Sahel	Cape Verde, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal
Coastal West and Central Africa	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Togo
Eastern Africa	Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda
Southern Africa	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia

AFRICA REGION

Africa Region

Since 1961, more than 63,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 46 African countries. Today the Peace Corps continues to enjoy strong cooperation and support from the people of Africa. The agency predicts that by the end of fiscal year (FY) 2008, 2,840 Volunteers and trainees will be working in 26 countries in Africa. Programs in Africa cover all six of the agency's program sectors—agriculture, business development, education, environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth. In addition, many Volunteers are engaged in projects involving information and communication technology (ICT) and girls' education. With real potential for expansion in these sectors and projects, the Africa region is poised for substantial growth. In FY 2007, the Peace Corps received multiple requests from African governments to enter or reenter programs in their countries. A team of Peace Corps Response Volunteers plans to enter Liberia in FY 2008.

Safety and security of Volunteers continues to be the agency's number-one priority. Twenty-nine employees are dedicated strictly to safety and security in the Africa region, and each of the 25 posts has a designated safety and security coordinator. Additionally, the Africa region's safety and security desk officer at Peace Corps headquarters ensures effective communication and compliance related to safety issues. Three additional safety and security officers with subregional responsibilities are located in South Africa, Togo, and Kenya, and they provide advice and support to the country directors.

Africa remains the epicenter of the AIDS pandemic. The Peace Corps has had a strong commitment to fight the spread of this terrible disease since the mid-1980s. Twelve posts are working very closely with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The Peace Corps trains all Volunteers serving in Africa, regardless of their primary assignment, in HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness. Volunteers provide AIDS education and prevention messages to schools, out-of-school youth, and communities. They also help build capacity for communities and local AIDS service organizations to care for orphans and vulnerable children, and to support people living with HIV/AIDS. Volunteers are uniquely suited to work in HIV/AIDS because they live and work in the communities where they serve. They are trained to communicate AIDS prevention messages in local languages, and they share information in a culturally sensitive way. In addition to French and Portuguese, the Peace Corps provides training for Volunteers in nearly 170 local languages, and in deaf-education and sign language in Kenya and Ghana. This enables Volunteers to effectively live, work, and transfer HIV/AIDS education messages in their communities.

In South Africa, Volunteers work with government officials, communities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are involved in HIV/AIDS prevention and relief. In Mauritania, Volunteers design and implement HIV/AIDS trainings of trainers and launch major HIV/AIDS-awareness campaigns throughout the country through sports, cultural events, and formal training sessions. Together, Volunteers and community members work to develop and facilitate culturally-appropriate HIV/AIDS workshops targeted to young adults.

In health, Volunteers work in 24 countries across the continent to improve child survival, nutrition, disease prevention, environmental health, orphan care, home-based care, youth at-risk groups, and women's health. In Kenya, Volunteers are working with NGOs to teach reproductive health and life skills to youth. Volunteers design peer education training manuals and implement a comprehensive in-school peer education program for primary and secondary schools, as well as a training program for peer education resource teachers.

Peace Corps Volunteers are involved with business development in 13 countries across Africa. Their efforts focus on teaching business skills to youth, farmers, artisans, NGOs, credit institutions, and IT-related businesses. In Burkina Faso, the Peace Corps' small enterprise activities promote business development and agribusiness. Volunteers train entrepreneur associations and cooperative members to market crafts and agribusiness products as well as to promote cultural tours and tourism. Volunteers work with savings and credit clubs, handicraft associations, and agribusiness cooperatives to improve business practices and the viability of commercial activities. Volunteers in

Guinea work to empower youth and small-scale entrepreneurs by strengthening their business management skills. Volunteers conduct business management and entrepreneurship training, create and strengthen market linkages, and help to establish basic accounting systems.

Education remains the Peace Corps' largest program sector in Africa, with education projects in 21 countries. Among the subjects taught by Volunteers are English, mathematics, science, arts, ICT, and life skills. Volunteers use community content-based instruction to incorporate HIV/AIDS, environmental, and gender-specific themes into their lesson plans and presentations. In Namibia, Volunteers enhance educational development through teacher training and support, classroom teaching in science, mathematics, and English, and integration of new ICT materials in the education sector. Volunteers facilitate teacher-training workshops on how to mentor and prepare students for science fair competitions. Schools where Volunteers teach have consistently witnessed verifiable improvement in student performance. In Lesotho, Volunteers teach English language and literature at 33 secondary schools. Volunteers organize debates within their schools and within their districts on HIV/AIDS-related topics that help students improve their vocabularies, develop critical thinking and oral communication skills while promoting HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteers in the agriculture and environment sectors work in 18 countries to improve agricultural practices and promote environmentally friendly approaches. Volunteers and their counterparts address environmental issues by promoting environmental education in schools and by educating farmers. In Mali, Volunteers collaborate with farmers to improve food production for local consumption and income generation. Volunteers serve as technical resources for community members, associations and youth groups on a variety of projects. In Niger, Volunteers help develop local strategies to improve household food production. Volunteers also work directly with farmers in their villages on issues such as water harvesting, crop rotation, soil fertility management, and improved animal husbandry.

Across Africa, youth are a major focus of Volunteer work, not only in education, but also in community health and development, small enterprise development, environmental education, and girls' empowerment. In Tanzania, Volunteers work to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS by empowering young people to make healthy choices about their lives. Volunteers train peer educators to teach other youth about HIV/AIDS awareness using drama, discussion groups, and organized debates. In Uganda, Volunteers provide training to organizations that support orphans and vulnerable children. As a result, the youth gain better access to education, nutrition, water, insecticide-treated bed nets, and psychosocial support. Volunteers use sports to draw youth together for healthy entertainment as well as to share life skills messages.

Volunteers in every project sector use ICT to help improve the training, capacity, and abilities of the African people in all aspects of life. Volunteers in Zambia provide primary education through interactive radio instruction for the growing number of children who do not have access to the formal educational system. Volunteers support learning centers, educate district and provincial leaders about the centers, and help monitor the effectiveness of the centers. They also train coaches in girls' empowerment, HIV/AIDS, and life skills. In Kenya, Volunteers integrate ICT into their work at deaf schools. Volunteers teach computer classes to both the students and teachers, and instruct teachers on how to develop teaching materials and lessons in all subjects. In Cape Verde, Volunteers use ICT to train teachers on the effective use of learning aids, teach literacy, and launch libraries and resource centers. Volunteers also promote e-learning, teach computer skills and assist the private sector in improving their operations.

EUROPE, MEDITERRANEAN, AND ASIA REGION

Balkans and North Africa	Albania, Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia, Morocco
Central and Eastern Europe	Moldova, Romania, Ukraine
Middle East and the Caucasus	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Jordan
Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan
Asia	Cambodia, China, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand

Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region

Many of the countries in the Europe, Mediterranean and Asia (EMA) region are undergoing difficult economic and social changes while striving to play a larger part in the global economy. Challenges to growth include outdated technology and infrastructure, unstable monetary systems, inflation, crime and corruption. Many countries face social issues arising from local, ethnic, or nationalist conflicts; complex demographic factors including emigration and immigration; as well as long-standing environmental problems and the growing pains associated with adapting to free market economies. Volunteers in the EMA region are working to support growth and stability through projects in the areas of business development, education, environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth. More than 51,343 Volunteers have served in the EMA region since 1961. At the end of fiscal year 2007, EMA had 2,386 Volunteers and trainees working in 19 countries.

The safety and security of the Volunteers and staff are top priorities in every EMA country. Training is one of the most important elements of the Peace Corps' process to ensure that Volunteers develop a practical awareness of safety and security risks, and understand the policies and procedures designed to improve their safety. The region emphasizes that Volunteers are safest when they are integrated into their local communities, are respected and protected as extended family members, and are viewed as contributors to the development of the communities where they live and work. Each Peace Corps post monitors safety and security according to agency guidelines.

Volunteers play many roles throughout the EMA region. They serve in a variety of settings, working with communities, schools, clinics, local organizations and host-country governments to promote cross-cultural understanding, and to provide needed technical expertise in areas identified as critical in each host country.

All Peace Corps countries in the EMA region have identified education as a priority. In many countries half the population is under the age of 25. Volunteers are part of national and local efforts to strengthen primary, secondary, and university-level education capacity through classroom instruction, professional development for teachers, and by promoting the development of educational and community resources. Volunteers help students to develop not only their English language abilities, but also their critical thinking skills. Through team-teaching and teacher-training courses and workshops, Volunteers help teachers learn new teaching methodologies and provide ongoing support.

Volunteers and host teachers work collaboratively to develop curricula and materials for special education, health education, environmental awareness, and other content-based courses. They facilitate lessons and extracurricular activities that focus on life skills, decision-making, healthy choices, and the development of personal and professional skills. They work alongside people of diverse ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic status. Volunteers are often catalysts for motivating youth, teachers, and community members to become involved in service learning. Volunteer projects often benefit orphanages, hospitals, minority villages, as well as centers for the displaced, homeless, and those with special needs.

Over the past decade, Volunteer business development projects in the region have evolved from promoting small business start-ups to projects that seek to work across the full range of business issues. Volunteers assist entrepreneurs, governmental and non-governmental agencies, educational institutions, lending and micro-finance institutions, community groups, and motivated individuals. Because Volunteers live as part of their communities for two years, they are uniquely able to integrate themselves and earn the trust and respect needed to be accepted as valued partners and mentors.

Today's Volunteers often come to the field well-versed in various uses of technology. Volunteers are particularly successful in providing guidance and developing implementation models for communities that wish to incorporate information and communication technologies (ICT) into local business, education, and community development projects. Capacity-building efforts concentrate primarily on training people to use basic software applications, such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and Internet applications.

A Volunteer in Azerbaijan secured a small project assistance (SPA) grant to train 16 computer teachers

from 10 schools in her community and its surrounding villages. The project included a 12-week, 70-hour series of "training of trainers" sessions, designed to give the teachers a working knowledge of Microsoft software that they could in turn pass to their students. The sessions also introduced the teachers to new interactive teaching methods, and offered guidance on using new textbooks provided by the government. The teachers gained confidence and understanding of both the theory and the practical use of computers. To demonstrate their skills at the end of their training, each teacher presented a PowerPoint to school directors and the head of the regional Education Department. As a result, the Volunteer's training center and the regional Education Department are collaborating on free, "open door" weekend training sessions for other interested teachers.

Health and HIV/AIDS sector Volunteers in the EMA region continue to educate individuals, households, service providers, and communities about the importance of health promotion and disease prevention. In addition to projects in other sectors that have health components, Albania, Armenia, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, and Turkmenistan all support distinct Volunteer health and HIV/AIDS projects that emphasize healthy lifestyles and improved quality of life. Volunteers and their counterparts work to strengthen different aspects of health education, not only at clinics and hospitals, but also at day care centers, schools and universities; and within local community organizations. Volunteer assignments encompass the design of health-education materials as well as the delivery of these messages with an emphasis on behavior change. Preventive health education topics highlighted this year include pre- and post-natal care, personal and environmental hygiene, nutrition and food security, and prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Volunteers across the region undertake similar health education activities as secondary projects in their communities, including working with hospitals, clinics, orphanages, and with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

A Volunteer in Ukraine helped a local NGO to open community discussion about the problems faced by people with disabilities. The Volunteer worked closely with the NGO to write a successful Peace Corps Partnership grant proposal. Funds were raised from friends and family of Volunteers in the United States, making it possible to distribute close to 400 items of disability equipment to assistance centers around the city. These items included walking sticks, crutches, shower benches, and canes for the blind.

Working in schools, with youth groups, and with NGOs, environment sector Volunteers in the EMA region promote a greater understanding of local ecology and environmental issues. Although the specific issues addressed in these projects vary from country to country, there is some commonality in types of activities. Volunteers increase awareness through eco-clubs, camps, tree-planting campaigns, and similar community efforts. Volunteers also address ecological issues such as safe water, erosion, and overuse of pesticides or fertilizers. Other Volunteers work to improve cookstoves, train guides in national or regional parks, or improve sanitation.

Youth development activities are increasingly important in the EMA region. Formal projects that aim to develop the capacities and attitudes of young people are underway in Bulgaria, Jordan, Morocco, the Philippines, Ukraine, and Mongolia. Informal youth development projects are in operation in virtually every EMA country.

The need for young people to have positive economic, social, and political opportunities is more critical than ever. Volunteers work to engage and prepare youth for the workforce and to be active and informed citizens. Important areas of program activity include life-skills training for employment and entrepreneurship and leadership training including conflict resolution skills. In all of the areas in which Volunteers work with youth, there is an overall theme of advocating for youth participation in their communities, using effective methods such as service-learning programs.

Many Volunteers work with young people in the classroom or through after-school clubs to support school-to-work transitions and to make learning relevant to real-life priorities. Some Volunteers use English language instruction in camps or clubs as a way to teach important life skills. Other Volunteers work with marginalized young people to build their capac-

ity to create positive futures in a region where human trafficking, drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution, unemployment and lack of schooling plague youth.

Volunteers and their host country partners also focus on projects to empower girls, who are often more disadvantaged than boys, especially in the areas of education, leadership skills, self-esteem and societal valuation. The highest percentage of girls' and boys' leadership camps is in the EMA region. These camps provide a venue for programs promoting broad-based leadership and empowerment activities for girls and boys, and a variety of other topical programs.

Every Peace Corps country in the EMA region suffers from human trafficking, and anti-trafficking efforts are a high priority for most governments in the region. Peace Corps posts in Albania, Macedonia, Moldova and Mongolia have established anti-trafficking committees to assist Volunteers in supporting and contributing to national and international efforts to reduce human trafficking. Volunteers research and promote best practices, and develop programs targeting youth in the country. In Moldova, Volunteers organized youth leadership and healthy-lifestyle summer camps for girls, one component of which was an exposé on the recruiting methods used by prostitution rings and human traffickers in Eastern Europe.

The EMA region continually strives to develop and refine its programs and Volunteer projects to address the current development needs of host countries; to assure that Volunteers gain a broader understanding of other cultures; and to enable other cultures to gain a better understanding of the United States and its people.

President Bush visits with Volunteers in Bulgaria in June of 2007.

Central America	Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama
Caribbean	Dominican Republic, Eastern Caribbean (Antigua/Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada/Carriacou, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent/Grenadines), Jamaica
South America	Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname
Pacific	Federated States of Micronesia and Palau, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands (suspended in 2000), Tonga, Vanuatu

INTER-AMERICA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

Inter-America and the Pacific Region

Since the Peace Corps' inception in 1961, more than 74,000 Volunteers have served in the Inter-America and Pacific (IAP) region. They have served in more than 32 countries in the Americas and 14 countries in the Pacific Islands. At the end of fiscal year (FY) 2007, 2,659 Volunteers were working in 23 posts in all six of the agency's sectors: agriculture, business development, education, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth. Additional countries in the region continue to be interested in establishing Peace Corps programs. IAP also actively supports the Peace Corps' 50+ initiative, an effort to recruit more Volunteers age 50 and over. Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Eastern Caribbean, and Panama currently serve as 50+ pilot posts, analyzing the needs of 50+ Volunteers and assessing language training strategies.

The region is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all Volunteers. All IAP posts have trained safety and security coordinators. In addition, three regional Peace Corps safety and security officers, stationed in El Salvador, Fiji, and Peru, help all posts assess risks and ensure appropriate training for staff and Volunteers. Each post has an emergency action plan, which is tested and revised as appropriate at least once every year.

Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts in the IAP region have become active, productive participants in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). In the Dominican Republic, Volunteers provide HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention information to youth living in rural communities. Peer educators are trained using a curriculum developed by Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and their counterparts in the Dominican Republic. The curriculum focuses on strategies to promote healthy decision-making and to effect positive behavioral change among young people.

Volunteers in Jamaica integrate environmental education themes in the formal education system through collaboration with 4-H and the School for the Environment Program. They also work with community-based organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to develop eco-friendly income-generation projects to help promote prudent management of the island's natural resources.

A Volunteer in Bolivia, in collaboration with a local NGO, worked with more than 20 communities to strengthen community water committees, water supply management, and water system maintenance. The Volunteer also assisted in the construction of new drinking water systems, grey water systems, and latrines, and he taught hygiene to children and women's groups.

Volunteers are helping the government of Vanuatu reverse declining health indicators by strengthening village health committees and the capacity of the government to measure the incidence of poor health. Eight Volunteers are helping one province to strengthen its health program by promoting opportunities for communities to improve their water supply and sanitation.

In many IAP countries, the Peace Corps' programs target youth to develop life skills, leadership skills, and employability. In Costa Rica, one Volunteer created a series of freestyle hip-hop workshops for at-risk youth throughout different regions of the country. The workshops provided a safe space for youth to discuss and express their concerns about the social issues they face, including racism, poverty, HIV/AIDS, discrimination, social injustice, drug abuse, and alcoholism.

In 2007, Volunteers helped start more than 30 new businesses in small Ecuadorian communities. Volunteers have also expanded an innovative savings and banking project that has been successful in more than 600 communities. In Ecuador, community banks help people save money, manage their finances, and provide credit to rural families. This past year, Peace Corps/Ecuador organized four community banking workshops to promote the program in local institutions. Fifty new banks were formed and eight institutions introduced the savings-and-credit program to their own organizations.

Volunteers in Nicaragua are also working to teach and promote community banking methodologies. One Volunteer, extended her service for a third year in order to conduct a study of community banks in Nicaragua. The Volunteer surveyed and visited nearly 70 banks and interviewed bank members and Volunteers. Using information collected during her study, the Volunteer

designed a training manual for Volunteers and their community counterparts on how to implement community banks as a sustainable development tool. The manual, written in Spanish, includes activities Volunteers can use to help organize community members, best practice suggestions from current bank members, as well as community banking success stories.

Among Peace Corps/Micronesia's activities in 2007 was a focus on serving in a more environmentally friendly manner. The post converted its fleet of vehicles to run on locally-produced coconut fuel, both reducing dependence on fossil fuels and supporting the local economy. Due to Peace Corps/Micronesia's success in the use of coconut oil, the government of Micronesia mandated in its FY 2008 budget that all new government vehicles must be designed to run on coconut fuel.

United States Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) meets with Peace Corps Volunteers during a trip to Guatemala in November 2007.

"Every place I go, I talk to the Peace Corps Volunteers. We only have, in the world, a little over 7,000 of them. We should have 70,000 Peace Corps Volunteers."

The Honorable Harry Reid (D-NV)
Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate
January 2007