCVs

The benefit of working so closely with the host-country nationals in preparing the camp was immeasurable. Cooperating with one another, we found ourselves exchanging skills and learning more sustainable ideas of how to adapt a Peace Corps project to the needs of the host country. During the last few days of the camp's preparation we concentrated on discussing the camp's sustainability. Because this is Peace Corps' last year in Poland, sustainability is a strong concern of ours. The girls showed so much interest in the camp that we wanted to put

them in the position to continue on the idea of GLOW. We held a session where we discussed the “Club GLOW” idea, whereby girls in different regions would arrange to work together to promote GLOW as well as provide services in their areas. This project would be all camper-centered — over two-thirds of the girls signed up to be contacts for future Camps GLOW.

#### Kyrgyz Republic:

Leslie Wakulich/PCV

A highlight of the camp was a life-size tree the campers made out of paper with painted leaves that hung on the wall of the community room. The camp theme “Shaking the Tree” reminded the girls to shake up the tree of life to get more out of it. The life-size tree served as a forum for the girls to express their feelings and thoughts by writing on pieces of fruit cut from paper and pasting the fruit to the tree.

We found the girls who were shy and hesitant at the beginning of the week later gain confidence and discovered their leadership skills in the final days of the camp. “This was the best week of my life,” said one camper, “I wish Camp GLOW lasted a month!” Others promised never to forget what they had learned and vowed to help make the camp an annual event for other girls. Another girl said, “I cannot wait to get home and teach my friends all of the things I learned at Camp GLOW!”

#### Russian/Far East:

Emily Schuckman/PCV

Thirty-one girls came together for our first Camp GLOW. Modeled after Camp GLOW in Ukraine and Poland, the camp focused on building self-esteem, confidence and developing goal planning and leadership skills of adolescent girls. Some of the highlights of the camp included a simulation game in which the girls were stranded on a desert island and had to choose eight survival items from a list of twenty and rank them according to necessity. The girls then worked in groups of five to draft a final list

and construct a plan for getting off the island using only their eight items. The activity was great for helping girls learn how to prioritize, negotiate with their friends, and write a concrete plan for achieving a goal.

One favorite project was making body tracings in order to illustrate the diversity of girls’ body shapes and the difference between physical and personal identity. The girls attempted to guess to whose body an outline belonged. After difficulty in identifying a girl simply by her outline, each girl drew symbols of that girl’s personality in and around the outline, which helped each girl clearly see herself as a unique individual.



**BUILDING CASTLES:**

Bulgarian campers show off their work after a team building exercise designed to reflect on the future.

Photo by: Kim Flowers/PCV

#### Romania:

Linda Mormile and Samantha Welch/PCVs

Each morning the young women attended workshops on attitudes, stereotypes, values, decision-making, self-confidence, goal setting and community development. After the Volunteers presented the topic of the day, participants broke into small discussion groups to reflect on the topic. After a lunch break, the entire group was divided into three

groups of fifteen and attended simultaneous sessions held in various locations throughout the campground. These included activities such as teambuilding (low ropes), yoga, journal writing, arts and crafts, GLOW Olympics, and a scavenger hunt. Other activities included a day hike up a mountain, and a sexual health awareness and HIV/AIDS discussion. The young women also had to create a “cabin cheer” with their new roommates. At night, campers gathered wood for campfires around which we sang popular Romanian and English camp songs.

#### Morocco:

Megan Myers/PCV

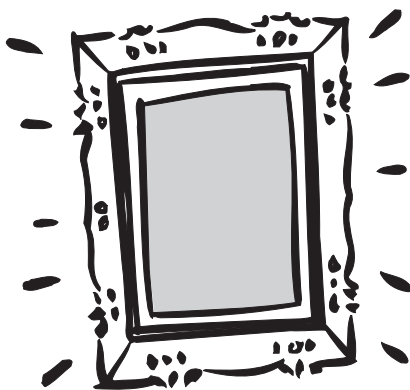
Six months prior to the camp, a team of Moroccan facilitators worked with a Volunteer to adapt the original English curriculum to the Moroccan Arabic language and Islamic culture. The result was a culturally sensitive curriculum, which preserved the values of Moroccan culture while integrating the modernization of the role of women in Morocco and encouraging the girls to become leaders and take active roles in society.

During the four days of Camp GLOW, we successfully accomplished the objectives of having older Moroccan women be the ones to prepare the younger generation to become leaders in today’s rapidly modernizing Morocco. Through this process the facilitators learned how to examine their own roles, gained facilitation skills in preparing and presenting interactive workshop curricula, and increased their self-esteem and satisfaction by becoming role models for young women within their own community. Having the Moroccan facilitators take the leadership role at the camp was an important part of the mission of Camp GLOW. The facilitators were all college-educated young women who are currently unemployed due to the extreme scarcity of work available for the population in general. They also gained a new sense of self-worth and an opportunity to acknowledge the value of their skills.

# Girls Hold Youth Conference in Nicaragua

By Jerusha Neill/PCV

After eight months of planning the Nicaragua Young Women's Regional Conference, Tomorrow Belongs to Us, six female community health Volunteers arrived with three young women, each from their respective communities to enjoy four days of learning and sharing. Each young woman was between the ages of 12 and 15 and was chosen by the Volunteer in accordance with the enthusiasm and participation that she demonstrated in her local youth group. In addition to funding from (SPA) small project assistance grants, this activity was made possible by the time and effort invested by each invitee, who raised funds within her community to pay for her transportation. They gathered together at the Centro La Amistad (the Friendship Conference Center) in the farmlands outside the city of Esteli in the north of Nicaragua. Everyone agreed that the experience of the conference was enhanced by the peaceful, reflective environment found there.



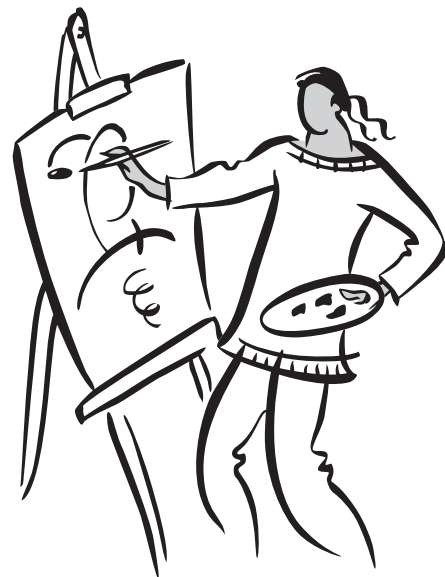
Upon arrival, the young women set about meeting and getting to know their fellow participants through trust games, being provided with a "secret friend," and an afternoon of swimming. The girls especially enjoyed the secret friend activity throughout the conference because it involved using their creativity to make gifts for their new friends. The first formal day of sessions continued this positive spirit of sharing through a morning of activities designed to build

self-esteem. The activities included drawing a self-portrait, identifying a favorite feature, giving and receiving anonymous compliments on a paper taped to one's back, and generally appreciating the importance and value of one's self.

After lunch, the young women continued with a session on puberty. Throughout the afternoon they learned and shared information about their bodies and how to best take care of themselves during the important changes of their adolescence. This included making a bracelet of different colored beads to represent the various days and phases of the menstrual cycle, and making a life-size drawing of their bodies filled with positive qualities which make up their self-image. After more swimming, the girls brought the enlightening day to an end with an evening activity of picture-frame making, which would hold a group photo of the participants. The girls received their framed photos at the end of the conference.

The girls began the next day of the conference with a creative approach to understanding gender roles. The participants engaged in an animated and interesting discussion about the differences between the terms gender roles and sex, (see *The Exchange*, Spring/Summer 1999, Volume 31, p. 17) and later shared their own gender role experiences through a drawing activity and small group discussions. They continued by examining gender roles in their communities by working in groups to create a town map, identifying their own houses as well as all the sites of interest and those frequented by men and/or women. In their enthusiastic presentation of their maps, it was evident that the young women had gained a new understanding of gender roles in their lives and environment.

The girls focused the final session of the afternoon on goal-setting for the future. The conference organizers guided the girls through a series of visualizations in order to better pinpoint personal goals for their future lives. In addition, they completed various



exercises that helped them in identifying steps to meet those goals, and making the commitment to take those steps.

Immediately putting these skills to the test, the young women met in groups by community and completed an action plan, which was a proposal of how each group will carry the message and the information of the conference back to their families and peers at home. By signing this action plan, the young women committed themselves to accomplishing a variety of activities in their communities that will transmit the positive feeling and important knowledge of the conference to those who were not able to attend. The girls closed the day with an evening ceremony at which each participant revealed their secret friend.

On the final day, the participants were a little tired but elated by all they had shared and learned. They received certificates of completion and a manual of all the conference activities. Equipped with what they learned and received, the girls began the long trip home, knowing that tomorrow really does belong to them.

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# Daughters of Burkina Faso Explore Professional Options

By Zallia Mantoro, APCD/Education

The following information was submitted in Peace Corps/Burkina Faso's 1999 Project Status Report.

Peace Corps/Burkina Faso successfully held our first Take Our Daughters to Work Day, positively impacting different groups of people. This day created greater gender awareness among female and male students, counterparts, parents, and other community members. The events also helped to bring Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts closer together on the subject of girls' education and leadership.

We provided information pertinent to girls' health and well-being such as sexual health and the prevention of HIV/AIDS, methods of dealing with sexual harassment at school, and other real life skills. These events allowed girls to examine their every day activities and their role in society; identify the factors that inhibit their success as students; and devise strategies to overcome these difficulties.

Students were also encouraged to develop and follow their ambitions for the future. The secondary school female students were matched with working women as role models, which helped to form lasting support networks and relationships between the girls from different regions of the country and the mentors at regional and national levels. Afterwards, the girls brought the event back to their local communities through presentations and career day activities.

The leadership style used in the implementation of this event was essentially participatory, resulting in high Volunteer job satisfaction. Each day, Volunteers would post the day's activities list and assignments. One group of Volunteers would take the girls to visit the lab, the factory, the school, or the radio stations while the APCD and another group of Volunteers would be doing the same with the second group of girls. Each



participating group benefited differently. The following is a summary of the day's successes:

## The Girls

- became aware of their potential and developed new ambitions.
- went back to their sites ready to work harder in their schools and to succeed despite the numerous challenges facing them.
- had the opportunity to see professional women at work helped them believe in their own potential.
- made a presentation to their schools and shared their experiences with other girls who were unable to attend the events, and were empowered to speak in public after making their presentation.

- shared experiences with their mentors, received useful advice, and learned from role models.

- are now valuable resources for their peers at their schools.

- (many) are still in contact with their mentors.

## Mentors

- got to know the Peace Corps as a development agency and to see the Volunteers in action.
- felt honored to have been chosen and many expressed their heartfelt thanks to the APCD for the trust put in them.
- were visibly happy to work as partners with Volunteers.

Daughters Explore Options continues on page 21

- became friends not only with their “daughter,” but also with Volunteers.
- (almost 20) reported that their daughters came back to the capital to visit them during the summer holidays at their invitation.
- took a lot of pleasure acting as role models and counselors for the rural girls. This event reminded many of the mentors of their own past experiences as girls working for success in a fast-changing world.

### Volunteers

- had a sense of accomplishment and higher job satisfaction.
- had a sense of being useful to their community.
- earned the trust of their communities to allow them to take the girls to the capital city to stay with people unknown to them.
- will benefit from the presentations in the schools, even if they did not participate in the activity.

### Staff

- increased collaboration with Volunteers and staff.
- revealed the organizational skills of individual Volunteers. Such skills can be used during pre-service trainings and in-service trainings.

### Ministry of Education

- reported to local, regional and central level offices that this event was one of the most important girls’ education activities in the course of the year in terms of awareness building and benefits for the girls.
- encouraged other women’s organizations to be as creative and practical minded regarding girls’ education.

### Recommendations

- Organize Take Our Daughters to Work Day only at the regional level, ensuring that it becomes nationally or regionally known.
- Reduce the number of days spent on learning exercises to increase the amount of time the girls can spend with their mentors.



- Provide an entire day for the girls to spend at their mentors’ workplace. This will allow for greater exposure and opportunity to examine their mentors’ profession.
- Provide an entire day for the girls to spend time with their mentor outside of the workplace. This will allow the girls to watch their mentor interact at home as well.
- Organize parallel activities for urban girls to visit rural areas, exposing them to learning opportunities outside of urban settings.
- Continue to build relationships with other local women’s associations and institutions willing to contribute to future Take Our Daughters to Work Days.



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# Volunteers Help Students Celebrate International Women's Day in China

By Aaron Orzech, Kelly Nash, and Jenna Sims/PCVs

International Women's Day was not a day that slipped by silently in China. Peace Corps education Volunteers around the country worked with their counterparts and friends to find innovative and exciting ways to help their communities celebrate this global observance of women's and girls' contributions to their country and communities.

An education Volunteer working at the Guiyang Chinese Medicine College helped a group of students organize an evening conference. The conference was attended by forty students, including around a dozen men. The two female guest lecturers included a faculty member with a law background, and an honorary faculty member with influential status in the community. The first speaker gave a talk on legal developments in China affecting women, especially developments concerning domestic violence and marriage law. The second speaker discussed how Chinese women can work to become successful in Chinese society. The participants ended the evening with a lengthy question and answer session. The students left the conference feeling very enthusiastic about the speakers and the possibilities for Chinese women.

At the Qiandongnan Teachers College for Minorities, 35 female students, 31 male students and an education Volunteer participated in an exercise exploring stereotypes. They began the exercise by talking about stereotypes in general and listing as many examples as possible. The students then focused in on stereotypes about men and women. This eventually led the participants into small group discussions on culturally defined gender roles. Each group presented their ideas about how culture shapes one's ideas about men and women. Afterwards, they wrote a three paragraph essay in which they were asked to imagine they are the opposite sex for a day. The essay had to



SPEAKING OUT:

A student leads a discussion on women's issues in China at an International Women's Day celebration.

Photo by: Jenna Simms/PCV

describe their day, tell what they liked and did not like about being the opposite sex, and analyze how their culture's views shape what they think about men and women.

A week later, the students returned and held a debate about whether or not women's changing roles in society is good for their communities. The lively debating between the students was at times heated, but very informative, allowing some of the more typically quiet students to stand up for their opinions.

Students at the Guizhou Educational Institute in Guiyang, Guizhou put together an International Women's Day event where guest speakers were invited to discuss various issues of importance to women. One speaker, a doctor who teaches at the medical school, addressed several women's health issues. A second speaker gave a talk on how she started her own business consulting firm in Guiyang, and provided wonderful insights

and opinions on professional women in China. The final speaker provided information on the situation of minority women in rural areas of Guizhou.

Several students also spoke about their ideas of how teachers can encourage and help build the confidence of female students. Between speakers, the participants held a trivia game focusing on famous women in Chinese history. Winners were given an assortment of prizes. The 100 students (one third of whom were men) left the event inspired and energized.

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# Peace Corps/Morocco Provides Opportunities to Women and Girls

By Kristen Cammarata/PCV

## Take our Daughters to Work Day

Peace Corps/Morocco's Women in Development/Gender and Development (WID/GAD) Committee is a cross-sectoral group of Volunteers who have made projects focusing on women and gender issues a priority in their work in Morocco.

A combination of lack of resources, distance to secondary schools, and priority given to boys' education prevents many rural Moroccan girls from completing their studies. Volunteers across Morocco held Take Our Daughters to Work conferences to address this issue and raise awareness in their communities about the importance of girls' education. Based on last year's success in the province of Azilal, this year's project was expanded to four provinces and reached a total of 68 primary school girls. The conference participants were rural girls in the fifth or sixth grade.

Though the activities for each province's conference varied, they were all organized with the participation of a local women's association or a group of local businesswomen. These women acted as host mothers and role models for the participating girls, who came from their villages to stay in the women's homes for the duration of the conferences. In each province, the girls devoted one morning shadowing their hosts in the workplace. Other activities during the conferences included visits to middle and high schools and school dormitories, health presentations about women's health topics, and panel discussions about the importance of continuing one's education. When the girls returned to their villages, they shared what they had learned with other students by giving presentations about the conference.

An important part of the Take Our Daughters to Work conferences was that the girls were able to experience first hand the possi-



bility to both work outside the home and care for a family. By the end of the conferences, the girls had come to realize the importance of continuing their studies, but also strengthened their self-esteem and self-reliance. One participant explained that the most important thing she had learned was how to deal with strangers and how to travel alone "without the help of my father or brothers."

## Women in Development Conference

Peace Corps/Morocco's WID/GAD Committee held its second annual Women in Development Conference in the city of Ouarzazate. The theme of this year's conference was "Working Successfully in Associations and Cooperatives." Eighteen women from across Morocco gathered to learn and exchange ideas about how to work together to improve life in their communities. The conference sessions were designed to be highly interactive in order to give women time to discuss individual ideas or questions about the topics covered. Women from non-governmental organizations (NGO) as well as Moroccan ministries were invited to give presentations on their areas of expertise and to serve as facilitators for small group sessions.

The conference activities were held over a two day period. After an introductory small

group session, two women spoke on how to go about forming associations and cooperatives. They covered the legal aspects and the differences between associations and cooperatives, as well as the advantages to working together to solve common problems. In the afternoon, an extension agent from a local NGO spoke about how to set goals and plan for the future when working in an association. Two speakers from a local micro-credit provider also gave a presentation on how to apply for loans to start a small-scale project or business. At the end of the conference, participants met again in small groups to discuss projects they would like to do in their own communities. Using the speakers and other women as resources, the women found the information they needed in order to make their ideas reality. Even after the sessions were over, many participants sought out speakers and other women to answer lingering questions and exchange information. At the end of the conference, many women said that this was just the first step and that now they were prepared to go back and work with other women in their communities.

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# Girls in Benin Find Opportunities Through Etoile Apprenticeships

By Lida Fitts/PCV

During Benin's summer vacation, 13 urban secondary school girls with otherwise limited means and exposure to professional life took part in the "Etoile Apprenticeships," which were funded by Peace Corps' Small Project Assistance (SPA) grants. The apprenticeships are designed to help develop their career goals and aspirations. The girls worked for a month with female professionals in the fields of medicine, law, and journalism. The girls learned about their chosen profession, the roles the women play in the office and how they balance their work, family, and social lives.



The girls were chosen through a rigorous application process, including essays, interviews, and a grade evaluation. The mentors were located through recommendations and interviews. Parents were invited to both opening and closing ceremonies to involve them in the program and encourage them to support their daughters.

Mentors thoroughly integrated their young apprentices into the office activities. During the program the girls had the opportunity to watch caesarian-sections and live births, take blood pressure, report on television, be published in a national newspaper, and go to court, just to name a few experiences.

The girls met as a group each Friday to describe and discuss their week, explain what they had learned, do public speaking exercises, participate in lessons on subjects such as reproductive health and personal study skills, and provide a progress report on their independent projects.

Independent projects required each girl to pick a subject related to her profession, research it throughout the month, and present her research at the closing ceremony. The "lawyers" presented a mock trial using proper court procedures. The "doctors" gave speeches on diseases and health problems; including malnutrition, malaria, infant resuscitation, sexually transmitted disease, high blood pressure, AIDS, and dog bites. The "journalists" reported on local Cotonou (capital of Benin) stories. One girl even brought a video of herself as an anchorwoman.

The girls left their apprenticeships feeling more positive about their professional futures and more enthusiastic about the hard work they will face to reach their career aspirations.

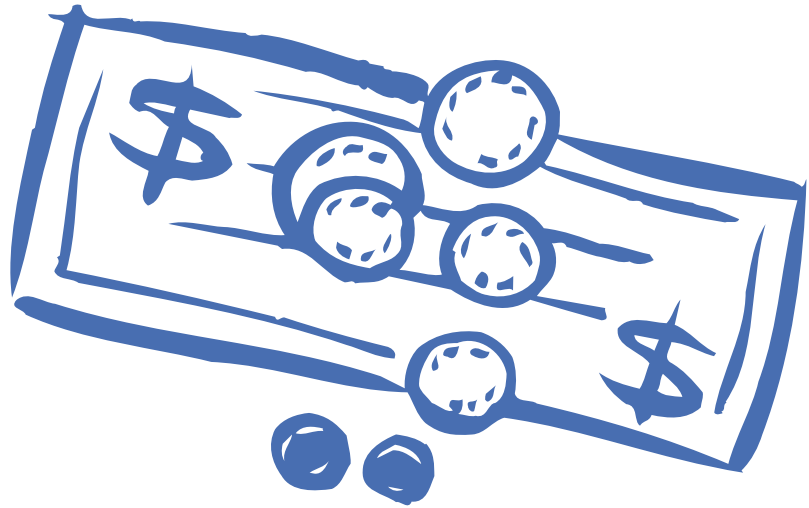
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# Microlending Provides Hope to Women in Slovakia

By Arlene Barilec/PCV

The Integra Foundation is a micro-enterprise development agency based in Bratislava, Slovakia. One of the programs of Integra is the microlending program MikroFond Integra, which focuses on the support of women in business. A key aspect of this program is the development of community responsibility and belonging. This is accomplished through the creation of solidarity groups, which enable the female clients to guarantee one another's loans.



## MikroFond Integra Client Profile

Last year I learned that Integra was going to provide loans to women who would like to begin their own business but have inadequate funds to start. The conditions were to complete some training and present a business plan. I signed up, even though I was not certain I wanted to start my own business. During the training, I decided to give it a try. My main business activity is accounting for nongovernmental organizations, which I do out of my home. I used the loan to buy a computer, which is essential for my business. It turns out that the computer is working more than I expected. My five-year-old daughter is even using it!

Damar Lipovska,  
graduate from the Bratislava  
MikroFond pilot project

The target group for this project is women-at-risk. Women who are single mothers, divorced with young children, victims of domestic violence, with alcoholic or chronically unemployed partners, or not able to re-enter the work force after maternity leave.

The program consists of an initial forty hours of training in basic business skills and writing business plans. Women who successfully complete the training qualify for a business loan of up to US \$2,000, which they use either to launch a new business or strengthen an existing one. They also join a group with up to six other women who meet regularly for support. An Integra staff member regularly monitors the group by helping to answer business questions or assist with other problems that might arise.

The initial pilot project was held in the Petrzalka suburb of Bratislava, which has high levels of unemployment, divorce, and crime. A total of 134 women applied for the project, of which 27 were selected for training with 18 business plans approved. The

average loan was US \$1,100. The training program was funded by a grant from the Peace Corps and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

There are plans to repeat the program in Bratislava and also in the city of Komarno, which has over 6,300 unemployed, professional women. During the Kosovo conflict, many of these women lost their jobs as a result of severe cutbacks in the local ship-building factory. Since the Danube was blocked to river traffic, there was no market for the ships. MikroFond attempts to offer a few of them some hope.

Based on the successful experience of the MikroFond Slovakia, a new program for women in Oradea, Romania, is underway. It is supported by USAID and focuses on women-at-risk in Romania.

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# Women in Honduras Get Recognition For Role in Agriculture

By Scott Hardy/PCV

Blistered hands and soil-stained hats are symbols of the traditionally male-dominated field of agriculture in Honduras. Peace Corps Volunteers have worked for years with male farmers, helping to implement sustainable agricultural practices and improve the quality of life for agrarian communities. Together, we have made obvious improvements in the nutritional intake of families, the diversification of crops, and the preparation of soils. We accomplished this by building on traditional farming practices, and taking an old idea and refining it. Despite past success in this field, there seems to be a fountain of energy and motivation for agriculture that we have not yet fully tapped — women. As a result of a gender analysis of the project, Volunteers and local women organized an agriculture workshop for women.

With the future of Honduran agriculture in mind, the western regional Honduran Women in Agriculture workshop took shape. An inspired group of 16 female counterparts and 10 Volunteers converged for two days of discussion on the importance of women in agriculture. The women immediately bonded creating a comfortable atmosphere allowing for the open exchange of ideas and concerns surrounding the workshop topic. The training proved to be a powerful platform where women could voice their concerns about their roles in agriculture.

Volunteers acted as passive facilitators throughout the workshop allowing the women to discuss amongst themselves what needs to be done to empower their position in the community. The female agriculturalists gave presentations of their daily activities and exchanged personal practices that they implement in their homes. One could see the excitement grow as the women described their accomplishments and found similarities with the other women in the region. It was obvious that each participant left the training more confident and prepared to take the lessons learned back to their communities. At the end of two days, the participants chose four women to represent the group at a national convention later in the year, an opportunity that was a great honor to those selected.

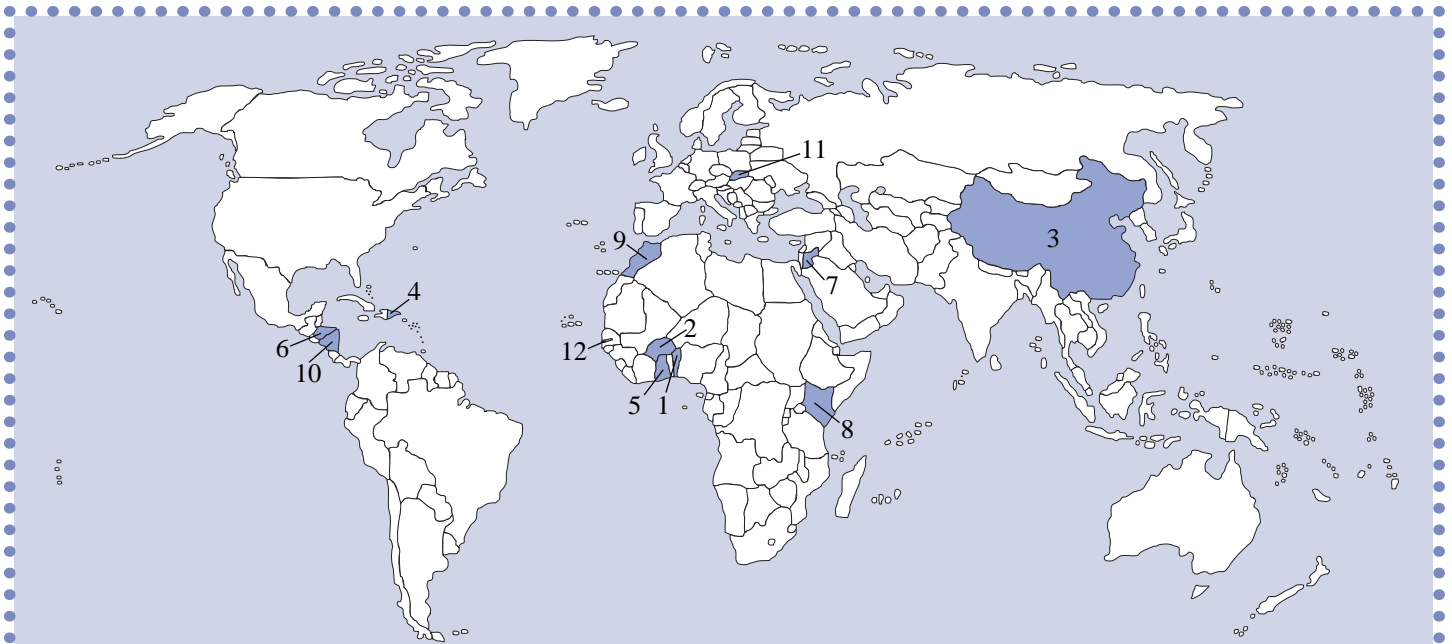
The agriculture Volunteers walked away from the training with a clearer view of the relationship between themselves and Honduran women. They left the conference empowered by the opinions and insights of the workshop participants, believing that agriculture Volunteers can and should work with women. There are plenty of females in Honduras who are interested and very able to work with and encourage other women to pursue non-traditional roles. Project plans that take into account women's and girls' needs target a larger group of counterparts, and can motivate Volunteers who are discouraged by lack of participation from men and boys.



Overall, the workshop prepared Volunteers to work with more women, and taught the female participants how to make a bigger impact in their communities. It motivated the participants to help improve the field of agriculture in Honduras. They also were able to better understand their importance within their families as well as their key role in an agricultural household. By recognizing and increasing their role in agriculture, women will help insure an increase in food availability, a more balanced social structure, and greater participation between agriculture Volunteers and females in their communities.

A second workshop with even more female participants was held later in the year with some slight adjustments. The second workshop included an action planning portion, in which women worked with Volunteers to plan activities in their communities based on their expressed needs and interests. The women are also working out ways to share skills between villages based on what they learned about each other at the workshop.

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Articles in The Exchange, Gender Roles & ICT • September 2001, Were Submitted From...

- |                       |             |                |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Benin              | 5. Ghana    | 9. Morocco     |
| 2. Burkina Faso       | 6. Honduras | 10. Nicaragua  |
| 3. China              | 7. Jordan   | 11. Slovakia   |
| 4. Dominican Republic | 8. Kenya    | 12. The Gambia |

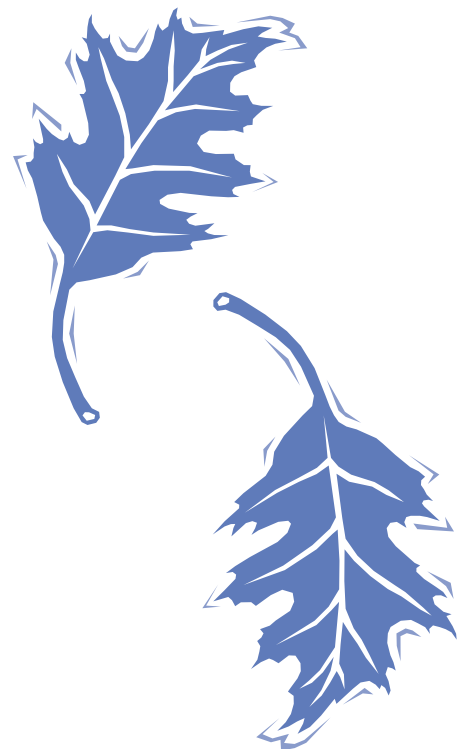
## Upcoming Issues

- The next issue of The Exchange (Volume Number 36) will focus on the role of boys and men in GAD. The submission deadline is October 15, 2001.
- Volume Number 37 of The Exchange will focus on gender roles and agriculture. The submission deadline is December 15, 2001.

Editor's Note: All submissions are welcome and are not limited to the theme of the issue. Please feel free to submit letters to the editor, articles for the How To column, sustainable development columns, or any activity that involves Gender and Development.

## Upcoming Opportunities

- August 26: Women's Equality Day (USA)
- October: Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- October 15: World Poetry Day
- October 16: World Food Day
- November 25: International Day Against Violence Against Women



# Increasing Awareness About Deaf Culture in Kenya

By MJ Shahan, PCV

Editor's note provided by Susan Mugwe, Program Assistant: In September, Peace Corps/Kenya held a national Take Our Daughters To Work event, and for the first time decided to include deaf girls and deaf host mothers. This was such an eye opener to both hearing girls and mothers, some of whom had never come into contact with deaf girls before. The Peace Corps gave a session on deafness and deaf culture and in the evaluations it was rated the most informative and interesting. The participants requested that we ensure that it is a component in all the follow-up activities.

As a deaf Peace Corps Volunteer, I have been working with the Deaf Mumias Women's Group in Kenya. I have seen this group serve as strong role models to others who are deaf or disabled. The Deaf Mumias Women's Group has created its own artisan business, allowing the members to share a little bit of deaf culture with others. Together, we believe that deaf people all over the world belong to a linguistic minority with its own culture. Deaf culture has its own history, shared values, and social norms and



customs, which have been transferred from generation to generation.

Kenyan women study at several different vocational training schools for the Deaf in Kenya, where they learn knitting, tailoring, crocheting, and other artisan crafts. At these schools, they have learned entrepreneurship and get to experience real business situations, which helps them to be more productive and confident members of their communities. Together they have learned to communicate with hearing people by writing on paper, using pantomime, some lip-reading, and creating further communication methods for their individual needs.

The Deaf Mumias Women's Group and I also established a newsletter to introduce Peace Corps Volunteers to ways they can assist people with disabilities to break barriers in their communities. The newsletter has helped deaf and hearing people communicate by providing ways to specialize sign language to a deaf person's own national or regional language. This will hopefully provide encouragement to other deaf women in poor or disadvantaged communities.

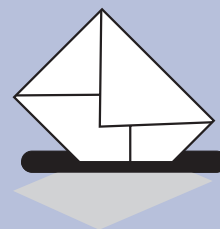
I hope that the story of the Deaf Mumias Women's Group encourages you to help deaf communities in your country. With the right kind of support, deaf women can work together to start income generating activities, empower themselves as deaf women, and educate themselves on women's rights. I also encourage you to help deaf women in your country participate in Women In Development projects as well.

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## Express Yourself

Tell us what is happening with WID or GAD in your country that you would like to share with others. Tell us your success stories. What works? What does not? When you tell us about your project, please give a location and an address. Photos should include the names of the key individuals in the picture, a brief description, location and the name of the photographer. Send contributions, comments, suggestions, and requests to:

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The Exchange is published by Women in Development, The Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, the Peace Corps, for distribution to all Peace Corps Volunteers and staff. Views expressed in The Exchange are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Peace Corps. Use of funds for printing this newsletter has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget, U.S. Government. We reserve the right to edit for style, clarity, and length. The Peace Corps reserves the right to use any submitted writing, photos, and artwork in other publications.