

The Herald

News for those who served with the Peace Corps in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

MONTHLY ARCHIVES: JANUARY 2016

Editor's Note — January 2016

Posted on [January 23, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

The times they are a changin'

by Janet Lee (Emdeber 1974-76)

Well, I am not really from the '60s, but many of the RPCVs of Ethiopia and Eritrea are. I am, however, close enough to appreciate the work of those who came before me and have the willingness to "pass the torch to a new generation." In working with RPCVs and in my recent travels to Ethiopia where I met and worked with current Volunteers, I feel a shared connection to Ethiopia, best described by the late author, Maria Thomas, "If you've ever lived in Ethiopia, you never really put it behind you. You follow the news, any you can get, avidly. You look for people who have just been there. You find Ethiopians on the outside, or they find you. You collect stories. You wait for any chance to go back."

Call for new board members

In the last issue of *The Herald*, we came to learn of the resignation/retirement of our President Marian Haley Beil (Debre Berhan 1962-64) and founder of E&E RPCVs. In addition to her role as President, she was the treasurer, database manager, website and blog designer, and editor and publisher of both the print and online version of *The Herald*. Oh, and one must not forget the manager of our Facebook page. Not surprising since she was one of the first intrepid Volunteers to Ethiopia. Barry Hillenbrand (Debre Marcos 1963-65) [paid tribute](#) to her in our September issue.

We knew it would be tough to fill her shoes, but we are making progress in the transition. Vice President, Leo Cecchini (leo@cecchini.org) is presiding over the operations as a new board is formed, at which time a new President will be elected. Fortunately, Marian is still actively participating behind the scenes. Current board members include: Janet Lee, Barry Hillenbrand, Leo Cecchini, John Coyne, and Karen Glover.

Hold the presses! Just a week ago Barry Hillenbrand announced *his* retirement from the board as well. We were fortunate to not only have Barry as a wise member of the Board, but also a wonderful editor to lend his professional expertise to *The Herald*. We will pay tribute to Barry in the next issue of *The Herald*.

Our first call for new board members has met with success: Amanda Sutker (Adaba, West Arsi, 2012-14) is the first to answer that call. Currently residing and working in the DC area, she has stepped up to not only join the board but coordinate local arrangements and programming for the Ethiopia activities at National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) conference Peace Corps Connect in DC September 22-25. She and Barry Hillenbrand have begun planning a DC area get together on February 4, complete with an Ethiopian comedienne. More info will be forthcoming.

The second to answer is Kristen (Straw) Barredo (Finote Selam, 2007-09). Kristen was in the first Peace Corps group to re-enter Ethiopia and worked in HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control. She also currently resides in the DC area and will assist with local arrangements and programming in DC. Welcome to the board!

What are we looking for? Passion, commitment, and enthusiasm. All those traits that took us to Ethiopia in the first place. Do you have organizational skills? We need someone to maintain a database of names and emails. Are you good with numbers? We could use someone who can manage our financial resources. Do you have a bent for design? Hey, we have a great web presence, but who doesn't need a fresh, new look? Do you network? Everyone on the board needs to be reaching out to Volunteers in the field, recently returned Volunteers, and those not yet connected to social media. Yes, there is much work to be done, but being on the board or volunteering in some capacity to the group is rewarding and a lot of fun.

Interested? Contact Leo Cecchini (leo@cecchini.org)

Where does all the money go?

Did you know that E&ERPCVs is not a membership organization and cannot charge dues? (A violation of our bylaws and non-profit status). Although not expensive to run, there are some expenses that do occur, including minimal web fees, bank fees, rebates to NPCA, and fees associated with maintaining our non-profit status. Where does our income come from? Up until the changes discussed below, most income came from a portion of the individual dues paid to NPCA, about \$1400 in 2015. That cash flow will decrease substantially as the NPCA dues structure changes. But how about all of the reunions, especially the annual get together at Peace Corps Connect? Surely E&E RPCVs make a bundle on these activities? Nope! Nothing! Zip! Nada! *Minum yellum!* Yes, there are some fees related to these events (such as room rentals), but all expenses are covered by the attendees and not passed on to the general membership.

Who benefits?

Of course, that's easy. We all do. We network. We communicate. We share our photos. We share our hopes, projects, ideas. We remember those who have gone before us. None of this would happen without a community and we are a community, one that is expanding as each new group of Ethi PCVs enters and COS at the end of their service.

Unique to the E&E RPCVs is the RPCV Legacy Program, E&E RPCV projects that are sanctioned by the board, posted on the website, and eligible for a tax deduction by the donor. 100% of all donations go to the project. E&E RPCV collects the donations, tracks the funds, sends donation receipts, disperses the money, and files all appropriate IRS forms. No wonder Marian decided to retire! If there is a little bit of money left over at the end of the year, the board may donate money to the various projects to sweeten the pot. How cool is that? This year we received \$25,471.38 in Legacy Project donations and dispersed \$25,528.43 (numbers aren't an exact match because funds may cross years or specific projects are not yet fully funded).

This year, the board approved a contribution to an Ethiopian Peace Corps Partnership Program grant. We are dedicated to supporting the Volunteers in country. Please take note of the gracious response of gratitude from PCV Matt Westerberg, Yochila, Tigray. His Partnership Program Grant will support the building of two bathrooms in Yochila schools and the building of 20 desks for a classroom.

Where do you send donations to further the cause?

OK, you *would* have sent a check in 2015 but you missed the tax deadline. Don't worry. There is still time for 2016. Click on the link to learn about all of your giving options: <https://eandeherald.com/ee-rpcvs/support-the-herald-ee-rpcvs/>

Changes at NPCA

There are big changes afoot at the NPCA, one of the most significant being the dismissal of dues. In this issue, *The Herald* interviews Glenn Blumhorst, President of NPCA, who outlines these changes and hopes for the future. Thanks in large part to the mobilization of individual RPCVs and groups such as the E&E RPCVs, Congress has passed the largest budget for Peace Corps in history. Let's all stand up and give ourselves a hand.

In this issue

In addition to the interview with Glenn, there are articles by three current Volunteers in the field. Hannah Pensack-Rinehart (Mezezo, Amhara, 2015-) describes a simple but effective solution to the hand-washing problem in "Tippy Tap to the Rescue." Swathi Ayyagari (Quiha, Tigray 2015-) successfully raised funds with a Peace Corps Partnership Grant to continue the Kid for Kids project that Benjamin Morse (Hawzien 2011-13) described in his article in an earlier issue of *The Herald*. Kids for Kids creates music videos that include topics such as hand washing, exercise, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, fetal alcohol syndrome, gender equality, disabilities, school pride, cheating on exams.

This issue of *The Herald* also highlights a few projects by RPCVs. Mary Gaul (Kombolcha, Welo, 2012-2014) with her husband Ryan share their experiences with GrassRootSoccer both in Ethiopia and in the U.S. While in Ethiopia they trained nearly 500 kids in GRS techniques. Here in the U.S. they continue to run races and raise funds for this program. Have you ever had a great idea for a book and wanted to publish it on your own? Andrew Tadross (Endodo, Tigray & Mekelle, Tigray 2011-13) shares how he went from an idea to a finished product in "From PCV to Author/Publisher." Finally, a quick update on a project from the field. Dwight Sullivan (Yergalem, Dodola 70-72) is currently in Ethiopia unloading six shipping containers of building materials for the Axumite Heritage Foundation library. He has sent photos of their amazing progress.

We conclude as always with book reviews for your reading pleasure.



Janet in the Peace Corps Room of the Kennedy Library in Boston

Posted in [Editor's Note](#)

Tagged [January 2016](#)

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E&E RPCVs Group News

Posted on [January 23, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [1 comment](#)

Introducing Our New Board Members

Amanda Sutker (Adaba, West Arsi, 2012-14)

My name is Amanda Sutker and I served as a Peace Corps/Ethiopia G7 Volunteer from 2012 to 2014. I was an English teacher trainer in Adaba, a small town in West Arsi between Shashemene and Robe. During my service, I worked with Ethiopian English teachers, many of whom studied English under PCVs in the 1960s and 1970s. I also taught seventh and eighth grade spoken English courses, mentored a group of high school girls, and coordinated a story development initiative between PCVs and graduate writing students in the United States that

resulted in the distribution of 2,000 English language anthologies throughout Ethiopia.



I currently live in Washington, D.C. and work as a writer with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Legislative and Public Affairs program. Outside of work I mentor a recent Ugandan refugee, practice yoga, and attend a small, diverse church (where an Oromo congregation meets in the afternoon).



I decided to join the board because I appreciate the formal organization of a returned Peace Corps group, and I'd like to help build a bridge between the generation of RPCVs who have taken leadership of the E&E RPCV group and recently returned RPCVs like me. Since I live in DC, I also think I have a lot to offer in planning E&E reunions at the NPCA conference. I'm working with Barry Hillenbrand (Debre Marcos 63-65) to plan a small event for E&E RPCVs in January, and we've even coordinated a local Ethiopian-American comedian to attend the dinner.

I look forward to working on the Board.

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Kristen (Straw) Barredo (2007-09)

My name is Kristen (Straw) Barredo and I was in the first Peace Corps group to re-enter Ethiopia in 2007. I was assigned to the Finote Selam (West Gojjam) HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office. During my time in Finote Selam I worked with women and youth affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as the People Living with HIV/AIDS Association, to start income generating projects. Through grants and other funding our office was able to raise, we were able to support groups to start a grain mill, hair salon, a new café near the hospital, small shops, and Finote Selam's first automatic washing machine for a laundry service! I also participated in many Woreda HIV/AIDS education campaigns and guest-taught health and English classes at the middle schools and high school.



Click to see Kristen, her host sisters and brother, and her



Since 2009, I have been working in the humanitarian and emergency relief sector and had the opportunity to return to Ethiopia multiple times and live there again during 2012-2013.

husband Jim Barredo
at Tissisat Falls

I am excited to use my experience in managing grants and privately funded projects to continue the good work the E&E RPCV Legacy Program is doing. I look forward to hearing your ideas on how we can continue to support projects in Ethiopia and Eritrea!

Posted in [E&E RPCVs Group News](#)

1 Comment

Tagged [Amanda Sutker](#), [Kristen Barredo](#), [new board members](#)

E&E RPCVs Group News

Posted on [January 23, 2016](#) by [eerpcv](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Recently our group — that's E&E RPCVs for short — made a donation through our RPCV Legacy Program to a [Peace Corps Partnership Program](#) project in Ethiopia. We have received the following letter from the PCV who applied for the grant:

Dear Ethiopia and Eritrea RPCVs,

My name is Matt Westerberg and I am the Peace Corps Volunteer overseeing the grant project you recently donated to in Yechila, Tigray region, Ethiopia.

First of all, thank you so much for your generosity and help! This project is particularly special because it was generated from members of the community who saw the need. It is also notable because much of the funding for this project is being provided by donations from parents, local business owners, and other community stakeholders in Yechila.

Your generous donation will be combined with these hard saved community funds to build two new bathrooms, one for Yechila Secondary School, and another for Yechila Preparatory School. In addition, some of the funds you have donated will go towards building 20 new desks to reduce overcrowding by allowing the secondary school to utilize a new classroom that was recently built.

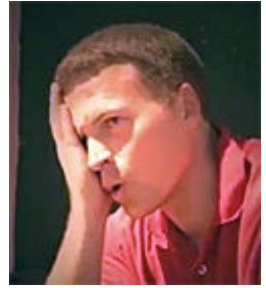
I will keep you updated with pictures and written accounts of our progress. Thank you again for your help and support!



Matt Westerberg
Education PCV
Peace Corps Ethiopia

P.S. Also, below is an article from the BBC on our most recent English Club project! Enjoy!

CLICK: [Ethiopian students perform “Smells Like Teen Spirit” for Dave Grohl’ birthday](#)



Matt in “Smells Like Teen Spirit”

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Tagged [Matt Westerberg](#), [Peace Corps Partnership](#), [RPCV Legacy Program](#)

Peace Corps and NPCA

Posted on [January 23, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

Interview with NPCA President Glenn Blumhorst

by *Janet Lee, Editor (Emdeber 1974-76)*

Glenn Blumhorst is the President & CEO of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) and an RPCV from Guatemala (1988-1991). In early December, he and his associate, Amanda Silva, RPCV Indonesia 2013-2015, visited Colorado, attended the RPCVs of Colorado annual Holiday Party and met with a group of RPCVs in Boulder. The visit was part of a nation-wide road trip to reach out to established RPCV groups and to meet with recently returned Volunteers.

The Editor of *The Herald* took this opportunity to interview Glenn about changes that are underway with the NPCA.

The Herald

The most noticeable changes to NPCA are eliminating membership fees and broadening the scope of who is eligible to become a member. What do you hope to accomplish with these changes? Tell us more about the “New” National Peace Corps Association.

Blumhorst

Historically, the NPCA has been a membership dues organization, however, after looking at our community we wanted to further engage and better serve the greater Peace Corps community, and in the New Year we will complete our transition to being a mission-driven and project-oriented organization. Currently, anyone with any affiliation or affinity for Peace Corps ideals is welcome to become a member of the National Peace Corps Association.

Because membership is free, members who are committed to the mission of the NPCA are welcome to contribute or continue contributing as “Mission Partners.” Mission Partners can choose their level of investment in funding any of our 3 areas:

1. Helping RPCVs thrive through transition services spanning career development, mentorship or health care issues.
2. Making Peace Corps the best it can be by advocating for greater funding to increase the number of Volunteers in the field to 10,000, calling for extension of federal Non-Competitive Eligibility Act, increasing the number of companies partnered with Employers of National Service, and building partnerships to secure new resources for Volunteers in the field.
3. Increasing our Development Impact through our collaboration with the White House and Peace Corps on the Let Girls Learn initiative, investing in partnerships with RPCV-run organizations such as Water Charity for [WASH](#) projects.

The Herald

Describe the launch of the Peace Corps Community Fund. What opportunities will it provide for RPCVs?

Blumhorst

The Peace Corps Community Fund is aimed at better serving, engaging and connecting the Peace Corps community. The NPCA is always strongest when our community comes together and is driven by common goals. We were able to secure the highest Peace Corps budget for the 2016 fiscal year, because our community mobilized to make this happen. There is so much more that can be done when we have the investment and engagement of the Peace Corps community, the Community Fund is our way of expanding those services and creating more opportunities that RPCVs want from us. Let us know your ideas; we want to know how we can help!

The Herald

Any advice on how RPCVs can advocate for current and future Volunteers in the field? How is NPCA advocating on their behalf?

Blumhorst

Great question! The most important thing RPCVs can do is meet with their House and Senate Representatives. Time and time again we're told that face time between a constituent and a Member of Congress is the most effective means of advocacy. Talk about your positive experiences from Peace Corps and how those experiences have affected you and your host community. If you're interested in organizing a meeting, or inviting your Members to an RPCV-led event, please get in touch with our advocacy team, and they'll walk you through it. Also, you can use our software to contact Members of Congress; request that they meet with Volunteers in the field while they're on Congressional Delegations; and ask that they raise awareness for the Peace Corps by promoting the agency and its work — to that end, feel free to supply them with press releases of RPCV constituents and those currently serving, and notify them of RPCV-led events, especially service-oriented projects.

The NPCA advocacy team is here to assist and represent you every step of the way. We are the sole advocacy body for the Peace Corps community, and will continue to build on successes in the past by advocating for RPCVs and the agency, whether it's reform or appropriations. Aside from providing you with talking points, materials and advice, we'll also connect you with our vast team of advocacy coordinators all over the country — like the fabulous Suzanne Smith of Colorado. And while you may not be able to meet with your Members of

Congress, we do. We're on Capitol Hill all the time, meeting with Members and staff. It's what helped secure Peace Corps' FY16 budget of \$410 million — the agency's biggest budget ever. Please contact our advocacy team for more information.

The Herald

Peace Corps Connect in Berkeley was a highly successful event. A highlight for RPCVs from Ethiopia/Eritrea was the selection of Berhane Daba, president and founder of Ethiopian Women with Disabilities Association for the Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award. What does NPCA have planned for the 35th anniversary in Washington D.C. September 22-25, 2016?

Blumhorst

The NPCA is excited that this year's Peace Corps Connect, September 22-25, 2016 in Washington DC, will be held in conjunction with the 55th anniversary of the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps has had a profound global impact and our community has a wealth of knowledge and experience with which we continue to affect change. The conference will create discussion and open dialogue about how Peace Corps can continue to have impact in the coming years, with a specific focus on our core mission areas: girls education and empowerment, peace and security, economic development, global health, and environmental sustainability.



Berhane Daba, winner of the Harris Wofford Award, and her mentor/American mother, Mary Myers-Bruckenstein (Addis 68-70)

Posted in [Peace Corps and NPCA](#)
Tagged [Glenn Blumhorst](#), [interview](#)

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RPCV Projects

Posted on [January 23, 2016](#) by [janetlee](#) | [4 comments](#)

Grassroot Soccer Peace Corps SKILLZ Program

by *Mary Gaul (Kombolcha, Welo, 2012-2014)*

Ryan and Mary Gaul served together from 2012-2014 in Kombolcha, Welo, Ethiopia. As health Volunteers they were both placed with local HIV, infectious disease and environmental health-focused organizations where they trained local staff and health extension workers. They each started after school clubs, Mary focusing on gender, and Ryan

focusing on English and agriculture. They also hosted events for a number of international holidays including World Malaria Day, Earth Day, World AIDS Day and International Day of the Girl.



The most rewarding experience Ryan and Mary had during their service, however, was working with the [Grassroot Soccer](#) Peace Corps SKILLZ program. Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is an international adolescent-health organization that educates, inspires and mobilizes young people to overcome their greatest health challenges and live healthier, more productive lives. GRS uses the power of soccer to connect young people with the mentors, information, and health services they need to thrive, and empowers adolescents to make educated choices about pressing health challenges such as HIV & AIDS, sexual health, gender-based violence, and malaria. GRS's evidence-based programs, led by trained local coaches, incorporate soccer into dynamic lessons about health and wellness that engage young people and break down cultural barriers. With proven results and a constant focus on research and innovation, GRS has reached over 1.2 million young people in nearly 50 countries with health education.

During their service, Mary and Ryan trained nearly 500 youth in their town of Kombatolcha in the GRS curriculum. They witnessed first-hand the incredible impact of this program, educating and empowering youth to make positive impacts in their own lives and the lives of their families and communities.



Mary with some of the girls . . .



. . . and some of the boys.

As firm believers in the program, Ryan and Mary have continued their support for GRS back in the United States by joining their team of endurance runners. Endurance runners run long-distance races throughout the year in order to raise funds for GRS. The money goes directly to GRS and supports their programming, including the SKILLZ program (which covers the cost of training curriculum manuals, an indestructible soccer ball, and shipping costs to send the materials to currently serving Peace Corps Volunteers involved in the program). In October, Ryan and Mary ran their first race — a Tough Mudder in Philadelphia — where they raised \$1,700 for GRS.



They will continue to run races throughout the year, and attempt to raise even more money for GRS (please email mgaul13@gmail.com or ryangaulo9@gmail.com for details on how you can donate to their future races).

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4 Comments

Tagged [GrassrootsSoccer](#), [Mary Gaul](#), [Ryan Gaul](#)

RPCV Projects

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Axum Library and Cultural Center Update

update by Dwight Sullivan (Yergalem, Dodola 70-72)

In September, Dwight Sullivan (Yergalem, Dodola 70-72), wrote in *The Herald* of his work with the [Ethiopian Community Development Council's library development project](#) in Axum. Dwight is currently in Axum where he has been supervising the unloading of six (yes, count them six!) shipping containers of building materials from Dubai and one container of miscellaneous items including furniture, books, desks, and sewing machines. The building materials include ceramic tiles, metal frames, windows, and tools that are not available in Ethiopia.



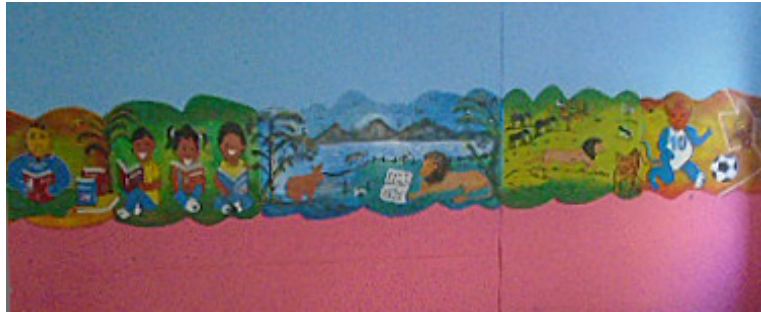
Entry area with new windows waiting to be installed.



He has also commissioned three pieces of art: one is on canvas, one is on a goat skin, and the last is on a cow skin. The first is of the battle of Magdela, the second is of the Italians in WW II in Axum, and the last (see below) is of the Dergue period.



Dwight plans to commission a mural of the Blue Nile falls for the children's section of the library.



Children's Room

Dwight has been beating the streets of Addis Ababa in search of children’s books in local languages. There are few to be found. Could publishing be the next great step?

Axum has presented Dwight with much great fortune. Through Peace Corps connections in Axum, he was introduced to PCV Madeline Jones, who lives in Belie [Tigray] (between Axum and Shire), and is a most able seamstress and crafter. She gave a private sewing lesson to a group of nuns, and, according to Dwight, was quite adept at her command of Tigrinya based on the amount of chatter while they worked together. In that one short session, they were able to craft together a small prayer book carrying case. A sure sign of more good things to come.



PCV Madeline Jones and her sewing class

Highlight of Dwight’s trip? Kissing a bishop’s cross.

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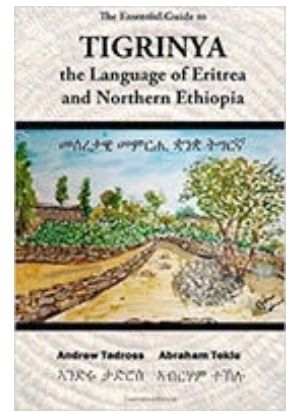
From PCV to Author/Publisher

By *Andrew Tadross (Endodo, Tigray & Mekelle, Tigray 2011-13)*

In 2015, I did something I never thought I’d do . . . I authored a book . . . about a language I’d previously never heard of . . . from a country I never considered visiting. But such is the beauty of Peace Corps — especially the “old” Peace Corps where your assignment was not necessarily by choice, but you went where you were asked to serve and let the experience unfold. The name of the book is *The Essential Guide to Tigrinya: The Language of Northern Ethiopia and Eritrea*. A few months later, I completed the *The Essential Guide to Amharic: The National Language of Ethiopia* using the same template. I’m currently in the process of putting out a similar reference book for Afan Oromo, this time as editor.

If you are a writer, consider yourself fortunate to live in the era of self-publishing. There’s no telling how I’d reach such a specialized market in the 1960s — or even the early 2000s. Today, I can crank out a book, publish it online through CreateSpace, sell it on Amazon; 24 hours later someone anywhere in the developed world can buy it, and a month later I receive a royalty check. Many people don’t write books because they think they are “too late to the

game” i.e. it’s already been done, or it is too much work. I believe we are actually just getting started, and I think *now* is the time to do this — especially if the information you are providing is either *new*, or better organized than what currently exists.



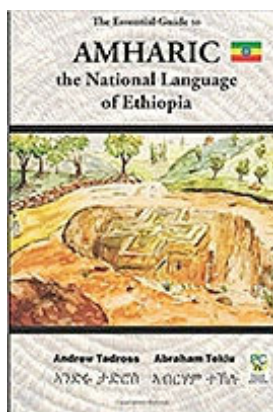
When I was in Tigray, I was desperate to find a helpful Tigrinya book for foreigners. The PCV handbook left a lot to be desired. I found one rare book in a market that had words and phrases spelled phonetically — it was a Godsend, but it was still poorly organized and left a lot of grammatical confusion. There was also an American-authored book from the 1970s . . . but all the translations were in Ge’ez script, and a lot of it was Bible verses — not so relevant for Peace Corps work. I knew I could organize a more functional guide to Tigrinya, so I began the project, after developing many pages of essential vocabulary.

I met my co-author Abraham Teklu while visiting Mekele, and staying at the hotel his wife owns. After I moved there some months later to teach at the university, we decided to begin this book venture together. It was very fortuitous. I had discussed the book idea with some other Ethiopian acquaintances, but nothing had jelled. Abe has turned out to be a good friend and business partner with whom I communicated easily. Abe’s role is that of the language expert, and my role is to organize the book. As a foreigner/PCV, I knew exactly what I wanted out of a language guide. He translates, and I try to flesh out the grammar rules — which is not an easy task. We also devised a phonetic code so people can read it simply.

A side benefit of the whole project is that I’ve included my original sketches and artwork, and those of fellow RPCVs Eldon Katter (Harar 62–64) and Brittany Franck (Tigray 2011–13), as well as several Ethiopian colleagues.

Selling my books

Peace Corps does not allow you to make a profit while serving. That was fine; I didn’t finish the first book until a year after I was home. Today, *The Essential Guide to Tigrinya* is the #1 Tigrinya book on Amazon.



I didn’t think the Amharic book would sell as well since the Lonely Planet phrasebook (\$9.00) and *Colloquial Amharic* (\$50) seemed to be widely available in Ethiopia. Yet now, three months later . . . *The Essential Guide to Amharic* comes up *first* on Amazon search. I expect Afan Oromo will also do well on Amazon as there is very little available.

By the way, I’m not talking about NY Times bestseller . . . a typical month’s revenue for me barely pays my grocery bill. It won’t change my lifestyle much, but I find it satisfying to look at the sales figure every day and see that 1–2 people bought a book overnight. November was a great month — with almost 90 sales. Usually I sell about 40 per month, but I can attribute the growth to marketing with postcards sent to various Ethiopian churches, restaurants,

and organizations.

I used CreateSpace to self-publish, and retaining my rights to the book royalties through self-publishing was a great idea. It motivates me to market the book and keep improving it. Rather than accept a one-time payment from a publisher, I can earn revenue as long as the people are purchasing the book online — and I can change the price if needed. I’ve found CreateSpace customer service to be excellent. They even offer a service to adapt the book format for Kindle. There was zero up-front cost, except to form an LLC (mainly to cover protecting my personal finances in the unlikely event of a lawsuit).

I don't need to have a garage full of extra books since the books are sold by "print-on-demand." I can also purchase books at cost (less than \$5.00) and distribute them without Amazon taking their cut. For instance, I can buy 100 books and sell them at an Ethiopian festival for \$10 each. So, there is a lot of flexibility – to do as much – or as little marketing – as I like.

With my Amharic book (and the upcoming Afan Oromo book), I was invited by Marian Beil to self-publish under the [Peace Corps Writers](#) imprint. This provides the benefit of a PCW cover label, promotion (interview, review, etc) of the book on their website (peacecorpsworldwide.org), and the opportunity to be amongst the many fascinating publications written by RPCVs.

Most of all, I've enjoyed creating something that I know people will find useful. Twenty years from now people might be buying the book still and have no idea who I was, but the work that I did will still be helping to further communications with Ethiopia. That is the great thing about a non-fiction book — you write it once, and it keeps serving its purpose into the future . . . until someone creates a better book.



[The Essential Guide to Tigrinya: The Language of Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia](#)

Andrew Tadross and Abraham Teklu, co-authors

CreateSpace

March 2015

160 pages

\$25.00 ([paperback](#))

[The Essential Guide to Amharic: The National Language of Ethiopia](#)

Andrew Tadross and Abraham Teklu, co-authors

A Peace Corps Writers Book

September 2015

162 pages

\$25.00 ([paperback](#))

To order a book from Amazon.com that has been mentioned here click on the cover, bold title or the format of the publication, and Ethiopia & Eritrea RPCVs, an Amazon Associate, will receive a small remittance to support its RPCV Legacy Program.

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