



## Peace Corps Swaziland

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# Stakeholders Report

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## About the Peace Corps

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship.

The Peace Corps' mission has three simple goals:

1. Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
2. Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
3. Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.



Since 1961, nearly 200,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. Today's Peace Corps is more vital than ever, working in emerging and essential areas such as information technology and business development, and contributing to the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Peace Corps Volunteers continue to help countless individuals who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

## Overview of Peace Corps in Swaziland

The first group of U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Swaziland in January 1969, a few months after its independence from Britain. During the following 28 years Peace Corps provided Swaziland with a total of 1,400 Volunteers. The primary focus throughout most of this period was in secondary education (mathematics, science, English, agriculture and vocational training) and agricultural cooperatives. Due to budgetary constraints, in 1996 Peace Corps regrettably closed its program in Swaziland as it did in several other countries.

In 2002, Peace Corps returned to Swaziland at the request of King Mswati III to assist in countering the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Peace Corps Swaziland Post reopened in early 2003 and the first group of Volunteers to implement the Community Health Project began their service in November 2003. Since re-opening the program in 2003, over 300 Volunteers have served in Swaziland.

During the current phase of the Community Health Project (2008-2013), the Post is strengthening collaboration and partnerships with the Swazi government's HIV/AIDS coordinating body, the National Emergency Response Council for HIV/AIDS (NERCHA). NERCHA is the coordinating and facilitating agency of the national multi-sectoral response to HIV and AIDS prevention, care and support including impact mitigation. In collaboration with the former Ministry of Regional Development and Youth Affairs, NERCHA created 291 *KaGogo Social Centres* throughout Swaziland to promote local ownership and response to the pandemic. Peace Corps Swaziland supports this initiative by posting Volunteers in communities to assist with the development of the KaGogo centres. Each centre's activities are coordinated by a KaGogo Clerk, who is the Volunteer's initial counterpart. In the Volunteer's first three months of service, he or she works with the KaGogo Clerk to develop a community assessment that includes an analysis of community priorities and potential work

opportunities for the Volunteer to address collaboratively with his/her community. Beyond this collaboration with KaGogo Centres, Volunteers work with a broad range of counterparts and beneficiaries. During service, Volunteers form partnerships with traditional and elected leaders, schools, non-governmental organizations, informal community groups, churches, and others to teach, mobilize resources, write proposals, coach youth, build organizational capacity, or provide other assistance.

In 2011, Peace Corps Swaziland welcomed the first Volunteers in the new Youth Development Project, or Non-Formal Education Project. In this project, Peace Corps Swaziland is partnered with the Swaziland Ministry of Education at the national level and with schools and communities at the local level to build the capacity of young people and enhance their development throughout the four regions of the country. This project enables Volunteers to contribute to a variety of youth development activities in local schools, communities and support centers. Volunteers build relationships with numerous stakeholders (i.e. community groups, schools, non-governmental organizations, etc.) depending upon the needs of the youth and the strengths of the Volunteer. During their service Volunteers support healthy lifestyles and prepare youth for family life and the world of work. Volunteers support parents, families and communities and facilitate gender empowerment and education. Additionally, Volunteers build learning capacities in primary literacy.

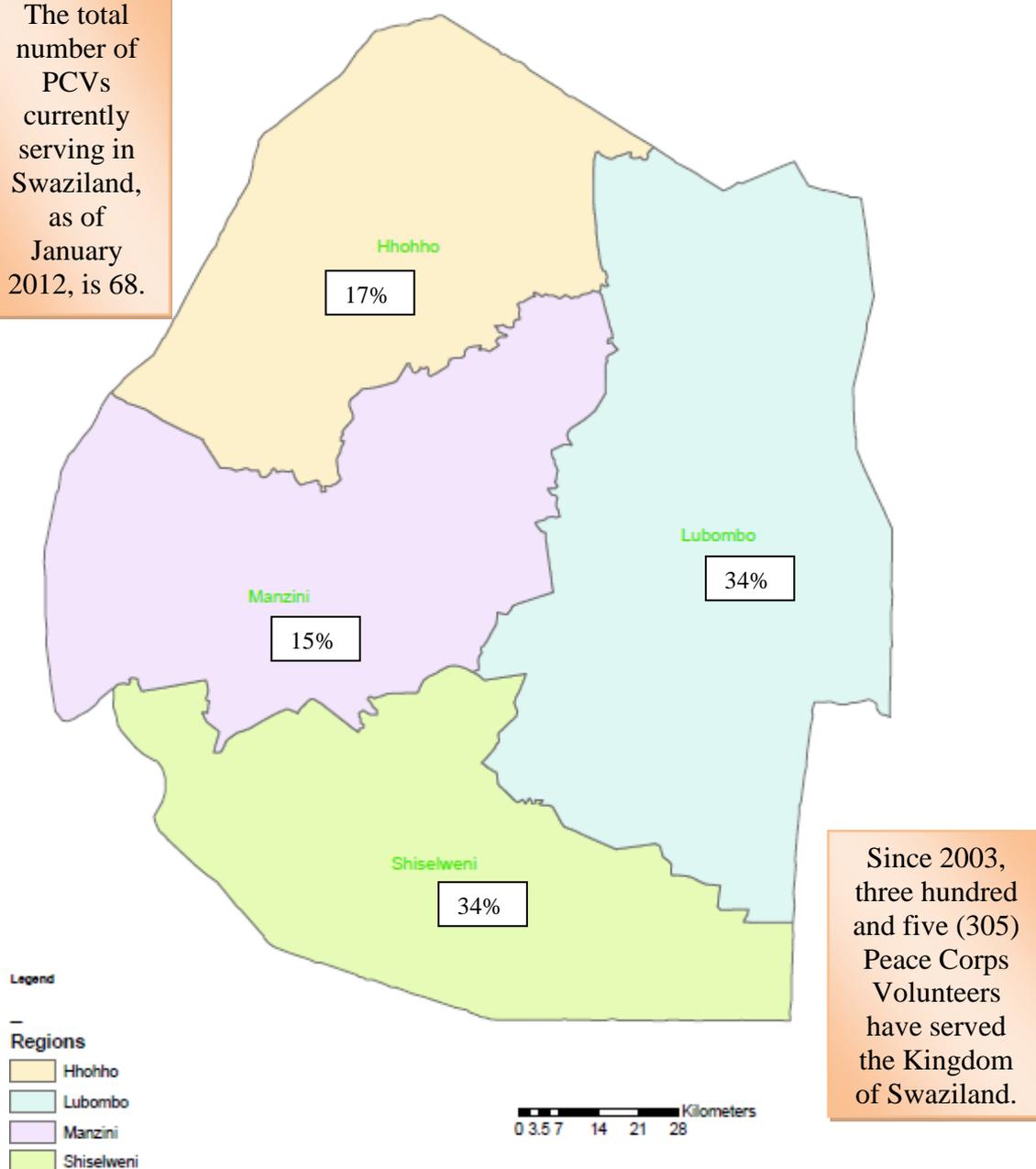


**The above are images taken during Volunteer work and integration activities in 2011.**

## Map of Volunteer Placements by Region

### Peace Corps Swaziland Volunteers 2011

The total number of PCVs currently serving in Swaziland, as of January 2012, is 68.



Volunteers are placed in all four regions in Swaziland.

Currently, there are 23 Volunteers serving in the Lubombo region (34% of all Volunteers) and another 23 Volunteers (34%) placed in the Shiselweni Region. 12 Volunteers are serving in the Hhohho Region (17%) and another 10 are based in the Manzini Region (15%).

# Peace Corps Swaziland’s Community Health Project Plan

## Purpose:

Swazi youth, adults, and community organizations will be engaged in activities that will positively contribute to a society responding proactively to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

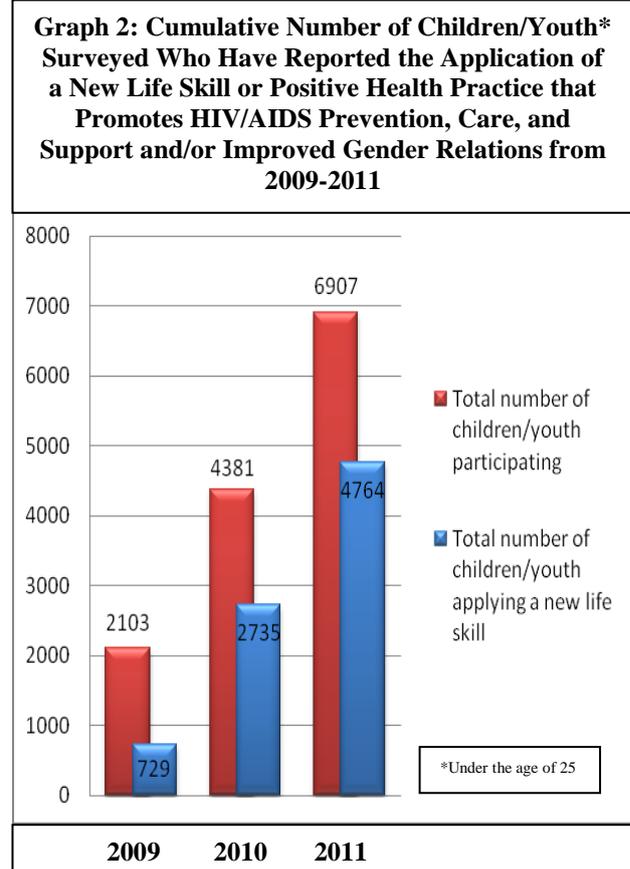
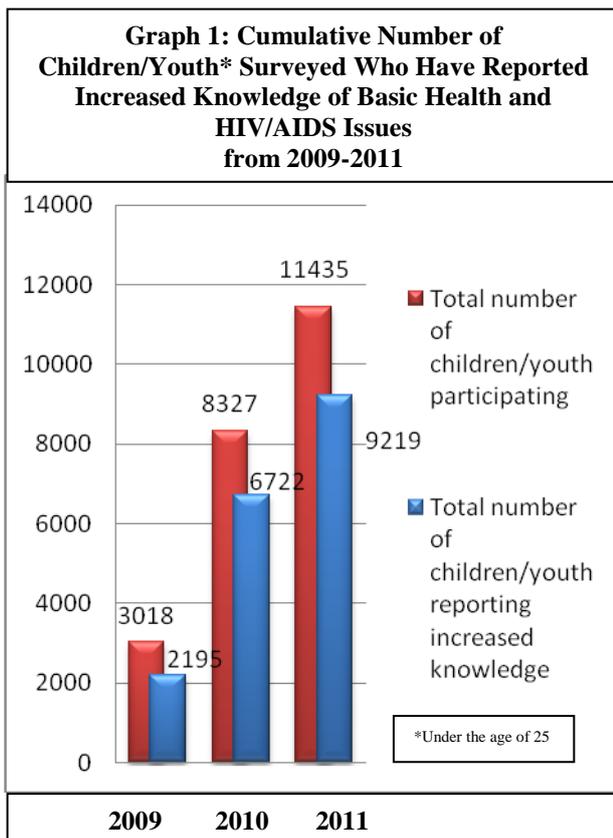
## The three goals of the project are:

- Goal 1: Community members will adopt positive behaviors to ensure their own health;
- Goal 2: Partner organizations will have enhanced capacity to achieve their missions; and
- Goal 3: Service providers will have enhanced technical capacity to provide HIV/AIDS prevention, education, care, and support.

## Status of Project’s Goals

**Target Area:** Child/Youth Health

Each fiscal year, each Volunteer and her/his collaborators will educate children (under 15) and youth (girls and boys ages 15-24) on knowledge and skills necessary to reduce high risk behaviors and live healthier lives (Life Skills and HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support).



**Results:**

To date, Volunteers and their counterparts have provided basic health and HIV/AIDS education for 11,435 children or youth. 9,219 of these children or youth showed or reported that they received an increase in health knowledge as a result of Volunteer activities. Additionally since 2009, 4,764 children or youth working with Volunteers reported the application of a new life skill or positive health practice that promotes HIV/AIDS prevention,

**Volunteer Success Story – Child Health**

“One of the main projects I have been working on is the Mhlangatane Youth Charity Organization, a group comprising Orphaned and Vulnerable Children. The group was started by a previous Volunteer and now includes my community. My group consists of 12 individuals ranging from ages 8-17. Together a nearby Volunteer and I teach the youth valuable life skills including how to make a living, be healthy and active, and how to support themselves so they will not feel dependent on others. In December, the other Volunteer and I arranged to have a Christmas party for the children complete with a singing competition, a soccer match, and a drama put on by both communities. A couple weeks before the celebration, the children were asked what items they needed for the party and then sold candy to their family and friends to raise enough money to purchase the needed supplies from their earnings. They are learning that with hard work you can succeed in life. This was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my community thus far and I am incredibly excited to build upon it.”

- Peace Corps Volunteer, Hhohho Region

care, and support and/or improved gender relations.



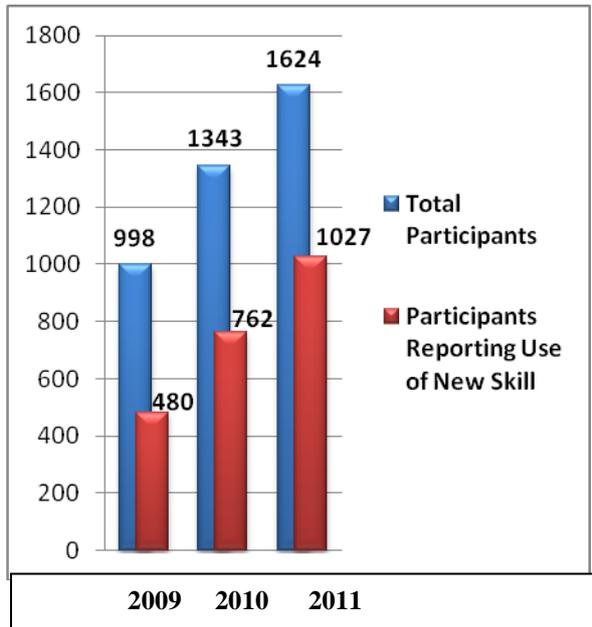
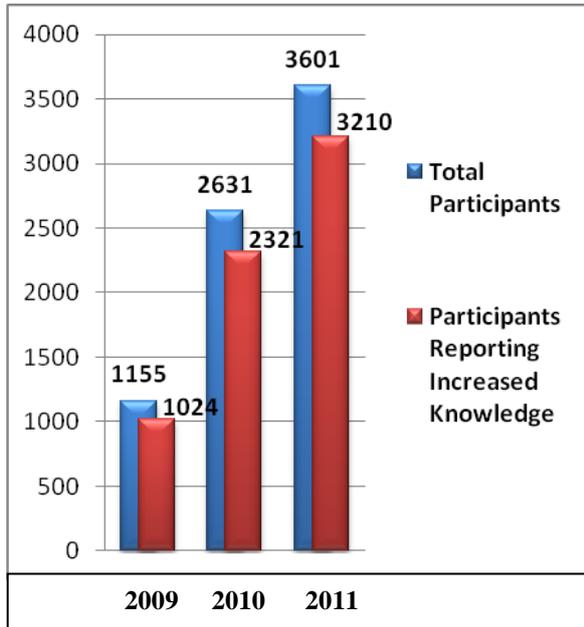
**Volunteers working to improve the health and lives of children  
in rural communities in Swaziland.**

**Target Area: Adult Health**

Each fiscal year, each Volunteer and her/his collaborators will educate adults (women and men ages 25 and older) on knowledge and skills necessary to reduce high risk behavior, live healthier lives and improve family health (Life Skills and HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support).

**Graph 3: Cumulative Number of Adults  
Surveyed Who Have Reported Increased  
Knowledge of Common Health and HIV/AIDS  
Issues from 2009-2011**

**Graph 4: Cumulative Number of Adults  
Surveyed Who Have Reported the Application  
of a New Life Skill or Positive Health Practice  
to Improve Family Health and/or Promote  
HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care, and Support from  
2009-2011**



**Results:** To date, Volunteers and their counterparts have educated 3,601 adults in common health and HIV/AIDS issues. 3,210 of these individuals demonstrated or reported increased knowledge during Volunteer activities. Volunteers and their counterparts also worked with 1,624 adults to encourage the adoption of new life skills or positive health practices to improve family health and or promote HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support.

**Target Area:** Partner Organizations and Service Providers

Each fiscal year, each Volunteer will assist groups/organizations to improve management and operations and assist Service Providers to improve their HIV/AIDS technical capacity to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, care for those infected and support those impacted by the disease.

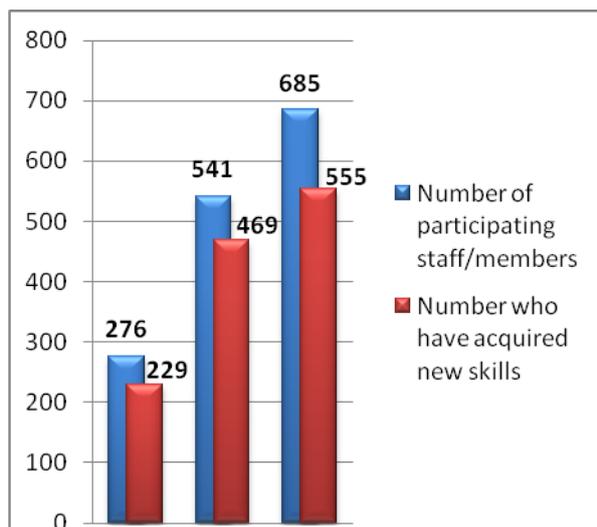
**Graph 5: Cumulative Number of Staff/Members\* Who Have Reported that they Acquired New Organizational Development Skills\*\* from Training or Mentoring Activities from 2009-2011**

**Graph 6: Cumulative Number of Service Providers Who Have Reported that they Have Acquired New Technical Skills from Volunteer Training or Mentoring Activities from 2009-2011**

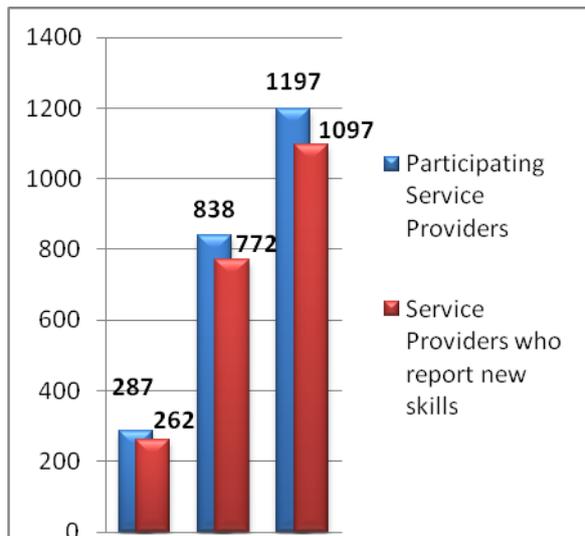
### **Volunteer Success Story – Adult Health**

“My husband and I have regular sessions with the inmates at the nearby women’s prison, teaching on HIV topics (grief and living with HIV), life skills (identifying one’s personal values and how values come into play in crucial times of decision making) and introductory business skills training (pricing goods and minimizing costs/expenses). In January our co-facilitator will be released from prison. We’ve enjoyed working with her. We’ve seen her grow in her comfort of co-leading the women (numbering from 35 to 50).”

- Peace Corps Volunteer, Manzini Region



**2009 2010 2011**  
 \* From Surveyed Partner Groups/Organizations  
 \*\* Organizational development may include strategic planning, data management, time management, human and financial resources management, resource mobilization, networking, advocacy, communications, and project management.



**Results:** To date, Volunteers and their counterparts have trained or mentored 685 adults to build their organization development skills\*\* among staff or members of partner organizations. Volunteers have also trained or mentored 1,197 service providers from 2009-2011.

**Volunteer Success Story – Partner Organizations and Service Providers  
 “Supporting Community-Based Caregivers”**

A Peace Corps Volunteer in the Shiselweni Region collaborated with community-based caregivers (RHM) to provide additional training and support for the caregivers in the community to better care for those affected by HIV/AIDS. With the help of the Volunteer, the RHM prepared and conducted health lessons for groups of community members. In this process the caregivers solidified their knowledge of health topics while also improving their ability to prepare lessons, speak in public and clearly explain important HIV-related health topics to community members. One RHM said, “The workshop has helped to revive us,” and “I am now able to teach the homesteads I visit.” The community participants also benefited from the lessons. At the close of the lessons one participant said, “Thank you for the knowledge I got in encouraging the fight against HIV/AIDS. HIV touches us all so we should learn to take care of ourselves.” *(Continued on next page)*

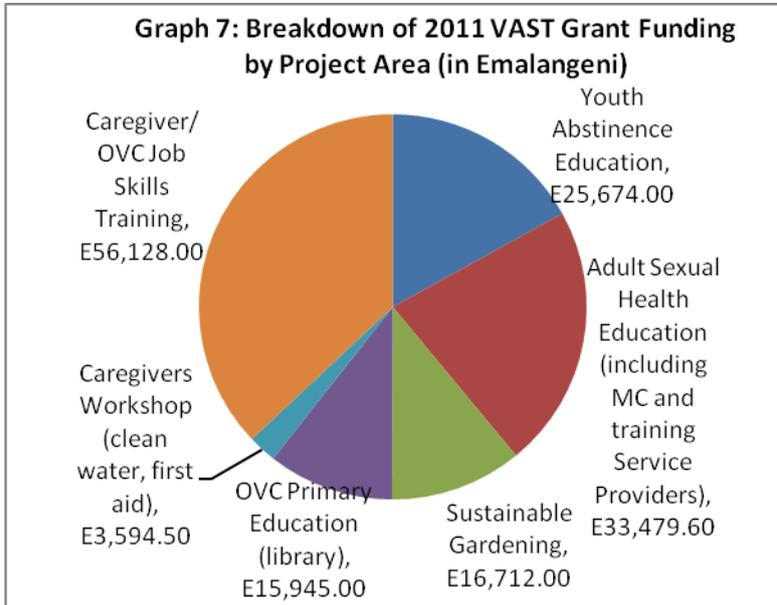
**Volunteer Success Story – (Continued from previous page)**

A few participants even discussed the dissemination of information, which was the goal of these workshops saying, “I am so grateful to learn about these diseases. I’ve learned more and I will tell others” and “we shouldn’t stop passing our knowledge to other people around us.” The Volunteer personally witnessed the passing on of information, as her host sister who attended the workshops told her host mother what she had learned at the trainings. Through this project it is anticipated that the community will benefit from improved health awareness of HIV prevention and treatment and improved community health standards, including water, sanitation, and nutrition.

- Peace Corps Volunteer, Shiselweni Region

**VAST Community Projects**

Through the support of the U.S. Embassy/PEPFAR Program, Volunteers and their communities are able to access small grants to enhance community activities. Though the total dollar investment in these projects is often small the impacts in the community are very substantial. In 2011, Volunteers utilized VAST grants to implement girls’ empowerment camps, train peer educators in prevention, organize prevention and anti-stigma community dialogues, and train caregivers in psychosocial support techniques. They also worked with school teachers and guidance counselors to teach life skills to youth and to improve the quality of education and other support services for OVC. Volunteers have utilized small grants to conduct workshops for community members introducing business (e.g. resume and grant writing, interviewing and networking) and vocational skills such as animal husbandry. Volunteers have also coordinated sustainable gardening projects (including water harvesting, treatment and storage) and income generating projects with VAST grants. Volunteer projects are often aimed at strengthening the ability of families and caregivers to meet OVC and PLHA (people living with HIV and AIDS) needs and therefore include supplemental information and trainings about general health issues (such as TB) and preventing mother to child transmission of HIV (PMTCT). Volunteers collaborate with other partners to provide in-service training for community-based Kagogo Clerks and other NGO/CBO service providers such as Rural Health Motivators, peer educators, and caregivers. Volunteers also work with community partners to reduce violence and coercion through interpersonal communication and community mobilization aimed at empowering female youth and mothers and promoting men as partners. In 2011 there were 18 projects funded in a variety of program areas (see Graph 7).



### ***Volunteer Success Story – VAST Project***

“I am working with ten caregivers in my community to plan and implement a poultry project. The main objective of this income generating project is to train caregivers on how to raise chickens and sell them for profit with the extra income contributing to OVC care. Since working with these women I have realized that they are genuinely dedicated to this project. They formed a committee and initiated meetings with me to talk about what they would like to learn during their training. They have also worked hard to reach the training manager for our area whose permission was needed for the project to go through and for the project to get local funding. They have been active in searching for markets for the eggs that will be sold and in organizing themselves.

Throughout the project’s history I made sure that the women took ownership over their work. I tried to involve myself as little as possible in the day-to-day operations of the project. This built independence and self-reliance on the part of the caregivers. Therefore, while I was away on leave over Christmas in 2010 they were able to continue the project by selling the first 200 chickens and begin to raise their second batch of 200 chicks. After I returned from the holidays the Chairperson of the committee came to me and said, “The men [in our local leadership] want to see us sitting down, but we want to work. We want to make ourselves better and make this project work.” Their level of organization and dedication for this project lets me know that these women will be able to sustain their project.”

- Peace Corps Volunteer, Hhohho Region

### ***Volunteer Success Story – VAST Project***

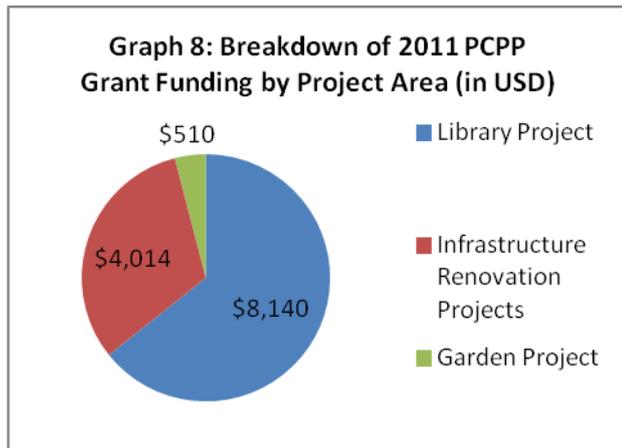
A Peace Corps Volunteer and her counterpart working near Big Bend, Swaziland led a workshop to increase the capacity of caregivers to address diarrhea-linked sickness and mortality amongst Orphaned and Vulnerable Children in the community. This project addressed the community-identified priority of reducing instances of childhood diarrhea, a major health issue for the community, especially after a 2009 outbreak of cholera. The Lusutfu River is the primary drinking water source for the community, especially for the most impoverished families, which often care for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in the community. Interviewed community members are aware of the danger of drinking untreated river water, but the Volunteer and her counterpart found that using wood fires to boil the water is too resource-heavy to be practical for most families.

Sixty-nine community members, including caregivers and families of Orphans and Vulnerable Children, attended the workshop and were taught the skills to prevent diarrhea through solar boiling and/or bleaching water, hand washing, making a simple hand washing station, and the skills to treat diarrhea by making and using Oral Rehydration Solution. At the end of the workshop, all attendees physically demonstrated their knowledge of hand washing by washing before lunch was served, and 90 percent of attendees demonstrated their knowledge of Oral Rehydration Solution by making several bags of Oral Rehydration Solution to take home. In informal interviews during a question and answer sessions at the end of the workshop attendees orally demonstrated their acquisition of knowledge on all topics. One participant, a local leader, said he was glad to have a focus on water because, “it is a huge issue for community members, who suffered from cholera in years past due to the state of the river.”

- Peace Corps Volunteer, Lubombo Region

## Peace Corps Partnership Project (PCPP) Community Projects

Volunteers and their communities may also apply for PCPP funding for their community projects. Through PCPP Volunteers are able to reach out to family and friends in the U.S. to promote a project. These individuals then pledge support for the Volunteer and Community Activity. In 2011, 23 Volunteers received \$12,664 in international donations.



### ***Volunteer Success Story – PCPP Project***

For the second straight year, Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts partnered with Books for Africa to bring 30,000 books into the country for 30 primary and secondary schools throughout Swaziland. A total of twenty PCVs participated in this project with several involving multiple schools from their communities. In order to participate in this program, each school was required to designate a room with shelving for a library, contribute E1,500 as partial payment for shipping costs, and participate in a library development training session. The return for this community contribution was enormous! Each school received 1,000 new books and assorted library materials. Through this project, the libraries will help to educate and empower the next generation of Swazi students.

One school representative, observing the significance of this project to enhance education at its site, exclaimed: “These books will be like a bride for the school. They will bring such goodness!”



In 2011, Volunteers organized books (left) and helped plan new school libraries (above) as part of the Books for Africa project.



**Volunteer Success Story – PCPP Project  
“Building a Future for the Children”**

The Ward 4 Social Centre in Nhlango had been called a "white elephant" because of its enormous size and nearly equal level of disrepair. The roofing, windows, and doors and toilets all required serious attention. The facility was in disrepair, though several resourceful community members knew it had the potential to promise to serve as a thriving multi-purpose centre. But until the Centre was repaired, children and teachers couldn't leave their educational materials in the Centre because the doors didn't lock. The community kitchen couldn't be used because of the leaky roof and ceiling. And the caregivers who serve children with HIV/AIDS in the community couldn't meet at night because there was no electricity. And, if this weren't enough, the children couldn't even play on the sports field at the center because they were all broken.

Town council members approached a Shiselweni-based Volunteer who was helping with restoring the Centre, and together they worked out a plan to make the Centre a viable project. The Community now has a beautiful attractive Social Centre that is now renters supporting it but is now able to be rented for functions such as weddings and meetings. The fees raised from these rentals will allow the Centre to function at full capacity feeding the students & supporting the community patients. Currently, 50 pre-school students are enrolled and will directly benefit from the renovations immediately and for the many years to come.

"It wasn't just me...there were many who contributed, including people from Europe who donated to the project, the caregivers and skilled craftspeople who worked hard in repairing the Centre and the Nhlango Town Council who supported the project. And now, the community will benefit for years and years because of the work done on this centre. "

- Peace Corps Volunteer, Shiselweni

**Ward 4 Social Center, Nhlango.**



## Program Direction

Peace Corps Swaziland has experienced many successes in recent years with the Community Health project and will continue to place Volunteers in this area. In 2012 Peace Corps Swaziland will encourage Community Health Volunteers to focus on key project areas including:



Additionally, Peace Corps Swaziland will continue with an education-based youth development project that began with 17 Volunteers in June 2011. With this initiative, Post has partnered with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF's *Schools are Centers for Care and Support* project, which targets OVCs and their caregivers as primary beneficiaries. In 2012 Peace Corps Swaziland will encourage these Volunteers to focus on key project areas including:



The Volunteer community has already begun two large projects for 2012. The first is the third generation of the "Books for Africa" project that began in 2010 and has continued, including more schools and more and more students every year since. The second project is a national GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) project including a training workshop for service providers, GLOW activities in communities throughout Swaziland and a national camp for participating girls. These activities, along with general health education and youth development, are integrated into the daily activities of Volunteers in Swaziland.

## Strengths and Challenges

### *Program Strengths:*

Peace Corps Swaziland has a well-developed training program for Volunteers and their host country counterparts. During the Volunteers' 27 months in Swaziland Volunteers participate in five large training activities including: Pre-Service Training, In-Service Training, Mid-

Service Training, Grief and Loss Training and Close of Service Training. The Volunteers' counterparts are invited to attend two of these training events and some additional training activities that occur throughout the year. During training activities, Peace Corps partners and stakeholders join the training team to provide Volunteers with the most up-to-date information and strategies for community health interventions.

The success of the training program is observed in the results of outreach activities. In FY 2011 Peace Corps Swaziland Volunteers reached 4,251 community members through "abstinence or be-faithful" prevention activities and 5,363 individuals through other prevention activities. Volunteers also reached 3,271 individuals in WID/GAD (women in development/gender and development) activities and 20,286 through youth development activities.

Volunteer have reported growing satisfaction with their place in Peace Corps Swaziland and more Volunteers are participating in third-year extension options. The number of Volunteers who extended their service beyond the 27-month mark in 2011 was seven, including six that chose to extend for a full year. Peace Corps Swaziland experienced a secondary benefit in this process as Volunteers continue sharing their acquired knowledge and skills in-country, as well as contributing to the project goals.

#### *Program Challenges:*

Volunteers continue to struggle with the challenge of "AIDS Fatigue" throughout Swaziland. Post has focused Volunteer technical training and programming support to encourage Volunteers to engage in skill-based HIV education and use diverse and creative activities to share knowledge and initiate behavior change. Additionally, Volunteers share prevention messages with coming-of-age youth, focusing on this impressionable group while still engaging community members in discussions of stigma reduction.

Post's focus on sustainable development and building local capacity frequently conflict with local perceptions of the role and abilities of Volunteers to initiate and complete community projects. In some cases, communities expect volunteers to bring in large-scale projects such as building boreholes for water and constructing new buildings. To overcome this, Post has and will continue to orient communities on the role of Volunteers. In 2010 and 2011, Post reached out to local counterparts during the Project Design and Management Workshop to improve its understanding of and partnerships in development.

## **Conclusion**

Peace Corps Swaziland Volunteers had a successful 2011, working with local counterparts to reach out to children and youth with knowledge and skills necessary to reduce high risk behaviors and make healthy choices. Volunteers also educated adults in ways to live healthier lives and improve family health. Volunteer assisted groups/organizations to improve management and operations and Service Providers to improve their HIV/AIDS technical capacity to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, care for those infected and support those impacted by the disease. Volunteers conducted training and mentoring activities with community partners throughout the year with the occasional use of small grant funding to support a specialized community training or targeted project. In the future Volunteers will

continue these health education and youth development activities with the support of regular trainings and project guidance from Peace Corps Swaziland.