

Peace Corps

Accomplishments

2001-2004

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2001–2004



Peace Corps Accomplishments 2001–2004

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“The Peace Corps Volunteers carry the American idea with them. They don’t carry our culture; they carry universal values and principles that are so incredibly important for all of mankind ... when President Kennedy—Sargent Shriver’s brother-in-law—signed an executive order more than 40 years ago providing for the establishing of the Peace Corps, he spoke about a nation of men and women anxious to sacrifice their energies and time and toil to the cause of world peace and human progress. That mission hasn’t changed. As a matter of fact, today the mission is needed more than ever... I believe Americans are still willing to sacrifice for causes greater than themselves. And the Peace Corps offers such a fantastic opportunity to do so.”

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH’S ADDRESS AT
PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR GADDI VASQUEZ’S
SWEARING-IN, FEBRUARY 15, 2002

Dear Friend of the Peace Corps:

Today, there are more than 7,700 Peace Corps Volunteers serving around the world, and I am pleased to report that they are doing outstanding work in realizing the goals of the Peace Corps. They are making important contributions to grass-roots projects in agriculture, education, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS education and prevention, small business development, and youth development. At the same time, our Volunteers are strengthening cross-cultural ties with the people of 72 countries. As of September 30, 2005, we expect that there will be more Volunteers serving overseas than at any time in 30 years.

To have successfully reached this point in the history of the Peace Corps has required a tremendous effort on the part of many people. Over the course of the past four years, the Peace Corps has been the beneficiary of broad, sustained bipartisan support from Congress and extraordinary support from President Bush. In his State of the Union address in 2002, President Bush called for an expanded Peace Corps and upon all Americans to commit at least two years of service to their nation. His remarks proved to be catalyst for the increased interest in the Peace Corps by Americans and the steady growth in the number of Volunteers serving overseas.

It is my responsibility, and that of the dedicated staff at the Peace Corps, to focus our efforts on supporting the Volunteers, renewing the promise of the Peace Corps, and meeting the challenges facing the agency in the 21st century. Beginning in 2001, we committed ourselves to growing and strengthening the agency in a wide variety of ways and would like to take this opportunity to familiarize you with our efforts.

Using a thematic approach, this book is comprised of five areas of emphasis, and they are: expanding the number of Peace Corps Volunteers and supporting them effectively; reacquainting the American people with the mission of the Peace Corps; increasing the diversity of Volunteers through expanded recruitment efforts; modernizing the agency's accounting and financial management systems; and lastly and most importantly, making the volunteer experience as productive, meaningful, and safe as possible.

In the years ahead, the Peace Corps is committed to building upon its accomplishments of the past four years and thereby providing more Americans with the opportunity to contribute their time, energy, and skills on behalf of the less fortunate. We greatly appreciate all the support that the Peace Corps has received and ask that you provide support to the Volunteers of tomorrow.

I am deeply honored to serve as the Director of the Peace Corps and to witness, firsthand, the spirit of service that lives in our Volunteers. All Americans can take great pride in what Peace Corps Volunteers do to help lift the human condition in some of the world's poorest countries, and in what they do to improve our own understanding of other people and cultures around the world.

Sincerely,



Gadd H. Vasquez
Director

April 2005

A LEGACY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



JANUARY 2002

Born from the challenge by President Bush for all Americans to volunteer, the agency began efforts to prepare to increase the number of Volunteers worldwide.

JULY 2002

Approximately 23 percent of current Peace Corps Volunteers serve in 14 countries with significant Muslim populations.

Since its inception in 1961, the Peace Corps has sent over 178,000 Volunteers to serve in 138 countries around the globe—from Albania to Zambia—promoting the Peace Corps’ mission of world peace and friendship. Volunteers share their time and talents by serving as teachers, business advisors, information technology consultants, and health and HIV/AIDS educators carrying out the agency’s three goals:

- 1 Helping the people of interested countries meet their need for trained men and women.
- 2 Helping to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- 3 Helping to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FOUR YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION



NOVEMBER 2002

In response to UNICEF and the government of Malawi, the Crisis Corps sent its first group of Volunteers to Malawi for a cholera prevention initiative.

MAY 2003

President Bush met with Volunteers in Botswana, commending them for their support and commitment.

During the past four years, the Peace Corps has reached historic highs on many fronts. The following are a few of the many accomplishments that have launched the Peace Corps into the 21st century.

- The Peace Corps had 7,733 Volunteers serving in the field at the end of fiscal year 2004—the highest number in 29 years.
- The Peace Corps has entered or reentered 21 countries since 2001, including nine with predominantly Muslim populations.
- The Peace Corps launched a successful new recruiting campaign entitled “Life is calling. How far will you go?” that is attracting the next generation of Volunteers.

A LEGACY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



JUNE 2003

Director Vasquez signed a Partnership Accord to open a program in Mexico for the first time.

SEPTEMBER 2003

The "Life is calling. How far will you go?" recruitment campaign is launched to attract more diverse applicants, to better reflect the face of America.

- The Peace Corps has worked for and realized an increase in ethnic minorities and older applicants enabling Volunteers to reflect the broad diversity of America.
- At \$317 million in fiscal year 2005, the Peace Corps budget reached a record high funding level.
- With their unique knowledge of local languages and customs around the world, and also under the auspices of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Volunteers are playing a vital role in HIV/AIDS prevention and education activities.
- The Peace Corps has continued to make the safety and security of Volunteers its highest priority, significantly increasing its infrastructure, including safety and security-related personnel in the field and at headquarters.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FOUR YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION



JANUARY 2004

A Health Volunteer in Tonga works with a community educator to develop HIV/AIDS awareness among youth.

JANUARY 2005

Director Gaddi H. Vasquez and Regional Director Jay Katzen assess rebuilding efforts in Southeast Asia.

The three goals of the Peace Corps remain relevant, vital, and strong. The agency is proud of its accomplishments and legacy, and looks forward to continuing to carry out the important work of transferring skills and building cross-cultural relationships around the world.

The Peace Corps has a clear mission that has served the agency well for the past 43 years. The president's emphasis on volunteer service and his proposal to expand the number of Peace Corps Volunteers serving overseas have created renewed interest in the Peace Corps worldwide. As Americans answer the call to extend the compassion of our country to every part of the world, the Peace Corps remains a vital part of the equation. Whether teaching children, educating people about HIV/AIDS, or connecting communities to the Internet, Peace Corps Volunteers continue to promote a spirit of service throughout the world—one person and one community at a time.

A LEGACY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS TO THE AGENCY

JUNE 19, 2001

U.S. Representative Mike Honda
RPCV El Salvador, 1965-67
15th District of California

OCTOBER 15, 2001

Mel Martinez
U.S. Secretary of Housing
and Urban Development

JANUARY 29, 2002

Sargent Shriver
First Director of the Peace Corps

FEBRUARY 8, 2002

Ambassador Sichan Siv
U.S. Representative to the United Nations
Economic and Social Council

MARCH 26, 2002

Lorne Craner
Assistant Secretary for
Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
U.S. Department of State

MAY 8, 2002

John Bridgeland
Director of USA FreedomCorps
The White House

SEPTEMBER 14, 2002

Alejandro Toledo
President of Peru

OCTOBER 8, 2002

Rosario Marin
Treasurer of the United States

SEPTEMBER 26, 2002

Hipólito Mejía Domínguez
President of the Dominican Republic

MARCH 20, 2003

Amadou Toumani Touré
President of Mali

JUNE 24, 2003

U.S. Representative Anne M. Northup
3rd District of Kentucky

JULY 15, 2003

U.S. Senator Norm Coleman
Minnesota

JULY 16, 2003

Dr. Julie L. Gerberding
Director of the Centers for
Disease Control and Prevention

SEPTEMBER 14, 2004

Joseph Acaba
RPCV Dominican Republic, 1994-96
NASA Mission Specialist and
Astronaut Candidate

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FOUR YEARS OF SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION

AGENCY AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Orden del Quetzal from Guatemalan
President Óscar Berger Perdomo

National Order of Merit from
the President of Ecuador

Alternative Dispute Resolution
program named by the Equal
Employment Opportunity Commission
as a model for U.S. government

Peace Corps Partnership programs honored
as best practices by the U.S. Department
of State Interagency Working Group

Peace Corps website nominated
for a Webby award in 2001

New recruitment campaign materials
received seven awards from
the National Association for
Government Communicators

Selected among *Washingtonian*
magazine's "50 Great Places to Work"

Campaign recruitment video
awarded CINE Golden Eagle

National Capitol Area Combined
Federal Campaign Committee's award
for Best Special Event in 2003

Awarded the Summit Award for exceeding
growth in participation in 2003

Won the President's Award (highest award)
for outstanding performance in 2003

Three outstanding service awards
from the Hispanic Association
of Federal Employees

The Peace Corps Office of Management/
Administrative Services awarded the
U.S. General Services Administration
(GSA) 2004-05 Federal Mail
Center Excellence Award

The Federal Mail Manager of the Year
Award was awarded to Alvin Laich, acting
director for Administrative Services
and the chief of Peace Corps' Reference,
Research, and Distribution Division.
First time in the history of the Federal
Mail Best Practice Awards program a
single agency has won both awards.



THEME

1

Expanding the Number of Volunteers, Supporting Them Effectively



Expand into new countries, optimize the number of Volunteers and staff currently working in each country, ensure an available and productive job for every Volunteer, expand the Crisis Corps, and encourage new ideas and innovative partnerships.

President George W. Bush has called on all Americans to commit

2 years or 4,000 hours

of service to the nation and to every part of the world.

With President George W. Bush's call to expand the Peace Corps, the agency has pursued the strongest possible growth within the constraints of its resources, while focusing on safety and security and preserving the quality of the Volunteer experience. The agency has worked to achieve this growth through focused recruitment, training, support, and management improvements. The themes in this book show priorities for increasing the number of Volunteers and supporting them effectively as they serve.

During the State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002, President George W. Bush called on all Americans to commit at least two years or 4,000 hours of service to one's neighbors and the nation. The President declared, "America needs citizens to extend the compassion of our country to every part of the world. So, we will renew the promise of the Peace Corps ... and ask it to join a new effort to encourage development and education and opportunity."

Americans have answered the call to service, and the Peace Corps increased the number of Volunteers serving to 7,733 at the close of fiscal year 2004, the highest number in 29 years. Host countries continue to request Volunteers, and the Peace Corps entered or reentered 21 countries during the past four years, nine of which are countries with predominantly Muslim populations.



THE DETAILS

Answering the Call

At the close of fiscal year 2004, the Peace Corps achieved the highest number of Volunteers in 29 years.

FY 2001—6,643

FY 2002—6,636

FY 2003—7,533

FY 2004—7,733

“We have been waiting for the Peace Corps with open arms to return to Chad. Our students as well as our country will greatly benefit from their presence.”

ABDOULAYE BERI
COUNSELOR AT THE EMBASSY OF CHAD



New Country Entries

Americans want to serve, and host countries are eager for Peace Corps Volunteers. Between 2001 and 2004, the Peace Corps entered or reentered 21 countries. The Peace Corps has been welcomed by some countries for the very first time, invited back by countries after a hiatus, and resumed operations in others following the suspension of a program due to political unrest, natural disasters, or other unforeseen challenges.

For instance, in 2002, the Peace Corps reentered Peru at the invitation of its new president, Alejandro Toledo, after a 27-year absence. The agency also reestablished an independently administered program in Costa Rica. In June 2002, Peace Corps Volunteers were among the first Americans to arrive in the newly independent nation of East Timor. The Peace Corps also reentered Botswana and Swaziland after several years of absence and began with new programs focused entirely on the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The agency established other new programs in 2003, reentered Albania, Chad, and Fiji, and launched a new program in Azerbaijan. In 2004, the Peace Corps reopened opera-

tions in St. Kitts and Nevis, making it the sixth island nation within the agency's Eastern Caribbean region.

In a historic agreement under the Partnership for Prosperity Initiative of President Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox, the Peace Corps also entered Mexico in 2004. The program is providing a unique opportunity for the Peace Corps to recruit highly specialized, technically trained and experienced Volunteers to work side-by-side with Mexican counterparts. Arriving in October 2004, Volunteers worked in the areas of environment/water engineering, business development, and technical research and development.

The demand for Peace Corps Volunteers is high—with more than 20 countries requesting Peace Corps programs. Prior to entering or reentering a country, the agency conducts an assessment trip to evaluate the feasibility of a Peace Corps program in the interested country.

Typically, at the invitation of the host country, the assessment team evaluates safety and security conditions, pro-

gramming, site selection, administration, and host country support. This assessment is critical to open or reopen a program, and a template created in 2002 ensures assessment consistency. Safety conditions in some countries and agency budget constraints have prevented reentry into certain countries where assessments took place. Since 2001, in addition to those countries the Peace Corps has entered or reentered, the agency has sent assessment teams to Afghanistan, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Marshall Islands, Sierra Leone, and Tajikistan.

The Peace Corps has sought opportunities to increase the placement of Volunteers in Muslim cultures to foster more peaceful relationships with citizens of Muslim nations. Subsequently, three out of four new country entries in 2003—Albania, Azerbaijan, and Chad—were in countries with predominantly Muslim populations (defined as 40 percent or more). This brings the agency's total program involvement from 14 nations in 2002 to 18 in 2004, with almost 20 percent of Volunteers serving in nations with predominantly Muslim populations.

“[Volunteers] get close to the people they serve... And the legacy they leave behind lives on after they leave.”

THEO-BEN GURIRAB
NAMIBIAN PRIME MINISTER

Between 2001 and 2004, the Peace Corps entered or reentered the following 21 countries

Albania*	Costa Rica	Kyrgyz Republic*	Peru
Azerbaijan*	East Timor	Macedonia, Republic of	St. Kitts and Nevis
Bangladesh*	Fiji	Madagascar	Swaziland
Botswana	Haiti	Mexico	Turkmenistan*
Chad*	Jordan*	Morocco*	Uzbekistan*
China			

* Countries with predominantly Muslim populations





Volunteer Support

Volunteers live and work in the most remote countries and regions of the world, and follow a community integration model. Volunteers must adapt to a vast array of different languages and cultures, and the Peace Corps equips them for the transition with effective training and support. For example, in 2004, the Peace Corps taught more than 200 different languages in pre-service training.

The Peace Corps has reviewed and expanded support for Volunteers, responding to their changing needs and circumstances in countries where they serve, as well as providing them with better materials, technology, and communication.



Health Care

It is essential that Volunteers have a constant, effective support system for their health care needs. Several improvements and changes were made over the past four years. In the 2004 Volunteer Survey, 85 percent of Volunteers indicated they were adequately to exceptionally satisfied with the health care they received in their country of service. While the language used in the 2004 Survey was slightly revised from language used in previous years, this represented an 8.3 percent increase in satisfaction over the 2002 Volunteer Survey.



Safety and Security

Safety and security improvements are the most important changes to Volunteer support. This remains an overarching priority for the agency, critical to each Volunteer's ability to succeed in service. The Peace Corps has established procedures and policies to help Volunteers reduce their risks and enhance their safety and security. At the same time, the Volunteer's own conduct is the single most important factor in ensuring his or her safety and well-being.

Health Care Enhancements Include:

Converting all trainee health records to encrypted CD-ROMs that are now sent to post two weeks ahead of trainees. Peace Corps medical officers (PCMOs) now prepare in advance for any trainee special needs. Additionally, PCMOs can instantly search medical records, speeding required follow-up during an emergency;

Completely overhauling and updating the Volunteer health kit, making it easier to use;

Initiating continued education training in Volunteer resiliency for PCMOs including a new resource guide;

Using enhanced data analysis capability to track medical and prescription drug use trends for medical support changes;

Working through a task force, developed policies, training modules, and support strategies for improving Volunteer resiliency; and

Developing and testing an integrated training module for working with Volunteers with high-risk behaviors, such as overuse of alcohol.

Programming and Training

Volunteer success is tied to strong training and programming. Volunteers serve at the request of host government ministries. These ministries work with Peace Corps staff in-country to establish specific program elements that meet host government requirements and are supported by host government counterparts and supervisors, as well as Peace Corps staff. The Peace Corps has added new structures and systems to strengthen its programming and training support, making use of new tools and technology.

Project status reviews (PSRs) and training status reviews (TSRs) have been expanded. A new template for each post's preparation of projects and training program plans to the agency enables uniform measurement of the quality of new and continuing projects (community involvement in developing the project, counterpart training, etc.). These projects are reviewed by relevant agency staff through roundtable discussions. Recommendations are then sent back to the post, based on questions the posts raised.

This process identifies best practices in programming and training and shares them among posts and with partner organizations. The strengthened process has streamlined and coordinated the timing of reports, and enabled the agency to use data to formulate budgets, meet Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) goals, and improve its strategic planning.

Feedback on Volunteer Support

Volunteer feedback is the best avenue for improving programming and training and Volunteer support. The Peace Corps administered two Volunteer surveys, in 2002 and 2004, with more than 80 questions related to Volunteer perceptions of training, service, and safety and security. Two-thirds of Volunteers responded each time and the results were distributed throughout headquarters and the field.

In 2003, staff developed 13 quality statements applied to applicants, Volunteers, returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs), and staff touching all areas of agency work. These statements included whether information that the public receives informs their decisions about service, whether recruitment and placement supplies posts with trainees who possess the right skills and experience, and whether Volunteers are satisfied with their assignments. Fifty-six survey questions assess quality, with reports to be issued semi-annually.

In keeping with the President's e-government initiative, the Peace Corps will launch a new survey in 2005 to gather data at the close of the Volunteer's service. The survey will tap into the wealth of knowledge of the experienced Volunteer, providing the agency with data for planning. This complements the ongoing Volunteer Survey and Early Termination Survey.

Major Programs

Agriculture. 551 Volunteers are working in 15 countries, assisting 158,769 individuals, training 3,556 service providers, and helping 1,023 organizations and 2,214 communities around the world.

Business Development. 1,198 Volunteers are working in 36 countries, assisting 217,022 individuals, training 12,364 service providers, and helping 5,177 organizations and 4,245 communities worldwide.

Education. 2,499 Volunteers are working in 53 countries, assisting 472,945 individuals, training 36,183 service providers, and helping 7,703 organizations and 11,905 communities worldwide.

Environment. 984 Volunteers are working in 34 countries, assisting 899,322 individuals, training 13,729 service providers, and helping 3,529 organizations and 3,852 communities around the world.

Health and HIV/AIDS. 1,406 Volunteers are working in 46 countries, assisting 1,024,320 individuals, training 24,734 service providers, and helping 5,093 organizations and 10,651 communities worldwide.

Youth. 338 Volunteers are working in 14 countries, assisting 101,542 individuals, training 5,281 service providers, and helping 1,124 organizations and 1,804 communities around the world.

“How can we not listen more to expatriates who are willing to share our everyday concerns for two years? They eat what you eat, they drink what you drink, they teach you to love your own country by showing you ways to love it!”

MADAGASCAR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICIAL

The agency has improved worldwide the management and delivery of its technical assistance and training materials. New systems include an effective online library accessible from the Peace Corps website. This library offers PDF files of the most commonly used technical/training/cross-cultural materials, including *Culture Matters* and *The Life Skills Manual*, and can be accessed in print-ready format in the field and by visitors to the website.

Between 2001 and 2004, the Peace Corps expanded programming in youth development, technology including the Digital Freedom Initiative partnership, and disaster preparedness and mitigation. For the latter, the Peace Corps designed and delivered an extensive in-service training program for Volunteers in the Caribbean, Central America, and the Pacific Islands to combat hurricane damage, an earthquake in El Salvador, and a series of devastating hurricanes in 2004.

The Peace Corps developed formal partnerships with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Habitat for Humanity, and the United Nation's World Food Organization to combine efforts and work collaboratively in the countries where the Peace Corps has a relevant program. In addition, the agency developed informal partnerships with AARP, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging, and National Geographic Society to further awareness and recruitment efforts.



Improvements to Programming and Training

- Converted the programming and training information to a database enabling searches and reports on hundreds of program and training topics.
- Instituted a three-color ranking that enables posts to assess their own progress toward meeting project criteria. Posts can also compare changes and improvements with other posts.
- Further refined annual summaries of project and training activities. Annual reports now fully capture Volunteers' work by sector and region and deliver detailed examples of work within each country. The summary now includes: numbers of people impacted by the work, numbers of projects, and Volunteers serving in the projects.
- Added questions that meet information requests from different sources. For example, there are now questions about the types and numbers of youth programs, or the number of Volunteers working with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).
- Institutionalized working groups among the program technical support center, the regions, and the Volunteer recruitment units to integrate improvements based on annual review results.

“Malians and Peace Corps Volunteers together are breaking the silence, upholding human dignity, and showing compassion for all those with HIV/AIDS.”

AMADOU TOUMANI TOURÉ
MALIAN PRESIDENT

Expanded Program Area: HIV/AIDS

The Peace Corps HIV/AIDS program has increased dramatically over the past four years. While the Peace Corps was already involved in HIV/AIDS prevention work, the agency has partnered with others to participate in the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Emergency Plan), a five-year, \$15 billion initiative. Of the 15 countries targeted by this initiative, the Peace Corps has programs in 10 countries. In fiscal year 2004, more than 3,100 Volunteers worked directly or indirectly on HIV/AIDS prevention and education activities, a 35 percent increase over fiscal year 2003. Volunteers are making great strides in educating vulnerable populations throughout the world about the pandemic, and the number of individuals assisted by their activities nearly doubled from 440,000 in fiscal year 2003 to more than 800,000 in fiscal year 2004.

Under the Emergency Plan, the Peace Corps received \$1.1 million in 2004 for programs in six focus countries. The agency expects that amount to significantly increase in 2005 and 2006. Volunteers in the 10 focus countries of Botswana, Guyana, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique,

Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia are working in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, USAID, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and their hundreds of international and local partners. This presents an opportunity for the Peace Corps to be part of an integrated U.S. government and international plan for combating the disease on a global scale.

All Peace Corps Volunteers in sub-Saharan Africa work directly or indirectly in HIV/AIDS as do nearly one-half of the over 7,700 Volunteers worldwide. Their work in HIV/AIDS is often linked to other sector primary assignments, such as gardening in a family compound when family members are too weak to work in the fields, training community volunteers as teachers in primary schools when trained teaching staff become too sick to teach, or working with community groups training volunteers to give home-based care to those ill with HIV/AIDS.

Most Volunteers with HIV/AIDS-related projects are not health professionals, but con-

tribute other technical and organizational skills that meet critical service delivery needs, which international workers with health technical backgrounds are less equipped to do.

With the size of the pandemic, Volunteers, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, are constantly confronted with the loss of host family members, close colleagues, and community friends. In 2004, the Peace Corps added newly designed material on grieving and grief counseling to support Volunteers.

To address the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on all aspects of community life, all Peace Corps Volunteers in the Africa region—regardless of their primary assignment—are trained in HIV/AIDS prevention and education. Volunteers are uniquely suited to work in the field of HIV/AIDS because they are trained in the local language, live and work in the communities where they serve, and know how to share information in a culturally sensitive way.



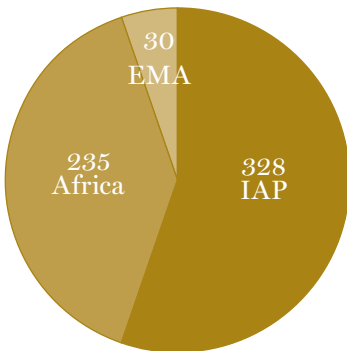
THE DETAILS

Peace Corps Volunteers focus on HIV/AIDS prevention and education activities under the auspices of President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a five-year, multi-billion dollar effort. For FY04, the Peace Corps was awarded funding of \$1.1 million for projects in six countries, and more than 3,100 Volunteers worked directly or indirectly on HIV/AIDS prevention and education activities throughout the world.



Crisis Corps

The Crisis Corps mobilizes former Peace Corps Volunteers to serve in three regions: Africa; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia; and Inter-America and the Pacific.



Since the inception of the program, nearly 600 Crisis Corps Volunteers have served throughout the world.

Crisis Corps, a program of short-term assignments for returned Peace Corps Volunteers, began in 1996 as a response to natural disasters in the Caribbean. It offers an opportunity for returned Volunteers to give back again, particularly in emergency situations. Assignments are made directly with NGOs or government ministries and each is individually developed. This program also helps keep the Peace Corps connected to the extensive returned Volunteer community that is periodically tapped to support recruitment activities.

During the past four years, Crisis Corps has:

- Sent Volunteers into 11 new countries;
- Expanded “immediate response” to also address ongoing natural crises such as droughts by working closely with Peace Corps posts to expand Crisis Corps’ potential;
- Developed programs in HIV/AIDS such as NGO strengthening, curriculum development, agriculture, training, and monitoring and evaluation;
- Fielded Volunteers under the the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief;
- Led the Peace Corps’ response to the Indian Ocean earthquake and resulting tsunami; and
- Offered opportunities for more than 200 RPCVs to serve over the last four years.

“Never doubt that a small group of individuals can change the world ... indeed it is the only thing that does.”

MARGARET MEAD



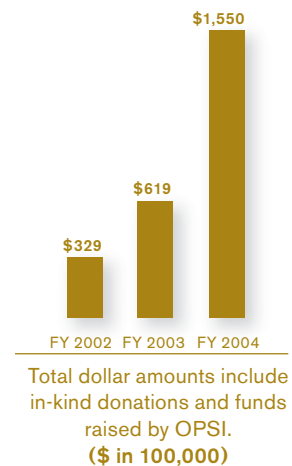
Peace Corps Partnership Program

Many Volunteers have or design projects that are enhanced by small project assistance dollars, usually between \$200 and \$5,000. Projects have included equipping a laboratory, purchasing equipment for an after-school basketball team, establishing a small school library, and purchasing minimal equipment for an HIV/AIDS youth theater. Private sector contributions to support the projects of Volunteers are used within appropriate parameters such as sustainability and a matching community commitment.

Between 2001 and 2004, Peace Corps' Office of Private Sector Initiatives (OPSI) has:

- Doubled the number of contributors by expanding outreach to local civic groups, RPCV groups, schools, foundations, and businesses;
- Funded more than 350 projects annually;
- Built a new Web-based system in which projects are posted on the Web and potential donors can identify their interests and contribute; and
- Accelerated the funding process (time required to get funding to Volunteers in the field) by an average of two months.

The Office of Private Sector Initiatives has dramatically increased private sector support for projects that benefit local communities working with Peace Corps Volunteers around the world.



“Most everyone who [has] ever come here from somewhere else has found some way to make our lives harder. You are the only person who lends us a helping hand.”

COMMUNITY LEADER IN EL SALVADOR

THEME

2

Reacquainting the American People with the Mission of the Peace Corps



*Reacquaint
the American
people with the
mission of the
Peace Corps,
and in doing
so, strengthen
and expand
the scope of the
Peace Corps'
domestic
programs.*

Around the world, Peace Corps Volunteers continue to bring a spirit of

Hope and Optimism

to the struggle for progress and human dignity.

The Peace Corps' continued global and domestic impact is a product of the more than 178,000 Volunteers who have served during the past 43 years. Volunteers share stories of their experiences and these experiences often shape their own lives and those they encounter.

The Peace Corps' mission is unique among agencies and organizations in that it combines practical assistance with cultural interaction. Volunteers provide assistance, but they also share with communities worldwide, and bring their experiences home. The Peace Corps has expanded opportunities for RPCVs to share these experiences, building new generations that take these lessons forward.

President Amadou Touré of Mali spoke at the Peace Corps in July 2003, expressing how Peace Corps Volunteers were responsible for eradicating river blindness from his region of Mali and that he worked with them and witnessed their success.

During his presentation, a former Volunteer in the audience stood and shared her experience, speaking in President Touré's own tribal language. It brought tears to his eyes.



THE DETAILS

The Peace Corps Mission

The Peace Corps mission is to promote world peace and friendship. Throughout its history, the three goals of the Peace Corps have remained the same, namely:

- 1) To help the people of interested countries meet their need for trained men and women;
- 2) To help to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and
- 3) To help to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

“The [Peace Corps] Volunteers are not U.S. government employees. They do not represent Washington, or a particular administration. They are Volunteers who have asked for the chance to devote some years of their lives overseas in service to others. They represent the American people, and they come from all parts of our country.”

ROGER A. MEECE
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO MALAWI



Reaching out

Would you stop to give someone directions?
If you were walking that way,
would you guide them?
What if it was out of your way?
One mile—
Ten miles,
Ten thousand miles,
directly inland from the Skeleton Coast
to a one-room schoolhouse in the foothills of Namibia?
What if you were the teacher in that schoolhouse?
Would you travel that far to teach someone?
To learn something yourself?
Peace Corps.
Life is calling. How far will you go?

Call 800.424.8580 | Visit peacecorps.gov

Has anyone ever called you crazy?
What if you moved to another country,
to live with people you didn't know?
What if you went to improve their lives,
and in the process, improved yours.
Would that be crazy?

Peace Corps.
Life is calling.
How far will you go?

800.424.8580 | peacecorps.gov

Ads from the “Life is Calling” campaign

National Outreach

Reaching out to a domestic audience is vital to reintroducing the Peace Corps to Americans. Many of the agency’s communications are focused on reminding Americans that the work of the Volunteers continues today. The key thrust of the agency’s national outreach has been its new marketing and recruitment campaign, “Life is calling. How far will you go?” Developed by the Office of Communications, this successful campaign employed an enticing call-to-action message across all media materials. Additionally, the campaign includes effective new tools and materials designed to aid recruitment.

The Peace Corps successfully implemented a new marketing and recruitment campaign with the theme, “Life is calling. How far will you go?” Related public service announcements for television, radio, and print in both English and Spanish were unveiled in November 2003.

In their first year, the PSAs have:

- Earned more than 91,000 placements or airings,
- Gained a media value of more than \$9.2 million, and
- Made more than 1.5 billion audience impressions.

“I found that many of the values instilled in me as a Latina served me well in South Africa, where there is a similar unwavering respect for elders and people are also regarded as more important than material things.”

NINA HERNANDEZ
VOLUNTEER/SOUTH AFRICA

A group of senior leaders at the agency served as the Diversity Task Force to identify and overcome barriers and obstacles that may discourage a wide range of ethnic groups from applying for service in the Peace Corps. Informed by research and focus groups held in 2002, the Diversity Task Force arranged a series of leadership roundtable discussions with African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian leaders to discuss their ideas on methods to employ in the agency’s outreach.

The Office of Press Relations prepares press releases for the website and news organizations locally and nationally. The office expanded the list of news organizations that receive Peace Corps press releases, emphasizing groups representing American diversity. During Black History Month, for example, staff prepared a series

of stories about the work of African-American Peace Corps Volunteers worldwide. The new Peace Corps program in Mexico was highlighted in the Hispanic press, and senior Volunteers have been featured several times in AARP publications.

The headquarters press and communications offices work collaboratively with public affairs specialists situated in the 11 regional recruitment offices. Biweekly conference calls ensure that common themes and messages are used to support outreach and to place Peace Corps stories and public service announcements in media throughout the country.

Talking points are now core to all Peace Corps-related news situations and emergencies to get facts and messages quickly to Volunteer families and friends, posts worldwide, communities, returned Volunteers, and elected

officials. The messages are posted to the website and updated hourly if needed.

The Office of Communications has many formal and informal alliances with organizations for awareness-building, including AARP, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration on Aging, and the National Geographic Society’s Educational Foundation.

The Office of Press Relations reaches out nationally and internationally to raise the visibility and understanding of the Peace Corps’ work throughout the world.



*The Peace Corps budget has steadily grown.
(\$ in millions)*

Interacting with Congress

Effectively communicating with Congress is vital to achieving the agency’s awareness-building strategy. Six Members of Congress and dozens of Congressional staff are RPCVs, and the agency has worked with them and key committees of jurisdiction to promote awareness of the Peace Corps’ current activities. The Office of

Congressional Relations has enabled Members of Congress to visit with Volunteers in the field during Congressional delegation (CODEL) trips throughout the world. These visits inspire both Members of Congress and Volunteers, and give the legislators and their staff an on-the-ground perspective of the work of the Volunteers. The number

of CODELs and Congressional staff trips with which Peace Corps staff and Volunteers were able to interact increased from 11 in 2003 to nearly 30 in 2004. Both Congress and the Bush Administration have strongly supported the work of the Peace Corps and given the agency the highest budget mark in its 43-year history.

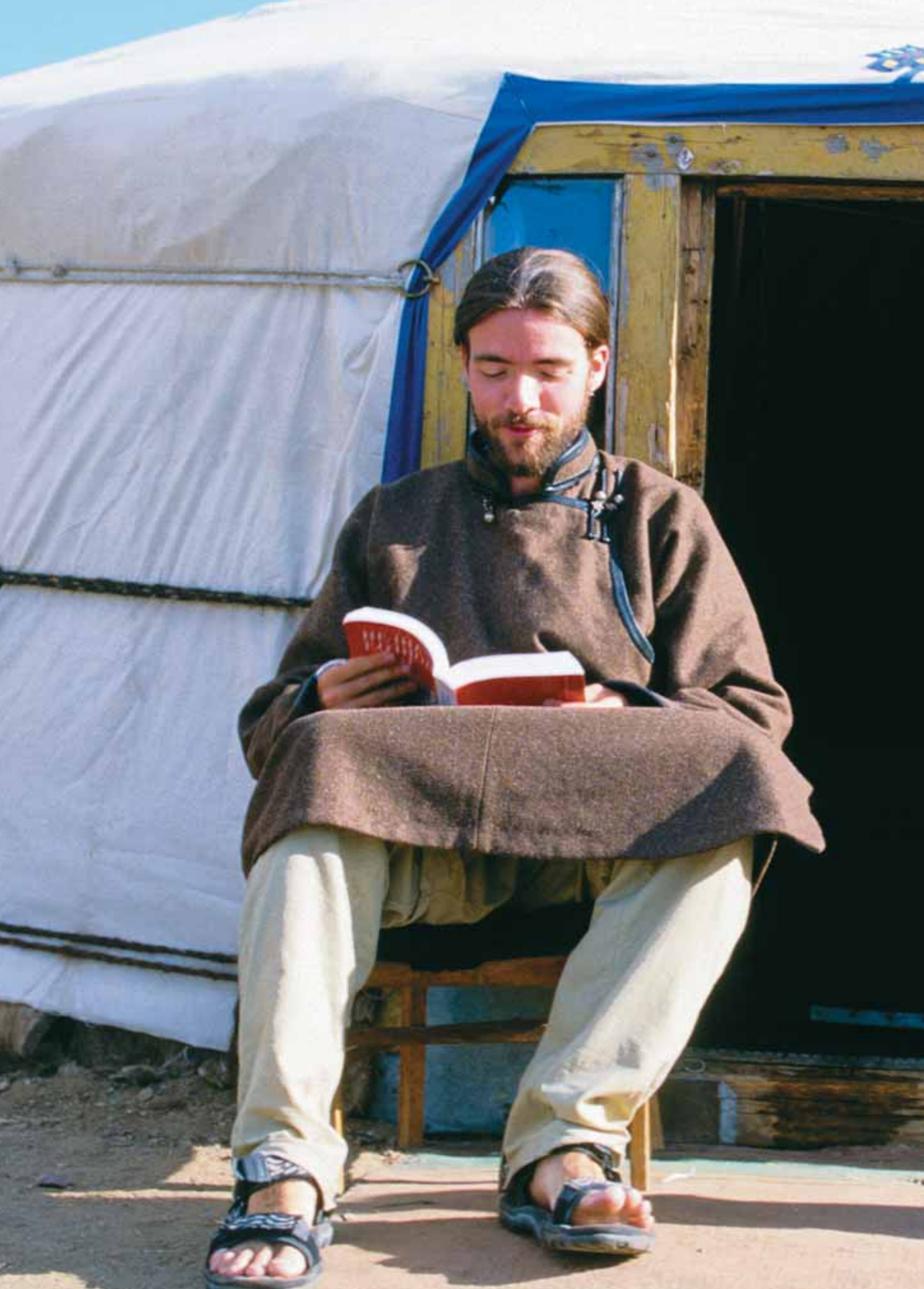
“I believe the Peace Corps is American diplomacy at its best. In a world where America is too often misunderstood, the Peace Corps represents an opportunity to show the compassionate nature of this country and its citizens. Now more than ever we need the Peace Corps to continue fostering international goodwill at the grass-roots level.”

SENATOR NORM COLEMAN (R-MN)

RPCV Members of the 108th Congress

Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT)	Dominican Republic	1966-68
U.S. Representative Sam Farr (D-CA)	Colombia	1964-66
U.S. Representative Mike Honda (D-CA)	El Salvador	1965-67
U.S. Representative Tom Petri (R-WI)	Somalia	1966-67
U.S. Representative Chris Shays (R-CT)	Fiji	1968-70
U.S. Representative Jim Walsh (R-NY)	Nepal	1970-72





Reading, seeing, and hearing RPCV stories is the top reason



given by new applicants for wanting to join the Peace Corps.

Third Goal

Bringing It Home

Communicating with Returned Peace Corps Volunteers: Reaching Out and Bringing the World Home



The Peace Corps has a large and visible alumni group—more than 178,000 returned Volunteers. Many of these RPCVs are members of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) and/or state and local groups, and “friends of [Peace Corps country]” groups. Telling the stories from former Volunteers is an important part of the third Peace Corps goal and creates images new Volunteers carry into their own service. Reading, seeing, and hearing RPCV stories is the top reason given by new applicants for wanting to join the Peace Corps.

During the past four years, the Peace Corps has focused significant attention on creating opportunities for RPCVs to tell their stories. A Peace Corps-NPCA task force was created to promote recruitment and third-goal activities. This task force, now in its

third year, links recruitment and third-goal projects with the NPCA, its affiliates and the Peace Corps.

NPCA task force activities have included:

- Support for national Peace Corps Week activities consistent with the Peace Corps Act;
- Development of annual primary and secondary classroom materials and activities;
- Facilitation of participation in NPCA annual conferences;
- Increased participation in each group’s activities, presentations, and workshops;
- Development of methods for stronger links with local and “friends of ...” groups; and

- The development of two cooperative agreements, adopted between the Peace Corps and the NPCA (2004 and 2005). Funds were used to:

- Establish and maintain an online RPCV teacher match program (Peace Match),
- Conduct three job fairs in Florida, Illinois, and Texas, and
- Plan for four open houses across the country to highlight Peace Corps domestic programs in 2005.

These collaborative efforts are reacquainting the American people with the mission of the Peace Corps and promoting a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

THE DETAILS

In collaboration with the National Peace Corps Association, the Peace Corps created an electronic speaker’s bureau matching RPCVs with teachers who want to participate in the Peace Match program.

Coverdell World Wise Schools Program

In 1989, then Peace Corps Director Paul D. Coverdell initiated the World Wise Schools program at the Peace Corps. In 2001, Congress enacted legislation naming both the headquarters building and the program in his honor. The program's major objective is to help acquaint American classrooms with other countries through contact with Peace Corps Volunteers. With a goal to reach a classroom in every school district in the country, the program has expanded each year through new curriculum materials and technology.

Highlights of the program include:

- Four books of Volunteer stories and associated lessons that meet national standards.
- A concise manual of exercises to help students understand their own and other cultures.
- Regular correspondence with currently serving Volunteers (nearly 4,000 participate at any given time primarily through letters and e-mails).
- Visits from RPCVs who give presentations in classrooms.
- Monthly letters from "CyberVolunteers," who are current Volunteers selected to write stories on specific topics, which are posted on the Peace Corps website with corresponding classroom activities.
- Handbook of guidelines for RPCVs using the materials.
- Teacher training in how to use the written materials.
- Web-based content and lesson plans.

Sharing the Volunteer Experience

Whether recounted by RPCVs in the classroom, shared in conversations with Volunteers in the field, or presented in curriculum materials, Volunteers' stories have a powerful impact on students' and teachers' perceptions of cultures, cultural differences, and their own images in a diverse community.

The Peace Corps produced several culture-focused publications that feature Peace Corps stories. Designed for use in the classroom, these texts offer lessons on cross-cultural understanding and individual Peace Corps experiences.

- *Insights From the Field: Understanding Geography, Culture, and Service* (2001)
- *Voices From the Field: Reading and Writing About the World, Ourselves and Others* (2002)
- *Building Bridges: A Peace Corps Classroom Guide to Cross-Cultural Understanding* (2002)
- *Uncommon Journeys: Peace Corps Adventures Across Cultures* (2004)

The National Geographic Society's Education Foundation contributed to the publication of 70,000 copies of *Building Bridges*, a kick-off reception was held on Capitol Hill celebrating the partnership, and the foundation distributed copies to its national Geography Alliance Network. Many school districts have adopted *Building Bridges* as a part of their official curriculum.

THE DETAILS

From 2000 to 2004, more than 7,000 new teachers were enrolled in the Correspondence Match program, reaching approximately 500,000 students across the country.

Third Goal

Graduate Programs

Reacquainting America with the Peace Corps mission is also a strong part of university graduate programs. Faculty and students in more than 115 programs in more than 80 institutions of higher education support the Peace Corps Fellows/USA and Master's International (MI) programs. During the past three years, these programs have grown with new core staff and additional funding. Universities

have used Volunteers' experiences in these graduate programs to enrich program curricula and encourage many more students, and sometimes faculty, to consider Peace Corps and other international work.

In the MI program, students combine work toward a master's degree with two years as Volunteers before returning to complete their degree.

The MI program has:

- added 19 new partners since 2000, for a total of 50 universities, and
- enrolled 524 students in 2004, up from 400 in 2003.

Peace Corps Week

The Peace Corps has celebrated its founding annually on March 1, the day President John F. Kennedy signed an executive order establishing the Peace Corps. Beginning in 2003, the agency expanded Peace Corps Day to Peace Corps Week, allowing more time for additional activities and ceremonies to take place throughout the U.S.

Returned Volunteers now have additional time to visit classrooms, make presentations in communities, and use Peace Corps Week materials accessible via a special location on the website. In support of Peace Corps Week, links with NPCA and more than 150 affiliates have been expanded, encouraging local participation throughout the country.



Institutionalizing the Mission at Home

To acquaint America with education internationally, the U.S. Departments of State and Education began a joint International Education Week program in 2000, held the third week in November. In

2003, the Peace Corps partnered with the Department of State and the Alliance for International and Cultural Exchanges to share through workshops its international Coverdell World Wise Schools

experiences. In 2004, the Peace Corps partnered with the Department of Education, sharing speakers, workshops, a photography exhibit, and joined websites in celebration of International Education Week.



Services for Returning Volunteers

The third goal is carried out through the work, experiences, and stories of returned Peace Corps Volunteers. The agency has a responsibility to help returned Volunteers readjust after returning from service. During the past four years, the Peace Corps' expansion of both the Fellows/USA and Master's International programs augments graduate school opportunities for Volunteers. In addition, the Peace Corps has provided services through the Returned Volunteer Services program. Recent enhancements have included:

- Expanding *Hotline*, a semi-monthly newsletter with job and educational opportunities throughout the United States and an online version.
- Expanding the offer of services to recently returned Volunteers by setting up space and a computer in each of the 11 regional recruitment offices for Volunteers to use for job searching and networking.
- Creating a new career fair model that can be used locally through regional offices; adding a Spring career fair at headquarters for a total of three per year.
- Beginning the quarterly *RPCV Update* newsletter for 110,000 returned Volunteers, which publicizes the experiences of colleagues, current Volunteers, and the agency.
- Doubling the size of the career information consultant guide, from 800 contacts to nearly 1,600.

THEME
3

Increasing the Diversity of Volunteers, Expanding Recruitment Efforts



The agency has expanded its outreach to reflect America. More than ever, Volunteers in the Peace Corps are coming from diverse backgrounds and experiences, enabling them to successfully dispel stereotypes others may have of Americans.

At the end of fiscal year 2004, the Peace Corps had

7,733

Volunteers in the field, the highest number in 29 years

Historically, the Peace Corps has focused its recruitment on college campuses and the agency continues to find tremendous interest among undergraduates. However, to recruit the broadest cross-section of America, the agency has expanded its outreach to seniors, married couples, mid-career professionals, community college graduates, and other applicants to reflect America's diversity. More than ever, Volunteers in the Peace Corps are coming from diverse backgrounds and experiences, enabling them to successfully dispel stereotypes others may have of Americans.

To fulfill this goal, the Peace Corps has devised new means of outreach. The agency has also strengthened and simplified its Volunteer Delivery System, reducing barriers for those who want to serve. To facilitate this process, the agency established task forces to explore barriers to service and strategies to increase diversity.

New recruitment materials which echo the "Life is calling. How far will you go?" campaign theme were written

and produced in 2003 with additional materials continually added. Vital to those materials was messaging that depicted the work of the Volunteers as modern, current and relevant to today's world—underscored in importance after September 11, 2001. The materials developed for recruitment included a new video, a suite of printed materials both targeted and for general use, various PowerPoint presentations, an image library, a DVD-ROM, and a reengineered and redesigned website.



THE DETAILS

The Peace Corps Vision

A Peace Corps that promotes world peace and friendship by providing Americans of all backgrounds who wish to serve a quality volunteer experience in a safe and secure manner as they help communities meet their growing and evolving needs and return to share their unique experiences.

“[Peace] arises only out of the mutual and equitable exchange of skills, of ideas, of cultural values. Peace Corps Volunteers—going where they are invited; bringing open minds, dedication, and enthusiasm; living and working side-by-side with their hosts; and returning with new perspectives to share with those at home—are among the best examples of how that peace will be achieved.”

JORDAN'S QUEEN NOOR AL HUSSEIN





Important in the development of the new recruitment materials was the desire to have appropriate ethnic and age diversity. This meets the goal to have readers and observers see themselves as potential applicants for Peace Corps service.

Using existing resources in a new way, video was streamed for the website so the public could view life as a Volunteer using the Volunteers' own

words. The website now shares more about where Peace Corps Volunteers serve, specifically what they do, and what their life is like—featuring five-minute interviews, photo galleries and other special features.

Other key improvements to the recruitment campaign happened online. With more and more Americans accessing the Internet, the Peace Corps



enhanced and simplified the application process, converting the delivery of references online. Immediate access to where the applicant is in the process of applying was also created through the development of the Online Status Check process.

Peace Corps information—whether about countries served, the types of programs available, safety and security procedures, or ways families

can stay involved during Volunteer service—can be found online. Current Volunteers, families, friends, and Peace Corps advocates all have ready access to the agency's rich online resources. Applicants are responding to these enhancements; from 2001 to 2004, the number of applications received and processed online has risen from 47 percent to 75 percent.

Regional Success

Successful outreach must include a combination of effective materials available to Peace Corps regional recruitment offices and friends of the Peace Corps, and an effective staff and resources. Regional recruitment offices are the front line in marketing, so the agency has provided them with:

- Demographic analysis software, which allows recruiters to identify demographics of target audiences for outreach;
- New recruitment goal models for improved outreach;
- An upgraded inquiry system to better track applicants and identify leads; and
- A new regional database system for tracking, organizing, focusing, printing, and distribution that effectively supports the application process.

Community Colleges

The Peace Corps has established a successful initiative with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to reach out to community colleges, generating interest on campuses that now represent close to half of the higher education student body. Activities of this initiative have included:

- Presenting a targeted rollout in Washington, D.C., and at five community college systems in Spring 2003;
- Identifying and orienting more than 200 community college points of contact;
- Constructing a Web landing page that highlights special recruiting materials and activity ideas for community college advocates (www.peacecorps.gov/poc);
- Presenting speeches and workshops at 12 national meetings and conferences;
- Identifying programs for which community college graduates are eligible;
- Creating a 30-page booklet about the strengths of community college graduates that was sent to Peace Corps posts; and
- Designing a brochure that conveys the priorities, eligibilities, programs, and benefits of the initiative.

Taking it Online

Historically, the Peace Corps application process was largely paper based and time consuming. In response to escalating Internet accessibility, the agency upgraded the application process and launched it online. Enhancements include:

- Online status check and access to follow-up;
- Automatically generated e-mails to questions posed by applicants;
- Online reference checks;
- Online integrated Health Status Review;
- Downloadable forms required to complete the application; and
- Online training materials.

Plans to add country-specific resources for invitees, including the *Welcome Books*, are forthcoming.

Volunteer Delivery System

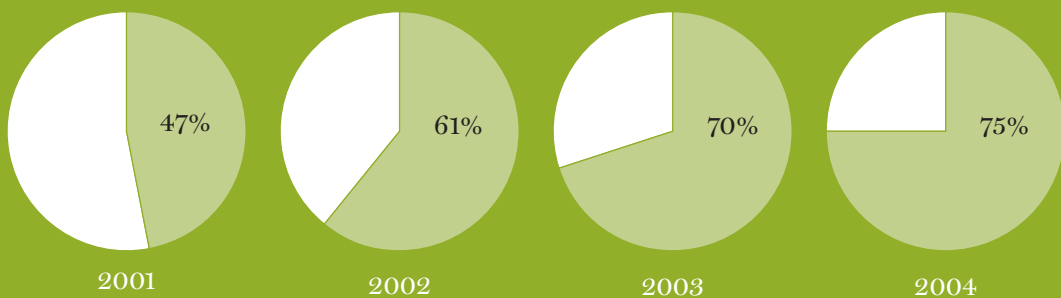
The Volunteer Delivery System is the continuous cycle of Volunteer recruitment, screening, and placement that allows the Peace Corps to deliver suitable, trained Volunteers to meet host country needs. The Peace Corps has recently focused on improvements to the system. Internal communication has been streamlined and overall response times to applicants reduced. A fully user-centered Web presence with an online tracking system and application tools has also been implemented.



Online Trends

The Peace Corps has used the Web effectively to simplify the application process. The percentage of online applications has increased dramatically from 2001 to 2004.

Percentage of applications submitted online:



THEME
4

Strengthening Agency Management and Financial Performance



Strengthen agency management and financial performance, and in doing so, use world-class technology to provide high-quality training and programming.

The most significant management accomplishment has been the

Modernization

of the agency's accounting and financial management systems.



Achieving excellence in programming, training, and support for Volunteers requires a committed agency staff and efficient, effective systems. During the past four years, the agency has strengthened staff training, launched an enterprise architecture project to map out processes and enable strategic change, and introduced new systems that utilize advances in technologies.

THE DETAILS

Open Market

The new financial management system integrates and streamlines the financial management and reporting process, improves the ability to audit the agency's records, and reduces duplicative and error-prone data entry.

“With the scarcity of teachers in our secondary schools, especially in remote rural areas, Volunteers are considered as diamonds.”

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICIAL
AFRICA REGION



Human Resource Management

Work at the Peace Corps is carried out by staff working under a unique term-limited hiring authority that has been in place since 1964. All Peace Corps staff are limited to five years of regular employment. A maximum of 15 percent of the staff may serve an additional three and one-half years with the personal approval of the Director. In 2002, Congress authorized an exception to this five-year rule for positions directly related to safety and security; subsequently, the Director exempted 23 key positions.

Working within federal procedures and the unique term-limited appointments, the Peace Corps has improved its human resource management (HRM). This has included working to make the hiring process as efficient as possible, strengthening in-service training programs, and supporting ongoing personnel systems and issues that arise.

The most sweeping enhancement has been implementing the human capital management software application, which will automate the HRM office for the first time. This application is part of the larger enterprise architecture program for the agency started in 2003.

American Diversity Program

The Peace Corps staff and Volunteers represent a broad range of ethnic heritages and cultures. The experiences of Volunteers throughout the world add significant cultural dimensions to the work of the agency. With that in mind, the Peace Corps has expanded its national monthly observances, sponsoring more than 45

programs and events, involving the participation of 300 staff members. For instance, a special program on the civil rights movement commemorated Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday; and a parade of Asian flags, an ethnic fashion show and food festival commemorated Asian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month. In

addition, the agency has built standard operating procedures for efficient EEO complaint management, including new officers, regular training, and faster case processing.

THE DETAILS

In 2004, the Peace Corps began implementation of a human capital management system, which will fully automate human resource management.

“Each night I sit with these four old men and learn their language. We go over simple phrases like, ‘How is the body?’ ‘The body is well.’ ‘I tell God thank you.’ But it is this small effort that brings us together.”

RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER,
SIERRA LEONE



New Accounting and Financial Management System

The most significant management accomplishment during the past four years has been the modernization of the agency's accounting and financial management systems. To be compliant with requirements of the Federal Accountability of Tax Dollars Act of 2002, the Peace Corps initiated a multi-million dollar three-year transformation project to replace 20-year-old legacy systems with Odyssey/FOR Post. This is an integrated financial system that meets federal standards and can support operations worldwide in real time—a new modern system for the 21st century. The new financial management system integrates and streamlines the financial management and reporting process, improves the ability to audit the agency's records, and reduces duplicative and error-prone data entry. A transaction starts with a requester and passes through the entire financial process without the data needing to be reentered. Purchasing and payment on all transactions, contracts, and awards are reflected in the financial system in the originating foreign currency.

The transformation to the new financial management system allowed the Peace Corps to produce the agency's first set of auditable financial statements—a first in the agency's 43-year history. The financial statements summarize the Peace Corps' financial position; disclose the net cost of operations and changes in net position; and provide information on budgetary resources and financing. Where possible, the financial statements conform to the hierarchy of accounting principles approved by the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board, OMB Bulletin 01-09, Form and Content of Agency Financial Statements; and the Department of the Treasury's Financial Manual and related bulletins.

In the first full year of its operation, the new system required significant staff training worldwide, reviewing and adjusting staffing structures and duties, closing out old accounts, and reengineering business processes. With significant system design, development, and implementation completed by the end of fiscal year 2004, the Odyssey/FOR Post project is progressing toward achieving full compliance by fiscal year 2007.

Accomplishments in 2004:

- Hard close accounts for first time
- First set of agency auditable financial statements
- Fully aligned internal planning and budget processes to GPRA requirements including measurable standards
- Gap analysis
- Performance and Accountability Report allowing an audit of the GPRA progress



Achieving Results

Launched in 2003, the Odyssey/FOR Post system is the new integrated, agency-wide financial management system that provides the core accounting and financial management modules to the agency's 72 posts worldwide, 11 recruiting offices nationwide, and headquarters.

In the first full year of its operation, the new system required significant staff training worldwide, reviewing and adjusting staffing structures and duties, closing out old accounts, and readjusting software programs. By the end of the changeover, all accounting and financial business practices were completely reengineered.

Enterprise Architecture; Technology and Management Upgrades

In 2001, the Peace Corps initiated an agency-wide multiyear enterprise architecture (EA) mapping and process improvement exercise. In the exercise, the details of how the agency does business were reviewed, including existing and desired systems. The initial focus of EA was on the Volunteer Delivery System (VDS), post operations, and HRM processes. These are now models for systems review in international programming and training.

Overall EA has:

- Institutionalized an agency-wide governance process that includes an investment review board that meets monthly to review and approve all technology-related initiatives;
- Institutionalized an EA advisory board and IT change control board; and
- Documented “as-is” architecture for seven units and “to-be” architecture for two units.

Like all federal agencies, the Peace Corps has been upgrading its computer systems at headquarters, the 11 domestic regional recruitment offices, and in each of the agency’s 72 host countries. Each host country presents its own challenges for electronic change based on in-country regulations, infrastructure, and local support.

During the past four years the Peace Corps has:

- Replaced or upgraded 900 computers;
- Migrated 65 international posts from Macintosh-based to personal computer (PC) systems;
- Introduced and supported portable satellite and VSAT technology;
- Significantly improved information technology (IT) and communication security;
- Designed an implemented VIDA for Volunteer information management;
- Implemented an electronic process for transportation of medical records;
- Implemented a solution for international secure file transfer; and
- Hired IT specialists at all posts.

Many new implemented management upgrades have been supported by agency-wide review boards operating as a part of the EA project. These new systems have streamlined the work of headquarters staff as well as country directors, administrative officers, and Peace Corps medical officers, resulting in improved support for the Volunteers.

- Developed an improved vehicle fleet plan for posts with established criteria
- Automated leases and property agreements
- Institutionalized a state of the art property inventory system
- Automated space review and usage, including new offices, as needed
- Updated, regularized, and computerized acquisition and shipping processes
- Revamped internal and external mail delivery systems

THE DETAILS

In 2004, the Peace Corps received both the Federal Mail Manager of the Year and the Federal Mail Center Excellence awards—the first time that a single agency received both awards.

Peace Corps Manual, Worldwide Policies and Procedures

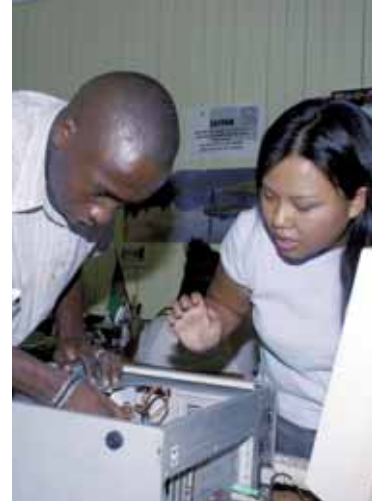
The Peace Corps continually reviews and updates its *Peace Corps Manual* to reflect any changing policies or administrative revisions. The manual is accessible through the agency Intranet and updated CD-ROMs are regularly sent to 72 posts and 11 domestic field offices. The Offices of General Counsel and Management identify out-of-date or conflicting policies. These offices have revised 25 *Peace Corps Manual* sections, issued nine interim policy statements and five partial statements, and designed an efficient system to update manual sections as policies change. Particular focus has been placed on Volunteer issues such as safety and security, travel, leave, and conduct.

Through the compliance office, the agency has created and implemented an original compliance system focusing on establishing management controls and criteria for verification, including clarity of expectations, materials needed, deadlines, and tracking. The office established the proper tools for reporting and tracking—including revising exist-

ing material and creating new tools using the latest technology. Additionally, the compliance office tracked manual sections' adherence and management compliance to directives from the agency Director.

The Peace Corps has also strengthened its ethics policies and procedures to comply with financial disclosure requirements. New ethics regulations were drafted, more than 500 employees were trained, and the agency achieved a 100 percent compliance record on financial disclosure.

Although the Peace Corps has answered requests for information throughout its history, some of which are under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), it has never had a formal system (outside of the executive secretariat) for managing the FOIA request process. In 2003, the agency formalized its responses to these requests and established a tracking and fee system, a reading room, education and training programs, and hired staff dedicated to FOIA requests.



“This generation needs to know the Peace Corps, needs to know what hope is.”

FIJIAN MINISTER OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE DETAILS

The position of chief compliance officer was created to ensure compliance to the *Peace Corps Manual* by all offices of the agency.



THEME

5

Making Safety and Security The Overarching Priority



The safety and security of each Volunteer is the agency's top priority. The Peace Corps is committed to developing optimum conditions for a safe and fulfilling experience for every Peace Corps Volunteer.

The Peace Corps will continue to do all it takes to make the

Volunteer experience

as productive, meaningful, and safe as possible.

Mindful of the new security environment borne from the events of September 11, 2001, Peace Corps Director Gaddi Vasquez has continued to enhance safety and security measures since he took office in February 2002.

Safety and security issues are fully integrated into all aspects of Volunteer recruitment, training, and service, with an emphasis on Volunteers taking personal responsibility for their own safety at all times and successfully assimilating into their communities. Key safety messages are provided throughout the recruitment, application, and training process—from recruiters; on the website; in printed application materials, informational booklets, and educational videos; and during the two days of staging and the two to three months of in-country pre-service training and continuing in-service training.



THE DETAILS

Key Safety Messages:

- Being a Volunteer involves risk. • The Peace Corps has an effective safety support system in place.
- Volunteers can and are expected to adopt safe lifestyles.

“After having been over there and visiting, we have found that we have no cause for concern because the village she lives in is a wonderful place and the people have embraced her and they really love her, so she is quite safe over there and she’s doing some great work.”

PARENT OF VOLUNTEER SERVING IN TONGA



Organizational Efforts

Based on the Director’s personal experience as a former public safety official, other agency experts’ suggestions, the recommendations and findings from the General Accounting Office’s July 2002 report on Volunteer safety, and Volunteers in the field, the Peace Corps created and implemented several important safety enhancements. In 2002, the Director approved the creation of a new Office of Safety and Security and increased full-time safety and security staff by 80 members, 95 percent of whom are deployed overseas.

The safety and security team was restructured to better communicate, supervise, monitor, and help set safety and security policy.

This new security staff includes:

- a new associate director of safety and security,
- a chief compliance officer,
- a research psychologist,
- a safety and security coordinator in each of the agency’s 72 overseas posts, and
- a safety and security desk officer for each Peace Corps region.



Overall Advances

In addition to the staff changes, further advances in safety and security include:

Standard operating procedures and a new template for posts to use in developing their emergency action plans;

Procedures for Volunteer/trainee safety and security (*Peace Corps Manual*, section 270) to measure and monitor posts’ compliance with important safety and security requirements;

Twelve hours of pre-departure (staging) training built around Volunteer roles and responsibilities for safety and security for new trainees;

Regular and ongoing safety and security training for staff;

An updated Volunteer site locator form identifying multiple methods of contact;

Revised site development criteria to assist in the selection of safe and secure Volunteer sites, with a standardized housing checklist, maps, lists and other documentation;

An enhanced safety and security information message as an applicant’s first contact with Peace Corps, during recruitment and throughout the application process;

The availability of safety and security information on the Peace Corps website;

Comprehensive safety and security information in the *Volunteer Handbook*; and

The development of a compliance system with six-month reviews and reports to the Inspector General.



“At first I was very worried about communicating, but there was never a problem. We talk more than when she was home! There is constant communication. I am learning how the Peace Corps is very concerned and loyal to their Volunteers.”

LINDA PASQUA
MOTHER OF KERI BADACH, VOLUNTEER IN PERU

In-Country

Peace Corps safety and security officers (PCSSOs) play a vital new role in conducting country-specific safety and security risk assessments. Working with a country director, a PCSSO will enter the host country and consult with embassy personnel, local NGOs, government ministries, police officials, and Peace Corps staff to review the current safety and security environment and offer suggested enhancements when necessary.

Early in 2004, the Peace Corps formalized its worldwide guidance that recommends a minimum of two site visits by post staff during the first year (including one visit within the first three months) and one visit during the second year. In addition to these minimum guidelines, each post develops country-specific standards on the timing and frequency of site visits to Volunteers in-country.

Emergency action plans (EAPs) are country-specific documents that outline a detailed plan of action to be followed by the post in the event of emergency situations, including an evacuation. In early 2004, the Director approved new standard operating procedures with guidance related to safety and security and emergency planning. The updated guidance standardizes the EAPs with a template, establishes requirements for essential components of each plan, and mandates a regular testing cycle that must be in place for a post to be in compliance.

Volunteers need to know how to handle emergency situations, from individual Volunteer accidents to entire country evacuations. There have been 11 successful evacuations of posts since 2001.



“Peace Corps Volunteers are examples of the great compassion of our nation ... Your selfless efforts to bridge cultures, to promote education, health, and economic opportunity, and to strengthen ties of goodwill among the poorest of the world contribute to a more hopeful future for all.”

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

THE DETAILS

Peace Corps diligently monitors the safety and security at each post and does not hesitate to take action if the need arises to move Volunteers out of harm's way.

At Headquarters

To better manage emergencies, the Peace Corps created a fully equipped “situation room” at headquarters that is dedicated to handling situations as they arise. The room contains emergency contact information and descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of emergency task force members. Staff training for handling emergencies is ongoing, using material drawn from the Peace Corps’ extensive experience with emergency situations and the agency’s comprehensive *Evacuation Support Guide*. Redundant communication systems enable the Peace Corps to provide uninterrupted support of post operations in the event of an emergency at Peace Corps headquarters.

The Peace Corps is a unique federal agency in that most employees are limited to serving the agency for five years. In 2002, Congress gave the Peace Corps authority to exempt certain positions associated with safety and security from the five-year rule. After careful consideration, 23 positions were exempted from the rule. Nineteen of these positions are in the Office of Safety and Security, which is the Peace Corps office primarily responsible for Volunteer safety and security. One safety and security desk officer position in each of the regional directorates has been designated as exempt, and the position of director of quality improvement in the Office of Medical Services has

also been exempted. While these 23 positions are the most clear-cut and readily justifiable applications of the new authority, the Director retains the authority to exempt other positions in the future. The exemptions are an effort to enhance continuity and build greater institutional knowledge of safety and security issues.

The Peace Corps uses four key elements in establishing and maintaining its safety and security framework for Volunteers and staff: research, planning, training, and compliance.

Safety and security information is tracked and analyzed by the safety and security research psychologist. This information helps to enhance existing policies and develop new policies and procedures, as needed. After careful analysis and planning, changes are being integrated throughout the agency. Volunteer training includes the most up-to-date safety and security information available. Finally, compliance is essential to ensure the integrity and top-priority of safety and security measures over the course of time. Each of these components helps create a framework to safeguard the well-being of Volunteers and staff, institutionalizing the procedures to enable future leadership to carry out the noble goals and mission of the Peace Corps.



THE DETAILS

To enhance continuity and build greater institutional knowledge of safety and security issues, the Peace Corps permanently exempted 23 safety and security positions from the agency’s five-year employment limit.

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Education Volunteer, Benin

Youth Volunteer, Belize

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Married Volunteers (Education), Armenia

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Young man in field, Guatemala

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Health Volunteer, Tonga

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Environment Volunteer, Belize

Volunteer at market day, Moldova

Agriculture Volunteer and host-country counterpart, Tonga

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Education Volunteer, Kazakhstan

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Young man ringing makeshift school bell, Benin

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Crisis Corps Volunteer and host-country children, community beautification effort, Guatemala

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Crisis Corps Volunteers, rebuilding, Honduras

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Health Volunteer, Benin

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Volunteer and host-country child, Mongolia

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Peace Corps Week brochure (2005)

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Education Volunteer and class, Guatemala

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Host-country national, Palau

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Education Volunteer and students, Turkmenistan

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Education Volunteer and host-country national, Guyana

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Business Volunteer and host-country counterpart, Belize

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Volunteer classroom, Benin

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Business Volunteer and the chief and residents of her host-country village, Ghana

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IT Volunteer, Moldova

Married Volunteers at the Peace Corps offices, Armenia

THEME 5

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Agriculture and Business Volunteer, Panama

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Host-country nationals, Kyrgyz Republic

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Host-country nationals, Kyrgyz Republic

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Business Volunteer and the chief and residents of her host-country village, Ghana

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IT Volunteer, Moldova

Director Vasquez with Peace Corps Volunteers, Morocco

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