IDS ALUM WORKING IN BURUNDI

By Desiree Alcholla

I moved to Missoula after working with a microfinance institution and the Lex Orandi School, an elementary school in Burundi founded by my mother in 2010. I was grateful to have this on-the ground experience when she came to UM in 2013 to finish my BA in Anthropology. I decided to minor in International Development Studies and Global Public Health as well as completing the Peace Corps Prep Civic Engagement Certificate helped me gain a better understanding of the social, environmental, educational, and economic challenges that I had encountered in Burundi.

Burundi, a small country in Central Africa, is the fourth poorest country in the world, and only 14% of girls finish high school. The public education system is severely overcrowded, and most teachers are barely knowledgeable in the subjects they’re expected to teach. The few students who graduate have done so by memorizing and repeating scores of facts and sharing a textbook with up to seven of their peers. My mother has been a teacher for over 20 years and, as a Burundian herself, started Lex Orandi School (called LOSKI by the neighborhood) as an alternative for local parents who wanted to give their children a quality education.

The first year was tough, considering that they were dealing with city-wide power and water cuts for days at a time as well as teachers who weren’t used to being required to show up to class every day! LOSKI began with 146 students in nursery through second grade and, as they say in Burundi, bukeye bukeye or slowly slowly, momentum started to build. In the past five years, the enrollment has now grown to nearly 400 students up to sixth grade, and 100% of our test-takers passed the National Exam.

After graduating from UM in May 2014, I went back to work with LOSKI to help make sure that students are not just in school but actually learning. My job included duties like working with the British Council in Rwanda to implement teacher development trainings, coordinating donations of books, toys, and school supplies with NGOs, and writing grant applications to build an adjoining building with a secondary school, campus library, and neighborhood pharmacy. I'm really excited to be a part of LOSKI’s next phase when our goals are not only academic, but to implement vocational training and preventative health screenings for the community.

If you would like to support our efforts, you can organize a fundraiser on our behalf as for quality desks, laptops, and English or French reading materials, as these are hard to come by in Burundi. You’re also welcome to join us this summer with our Teaching Teachers English program! Visit the Volunteer page on our website www.lexorandischool.org for more information.

With all this work ahead, I decided to seek a master’s degree this fall so I can better understand the challenges that will come with our growth over the next few years. I received a scholarship to a joint master’s degree program with the European Erasmus Mundus program call Education Policies for Global Development. Through this program I will spend the next 2 years in Barcelona, Amsterdam, Malta and Oslo.

I'm really grateful for the skills I learned at UM and will be incorporating many of the social justice and political science lessons I received from the IDS professors, class discussions, and readings in my future studies and career with LOSKI. Feel free to get in touch with me at desiree@lexorandischool.org if you have any questions about volunteering, Lex Orandi School, or even Burundi in general.

Murakoze cane, thank you!

Desiree Alcholla with a LOSKI student

Class in Session at LOSKI
**IDS HAPPENINGS**

**IDS Student Sophia Friedl Goes to Uganda with Global Grizzlies**

IDS student Sophia Friedl traveled to Uganda with UM’s Global Grizzlies to work in the Gombe Hospital. During her two week trip, Sophia primarily worked in the Gombe Hospital maternity ward and operating theater observing births and helping nurses.

Global Grizzlies is an ASUM student organization affiliated with the Davidson Honors College. Each year the Global Grizzlies group embarks on an international service learning program that gives students an opportunity to combine their classroom education with real-world experiences. Prior to departure Global Grizzlies are trained in Wilderness medicine skills and educated about the historical, political and social context of the destination country.

The program was supported by Global Grizzlies fund raising projects such as their silent auction. In addition, Sophia, who is also a Global Public Health minor, received a $500 GPH Award from the Global Public Health External Advisory Committee to assist her with the cost of the program. As a result of the experience Sophia switched her major from Human Biology to Sociology and is now planning to pursue a Masters in International Public Health at University College Dublin in Ireland.

IDS students can earn IDS Content course credit for international internship experience such as the Global Grizzlies. To learn more about the Global Grizzlies visit UM’s Davidson Honors College Global Grizzlies page at: [http://www.dhc.umt.edu/opportunities/globalGrizzlies.php](http://www.dhc.umt.edu/opportunities/globalGrizzlies.php).

**IDS Alumnus Stan Wilson Published in Permaculture Design Magazine**

IDS alumni and UM Master of Interdisciplinary Studies student Stan Wilson was published in the August 2015 issue of Permaculture Design magazine ([permaculturedesignmagazine.com/](http://permaculturedesignmagazine.com/)). Stan’s essay, Just Do It, chronicles the authors own discovery and use of humanure, the art of composting humane waste to create safe, fertile soil, as well as his families three-year teaching tour, the Skills For The New Millennium Tour. The article includes a brief history of the alternative technologies movement from the 1970's to the present date.

Stan has a BA in History from the University of Montana with a minor in IDS. Wilson will be completing his graduate project, a book titled The History of Shit: Human Waste and Its Role in Agriculture Over Time, in Spring 2016.

**BIG CHANGES TO UM’s PEACE CORPS PREP PROGRAM**

UM and the Peace Corps have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding that brings significant changes to UM’s Peace Corps Prep Program. The new MOU focuses on UM’s PC Prep Programs specializations that coincide with the Peace Corps sector specific areas and removes the generalist certificate as well as UM’s Civic Engagement specialization for students enrolling in the PC Prep program after January 1, 2016. This means UM students can earn PC Prep certificates in the work sectors of: Agriculture; Environment; Health; Education; Youth in Development; and/or Community Economic Development. In addition to course work, which now includes a broader expanse of classes, students are required to complete 50 hours of service learning the coincides with their sector-specific course work well as take part in professional development. As part of the course work students take 3 intercultural competence courses that may include IDS courses. Therefore, with careful advising, IDS students can still stack IDS courses and PC Corps Prep courses to fulfill the requirements of both the IDS minor and the PC Prep Program specialization certificate. For more information about the new PC Prep program visit the PC Prep page on the IDS website [http://hs.umt.edu/ids/peace-corps-prep/default.php](http://hs.umt.edu/ids/peace-corps-prep/default.php).
**(IDS FACULTY HAPPENINGS)**

**A MESSAGE FROM IDS DIRECTOR TERESA SOBIESZCZYK**

Snowflakes are drifting down, and students are preparing for winter break, with dreams of skiing or sunny beaches dancing through their heads. The Missoula campus is hushed and peaceful, and elk are nesting on the mountain above us. To help ward off the winter chill, let me recall some of the accomplishments of the International Development Studies and Peace Corps Prep Programs in the past few months.

The University of Montana’s President, Royce Engstrom, just signed a new five-year Memorandum of Understanding between UM and the national Peace Corps Agency. This MOU takes effect on January 1, 2016 and involves a significant redesign of our Peace Corps Prep Program to align it with the new mode of recruitment put in place this year by the Peace Corps (see article on previous page of this newsletter).

I’m delighted to report that we have registered 27 new student in IDS and PCPP this term, which is the highest number for a single term ever. I think this number speaks to the wonderful international and volunteer ethic of many UM students and maybe also their ongoing worry about the world’s current refugee and development crises.

In Spring 2016 IDS will be sponsoring its first course, Program Monitoring and Evaluation in International Development. It will be offered experimentally by Dr. Kimber McCay (Anthropology and IDS) next term, and, if our IDS rubric is approved, in the future it will become our first official IDS course. The course fills an important niche in providing students with the practical skills of program monitoring and evaluation, which are in high demand by NGOs, government agencies, and multilateral institutions like the UN and World Bank. Thank you to Dr. McKay for developing the course and making it available to the UM community!

Thank you to all of you for your ongoing interest in International Development Studies and Peace Corps Prep. I wish you all a happy and productive 2016. In peace, Teresa Sobieszczyk, Director

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**BOOKS, PRESENTATIONS & MARATHONS KEEP IDS FACULTY KEITH BOSAK BUSY**

IDS Faculty Keith Bosak co-edited a new book, *Reframing Sustainable Tourism* with Steve McCool. The book examines the need for a new way of describing sustainable tourism and also looks at the frameworks needed to rethink how to apply this to communities, private operators and protected area managers.

Then, in October, Keith presented a paper in Perth, Scotland titled: “Impacts of Climate Change and Changes in Socio-Economic Structure on Tribal Populations in the Garhwal Himalaya, India.” The paper, co-authored with IDS Professor Sarah Halverson as well as Professor Raghbir Chand (Department of Geography at UM Partner Kumaon University, Uttarakhand, India), was presented at the Perth III: Mountains of Our Future Earth international conference. The conference was organized by the Centre for Mountain Studies at Perth College, University of Highlands & Islands, United Kingdom.

While in Scotland for the conference, Keith ran the Glencoe Trail Marathon. The marathon is a 26.2 mile race through the Scottish Highlands from Glencoe to Glen Nevis. The day of the race was a beautiful, crisp and clear fall day and the trails the trails through the Scottish Highlands were excellent but challenging.

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**IDS PROFESSOR PHYLLIS NGAI CO-DIRECTS NEH INSTITUTE**

IDS Professor Phyllis Ngai Ed.D. co-directed a National Endowment for the Humanities 2015 Summer Institute titled “Indigenous Literary Studies through Global Conversations.” The professional development Indigenous Studies Summer Institute was hosted at UM Summer 2015. The institute was made possible through a NEH Bridging Cultures initiative grant award to Phyllis Ngai of the Department of Communications and Kathryn Shanley of the Native American Studies Department.

While attending the institute, participants studied the Salish people of Montana through literature, oral traditions and film, as well as the Kiowas of Oklahoma, the Samis of Northern Norway and Alaska Natives. Participants explored cross-cultural comparisons between and among indigenous peoples.
I enrolled in the International Development Studies and Global Public Health minors the spring of my freshman year. At that time, I had just changed my major to Community Health and had no idea what was in store for me. Now, four years later, I reflect on the knowledge I have gained from taking international focused courses and the experiences I have been honored to take part in.

Through enrolling in these two minors, I have been introduced to the multifaceted world of development management, which overarches into every field and course of study. Themes of these courses include the social construction of the environment and its impact on development, the effect of globalization on rural Nepalese communities, and analyzing the complex notions around development administration. The central question to my studies has been how can we maintain cultural diversity and honor traditions while also increasing the quality of life through development? Through these courses, I have been introduced to more sustainable forms of development, such as the concept of Community Driven Development in which community members dictate what changes are being made in their community. I had the privilege to work within an African organization that emphasized community stake-holding where I saw these strategies in action.

In my first major expedition abroad I worked in a township outside of Cape Town, South Africa with the AIDS organization, Treatment Action Campaign. This experience confirmed my love of public health as well as my fascination with Africa. Through observing and working in this capacity, I was able to apply the skills and considerations I was introduced to in my International Development Studies and Global Public Health courses. These minors challenge the distribution of development worldwide and explore how individual communities are reacting to globalization. Working on the ground in a developing community only furthered my interest in understanding how specific communities are blending their cultural traditions with the “modern” world.

The courses I have taken through International Development Studies and Global Public Health have provided me with a newfound respect and interest for developing countries. Through this exposure, I have settled on working in public health in developing countries specifically in the field of healthcare access. After graduating in the spring I hope to gain additional experience in Africa and then volunteer with the Peace Corps while continuing my global public health education.

The experience of working abroad, meeting new people and being introduced to a new culture completely made my head spin. Whether or not students intend to continue their career internationally, abroad experiences provide exposure to different cultures which challenge your perspectives on life and people, resulting in the most necessary shake-up of your life.

Rachael Schmoker, Alumna: Community Health major, International Development Studies and Global Public Health minors, Peace Corps Specializations in Health and Youth in Community Development.