

The Global Scholar



Core Expectations: Peace Corps Unveils Ten Keys to Success

Leaving home and family to move into a foreign community to live and work is a big, potentially life-changing decision. Peace Corps has been helping people do just that since 1961, and now the agency has put into words the 10 most important factors that applicants need to consider and commit to before becoming Volunteers.

These “Core Expectations” are key components for Volunteer success and will be standard reference points for the entirety of the Volunteer cycle, from recruitment through staging, pre-service training, the full 27 months of service, and even for life following Peace Corps service. The 10 Core Expectations are as follows:

1. *Prepare your personal and professional life to make a commitment to serve abroad for a full term of 27 months*
2. *Commit to improving the quality of life of the people with whom you live and work; and, in doing so, share your skills, adapt them, and learn new skills as needed*
3. *Serve where the Peace Corps asks you to go, under conditions of hardship, if necessary, and with the flexibility needed for effective service*
4. *Recognize that your successful and sustainable development work is based on the local trust and confidence you build by living in, and respectfully integrating yourself into, your host community and culture*
5. *Recognize that you are responsible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for your personal conduct and professional performance*

6. *Engage with host country partners in a spirit of cooperation, and mutual learning and respect*
7. *Work within the rules and regulations of the Peace Corps and the local and national laws of the country where you serve*
8. *Exercise judgment and personal responsibility to protect your health, safety, and well-being and that of others*
9. *Recognize that you will be perceived, in your host country and community, as a representative of the people, cultures, values, and traditions of the United States of America*
10. *Represent responsibly the people, cultures, values, and traditions of your host country and community to people in the United States both during and following your service*

As Peace Corps approaches its 50th anniversary, it recognizes the importance of providing clarity to potential Volunteers and Volunteers in the field as a means to manage their expectations, and provide clear guidance on how to be the best Volunteer possible. The roll-out of the Core Expectations, and their inclusion into the fabric of the Volunteer cycle will aid in preparing individuals before they even apply, so they can more effectively do what Peace Corps and its cadre of Volunteers do best: help people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained people, promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the people served, and promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.



CAMPUS NOTES:

MI TALKS TO PROFESSOR BLAIR ORR

Professor Blair Orr served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Lesotho, a small mountainous country in southern Africa. Now, over 30 years later, Blair continues to contribute to the Peace Corps as an MI coordinator at Michigan Technological University's School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science.

MI coordinators are central to student Volunteer and educational experiences, and Blair shares some of his best practices here.

Stay in contact

With time zone differences and limited mail access, staying in contact is difficult. Blair believes the key is to "be proactive." Make use of technology such as cellphones, text messaging, Internet chats, Skype, and especially email.

"Things happen. For instance, the bus into the village breaks down and that phone call you were expecting never comes. Email is great because it sits and waits for you no matter what else happens," said Blair. Also, paperwork and documents can be put onto a HTML page and shared electronically, which makes receiving information much easier for Volunteers who may be miles from a post office.

Above all, "make contact early and keep up with it," said Blair, who believes making a good connection early is essential to a student's two years of Peace Corps service. "Students sometimes forget about their university commitments," he said. "You don't have to demand academic things early, but always check in and see if there is anything you can provide."

Be patient and open minded

Blair believes the best projects come about when students take the first three to six months of service to become familiar with the people, area, and way of life. "Trust students," he said. Allow them to "get integrated."

He also noted that successful projects in one area may not work in another, pointing to a water quality project in Honduras that a Volunteer stumbled upon because of his location near a water distribution system. "Help them out, but don't give too many specifics because you really don't ever know what is there," Blair said.

Realize you can't control everything that happens

Blair reminds coordinators that some things are out of everyone's hands. "Projects may change and communication may become more difficult", he said. Even before a student leaves, circumstances can change, including the decision not to go after all.

"You have to keep in mind that students think a lot about their decisions," Blair said. "If a student decides it isn't best to go, recognize that it probably wasn't best for them, you or their host country."

The key, Blair recommended, is to set lines of communication early and allow students to be guided more by their own findings. Be hands on and understanding.

By Amanda Lindner, MI Intern

MI Coordinator List Serve

If you want to initiate a conversation with the MI coordinator list as a whole, send your message to pcmastersinternational@lists.umbc.edu

To respond to the whole group hit "REPLY ALL":

We are eagerly looking forward to seeing how this turns out, and hope that it will be helpful to you.

FIELD NOTES:

MI TALKS TO PCV JON MELLOR

Diarrheal disease ran rampant in the Rakai District of Uganda and only half its residents had access to clean water when Jonathan Mellor arrived about two years ago. An MI student at Michigan Tech University studying physics, Jon began a diarrheal disease prevention project in his Peace Corps community. Since he began, more than 4,000 people have improved their water and sanitation situations, and his work continues to have lasting effects on the community.

Through informal interviews and community meetings, Jon soon realized there would not be a single solution to the sanitation problems plagued by the district. His project, called “What Works Best in Diarrheal Disease Prevention?,” implemented a series of different interventions to best fit each village and community he served: shallow well protection, latrine improvement, household bio-sand water filters and a hand-washing and health education campaign.

The project brought two new technologies to the district: the rope pump, an inexpensive and locally manufactured alternative to typical water pumps, and the bio-sand water filter, an easy-to-use tool to treat dirty water. “The bio-sand filter is a household device they can use to treat their water instead of boiling, which saves time and firewood and improves household quality,” Jon said. The device lasts indefinitely, but Jon’s team trained local handymen in each village so small repairs can be made. The filter can be shared with up to four households, allowing far more access to clean water.

Jon recognized the success of his project one Christmas Eve while fixing a pipe on one of the wells. “I felt bad because I was there during ‘rush hour’ and there was a long line. However, even though their old



Children in Rakai gathering water

Photo by Jonathan Mellor



Children waiting to gather water from the new, clean source. Jonathan stands nearby.

Photo by Jonathan Mellor

and contaminated source was nearby, almost everyone patiently waited for me to finish because they told me that nobody liked the ‘old’ water anymore. They all wanted clean water from the new source!”

As part of the intervention, Jon’s team installed two shallow wells, 39 latrine slabs, 26 household filters, and 145 home hand-washing stations. He distributed 1,000 calendars promoting hand washing and administered home inspections to oversee household sanitation. Before leaving Uganda, Jon conducted music and theater shows to promote general health and hand washing to engage and empower the community in the continuation of health education.

Today, trained community members continue to maintain the new systems, and both the rope pump and bio-sand water filter have been embraced by local officials who have expressed interest in expanding the project. Jon is back on the Michigan Tech campus finishing final projects for his degree.

By Amanda Lindner, MI Intern

Re-Entry Shock: How MI Cushions the Blow

MI UNVEILS NEW GRADUATION SASHES

Any Peace Corps Volunteer returning home from service abroad can identify with the term “re-entry shock.” The physical discomfort ignited by the transition from a Peace Corps home back to the U.S. explains the root of the term. Re-entry shock can make an RPCV feel like a space shuttle hurtling through the film that lies between space and the earth’s atmosphere: all shook up; wondering which way is down; and with a confused feeling of both excitement and grief. At least homebound RPCVs are not likely to land in the middle of the ocean, and they can usually stay away from freeze-dried food products, but re-entry is difficult, for both the astronauts who coined the term, and for Peace Corps Volunteers.

Luckily, for Master’s International PCVs, there are often cushions to help soften the blow. Kate Reinsma, MI graduate of Colorado State University who served in Cameroon (2005-2007) and current MI coordinator at Loma Linda University, remembers that her return to the U.S. was easier because of MI. “Returning to an academic environment where I was encouraged and supported to share my PC experience through formal presentations, seminars, and writing the final paper created a natural forum for me to make sense of what I had experienced and learned.”

“I strongly believe that this is one of the greatest strengths of the MI program—formally providing RPCVs the opportunity to share their story and fulfill the third goal of Peace Corps,” she added.

Michigan Tech MI alum Amber Kenny points out that her alma mater formalized the re-entry cushion, and took it beyond the simple, organic nature of the fact that more than one RPCV in the same place will provide support. “Blair Orr, the coordinator, hosts a monthly pizza night at a restaurant. That’s a great place to share stories with other RPCVs and to give advice to those about to leave for Peace Corps service.”

Kenny believes “the more involved and supportive the university is, the more it helps the RPCV re-adapt, not only to American life, but to becoming a student again, and finishing the degree successfully.” Jason Rhoades, another recent graduate of Michigan Tech’s MI program, is more prosaic but no less apt when he points out, “An MI program gives you something immediately to do after Peace Corps, so you are not sitting around your parent’s house with nothing to do, getting freaked out by the choices at the grocery store and trying to find your next step.”

The trick, apparently, is in the company. RPCVs can find a group of like-minded souls to accompany them through the transition back to non-Peace Corps life, but MI creates the community for the RPCV. And, with that support group intact, the RPCV can concentrate more on other things, like finishing the thesis; looking for compelling work; and, of course, winnowing through the cavalcade of choices at the local grocery store.

Peace Corps sashes for graduation ceremonies are here! We have a limited amount which we will send to schools, and then they are sent back to us. MI coordinators should let us know as much in advance as possible in order to reserve their sashes.



MI Student Erin Kelly wears an MI sash at her University of Alaska, Fairbanks graduation

Congratulations to all of the MI graduates of the class of 2009!

Good luck in all of your future endeavors, and thank you for your service in the Peace Corps!

NEW MI PARTNER SCHOOLS

The following schools and departments joined the MI team in 2008 :

University of Pittsburgh— Graduate School of Public Health (Master of Public Health)

University of Illinois, Chicago—School of Public Health (Master of Public Health)

Oregon State University— College of Forestry (Master of Science in Forest Products, Forest Resources, Forest Sciences, or Wood Sciences and Engineering; or Master of Forestry)

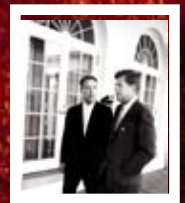
University of Virginia—Curry School of Education (Master of Teaching; Master of Education)

SUNY, Albany—School of Public Health (Master of Public Health)

Gonzaga University—Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language

University of South Carolina—Moore School of Business (Master of International Business Administration)

Indiana University—School of Public and Environmental Affairs (Master of Science in Environmental Science or dual degree in Environmental Science and Public Affairs)



Third Goal



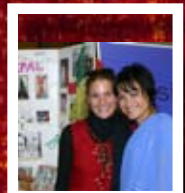
Share your personal Peace Corps stories about your country of service with your community. You can help Americans increase their understanding of the world and its people while inspiring others to make a difference too.



Visit www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal for ideas by the RPCV community and resources to help you prepare and present your Peace Corps activity.



Don't forget to register your Third Goal participation online. RPCVs who engage in Third Goal activities are encouraged to officially register with us once a year. You can help gain greater support to the Peace Corps from Congress.





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FROM THE MANAGER

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first issue of the reinvented Master's International newsletter, *The Global Scholar*. Our intention is to make the newsletter useful to you by providing news and insights from the Peace Corps, from students overseas, and from partner programs. The *Global Scholar* aims to be a vehicle for all of us involved in MI to communicate with and support each other.

The newsletter will be issued electronically twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. It will contain regular features such as Peace Corps updates, notes from the field, and notes from campus coordinators, as well as a letter from the MI Manager. We would welcome suggestions on what you want to have included or addressed.

Master's International plays an increasingly important role in helping the Peace Corps meet its needs to fill scarce skill Volunteer positions. With your continued cooperation and support, we have the opportunity to experience considerable growth over the next few years.

Lastly, I'd like to thank all of you, coordinators and students alike, who responded with title suggestions and article ideas when we asked for input late last year. Some of your ideas are reflected in this premiere issue, and others you will likely see in future issues.

Thanks for being a part of this important work.

Eric Goldman

Notes on the Blackboard...

Call for MI Theses

We are asking MI students to please send us a copy of their final paper, thesis, or other report on their work related to their Peace Corps experience. As in the past, we will develop an anthology of these papers in the form of a CD and thus can disseminate your work more easily. We would like to create this anthology in the summer of 2010. Please send your work to:

Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters
Master's International Program
1111 20th Street, NW Washington, DC 20526

or email it to mastersinternational@peacecorps.gov

PEACE CORPS RESPONSE NEEDS YOU!

Peace Corps Response is a unique Peace Corps program that mobilizes Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) to serve in short-term assignments to address critical needs around the globe. The development skills and expertise you have acquired in graduate school could be put to use in the field through a Peace Corps Response assignment. Please visit our website for more information on current openings and to complete a short application: www.peacecorps.gov/response

