

YOUR ASSIGNMENT



Country: ZAMBIA

Program: Rural Aquaculture Promotion
(RAP)

Job Title: Rural Fish Culture Extension
Agent

Staging Dates: February 3-4, 2014

Pre-Service Training
(in Zambia): February 5-April 23, 2014*

Dates of Service: April 23, 2014- April 22, 2016*
*dates subject to change

**Please review all the information
and follow the instructions on how to accept or decline
this invitation.**

**You have seven (7) calendar days to respond, starting
from the day you receive your invitation.**



A Note from Your Associate Peace Corps Director for Environment

I am very pleased to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Rural Aquaculture Promotion (RAP) project. I can imagine the anticipation that you must be feeling as you prepare for this endeavor. The most important encouragement that I can offer is to assure you that if you have the motivation, you will have every opportunity for success in all of its related definitions to Peace Corps in this project.

The RAP project experience begins with a thorough and practical training period of eleven weeks to ensure your preparedness for your assignment. Following that, you will be posted to a rural village that has been carefully prepared for your arrival. From that point you will find yourself in the midst of a community that has anxiously awaited your arrival and is ready to begin work.

A RAP Volunteer's work may be characterized by long hours spent with individual farmers and groups teaching them about fish farming and integrated agriculture. On a typical day, you start by heading out on bike to meet the farmers, sometimes up to 20 kilometers away (time to learn the metric system!). The work area is very rural, with little to nothing modern in sight. Your own home will be a basic small clay brick structure with a grass roof. You will see the fruits of your efforts; first in the form of constructed fishponds, then in the harvests of fish, and ultimately in the lifestyle changes based on that production. It is a very satisfying feeling.

To date, about 346 Volunteers have worked on the RAP project. These Volunteers have laid a promising foundation for you to work from and build upon for future RAP Volunteers. Your assignment will be more challenging than ever as we hope you will surpass our current achievements.

You have made a good decision in electing to come to Zambia. We are all looking forward to meeting you.

Think Fish,

Cleopher Bweupe
Project Manager, RAP, US Peace Corps/Zambia



HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

The Rural Aquaculture Promotion (RAP) project was developed by Peace Corps/Zambia in response to a request from the Zambian Department of Fisheries (DoF) for human resource assistance in the aquaculture sector. This assistance began in June 1996 with a needs assessment. The report gave positive and encouraging results, and so the first project plan was drawn up, and Pre-Service Training for the project was completed with 20 new RAP Volunteers. Since then, about 346 Volunteers have joined the project, which now works in six provinces of Zambia.

Since inception, the project plan has undergone a number of revisions and, currently, the focus of RAP is to promote aquaculture as a food security and income generating activity for small-scale farmers and farmer organizations (cooperatives, associations, clubs). RAP Peace Corps Volunteers work with local farmers to transfer knowledge and skills in fish farming, integrated agricultural production, income generation, and group capacity building.

Over the years, project farmers have successfully increased their fish productivity and annual farm incomes from integrated fish farming. Aquaculture has assisted in bringing irrigation to previously dry villages, bringing notions of integrated agriculture to villages, and have encouraged farmers to plant crops and vegetable gardens near ponds. Given the high poverty levels in rural Zambia, Volunteer efforts are directly contributing towards creating a sustainable source of income and nutrition for many households.

As a PCV you will be expected to serve in a manner that is in keeping with Peace Corps' approach to development. Peace Corps defines development as any process that promotes the dignity of people and their capacity to improve their own lives. Our approach is to help people develop their capacity to improve their own lives. We do not want to create dependences. We do not look to build monuments. We are interested in building relationships that can result in individuals and communities taking the lead in improving their standard of living, health and well-being.

An important aspect of your service will be the relationships you build with members of your community. To ensure that your work builds local capacity, we expect you to work with counterparts. Counterparts are people you work with proactively to transfer skills in an effort to learn from one another. Counterparts may be local farmers, agricultural extension staff, community development workers, or school teachers. Your role will be to work alongside

them as co-trainers, co-facilitators and co-planners. At times you will also serve in the roles of change agent and mentor to your counterparts and community. You will always be in the role of learner, as you absorb information about your new home, your work, your new culture and your community.



YOUR PRIMARY DUTIES

The RAP project supports Zambia's Department of Fisheries' strategy of improving rural livelihoods through promoting aquaculture as an activity from which farmers earn income, supplement their nutrition and improve food security. Therefore, the purpose of the RAP project is assist smallholder rural farmers to apply new and improved aquaculture practices that sustainably increase fish production, consumption and incomes.

As a fish culture extension agent, you will be working with Zambian fish farmers. Generally speaking, your primary duties will be to help the communities initiate and improve their fish ponds, improve management, increase fish production, integrate aquaculture with agriculture, increase incomes from ponds, and strengthen fish farming groups.

Below is a description of your primary tasks in helping to promote aquaculture in Zambia:

1. Initiate and improve fish ponds

Train and coach farmers and groups to apply appropriate site assessment, construction and renovation techniques to initiate or improve their fish ponds:

- Assess their community and farm resources, and needs for aquaculture development.
- Assess the benefits and feasibility of initiating or improving their fish ponds in a manner most appropriate for their terrain, water and resource availability.
- Apply techniques for site selection, surveying, staking, construction and/or renovation of fish ponds.
- Implement farmer-to-farmer exchanges (farm visits, field days and workshops) taking advantage of the "model" farmers to train others in improved pond construction and renovations.

2. Improve pond management and fish production

Train and guide farmers to apply improved sustainable aquaculture management practices to increase their yields of fish. (Improved

aquaculture management practices include pond preparation, stocking with appropriate fish species and rates, management techniques, fingerling management, pond harvest.):

- Employ the primary production goal figure of 2-3 tons fish/hectare/year.
- Stock their ponds with improved fish species from recommended sources of fingerling suppliers such as Department of Fisheries stations or other farmers.
- Design pond management systems for individual farmers capitalizing on their family resources and activities.
- Improve aquaculture practices concerning stocking, management and harvesting of ponds.
- Regularly and completely harvest their fish ponds.

3. Integrate aquaculture with other farming systems

Train and coach farmers to integrate fish ponds with other farming systems, enhancing sustainable and efficient re-cycling of on-farm by-products as inputs for aquaculture. (Integrated Aquaculture-Agriculture (IAA) approaches include planting gardens/ fruit trees/leguminous plants near ponds; re-circulating crop by-products, household kitchen waste and animal manure as fish feed/ compost material; using pond mud as garden fertilizer.):

- Assess the benefits and feasibility of adopting integrated agriculture-aquaculture (IAA) approaches.
- Establish a plan for integrating at least one other farming activity with their fish ponds.
- Use PACA (Participatory Analysis for Community Action) to identify gender roles of family members and how their daily/seasonal activities may facilitate integration of aquaculture with other farm activities.
- Introduce or improve integration of farming systems.

4. Increase incomes from aquaculture

Train and coach farmers' groups and women clubs to apply basic small business skills to increase incomes from aquaculture and use fish for household consumption:

- Make a plan for managing their pond(s) for "household consumption" and/or for "income".
- Conduct a simple market survey and make a plan for selling fish from the business pond.
- Establish a basic production plan for the business and home consumption pond(s).
- Write a simple budget, maintain basic records for inputs and outputs, and calculate profit for the income generation ponds.

- Consult with household on reinvestment of profits from the IGA pond.
- Retain some fish for household consumption from the IGA ponds and regularly hook out from the consumption pond.

5. Strengthen fish farming groups

Promote sustainability of fish farming through facilitating the formation and organization of aquaculture groups (cooperatives, associations, clubs, and informal groups):

- Introduce the value and benefits of group work for self empowerment.
- Organize technical meetings for sharing experiences on a regular basis.
- Combine efforts with the aim of facilitating the speeding up of pond construction task or jointly used irrigation furrows/dams.
- Source commonly needed inputs such as fish seed, equipment for feed manufacture and tools like nets, scales, etc, which are unaffordable for an individual farmer to procure.
- Facilitate group trainings like PCV-to-farmer and farmer-to-farmer events (exchange visits, field days and workshops) taking advantage of the model farmers to train others in pond management.
- Standardize pricing of fish, fish seed and implement joint marketing survey and marketing planning especially for larger bulk buyers of fish.
- Establish village-based fish seed producer(s) either as a group or with individual model members.
- Network with the Department of Cooperatives or other development facilitators for special trainings in leadership, planning and organizational management.
- Officially register the groups with the government as a club, cooperative or association.
- Apply project design and management skills to assess needs, set goals, establish action plans and implement projects that support fish farming needs of members .

A great deal of cultural sensitivity and a knowledge of extension techniques will be necessary as you encourage farmers to engage in fish farming and advise them on all aspects of fish culture. As an extensionist, good communication skills are a must. You will be required to learn and communicate in a local Zambian language. You will receive eleven weeks of intensive language, technical and cross-cultural training in Zambia. A certain proficiency in all

training areas is required before swearing-in as a Volunteer. Failure to pass the training requirements may result in your returning home.

During the course of your service you will submit quarterly reports to the Project Manager and a summary copy to your district supervisor, which is the Fisheries Officer in your district. This will help Peace Corps assess that your project is on track, measure its long term impact and provide you with follow-up and support.

All Peace Corps Volunteers in Zambia are expected to attain and practice the following core competencies: commitment to professionalism and personal well-being, the facilitation of sustainable community development, and integration into the community.

The most successful Volunteers are those who apply these core competencies daily, especially striving to integrate into their community. Continuous language learning, cultural exploration and a deep respect for Zambians are crucial to community integration and your successful service.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECONDARY PROJECTS

To ensure that the Peace Corps is playing its part in the important global effort to stem the spread of the disease, all Volunteers serving in Africa, in every program sector, will be trained to be advocates and educators for HIV/AIDS prevention. You will receive training in HIV/AIDS education and prevention during pre-service training and/or in-service training sessions, which will include sessions that address specific cross-cultural issues. After receiving this training, you will be encouraged to work with your host country partners to develop activities that integrate HIV/AIDS education into your primary work.

Volunteers have also been involved in promoting gender issues both in their primary work and sometimes as secondary activities. For example, Volunteers organize an annual girl's career week during which young promising youth from villages meet in provincial capitals and are exposed to different women with successful careers. Some volunteers establish girl or boy clubs in schools where they teach HIV/AIDS and life skills to the youth.

Volunteers are also encouraged to engage in activities that support Peace Corps cross-sectoral priorities including Stomping Out Malaria in Africa and promoting food security. Training on these activities will also be provided.



WORKING CONDITIONS

Available Resources

An all-terrain bicycle will be provided for transportation. You will receive bicycle riding and maintenance experience during pre-service training. You will be expected to be conscious of the dangers and safe riding/maintenance of a bicycle to ensure its reliability and your safety. Volunteers in RAP commonly ride over 100 kilometers/week over extremely rough terrain. This is necessary to cover their work zones of roughly 1,600 square kilometers.

RAP takes pride in advocating appropriate technology. Participating farmers have all the resources necessary to begin their fish farming effort. The RAP Volunteer brings the essential missing commodity—knowledge.

Location of Job

You will be posted to a village in one of the provinces that RAP currently works in: Northern, Luapula, Central, Eastern, Southern or Northwestern. RAP Volunteers are responsible for an area of 1,600 kilometers, or 20 kilometers out in any direction from their base village. The provinces where RAP concentrates are all located in the northern portion of the country, where rainfall is highest.

Work Hours

As a Peace Corps Volunteer you will be expected to be on call practically 24/7. This idea relates to the varied nature of your assignment. Your main goal will be within the fisheries parameters. In addition, you will be occupied with the second and third goals of every Peace Corps Volunteer: sharing your culture with your Zambian colleagues, and learning about theirs. These goals dictate striving to integrate into your new community and becoming a part of it.

Cultural Attitudes and Customs in the Workplace

Many RAP Volunteers comment on needing to adapt to a foreign work ethic. The attitudes and customs of the people with whom you will be working are as different and complex as the culture itself. Your tendency might be to pick out one or two habits of your work mates and concentrate on them without recognizing that they are aspects of the greater situation. In time you should strive to interpret the culture rather than work based on isolated actions. The key to success is ultimately flexibility and an open mind.

As a Volunteer, THE COMMUNITY WILL LOOK TO YOU TO PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH. You will be seen as a role model by many and you

will be expected to uphold high standards of behavior. If you are going to use alcohol, it will be very important to do so responsibly, and preferably not at your site. If you are going to be in an intimate relationship, it will be imperative that you practice safe sex. Your presence in the community will change the community. Your behaviors around nutrition and health care will need to be in line with the health messages you are conveying to your community.

Dress Code

As a RAP Volunteer and extension agent, you will be expected to conform to a local standard of dress as represented by other local extension workers. This is generally trousers and a decent shirt for men and either trousers or a knee-length skirt and shirt/blouse for women. As RAP Volunteers spend most of their time in the field it is advisable to bring clothing that is respectable but field oriented. Footwear appropriate to much walking and biking is a necessity.

One of the challenges of finding your place as a Volunteer is simultaneously fitting into the local culture, maintaining your own cultural identity, and acting like a professional. It is not an easy act to balance, and we can only provide you with some guidelines to dress and behave accordingly. While some of your counterparts may dress in seemingly worn or shabby clothes, this will be due to economics rather than choice. The likelihood is that they are wearing their “best.” A foreigner wearing raggedy, unkempt clothing is more likely to be considered an affront.

Zambians regard dress and appearance as part of one’s respect for one another. They value neatness of appearance, which is much more important than being “stylish.” You are expected to dress appropriately, whether you are in training, traveling, or on the job. Not doing so may jeopardize your credibility and that of the entire program.

Dress guidelines have been formalized based not only on advice from Zambians, but also on the experiences of current Volunteers. Dresses and skirts should fall below the knees. Appropriate undergarments should be worn, including slips. Spaghetti tops for women worn by themselves are inappropriate unless covered with a short or long sleeved/shirt, coat or jacket. Skin tight sports shorts or trousers are inappropriate but may be worn inside a skirt or dress when riding bicycles. Men and women should wear shorts only at home, when exercising, or when doing work where Zambian counterparts are also wearing them. If shorts are worn in public, they should be of “walking” length. Hair should be clean and combed, and beards should be neatly trimmed. Men should never wear a hat indoors unless custom in the area allows, and they should always be removed when speaking to an elder. Sunglasses should also be removed indoors.

PC training staff will send you back to your home-stay to dress appropriately if you come to class in what they will consider culturally or professionally inappropriate dressings.

Long hair, unconventional hairdos, blatant tattoos, and facial piercings are not culturally appropriate and may negatively affect community integration. Facial piercings are considered inappropriate and should not be worn during Volunteer service. Tattoos should be covered with clothing. If you have any of these appearance characteristics, a decision to go without them for the duration of your Peace Corps service should be made prior to accepting the invitation to serve in Zambia.

Preparations required before departing the US

You are required to provide certified true copies of your diplomas or degrees upon acceptance and clearance for this assignment. These documents are used for obtaining work permits from immigration department in Zambia. You are also expected to present ten (10) passport size pictures of yourself upon arrival in-country. In addition, you are encouraged to bring a tent and sleeping bag/pad for use during your service in Zambia.



TRAINING FOR YOUR JOB

Peace Corps provides eleven weeks of per-service training (PST) in the form of Community Based Training (CBT) to give you the opportunity to begin your immersion into the local language and village life from the day you arrive. You will live with a host family in a village near the training site. Language classes will be held in the village and your host will help you a great deal in learning the language and the culture. Peace Corps/Zambia will require a high level of competency in the local language before you swear-in as a Volunteer. The technical training will be held both at the training site and in your villages with the rest of your language cluster group. Technical training also includes trainee-directed assignments. There will be a lot of practical work that will give you an opportunity to mirror some of the activities you might undertake in your actual assignment.

Once you have a basis in local language, the emphasis of training will begin to shift towards technical training. This will include an orientation to aquacultural and agricultural practices in Zambia. More specific technical training will include the following: site selection, pond construction, stocking rates, pond management, feeds, composting, associated agricultural activities, harvesting, marketing, farm business management, extension methodology, working with farmer associations, nutrition, diseases, and the biology and culture of Tilapia.

Integrated throughout the training program will be sessions on personal health care in Zambia, cross-cultural issues, development issues, and Zambia's culture and history. Pre-Service Training for RAP is rigorous. There is little private time, and little individual space.

For the first three months after training you will be undertaking the community-entry process in your village. Community integration, language learning and intentional relationship building will be key learning activities that you initiate during this time. About 3 months after PST you will have a one week long In-Service Training (IST) workshop to follow up on technical skills you may need. One year into your service you will attend a mid-term conference to check in on your service and to hold individual meetings with your associate director. The final formal training is the Close of Service (COS) conference held 3 months before the end of your tour.

The most successful PCVs are those who strive to integrate into their community and take on the learner role throughout their service. Continuous language learning, cultural exploration and a deep respect for Zambians are crucial to community integration and successful service. Peace Corps Zambia encourages you to continue your language acquisition after PST by providing a tutoring reimbursement program.



LIVING CONDITIONS

You will work primarily at the village level. RAP Volunteers live in villages where you will find neither plumbing nor electricity, but rather earthen houses lighted by kerosene lamps with meals cooked over wood or charcoal. Drinking/washing water may need to be carried from as far as 20 minutes away on foot.

Some sites will be very isolated. The closest Volunteer may be 40 kilometers away. Transportation from your post to your provincial capital may take a full day and will generally be by crowded and dusty forms of public transportation. It may take two days by crowded, overland public transportation or train to reach the capital city, Lusaka. Some Volunteers walk or ride their bikes up to 30 kilometers to catch a ride at a main road.

Mail will be slow -- taking on average about four to six weeks from the US to Volunteer sites, and there may be no cell phone service in your village; however, goods (foods and personal supplies) and services (transport, communications) are usually available in district centers. Many volunteers choose to bring a personal laptop with them to Zambia as internet is available

both at the provincial Peace Corps resource centers, as well as via your cell phone provider if you select to purchase this service. In addition to the provincial resource centers, email access may be available in larger towns and cities.

You will receive occasional visits from Peace Corps and project staff. Your access to American foods may be very limited, but you will soon become familiar and ultimately enamored by "nshima, cabbage and kapenta" as well as other staple foods of Zambia like local leaf sauces and dried fish. Fruits are difficult to obtain and can be expensive; vegetable variety is generally good but can be seasonally difficult. Meat is scarcely found/eaten by Volunteers in the field. Patience, flexibility and tolerance will be very important on your part. The local cuisine, customs and expectations are very different from your own, and if you are not prepared to make some major adjustments in your lifestyle you will very likely experience a great deal of frustration.



POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

Challenges are many, ranging from personal to cultural. Learning to accept the culture and work constructively within its norms can be frustrating for Volunteers. It may provoke mental hardship. Physical hardship will be there too, as you face an illness you are not used to, or push yourself to bike long distances on a daily basis, or struggle to assure your basic nutrition. Many Volunteers have difficulty coming to an understanding of what development means outside of their own expectations.

The challenges of village living can be hard on your back. Daily activities such as sitting on low stools, bending over to cook over a fire, riding a bike on bumpy paths and carrying water can all contribute to back problems. Prepare yourself ahead of time by integrating back strengthening exercises into your daily life now. Your back will thank you for it later.

The rewards must be as diversified as the challenges or more so. Some Volunteers find it rewarding enough to be out of their familiar environment for two years. Others find satisfaction in making meaningful relationships with people in their new communities. Some base their fulfillment purely in terms of achievement of the RAP objectives. All Volunteers who finish their service acknowledge growth in different ways: in worldliness, in knowledge, in maturity, in experience, in flexibility. All Volunteers gain an experience that is irreplaceable and unique.

The AIDS pandemic strikes across all social strata in many Peace Corps countries. The loss of teachers has crippled education systems, while illness and disability drains family income and forces governments and donors to redirect limited resources from other priorities. The fear and uncertainty AIDS causes has led to increased domestic violence and stigmatizing of people living with HIV/AIDS, isolating them from friends and family and cutting them off from economic opportunities. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, you will confront these issues on a very personal level. It is important to be aware of the high emotional toll that disease, death, and violence can have on Volunteers. As you strive to integrate into your community, you will develop relationships with local people who might die during your service. Because of the AIDS pandemic, some volunteers will be regularly meeting with HIV positive people and working with training staff, office staff and host family members living with AIDS. Volunteers need to prepare themselves to embrace these relationships in a sensitive and positive manner. Likewise, malaria and malnutrition, motor vehicle accidents and other unintentional injuries, domestic violence and corporal punishment are problems a Volunteer may confront. You will need to anticipate these situations and utilize supportive resources available throughout your training and service to maintain your own emotional strength, so that you can continue to be of service to your community.



COMMENTS FROM VOLUNTEERS

“It’s currently the rainy season in Zambia, meaning my thatch roof is leaking in approximately 97 places, I am constantly covered with mud from riding my bike 20 km everyday, and I think I saw a goat float down my bush path after an exceptionally heavy rain storm. It’s times like this that I love it here! Yes, there are tough times and moments of utter insanity, but where else can you live in a mud hut, eating off the land without even a trace of the “modern conveniences” that so much of the world has come to love? I work with 25 different farmers to integrate fish farming in an attempt to create a better farming system which will in turn increase the families’ level of nutrition and promote income generation. After the initial building of the project ponds I have now started focusing on pond management and marketing strategies as well as how to better integrate the entire farming system of field crops, gardens and animal husbandry projects. The RAP program in Zambia is the last of its kind in Africa and I am happy and proud to be a part of it. There is ample amount of work and extreme amounts of fun to be had.”

“I live and work in Chipundu village in the Northern Province of Zambia. My primary project is to promote fish farming as a means of income and nutrition in the village. Most of my work in the past year has focused on construction of project standard fishponds. Now that many farmers with whom I work have completed fishponds my work is changing to teaching proper management techniques. I was very lucky to be chosen for the RAP program in Zambia. The work is plentiful and extremely satisfying. The living condition for PCVs in Zambia is what I always dreamed Peace Corps to be like. I live in a mud hut with a grass roof 20 kilometers away from running water or electricity. The Zambian people are some of the kindest and most generous people I have ever met. Because the work produces concrete results for the farmers and their families, I believe fish farming is going to be successful in Zambia for many years. It is a great job in a great place.”

“Initial indications show that the work potential is very high. In just a short four weeks at post we have renovated and stocked a pond, harvested another, designed and built two rabbit cages, initiated a water passageway system using bamboo, looked into the feasibility of building a canal system for the irrigation of fields, and spoke to numerous people about fisheries and the potential in the area. Enthusiasm is high. Barring rain I usually see two farmers per day - one in the morning and one in the afternoon. We are using Trek mountain bikes as transport and I see the potential of working in a radius of 15 - 20 kilometers from my house. (The first few times out on the bike were very painful).”

“The RAP program is one of the best. You get results after being at site for just a few months, and your villagers love you. Fish is one of their favorite foods, and it is often hard to get or not very fresh. You will live in a small village either in Northwestern, Northern, Central, or Luapula. I am from Northern so I am biased and think it is the best. You will have to learn one of the local languages (Bemba, Lunda, or Kaonde)... we have a whole lot of Bembas, of which I am one. You will come to Zambia in July and then will be sent quickly into the bush for a few days so that you get your feet wet. It is normally a good time. Then you will have 5 weeks of training. The trainers will pump you full of tech stuff and some Language trainers will get your Bemba, Lunda, or Kaonde up to par. Then you will be sent into the bush with your trainers again for two weeks and get some more hands on training. Then a final two weeks of training... then you will be posted. Everything you need to know will be given to you... no worries. You will be teaching small-scale farmers how to dig earthen ponds. You will be biking to these farmers houses and helping out with what you can. But not to worry, after training you have lots of free time to read, listen to tunes, and hang out with neighbors.”

Congrats on your invitation to serve in Zambia!



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This document is intended to give you an overview of the project you are invited to work on in the Peace Corps. For more detailed information about Zambia and living there, please read the Welcome Book (<http://files.peacecorps.gov/manuals/welcomebooks/zmwb611.pdf>), and check out the related Web sites we reference in the book.

For further information about serving as a Volunteer in Zambia, call the country desk officer for Zambia at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. (9AM to 5PM, EST):

Toll-free: 1-855-855-1961, press 1, then extension 2316;

or (202) 692-2316; or via email at zambia@peacecorps.gov.