



Description of Service as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer

Patrick Carlin Mohundro

Shhhhhhhwwwwwwcccccccooooo... And he burst forth from the womb of the Continental United States and into the unadulterated, darkness of Africa. And so it was, after laboriously grinding his way through the application process, Patrick Carlin Mohundro arrived in Mozambique on September 27th 2007. For ten weeks, both mentally and physically challenging, Patrick fervently trained in the mountain town of Namaacha. Patrick climbed boulder after bolder, through the steep, mud-red hills in order to attend 145 hours of Portuguese, 10 hours of Xitswa language training classes, 30 hours of health and HIV/AIDS sessions, 25 hours of cross-cultural lectures, 46 hours of teaching practice, and 146 hours of technical training in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) including methodologies such as Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) and Content- and Community- Based Instruction (CCBI). While the harsh climate and introduction to new bacteria physically prepared his body, the extensive hours of training prepared Patrick's mind for any challenge that would present itself to him as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

On December 7th 2007, Patrick Mohundro accepted his honorable title of Peace Corps Volunteer. As an official Peace Corps Education Volunteer for the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Program, he would teach at Massinga Secondary School amongst 180 other teachers and over 6500 students. Amongst the chaos, he would report to the headmaster, Horácio Antonio Guiambalo, and pedagogical directors, Rafael Lissai Samuel and Azarias Chilene. While at Massinga Secondary School he would be teaching 8th grade English from January-November 2008, 9th grade English from January-November 2009, and Visual Education from January-November 2009.

Patrick was destined to be more than a trainee in a controlled, third world microcosm and left for his assigned community on a rainy, December day. While battling uncontrollable stomach flu and a high fever, the Peace Corps Staff safely delivered Patrick to Massinga the day after his departure. Upon arrival, his physical conditions were not completely adequate to receive Massinga, and his house's physical conditionals were not adequate to receive him. Consequently, he was coerced to stay in the local, Peace Corps Volunteer-initiated library for the following week until his house was properly furnished.

Despite the inconvenience of being temporarily displaced, Patrick immediately immersed himself in the community's government administration by introducing himself to the District Administrator and befriending and tutoring the Administrator's immediate subordinate, the Permanent Secretary. As the academic year had not yet started, Patrick stayed busy by tutoring the Permanent Secretary, increasing his capacity for Portuguese, and traveling around his community and province to absorb the culture and observe underlying problems within the infrastructure.

Unfortunately, during this potentially immaculate experience of novelty, a larceny attempted to enervate Patrick's positive perspective of Mozambique. After being robbed of not only his digital camera, but also all of his shoes, dining chairs, and confidence, Patrick familiarized himself with the local police department and bureaucratic system. Despite unfruitful attempts to resolve the crime and unproven accusations of Patrick's few friends, Patrick maintained focus of his ultimate Peace Corps goals, putting aside his frustrations and beginning his first trimester as an educator.

His primary project as an EFL educator began in January 2008, teaching 8th grade English. He quickly took on the alias Mr. M, to alleviate any pains the students might suffer while trying to pronounce his last name. He taught six classes of approximately 65 students, each receiving 3 lessons per week, totaling in 18 classroom hours. The following year, Mr. Mohundro taught 9th grade English and took on an additional class to teach approximately 450 students. During his time as an English teacher, Patrick produced structured 8th grade English lesson plans, which complied with the nationally mandated curriculum.

Furthermore, during his second year as an educator, Mr. M's primary project expanded to include the newly established Visual Education discipline. With the help of the national Visual-Education curriculum, he took advantage of his background in Fine Arts, providing the students with quality instruction to increase their capacity for creativity. Additionally, Mr. Mohundro expanded and developed the existing curriculum by introducing new material, theory and practice, as well as producing digital lesson plans and presentations. Meanwhile, he established an annual program to accompany the digital lesson plans and resources he produced for the course.

Apart from his primary project as a secondary school educator, Patrick led a multitude of after-school projects and facilitated participation in several Peace Corps sponsored events, the most conspicuous being the Peace Corps Volunteer initiated Jovens Para Mudança e Acção (JOMA), or Youth for Change and Action.

The core of his experience with JOMA began with Massinga's Visual Arts Club, which developed into the Fine Art Club of Massinga the following year. Patrick formed the club in a response to a dire need for after-school programs and the deficiency of creative thinking skills amongst Massinga's students. Through the club, Patrick promoted individualism and expression within the collectivist society, empower students to oppose customary gender behavior afflicting the country. The club ran on Saturdays and Sundays from 12-4pm the first year and on Saturdays from 10-3pm the second year. During these sessions, Patrick presented art theory and technique, then monitored and assisted the participants as they practiced and reflected on their work. Within the practice portion of each lesson, Patrick encouraged students to elaborate works reflecting on healthy gender behavior, HIV/AIDS prevention such as abstinence, fidelity, and healthy practices, and environmental issues. Through the course of the year, Patrick taught the students how to use different media and skills such as rendering with graphite, mixing color paints, building up layers of color with colored pencil, using photography as art and reference for art, and creating p u b l i c w o r k s with oil and acrylic paints in the form of murals. During the practice and elaboration of their works, he monitored and bolstered the students as they discussed and debated contemporary issues, religion, the importance of voting and politics, risks and prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Mozambique, and sexual beliefs and preference. Patrick helped the student leaders to be examples as they defined and advocated positive behavior, such as the practice of abstinence.

Patrick was also a significant contributor to the coordination of the national and regional JOMA program. During his first year as a Peace Corps volunteer, Patrick participated in the coordinator transfer meeting, where responsibility and leadership roles were delegated. Additionally, Patrick helped e x p a n d JOMA's Community Art manual, as well as r e f i n e d the other three manuals in use at the time by illustrating covers, developing an elaborate design aesthetic, and developing a more professional layout for the manuals. The following year, Patrick took an active role in the program management and conference planning, leading the Community Art area of the project, choosing facilitators, preparing trainers, and developing the conference Community Art curriculum. Furthermore, with the expanse of the program to include a music project, Patrick worked diligently to h o m o g e n i z e the newly elaborated manual with the existing manuals before he closed his service.

As even developing nations are becoming more and more digitized, Patrick took initiative to improve his community's capacity for information and technology. Massinga Secondary School had been fully equipped with a computer lab since its completion in early 2008. Due to lack of resources, staff, and IT experience, the computer lab remained i d l e during the school's first year in operation. In order to resolve this, Patrick voraciously worked to open the lab, preparing the computers with anti-virus and educational software, organizing hardware within a numerical system, and working assiduously with his school's headmaster to arrange broadband DSL Internet. By the second trimester, the IT professor was able to move his students from computer theory to practice within the computer lab and Patrick established open lab hours to familiarize his counterparts with information and technology. Accordingly, Patrick was unofficially, yet publicly, nominated the IT Specialist of Massinga Secondary School by his headmaster and was assigned responsibility of the computer lab. His IT role included open-lab hours from 6:30-9:30, Monday-Friday, as well as on-call duties to assist with computer problems in the school's main office.

While doing his best to communicate western ideology and methodology to his community, Patrick made impressive efforts to establish an understanding of Mozambican culture throughout the rest of the world, particularly focusing on his compatriots. Through his Internet weblog, After School Detention, via http://afterschooldetention.blogspot.com, Patrick established communication with the outside world and documented his experiences within Mozambique and Southern Africa. Through After School Detention, Patrick ascertained international support and understanding of his work in Massinga.

Aside from the three emphasized secondary projects, Patrick participated in and contributed to a diverse arrangement of other projects such as the PCV initiated Science Fair, Future Business Leaders of Mozambique, and English Theater Competition. I n d e p e n d e n t l y, he developed and operated an after-school tutoring program, acted as a temporary basketball coach, counseled students on sexual activity, established ties with, and garnered support from, the Canadian sponsored Center for Health, and operated a PC Volunteer initiated Library where he performed librarian duties as well as obtained several book grants including large donations from programs such as Books for the World and Darien Book Aid.

In his two years of service, Patrick was able to both refine foreknown and develop unfamiliar skills as a Peace Corps Volunteer. As the JOMA Creative Director, Patrick applied and refined his advanced knowledge of Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator while exploring and expanding his limited experience with Adobe InDesign. Due to irrefragable language training and submersion in a loquacious culture and community, Patrick achieved Advanced MidPortuguese certification, in accordance with the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), as well as a restricted Xitswa vocabulary. Through classroom experience and leading technical sessions, Patrick honed public speaking and facilitation skills. Finally, by cooperatively working with diplomats and presidents in a very formal political system and under extremely irascible circumstances, Patrick genuinely augmented his creative problem solving and hierarchical management abilities.

After 26 arduous, yet exceptional, months of volunteer service, Patrick suffered yet another robbery in his home as he was working meticulously in the computer lab. However, he remained optimistic during his last weeks concluding murals, presenting the final works to bureaucratic and pedagogical officials, and presenting his colleagues with technical sessions. He exhibited extraordinary sanguinity and sprightliness until the day he completed his service on November 13th 2009.

Patrick Mohundro was truly a model volunteer. If anyone is still suited for such a venerable position, Patrick is certainly apposite for king. The term "jack of all trades" is ubiquitous with Peace

Corps Volunteers, however, in Patrick's case "King of all Realms" is much more suiting. It is with great satisfaction that I can say I have served as director during the time Patrick Mohundro served as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer. As I reflect on his outstanding performance and consider the generous contributions he has made, I can say with pleasure that I am entirely confident that Patrick will continue to strive for excellence and make outstanding contributions to the revitalization and prosperity of contemporary society.

Pursuant to Section 5 (f) of the Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. § 2504 (f) as amended, any former volunteer employed by the United States Government following his Peace Corps Volunteer Service is entitled to have any period of satisfactory Peace Corps service credited for the purposes of retirement, seniority, reduction in force, leave, and other privileges based on the length of Government service. Peace Corps service shall not be credited toward completion of the probationary or trial period or completion of any service requirement for career appointment.

This is to certify in accordance with Executive Order 11103 of April 10, 1963 the Patrick Carlin Mohundro served successfully as a Peace Corps Volunteer. His service ended on November 13, 2009. He is therefore eligible to be appointed as a career-conditional employee in the competitive civil service on a non-competitive basis. This benefit under the Executive Order entitlement extends for a period of one year after, except that the employing agent may extend the period for up to three years for a former volunteer who enters military service, pursues studies at a recognized institution of higher learning, or engages in activities which, in view of the appointing agency, warrants the extension of the period.

November 12, 2009

Date



Ruben Hernandez, Country Director Mozambique