

Shiselweni Goes Into The Trenches

by Hanna Lee, Mahlalini

DIG DIG DIG AWAY!!!!!!!!!!!!

It's time to get down and dirty! From December 12 to December 15th, volunteers from the Shiselweni region went to the Nhlanguano Farmers Training Center for a four-day workshop on trench gardening taught by Sam and Bonginkhosi of the Moya Center. Each of the volunteers was allowed to bring up to two members from their communities so that they too could learn about trench gardening and it was wonderful. We brought our bosisi, bobhuti, counterparts, bomake, and home-based caregivers (HBCs). The four-day workshop was very well organized and structured, breaking up the days with classroom learning and practical learning.

On the first day, Sam and Bonginkhosi led

us through the basic principles of trench gardening, why it was a useful tool, and the first steps in creating your own trenches. Trench gardening is possible wherever you want, in clay or sand soil, where your trenches can be as little as 1 meter by 1 meter, or as large as 1 meter by 10 meters. With some tins, bones, newspaper, compost, manure, and a little bit of water, you can build your own trench in one day! On day two, we actually created the trenches at a feeding kitchen in Nhlanguano. Everyone laughed as the volunteers did their best (with a lot of grunting) to dig into the dirt with the pickaxes and shovels but we cheered each other on as we "harmoniously" crooned to Sean Paul ("I got the right temperature to shelter you from the storm..."), James Blunt ("You're Beautiful,



HBCs water a newly planted lemon tree

it's true, and I saw your face in a crowded room, and I don't know what to do..."), Rihanna (I don't wanna do this anymore, I don't wanna be the reason why...I don't

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Numbers, Numbers, Numbers: NERCHA Lays It Down

From Beth Skorochod, NERCHA

Every second year, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) determines the HIV prevalence of a sample of pregnant women who attend antenatal care (ANC) clinics. This surveillance is referred to as *sentinel HIV surveillance*. Pregnant women are selected as the 'sentinel' population because they have had unprotected heterosexual sex, which is the main way HIV is spread in Swaziland. Therefore, should the HIV prevalence in pregnant women increase or decline, this is an indication (like a trip wire) of what is happening with the HIV prevalence in the general population.

In Swaziland, the 2006 sentinel surveillance measured the level of HIV infection among pregnant women aged 15 to 49 attending antenatal care clinics for a FIRST VISIT at 17 health facilities around the country. The clinics were selected to be representative of the four regions and of both urban and rural areas. The surveillance was conducted for a three month period between August and October 2006 and surveyed approximately 2,500 women. Of the 2,467 pregnant women aged 15-49 years enrolled

in the surveillance, 966 tested HIV positive, giving a prevalence rate of 39.2%, a decrease of 3.4% from the 2004 sentinel surveillance result of 42.6%.

Sentinel surveillance was designed to assess trends in the HIV epidemic over time. By comparing prevalence levels over a number of years, countries were able to see an increase or decline in HIV prevalence. Since many countries were using this type of HIV surveillance, the prevalence figures were also an easy way to compare the epidemic from country to country or region to region.

Concerns about the accuracy of national estimates based on sentinel HIV surveillance, and the need for more detailed data on the magnitude and distribution of HIV, have stimulated demands for more representative data on HIV prevalence for the whole population.

While expensive and logistically difficult to carry out, many countries have conducted national population-based surveys that include HIV testing, often called demographic health surveys (DHS). In most countries using DHS's the population-based surveys have shown considerably lower prevalence rates *continued on page 2...*

Director's Chat w/Pattie Austin, CD



Happy New Year to all PCVs!! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season with friends and families either in Swaziland, America, Mozambique, South Africa or wherever you celebrated.

2007 promises to be another busy and exciting year for Peace Corps Swaziland. The first event will be a visit from the new Peace Corps Director, Mr. Ronald Tschetter to Swaziland. Mr. Tschetter assumed his position in the fall 2006 following the departure of Director Vasquez. This will be the Director's first trip to Africa and he will be visiting Malawi, Namibia and Swaziland. The Director will be accompanied by his wife (both are RPCVs), Mr. Henry McKoy, the Director of the Africa Region, perhaps by Mr. Ron Campbell the Director of the PEPFAR office at HQ, and perhaps a confidential assistant and a press representative. I say "perhaps" because the details of the trip have changed several times so as of this writing the participant list is not final. One critical element of the trip changed the Friday before Christmas: I was notified that the dates of the visit had been postponed! Originally we were to host the Director January 16,17,18 and 19 but **now the new dates are February 20, 21, 22, and 23.**

The Director is very eager to meet with Volunteers so we will try to schedule as many of you as possible to meet him and share activities during his trip. There will be meetings with government officials, the Embassy, NERCHA and perhaps even the King, site visits and opportunities to see PCVs at work, a reception at the Ambassador's residence for NGOs/government/ and a few PCVs, and staff briefings and other functions. You will be hearing more from the programming staff and Khabo regarding your participation.

January is also the month that the PCO gears up to begin site development and prepare for PST in mid-June. We will be receiving Group 5 in mid-June with the expectation they will be Swearing-In just as Group 3 completes their service.

Finally, a few staff changes to announce. We are interviewing candidates for the Training Manager position and should be able to announce who will be Simanga's replacement soon. Also, the Motor Pool Coordinator Ndoda Manana has completed his contract year and won't be returning to Peace Corps so we will be hiring a replacement for him early in the New Year.

Interpretation of HIV prevalence survey results:

HIV prevalence is the total number of infections at a given point in time. If one wanted to know the exact HIV prevalence of the Swazi population at a given point in time, one would need to test every person in Swaziland at the same time, on the same date to determine their HIV status. This is not practically possible.

Therefore, different ways are used to ESTIMATE HIV prevalence. NONE of these ways provides an EXACT picture of the HIV prevalence. The precise HIV prevalence changes slightly from day to day, as new persons become infected (increasing prevalence) and those already infected die (decreasing prevalence).

It is very important to understand that the HIV prevalence estimates from ANC clinics are NOT the national HIV prevalence estimate. The reasons are:

- By its very nature, HIV surveillance at ANC clinics only measures the HIV prevalence of women, in particular only sexually active women who have had unprotected sex (otherwise they would not be pregnant).
- Women attending antenatal clinics may not be representative of all pregnant women because some pregnant women may not attend antenatal clinics.
- HIV surveillance at ANC sites does not provide information about HIV prevalence in men. Prevalence estimates for men are typically based on assumptions about the ratio of male-to-female prevalence.
- National HIV prevalence estimates based on sentinel surveillance at ANC clinics tend to overestimate the national prevalence.

“Numbers”

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than those reported based on ANC surveillance. The HIV surveillance at ANC sites provides an estimate of the HIV prevalence of pregnant women attending ANC clinics, whilst the DHS HIV testing results provides an estimate of HIV infection in the general population (the sample for the DHS is taken from men and women of all ages – i.e. the general population).

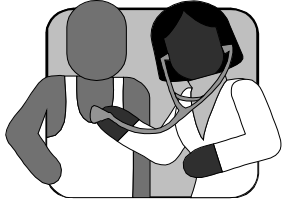
Swaziland has recently embarked on its own population-based survey or DHS, which includes HIV testing. Workers are going door to door to a randomly selected sample of households throughout the country, to interview Swazis and gather all kinds of health-related information. The workers also request permission to gather a blood sample, that is then tested at the laboratory to see if the person is HIV positive or negative. The blood samples are not linked to the individual person, so the results are anonymous. The HIV testing component of the DHS will provide the HIV prevalence among those who consented to HIV testing. Swaziland's DHS is expected to be complete by early 2007 with

results announced to the public in mid 2007. A follow up DHS is planned in 5 years' time.

As has happened in other countries, the prevalence rate gleaned from Swaziland's DHS is expected to be lower than the HIV prevalence amongst pregnant women attending ANC clinics. This does not necessarily indicate a decline in national HIV prevalence. One of the reasons for a lower rate is that, in the DHS, a complete population sample (male and female, of all ages, including those who have never had sex or those who only had protected sex — e.g. low risk for HIV infection — participate in the survey. Also, HIV testing during the DHS is based on informed consent. Therefore, a person who already knows that he or she is HIV positive may be more likely to refuse to be part of the DHS survey. All of these factors may lower the HIV prevalence rate.

Based on all of the above, one can say that the true HIV prevalence lies most likely somewhere in between the HIV prevalence estimates from ANC clinics and the HIV prevalence estimates from the DHS survey. It is imperative that the public understands the difference between the two; it is also imperative that the public understands that one

cannot compare the two. One should compare the HIV prevalence estimates of sentinel HIV surveillance at ANC clinics (every two years) with each other and the HIV prevalence estimates from DHS surveys (every 5 years) with each other to see the trends. Together, sentinel HIV surveillance and the DHS can provide a clear picture of both the overall trends and geographical distribution of HIV, as well as give detailed information on potential risk factors and groups exhibiting high-risk behaviour. This will inform future decision making and allow the country to better programme interventions and activities that will stop the spread of HIV.



Keeping you Updated and Healthy w/Daynese Santos, PCMO

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

It's great to see everyone back after the holidays refreshed and ready to overcome another milestone in your Peace Corps adventure. Even if you've already made a New Year's resolution, it's not too late to resolve to manage stress in healthy ways. When going through a particularly tough time, explore your feelings, let someone know what's going on with you. Pan out if you need to, get a different perspective. Avoid the comparison trap, sometimes projects fail not through lack of volunteer effort but due to any number of reasons far beyond the scope of Peace Corps. Even though other volunteers appear to be more productive, they're having their share of disappointments as well. Whether this is your first year or second year continually review and revise your goals. If you determine that a goal just isn't attainable, cut your losses. It may be an idea ahead of its' time. Tidy up, finish strong!

'PETICULARS'

Sometime around Week 8 of PST just before most eyes in the room sort of glazed over, the PCMO explained Peace Corps' policy on volunteer pet ownership. In summary, volunteers are expected to be responsible pet owners. That includes providing your pet with appropriate vaccinations, vet check-ups, spaying or neutering, adequate diet and nutrition and pest control. According to local vet Dr. M. Lufungulo, all dogs should be vaccinated against rabies annually. The Five in One vaccine which protects against Distemper, Parvovirus, Influenza virus and Hepatitis, (Adenovirus) should be given annually as well. Puppies should receive Five in One Vaccinations in a series of three shots at 6 weeks, 9 weeks and 12 weeks of age. Rabies vaccinations for puppies are given in a series of two shots at 12 weeks and 15 weeks of age. Cats require 'Three in One' vaccinations at 6 weeks of age and 9 weeks of age. Rabies shots for cats are given at 12 weeks of age and 15 weeks of age. Fees for complete immunization series average E150. Birth control for your pet is an equally important responsibility because of the tremendous health and economic impact that stray, unimmunized animals have on humans, other animals and the environment. Dr. Lufungulo recommends sterilization for female dogs at 3 months of age, average fee E800 and 5 months of age for female cats, average fee E470. Castration (neutering) for male dogs may be done at 4 months of age, average fee E400-E450. Male cats may be neutered at 5 months of age, average fee E310. Your pet's diet should be protein based not carbohydrate based in order to insure healthy development of bones, muscle, coat and teeth. Table scraps as a rule don't meet those requirements and pap is completely inappropriate. Recently, staff has had to intervene in various pet related issues and as a result became aware that volunteers may be harboring up to 12 pets! What's wrong with that picture? Our focus at Peace Corps Swaziland is HIV/AIDS

Education and Prevention, not Animal Husbandry. Families in the rural communities have received us as guests on their homesteads and as such we are not expected to burden them with destruction of property, annoyance, noise, animal waste and by-default pet sitting.

It's because of problems like these that some Peace Corps' posts ban volunteer pet ownership.

So here are the rules:

- Ø Get an OK from host family BEFORE adopting a pet
- Ø Limit yourselves to ONE pet
- Ø Provide required immunizations at appropriate age of pet
- Ø Maintain documentation of all immunizations
- Ø Have pets spayed or neutered at appropriate age
- Ø Before taking a trip, make arrangements for care of your pet
- Ø Make a plan for transport for your pet (if no transport available, consider a pet rock instead!)
- Ø Make provisions for adequate shade and water for your pet
- Ø Add pet food to your grocery list
- Ø You are responsible for damages to persons or property caused by your pet
- Ø Confirm arrangements and transfer ownership of your pet before COS.

Thanks to Mbabane veterinarians, Dr. M. Lufungulo, (404-4626) and Dr. Barry Spencer, (404-3621).

WRAP UP SITE VISITS GROUP 3

Thanks Group 3, the PCMO site visits went very well last month. It appears that you've accepted 'adjustment' as part of the reality being a PCV. I think you've got it! Outstanding medical issues that haven't been followed up will be done so over the next two weeks. Otherwise senior staff has been advised of specific issues requiring their attention. Thank you for sharing, for allowing me 'in', this has been a rewarding experience for me. Finally, I've got a clue!

NEW YORK CITY BANS TRANS FATS

This is HUGE!!! New York City is the first city in the U.S. to ban trans fats from all restaurants by July 2007 and from all foods by July 2008. Trans fats make crunchy foods crunchier and creamy foods creamier. The down side to that is that trans fats increase LDL, bad cholesterol, blood levels and decrease HDL, good cholesterol blood levels. As an added bonus, trans fats also expand the waist and are directly linked to heart disease. Be smart shoppers, look for labels that state 'contain no trans fats'. Although pricier and harder to find, extra virgin olive oil and 'low linoleic' soy bean oil are great picks.

A message from Make Thandi's desk:

Peace Corps volunteers are sometimes unsure of who is calling them and so do not answer their phones. Here are the Peace Corps office numbers, so please answer your cell if you receive a call from one of the following numbers!: 4220411, 4220413, 5514291, 5514292, 5514293, 5514294, 5514295, FAX 4220415.

Also, if you need anything important mailed to you from the U.S. (like a third laptop computer, glasses, airline tickets) via DHL (www.dhl.com / 1-800-CALL-DHL) the address is: YOUR NAME; c/o Peace Corps; Farm 188, Gate 256; Dalriach West; Mbabane, Swaziland. DHL will also need a phone number. Use: +268-422-0411

Programming w/Susan Olson, APCD

Happy New Year from the Programming Staff!

We thought that we would be welcoming the new PC Director and several other HQ visitors this month but we were recently notified that the trip has been postponed till the third week of February. We will be sure to keep Volunteers posted on the planned itinerary as we learn more details in the coming weeks. During January, we will begin developing sites for Group 5. We are missing site evaluation/recommendation forms from several Group 3 PCVs so please turn these in to the Programming staff as soon as possible as this info is very useful in our efforts to find the best possible sites for the new group arriving in mid-June. We still have not yet learned whether PC/Swaziland will receive approximately 25 PCTs or if there will be adequate budget for an additional ten for a total of 35 trainees in Group 5.

By now, PCVs should have received a CD that contains copies of all the technical sessions that were presented during both the Reconnect IST and All Vol Conference. If you didn't receive one, please see Susan. In case you've not had the opportunity to check out the CD yet, there is an e-copy of the revised trimester report forms for those of you who prefer to type your report. Additional hard copies of the report forms are available in the PCV lounge. Hand-written or typed is fine, just so long as we hear from you. We have received reports from all Group 4 PCVs and most all from Group 3. Thanks so much for your cooperation in submitting these reports in a timely manner.

We recently received an update from the World Wise Schools program with the most recent PCV/School matches. From the list we received it looks as though every Volunteer who submitted a request has been matched. If this is not the case, talk to Susan so she can follow up with our contact person in Washington.

For those of you who might like to work with school or community libraries as a secondary project, the Programming unit has a number of useful booklets and other resources. We also recently heard from a former Group 2 PCV, Marnie Cockrill, who now works for the Salvation Army and has access to low-cost books. She has offered to help with shipping books to supplement or establish school libraries. Please contact the APCDs if your school or community is interested.

Next, and probably of most interest to PCVs, is that senior PC staff and VAC representatives met on Dec 19th to discuss a variety of issues including the ever-popular topic of PCV vacation policy. It was brought to staff's attention that a number of PCVs felt that they were not able to make use of their monthly free weekend if they planned to be out of the country for a significant length of time on vacation. After some discussion, staff agreed to a trial revision of the free weekend policy. Effective February 1, 2007 if you plan to take 12 or more consecutive international leave days, you will be permitted to utilize your free weekend for that month which would give PCVs an extra 2 days of leave while out of the country. Please note that this policy will not be retroactive for those of you who already took 12+ days of leave in December or January. Also, if your 12+ days of leave take place over two months (e.g. late Feb-early Mar), you can only add one free weekend to your total, not two. Please don't ask for an exception to be made if you're only requesting 7 days or 10 days of leave as this adds an extra level of detail for Thandi and the APCDs to track (which was one of the major reasons that international free weekends were phased out in August 2006). We will see how this works over the next few months and follow up with VAC at our next quarterly meeting. While on the subject of PCV leave we wanted to provide another reminder that Stella is now tracking leave for all Group 3 PCVs and Susan is overseeing leave for Group 4 Volunteers. Please remember to keep us informed any time you are away from site overnight. It was brought to our attention that there may be some confusion on how leave days are counted. As per PC policy, your last day of leave is when you return to your **worksites**, not Mbabane. If you are late crossing the border and can't make it back to site, technically you should take another leave day unless you have pre-arranged official business at the PC office (e.g. SOJO). If there is any aspect of the Volunteer leave policy that is not clear, it's a good idea to discuss it with your APCD so as to avoid any misunderstandings.

Mahlubi is in the process of coordinating an official introduction between PCVs and the Regional Education Officers (REOs) in the Manzini, Shiselweni and Lubombo regions and following up on the status of the PC-produced Lifeskills Manual. He will provide more details on this when he returns from leave on January 9th.

Finally, we are looking for PCVs from Group 4 who are interested in serving on the Life Skills Committee or CHAPS/CHAT. Please contact one of the APCDs or Amy Baker (for Life Skills) and Kim Kanney, Jess Oya or Molly Pacenta (for CHAPS/CHAT). Enjoy your holidays on January 1st and 8th! Susan, Stella and Mahlubi.

NEWS & Notes

Gerald Ford Dies

The 38th President of the United States, Gerald Ford, died on Tuesday, December 26th, at the age of 93. Ford was the hand-picked successor to Richard Nixon after he resigned from office after the Watergate Scandal, making him the only President never officially elected. Ford had battled pneumonia in Jan 2006 and underwent two heart treatments in August.

Libyan AIDS Trial

Tripoli, Libya- A court convicted five Bulgarian nurses and one Palestinian doctor of deliberately infecting 400 children with HIV and sentenced them to death despite scientific evidence that the children were infected before the workers came to Libya.

In Brief

What a Tees

There's been a delay with Group 3's T-shirts due to unsatisfactory printing. Because of the holiday season, they may not be ready until early February. Deep apologies for any inconveniences.

Nyanyali Thursdays

Nyanyali Women's Sewing Association will now only be selling handbags, purses, pillow cases, place mats, etc. on Thursdays at the Manzini Market.

Clothes for Grabs

RPCV Jennifer Cindric recently sent two large boxes of used clothing (mostly children's) to Swaziland PCV's to distribute throughout their communities. The clothes are available in the volunteer lounge if you are interested, but please leave money in Justine's mailbox, as she has paid for the E40 postage fee.

There's only one rule playaz: Every row, column and 3x3 box has to have the numbers 1 through 9, exactly once. Do it to it. prepare yourself for the answers and a Monster Sudoku next month...

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Daily SuDoku: Wed 27-Dec-2006

medium

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Daily SuDoku: Tue 26-Dec-2006

very hard

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Daily SuDoku: Mon 25-Dec-2006

medium

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Daily SuDoku: Sun 24-Dec-2006

very hard

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Poor records plague Bush AIDS effort

Taken from Yahoo.com

by Rita Beamish, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON - President Bush's ambitious AIDS-fighting program in poor countries has pushed so hard for fast results that basic record keeping and accountability often went by the wayside, making it hard to judge the true success, according to government audits and officials.

Investigators found the three-year-old, \$15-billion program has overcounted and undercounted thousands of patients it helped or was unable to verify claims of success by local groups that took U.S. money to prevent the spread of disease or care for AIDS victims and their children.

The Bush administration says it has worked to fix the problems that were found in multiple countries and outlined in several audits reviewed by The Associated Press.

"It's not good enough for the auditors to hear from the mission that we did A, B and C but we can't prove it to you, or there's no documentation to prove that we did it," said Joe Farinella, a top watchdog inside the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Farinella is the assistant inspector general who oversaw the investigations into how U.S. AIDS money was spent overseas in 2004 and 2005.

He said many recipients failed to keep records that would provide "reasonable assurance that what they say was done was in fact carried out." The inspector general will recommend that the administration clarify its directives and improve reporting methods.

The administration acknowledges the lapses and says it has imposed tighter reporting systems that have improved the accuracy of information. Officials blame the shoddy record keeping on an eagerness to get money into the field to help AIDS victims.

"You could've waited for three years to get all these systems in place and an awful lot of people would have died," said Ambassador Mark Dybul, the administration's global AIDS coordinator.

"Our approach was get the services out, start moving the programs. In many of the cases where they say we can't find documentation, that doesn't mean people aren't getting services; that just means the reporting systems are not in place," he said. Dybul said he has "extraordinary" confidence in the overall numbers.

For at least one country, Guyana, incorrect numbers made it into this year's annual report to Congress. It cited services to 5,200 AIDS orphans, but auditors documented fewer than 300, many of them not even affected by AIDS.

The opposite occurred in South Africa. Some provincial governments refused to disclose information on AIDS tests and counseling, causing "severe underreporting" in the number of victims who were helped with U.S. money, an audit dated Aug. 11 concluded. Officials said that problem was now resolved.

After reporting that millions of people were reached by mass-media promoting sexual abstinence and use of condoms, the administration now has dropped that measurement completely, on grounds it is impossible to know how many people hear radio messages.

The numbers are important because Congress and others closely track administration strategies for a program that is pumping unprecedented sums into AIDS-stricken nations in Africa. The administration demands that programs make progress toward specific targets each year and report tallies in dozens of categories.

Bush's goals are ambitious: to treat 2 million infected people by 2008, prevent 7 million new infections and provide support and care

for 10 million.

"The accuracy of the numbers is essential and is something Congress should look at," said the incoming chairman of the House Government Reform Committee, Rep. Henry Waxman D-Calif.

Rep. Barbara Lee D-Calif., said she will seek oversight hearings into the questions raised by the audits. Dybul said early problems were expected, but standardized improvements are creating a growing "culture of accountability" in the field.

"We are putting into place reporting mechanisms that have never existed," he said. "Our numbers are the tightest in the world. Yes, we have problems around the margins. We've put enormous effort into them and are improving them all the time."

Current counts of people helped from each country are "within scientifically acceptable ranges of numbers," said Win Brown, a data quality consultant to Dybul's office.

The USAID's inspector general focused on care and prevention in 2004 and 2005, but did not highlight drug treatment, which Dybul said is easy to count and had good accountability.

Tracking care for orphans has been especially troublesome. Local groups were found tallying individual handouts such as meals or clothing and not measuring true care. That led the administration to impose a new rule in July that a child can only be counted if provided with three of six key services. The administration also is working to avoid double counting when a child gets help from more than one program.

Auditors also found confusion about reporting timetables and errors by U.S. officials, some of whom said the heavy workload interfered with their ability to monitor and document grant recipients' work.

Development experts say local groups often were ill-equipped to meet record keeping demands. The administration has pushed to enlist new religious and community organizations and often they work as subcontractors under more established nonprofits that are used to getting and accounting for government money.

"This whole push for new partners is a double edged sword. You have to build their capacity to manage U.S. government money and particularly meet the reporting guidelines," said Patty Mechael, former program director for the charity CARE.

One of the largest recipients of grant money, Family Health International, experienced 83 percent inaccurate or unverified tallies from its subcontractors in impoverished Guyana and could document only 345 of 9,000 HIV/AIDS infected people reported as receiving tuberculosis treatment in Nigeria, auditors said.

The organization has since strengthened training for its local partners, "making sure the people clearly understand what they're measuring," senior vice president Sheila Mitchell said.

Susan Krenn is Africa director for the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs, which also partners with local groups in Africa.

"It is all about being able to show at the end of the day the results and accountability for that money. How that translates to the field is challenging for some local organizations," Krenn said.

Some groups that did not measure up have been dropped and others that complained about reporting demands have warmed to the new systems that also help them track their own needs, Dybul said.

He said the updated numbers the administration reported on World AIDS Day Dec. 1 are accurate: 822,000 people receiving life-saving drugs, and 4.5 million receiving care.

In The Trenches with Shiselweni Volunteers

Cont'd from Page 1...

wanna be a murderer”), Bujo Mojo (“My mama told me never to fool around with l-o-v-e that’s I told her, ee-yo, na-we...something something something...). On the other hand, all other Swazis dug effortlessly, as the men of the group competed to see who could finish digging 50cm deep into the ground first. All the volunteers were impressed because one would never see “gardening” as a means of testing one’s masculinity back home. Gardening is what you learn in home economics right? It’s what your mother does on the weekends to spruce up the house. When I think garden, I think, “are we eating at the *Olive Garden*?” (Just

we created four trenches 1 meter by 5 meters, filled with manure, compost, and dried maize cobs, and everyone felt a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. It was exciting that the practical allowed us to help the Nhlangano area in the process.

On the next day, we were back in the classroom again as we learned about garden maintenance, planting, and guarding against pests. We learned how to differentiate plants as low feeders, heavy feeders, and heavy givers. Depending on how much nutrients certain plants gave or took from the soil, it determined how we rotated the plants in the trenches for the next round of harvest. Finally on day four, we completed the garden by planting seedlings



Make Shongwe adds grass to a trench



PCV's and their counterparts learning Gardening 101

(provided by the Moya Center) of onions, beetroot, cabbage, carrots, green beans, spinach, and even some fruit trees around the feeding kitchen. By day four, we had provided the kitchen with the workings of a complete garden, which would in two months time provide numerous children around the area with a more balanced diet. We were all eager to take what we had learned back to our own rural communities. Members of our communities and volunteers even received seeds, leftover seedlings, and a trowel to begin digging our own trenches immediately.

kidding) As I showered dirt onto my back with each swing of the pickaxe, I certainly used it as an opportunity to take out my aggressions—receiving a beautiful sunburn and an intense workout for my arms as bonus prizes. By the end of the day, as a team,

The four day practical was an amazing experience. It gave Peace Corps volunteers and Swazi volunteers the chance to bond and develop friendships with each other. We enter-

tained each other with jokes, games, and even a little Frisbee! I highly recommend this in the future. The Moya Center provides this workshop mainly around the Manzini region, but they will help you out if you need it! Or ask any other Shiselweni Group 4 volunteer! We’ll be willing to help out! If you like to sweat, feel sore, get a farmer’s tan, and feel the squidginess of dirt down your back, then this is the workshop for you! I swear I felt like I was a two year old playing in a sandbox, but a dirt box, yebo?

The contact info for the Moya Center in Malkerns in 528-2043/621-3230.

PSN (prozac substitute network) CORNER

by Jana Barnes, Mambatfweni

We hope that everyone enjoyed the IST in November. Hopefully you all came away with useful information that you can apply while working in your communities and feel as though the staff listened to your concerns.

PSN members brought up your concerns about sexual harassment and the need for a forum of discussion on a regular basis. Unfortunately, the office staff feels like that is all part of adapting to the culture here in Swaziland and will not allow a formal meet-

ing to take place in Mbabane. However, that is what the PSN representatives are here for. We can organize regional meetings or more personal contacts in order to discuss any of the issues that volunteers are facing in their communities or elsewhere. Please feel free to contact any of us with any and all issues that you may have.

As for dealing with the sexual harassment, each one of us has our own coping strategies. Some people ignore it, some try to make light of the situation, and others are not afraid

to tell their harassers where to go. Don’t be afraid to talk to other volunteers about their coping strategies, it never hurts to get another person’s perspective.

If someone crosses the line and actually assaults you, like touching you inappropriately, this needs to be reported and brought to the attention of the office staff. There are things that the office can try to do in those cases. And remember, Daynese is always a good person to talk to!

SUBMIT! SUBMIT! SUBMIT! SUBMIT! SUBMIT!

We’ll take anything you got, folks: articles on events and happenings at your site, journal entries, comics, editorials, recipes, craft ideas and projects, hard-corps/soft-corps, diy, gossip, photos, poetry, and any kind of poetically prosaic etceteras your minds can produce.

KOREAN GOSSIP KORNER

by Tommy Rimbach
and Hanna Lee

Hanna: Ahnnyung, nuh moh hae?

Tommy: Yah e gijibaeya!

H: Shikguluh!

T: Yah, Bra-hsil ungdungega nuh muh kuh.

Brasil: What? What you sayin' bout me in Korean?

T: We're complimenting your natural physique.

B: Binza wena, sishwapa sakho.

T: Umm, 'scuse me! Anorexic girls would kill for my rail thin ass. Don't hate on the Asian genes.

B: Shut up kimchi breath...your people's food smells like bad fermented squid...

H: Uh uh, you did not just call my people's food stinky! Oh no you didn't!

T: Yah, nuh michussuh? Kimchi is the best food for digestion! The fermented cabbage cleanses your system!

H: Yah kimchi mannhee mugumyun, ddong-ee jal nawuh...

T: H'okay anywayz, do you know that there's a Korean restaurant in Cape Town?

H: No are they really Korean? Or is it like a fusion restaurant that doesn't know how to do fusion? Because man, I hate fusion food. You can't do fusion unless you really understand it. I don't like it when restaurants think they're doing fusion when they just gonna drown their veggies and white rice in soy sauce and some ginger. That ain't fusion! Gross!

T: No this place is like, really Korean! Our

peoples be taking over everywhere. Even in Swaziland! Rando! Specially when Korea is like the size of NY.

B: Well, I love my rice with lots and lots of soy sauce.

T: It's not supposed to be eaten like that. You are not honorary Asian! Kendra!

K: Yeah? What's up?

T: According to the laws of Koreanity, do you drown white rice in soy sauce?

K: The cuisine of Korean food has always been dependent on a delicate balance of flavors and spices. Rice has never been cooked (aside from fried rice) with an incredibly powerfully and dark sauce like soy sauce, because rice represents the clean center, and stronghold of what maintains the energy balance in your stomach. Rice is what cleanses your palate and prepares you for the other tastes to follow.

T: Thank you Kendra.

H: See? Korean food is about the extremes, about yin and yang. We have rice, and then as its complement, we have Kimchi, the harshest of spices in one dish. First us Koreans drown it in the salty tears of the earth, fermenting the thick sharp cabbage to the point of salty bitterness. And after, we add the heat of life with the essence of red pepper, and together, what results, is a power of food one did not know was possible. It is the rot, the sour, the sweet, the spicy, the crisp essences of our people.

Facebook messages from Tommy's "culturally sensitive" friends:

Dear Tommy, I hope you like Swaziland. Use a rubber. Love, John

r u back yet bitch? stop playing like you actually care about the world! lol!

Come to India to see me. I can assure you the food and men are better here.

Oh, how I miss my Tommy. hope you aren't living in a poop hut and riding a donkey :)

seriously, though...come home

Tommy, I really enjoyed looking at your photos. They are really nice. You took those with just a normal digital camera right?

tommy, i attempted to make mojitos and thought of you. hope you have someone to get crunk with in your village.

Slash omg I really want to drink sparks with you right now...they don't even have sparks in germany...aah don't die in Africa!!!

Hey boo

Miss you

That rhymes

Hope you've not fallen on hard times

How's Swaziland

I bet you're really tanned

Don't get killed by the king

Mswati is the real thing

The end

[sic]

One Spicy Little Korean

Chili Sauce Review

by Hanna Lee, Mahlalini

Sweet Chili Sauce from Cross and Blackwell is an excellent choice of condiment on fries, emafeti, popcorn, swazi buns, and your veggie stir fry. There's no sense of spiciness and you get a sweet satisfying taste that isn't overpowering like maple syrup. You can even combine it with a chili garlic sauce, to have the sweet and spicy effect.

Garlic Chili Sauce from Cross and Blackwell is also another amazing choice. It's my personal favorite, since you get a kick that isn't too spicy with a lot of smoky flavor. It's very different from the peri-peri taste. This is very good in cole slaw, fries, and fried chicken. It also goes really well

with cucumber sticks and broccoli! It reminds me of Korean hot pepper sauce. The Cross and Blackwell sauces are useful and cost effective. For me, a jar usually lasts 1-2 weeks, which is great.

There's also the Black Mamba hot sauce specially made in Swaziland and it is not deadly at all. Don't let the name fool you. It's a good cousin of the Garlic Chili sauce, and it's not as garlicky if you don't have any gum around. But it's more expensive and you don't get as much



for your emalangeni.

Then there's Nando's lemon peri-peri sauce. It sounds sketchy, and you're not quite sure what to make of it. You think, what could possibly come of this sour chili sauce? I mean what do you use lemon for? You use it in tea, use it in guacamole, use it in pie crust, but chili sauce? Well my friends, the verdict is in! Lemon peri-peri works!!! It is an interesting and exciting dance of flavors in your mouth! It's like a cocktail party with the sweet, the sour, and the meaty appetizers! Go get it!

Did you know?

A blog entry from Kim's friend, Hayley, who is volunteering with Urpichallay in Ancash, Peru

- The fat from the feet of crickets can erase scars, scabs, and blemishes from the skin? Collect crickets and apply the grease from their feet three times a week. After you apply the grease, don't expose the skin to sun. Continue this process for one to weeks until the scar disappears.

- Garden snakes can be used to heal broken bones. Rather than months in a cast, capture a garden snake, soak it in vinegar and then wrap its body around your broken wrist or ankle. The body of the snake will naturally tighten and heal your broken bone in about two weeks.



- You can drink your roses! Boiled red roses and cinnamon make a terrifically tasty tea!

- The leaf from a coca plant can give you energy when you are down and cure a headache from altitude sickness. Instead of carrying processed granola bars wrapped in plastic, next time you go for a hike carry the dried leaves from a coca plant and chew them when you have a headache or feel low on energy.

- Teachers in the Andes use centipedes to encourage children to write faster. When students are lazy or write with sloppy handwriting, teachers put centipedes on their hands to make them go a little bit faster. Watch out!



- A specific breed of termite that lives in the Andes produces honey to mark the end of the rainy season. Buried deep in the blocks of the adobe houses, the people look for honey from the termites to know when the rains will stop.

- There is a magical lake called Huarancahyok above the community of Huashcar that has proven to help infertile women become pregnant. Women from all over the Cordillera hike up to the lake to ask for children. They pray to mother earth in front of the lake and place a rock on top a tower of others from prayers past and within in the next year, they become pregnant.

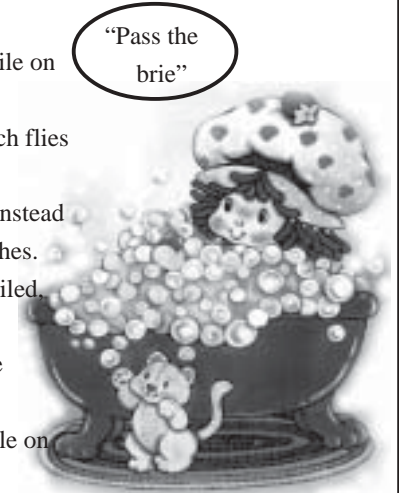
You know you're
HARD CORPS
when...

- ...you look at a drum full of dirty, brown water and think, "Sweet, water!"
- ...you unaffectedly watch a dog in your family's kitchen doorway vomit and reeat it without the least bit of reaction.
- ...you stopped caring that the roof leaks water onto you at night.
- ...you sleep with White Rhino's outside your rondaval at night.



You know you're
Soft Corps
when...

- ...you make out with the first guy you see while on your very first vacation out of Swaziland.
- ...you scare your host family when a cockroach flies at you and you scream.
- ...you pour yogurt straight down your throat instead of using a spoon so you don't have to wash dishes.
- ...your laptop breaks, you have a new one mailed, and that one breaks.
- ...your eyes start watering when you cross the border into South Africa.
- ...you carry around mints to hand out to people on khumbis.
- ...you own in Swaziland a sundried turkish fig unfused balsamic vinegar reduction.



Virginia's Literary Box

If you are not a fan of poetry, then you will not enjoy Anne Michaels's *Fugitive Pieces*. Though technically a novel, *Fugitive Pieces* often reads like a prose poem. There is a plot, but to describe it is beyond the point. It suffices to say the novel is about the aftermath of the Holocaust, about survivors, about living. This is not a book you read for plot, instead just to let the language wash over you. It is a book of details, a book of images that stay in your mind long after you set the book down. The novel takes the reader on a journey from wartime Poland to the olive tree laden shores of Greece to the fresh promise of Toronto, all the while sharing in the passions of the characters, geology, meteorology and literature. There are meditations on limestone as well as on lightning. The beauty of nature, often destructive beauty, is a central theme in the novel.



Fugitive Pieces is not for everyone. I picked it up three times before I could get through the first chapter, which is especially dense. But once I found the rhythm of the words, (or it found me), I could not set the book down, and I finished it in one long, rainy, satisfying afternoon. It is a novel that has several deaths in it, but the overall impression I was left with was of hope, despite the pervading sadness. And here in Swaziland, or just here in the 21st century, a message of hope is always a pleasure to read.

Januarys (should Add Acquaintance be Forget)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2 Federal Holiday for President Ford Office Closed	3	4	5	6 Incwala
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Martin Luther King's B-day Office Closed	16	17	18	19	20 Jessica Oya's B-day
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Amy Mayer's B-day	29	30	31			

The Swazi SoJournal

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