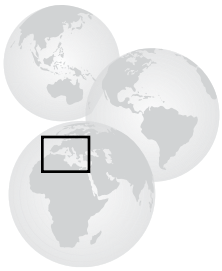
Macedonia



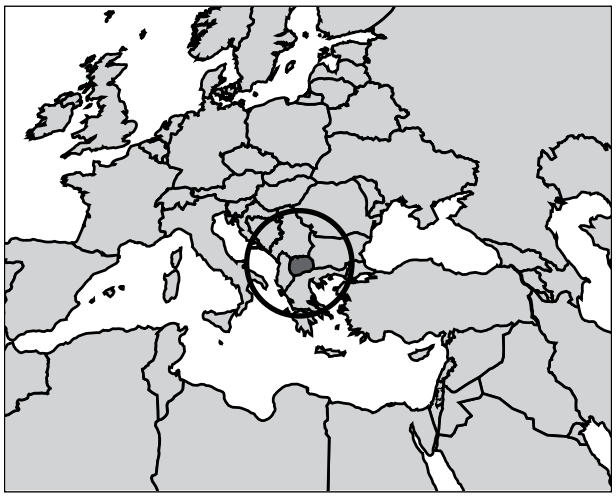
PROGRAM DATES	1996–1999 1999–2001 2002–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education

Capital	Skopje
Population	2 million
Annual per capita income	$2,830
GDP growth	2.9%
Foreign direct investment	$100 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 2% Female: 6%
Infant mortality rate	15 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 94% Measles: 96%
Access to an improved water source	85%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.1%
Religions	Eastern Orthodoxy: 65% Islam: 29% Roman Catholicism: 4% Others: 2%
Official language	Macedonian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	112	102
Program funds ($000)	2,048	2,020



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The objectives of Macedonia's government are to develop a multiethnic democracy; provide economic opportunities for its citizens; and move toward NATO and European Union (EU) integration. Despite some economic progress, the unemployment rate remains high. The Ohrid Framework Agreement, a peace agreement ending ethnic fighting in 2001, placed that conflict firmly in the past. The peaceful parliamentary elections of 2006 took Macedonia a step closer to membership in NATO and the EU, which eventually will improve regional and international trade ties and increase political cooperation.

Decentralization reforms have reduced municipalities from 124 to 84, and moved authority to local government for education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other services. Financing these now local-level responsibilities will be critical to the success of these reforms. Security within the country has improved since the Ohrid Agreement, and, in January 2004, the EU's military force was replaced by a mostly unarmed EU police mission. In cooperation with the U.S. embassy and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the EU police mission trains and advises the multiethnic Macedonian police force.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps program was established in 1996. Seven Volunteers were assigned to the Ministry of Education and Science and worked in the secondary school English education program. Subsequently, the program included business development within municipalities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and environmental education and management. Despite early successes, the program did not fully develop because of regional political instability and the program was suspended twice between 1999 and 2001. Since the Peace Corps returned in November 2002, there has been significant progress in the two current program areas—business development and education—and youth development and information technology are integrated into both program areas.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

As government structures devolve from the centralized system, local officials must learn how to operate effectively. Most municipalities have limited budgets and little experience in addressing their increased responsibilities. Peace Corps Volunteers strengthen the capacity of local/municipal

governments and NGOs by creating training programs and establishing projects that include more responsive management styles. Local organizations have a great need for expertise in strategic planning, project management, and sustainability planning, and Volunteers provide host organizations with organizational and management assistance. They conduct computer skills training; share expertise in fundraising methods, project planning, and management; conduct community outreach in human rights, health, and environmental awareness; and initiate small project assistance.

One Volunteer worked with an organization overseeing a large government land disbursement program to build agriculture industry capacity. The Volunteer planned economic education seminars focused on selecting the best products and practices for farming in the region, business development planning, and product export for more than 500 farmers.

Education

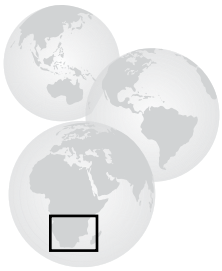
The Ministry of Education and Science places a high priority on English language education as a way for Macedonians to improve their place in the global community. The ministry is refining its curriculum and making concerted efforts to improve teachers' skills, particularly in smaller towns and rural villages where needs are greatest. The Peace Corps' involvement in this endeavor is twofold: to improve the effectiveness of English language instruction through teacher training and resource center development; and to help students improve their skills in English language communication, critical thinking, and independent life-long learning. Volunteers serve as English language resource teachers in primary and secondary schools. They also work on summer projects, including boys' and girls' leadership training camps, and they organize after-school English clubs, often incorporating information technology skills into the clubs as well as classrooms.

One Volunteer worked with her English students to put on a nine-minute version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The production presented an opportunity for the students to practice their English speaking more creatively and preparations for the play provided important life lessons for the students, including goal setting, leadership, and responsibility.

"The coordination between a public school and a private-sector NGO sparked a positive response culminating recently in a formal ministerial visit from Kosovo to study the success of our community in addressing cultural and educational issues relating to [the] Roma population in the Balkan region."

Macedonia Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Madagascar



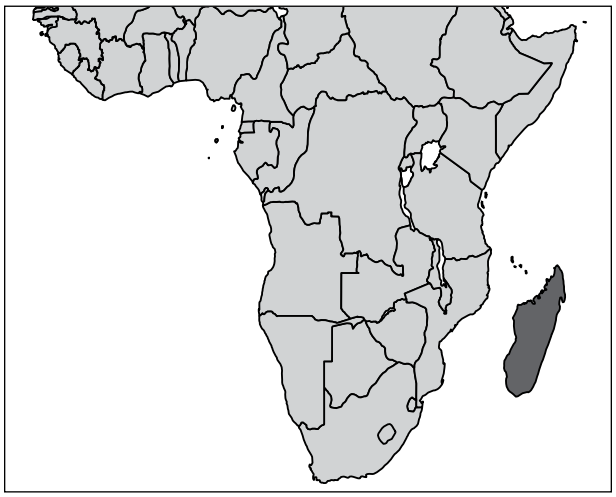
PROGRAM DATES	1993–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Antananarivo
Population	19 million
Annual per capita income	$290
GDP growth	4.6%
Foreign direct investment	$29 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 23% Female: 35%
Infant mortality rate	74 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 61% Measles: 59%
Access to an improved water source	46%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.7%
Religions	Indigenous beliefs: 47% Christianity: 45% Islam: 7%
Official languages	French Malagasy

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	143	144
Program funds ($000)	2,494	2,520



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

An independent kingdom until 1896, Madagascar was colonized by France until adopting a constitution and declaring full independence in 1960. During 1992-93, free presidential and National Assembly elections were held, ending 17 years of single-party rule. In 1997, Didier Ratsiraka, the leader during the 1970s and 1980s, was returned to the presidency. The 2001 presidential election was contested between the followers of Didier Ratsiraka and Marc Ravalomanana, nearly causing secession of half of the country. In April 2002, the High Constitutional Court announced Ravalomanana the winner.

The economy of Madagascar is dominated by agriculture, which employs 80 percent of the population. Agriculture, including fishing and forestry, contribute 26 percent of GDP; industry, 16 percent; and services, 56 percent. Major exports include coffee, vanilla, cloves, shellfish and sugar. Madagascar's natural resources are severely threatened by deforestation and erosion, aggravated by the use of firewood as the primary source of fuel. A great need continues for teachers, health specialists, and environmental counselors, particularly in rural areas.

The government of President Marc Ravalomanana has created the Madagascar Action Plan (MAP) which serves as a roadmap for all agencies and partners to assist in economic growth and poverty reduction and is committed to fighting environmental degradation, poor health and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Numerous international development agencies and volunteer organizations have been welcomed to Madagascar, joining the growing number of Malagasy nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working with the people of Madagascar with their development efforts. Madagascar is ranked 143 of 177 countries on the 2006 United Nations Human Development Index.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The first education Volunteers arrived in 1993. In subsequent years, the Peace Corps initiated programs in ecological conservation and community health education. Today, Volunteers work in the education, environment, and health and HIV/AIDS sectors. Some Volunteers concentrate on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; others teach English and train teachers. Volunteers also work with communities and national parks to find ways to balance human needs with environmental conservation. Shortly, the Peace Corps/Madagascar will expand its programming into the business development sector to boost nascent entrepreneurialism. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers are posted in rural communities and work with students, teachers, and the larger community to raise teaching standards, develop teaching resources, and strengthen links between schools and communities. Middle- and high school students are taught English through both traditional classroom lessons and by non-traditional methods such as songs, drawing, poetry, and drama. Volunteers transfer teaching skills to Malagasy English teachers to increase their capacity to plan lessons and create classroom resources. Volunteers and their counterparts use English as a vehicle to promote community programs such as girls' camps, HIV/AIDS prevention, and tree plantings.

One Volunteer launched a national HIV/AIDS awareness campaign. The campaign had over 2,000 students submit designs to create a women's wrap featuring HIV/AIDS awareness messages. This activity had the added benefit of challenging students to further develop their English vocabulary and messaging skills. Through public/private cooperation, over 5,000 of these wraps were manufactured and are being worn daily throughout the country.

Environment

Working with the government, NGOs and local communities, Volunteers train managers of protected areas, community members, and groups to improve their skills in environmental conservation, natural resource management and sustainable agroforestry and agriculture. More than 400 communities have learned about environmental conservation through theater projects, videos and workshops.

One Volunteer and his counterparts organized a sea turtle protection and egg monitoring seminar. Over 1,000 people in the surrounding communities learned how to manage the protection of this endangered reptile.

Health and HIV/AIDS

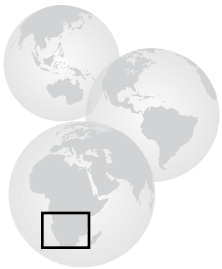
The Peace Corps helps communities address health issues through behavioral change methodologies and by effectively disseminating health messages. Volunteers concentrate on preventing the main life-threatening childhood illnesses; helping mothers understand basic maternal health issues such as how to ensure safe pregnancies; and providing the general population with information about preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Through their outreach programs, Volunteers provide vital health information to more than 400 communities each year.

One Volunteer was able to leverage the funds generated by the sale of malaria-prevention mosquito netting into the establishment of a rural radio station that used to transmit messages of improved health and HIV/AIDS awareness to remote areas of the island.

"The Peace Corps Volunteers are not here to replace any existing efforts, rather they are here to work with our communities as models and examples to encourage all. They can help us see possibilities, not just problems."

Dr. Jean Louis Robinson
Minister of Public Health and Family Planning
Madagascar

Malawi



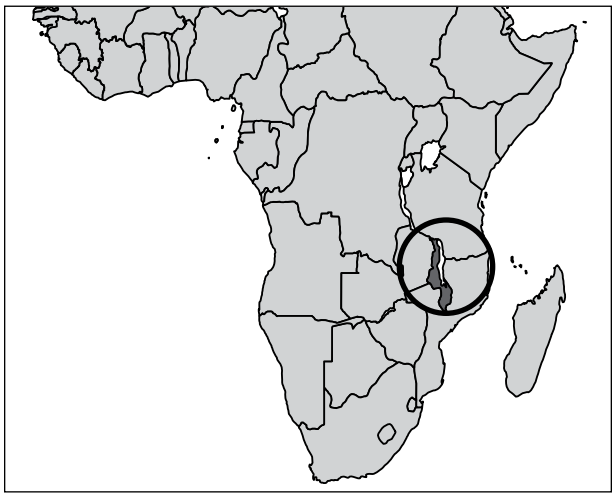
PROGRAM DATES	1963–1969 1973–1976 1978–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Lilongwe
Population	13 million
Annual per capita income	$160
GDP growth	2.6%
Foreign direct investment	$3 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 25% Female: 46%
Infant mortality rate	79 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 89% Measles: 80%
Access to an improved water source	73%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	14.2%
Religions	Protestantism: 55% Roman Catholicism: 20%; Islam: 20% Indigenous beliefs: 3%; Other: 2%
Official language	English Chichewa

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	130	126
Program funds ($000)	2,339	2,368



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 1994, after 30 years of one-party rule dating back to independence from Britain, Malawi peacefully elected a new government; a parliamentary government with a president as the head of state, and committed to multiparty democracy. Malawi held subsequent peaceful presidential elections in 1999 and in 2004. The government continues to focus on its policy of decentralization, implemented after the election in 1994 and strengthened by the Cabinet in 1998. This program was intended to alleviate poverty and promote good governance by shifting governmental responsibilities and resources from the national to the district level. It is regarded as being in the early stages of implementation. Malawi is on a path of social, political, and economic reform, but Malawians continue to face the challenges of environmental degradation, hunger, disease, illiteracy, and poverty.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, accounting for nearly half of the GDP. Tobacco generates more than 60 percent of export earnings. The agricultural sector employs nearly half of those formally employed and directly or indirectly supports about 85 percent of the population. Malawi has a narrow economic base with little industry and no known economically viable deposits of raw materials. As a landlocked country, its transport costs make imported goods expensive.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The change of government in 1994 allowed Volunteers to be placed at the community level for the first time, and the Peace Corps began working with counterpart ministries to identify appropriate areas for program involvement at the community level. Currently, Volunteers work in education, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

In 1994, the government implemented free primary education that swelled the ranks of schools and seriously strained the country's resources. To support the government's initiative, the Peace Corps focused its efforts on community day secondary schools in rural areas, where skills transfer and capacity building have the greatest impact. Currently, Volunteers help educate students, promote teacher-to-teacher collaboration, and encourage the exchange of experience and knowledge to improve teaching methods. Volunteers work with their counterparts by sharing lesson plans, discussing strategies

for teaching, evaluating students, and preparing exams. They also use locally available resources to produce innovative, participatory teaching materials. Volunteers help their schools acquire new textbooks and equipment, and work to establish reference libraries, science- and computer labs, so that students can more actively participate in learning.

The education program introduced a teacher-development component that focuses on secondary schools grouped into clusters. This project helps teachers improve their teaching skills and produce teaching materials using local resources.

Environment

The environment project works with communities surrounding protected areas to help them use local natural resources more sustainably. Volunteers partner with Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife, the Department of Forestry, and selected non-governmental organizations. Volunteers work in communities on conservation and resource use, including agroforestry, income generation, small-scale irrigation, and extension training. Volunteers help increase the productivity of fish farming and beekeeping, and have taught sustainable farming approaches, including propagating trees and other plants critical to the rural farming system. Volunteers have supported official village natural resource management committees and village forest areas, and have fostered conservation education with local schools.

Volunteers have assisted communities in gaining long-term economic viability by strengthening current practices and supporting sustainable agroforestry. Two Volunteers collaborated to increase food security and income-generation activities through crop diversification and expansion. Another Volunteer helped members of his community start a business that sells improved varieties of fruit trees better suited to grow in Malawi's environment. The Volunteer also provided trainings on topics such as organizational development, growth and marketing.

Health and HIV/AIDS

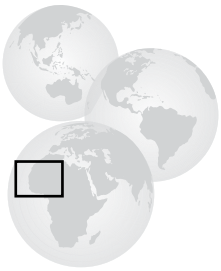
Malawi is severely affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and many other serious health conditions. The community health project works with the Ministry of Health and community based organizations to address health issues in rural parts of Malawi. Volunteers work in HIV/AIDS education, orphan care, home-based care, child survival, nutrition, disease prevention, environmental health, and women's health. Many work with youth and other at-risk groups. The projects focus on behavior change and integrate education on other health concerns linked with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, such as sexually transmitted diseases. A health personnel development project helps community nursing colleges fill the acute countrywide shortage of healthcare workers by providing direct teaching and teacher training.

One Volunteer worked with a support group for women living with AIDS to increase their ability to generate income. Members met weekly to discuss ideas, and chose a chicken-rearing project to provide eggs for nutrition. The women sell excess eggs to others in the community to generate income for group members.

"We appreciate the efforts of the Volunteers in rural health centers and hospitals who provide Malawi with qualified and skilled assistance at a time when demand for high quality health care has grown and our country is facing an acute shortage."

Louis Njaya
Principal Officer, Ministry of Health
Malawi

Mali



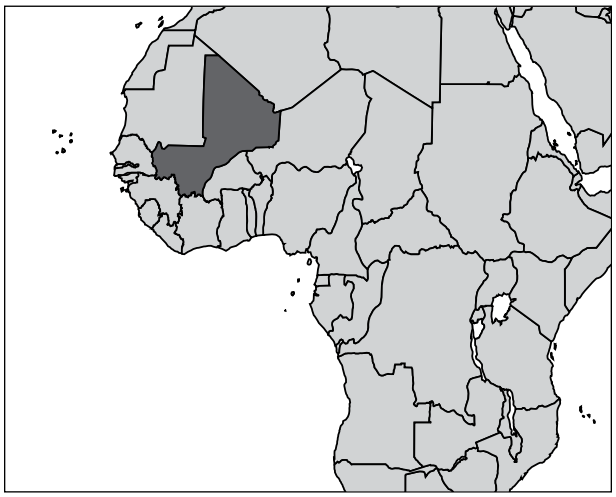
PROGRAM DATES	1971–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Bamako
Population	14 million
Annual per capita income	$380
GDP growth	6.1%
Foreign direct investment	$159 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 73% Female: 88%
Infant mortality rate	120 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 76% Measles: 75%
Access to an improved water source	50%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.9%
Religions	Islam: 90% Indigenous beliefs: 6% Christianity: 4%
Official language	French

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	127	129
Program funds ($000)	3,941	4,109



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Mali achieved independence from France in 1960. Between 1968 and 1979, a military government ruled the country in a period known as the "second republic." In 1991, after a period of civil unrest, a transitional government ruled until elections were held in 1992. Mali is a young, growing democracy, which has held two national elections since 1992. The government continues to promote democratization and administrative decentralization and has become a model in the region.

Mali is among the poorest countries in the world, and ranks 175 of 177 on the 2006 United Nations Human Development Index. As a landlocked country with 65 percent of its land desert or semi-desert, Mali is dependent on its neighbors for port facilities. Economic activity is largely confined to the area irrigated by the Niger River. Eighty percent of the labor force is engaged in farming and fishing, while industrial activity focuses on processing farm commodities. Mali is heavily dependent on foreign aid and vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices for cotton, its main export. The country is not self-sufficient in food production, a problem exacerbated by frequent droughts and a rapidly increasing population that strains the natural resource base.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The first Volunteers arrived in Mali in April 1971. Peace Corps/Mali assists the government of Mali in addressing multiple development challenges. Currently, Volunteers emphasize projects in the areas of agriculture, business development, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. A new government initiative promotes decentralization so that local communities assume responsibility for development projects. Many communities, however, lack the skilled personnel needed to identify, plan, and implement such projects. Volunteers will work with counterparts to teach community members the skills necessary to lead development projects at the local level. An expanded HIV/AIDS awareness program began in 2001, and all Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Many Malian farmers, especially women, engage in vegetable gardening and small animal husbandry as an alternative means for improving household nutritional status, as well as providing an additional source of income. To support these efforts, Volunteers collaborate with Malian farmers to build the local capacity of individuals and organizations in the areas of 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. These include animal husbandry, vegetable gardening, irrigation systems, and experimental farming with sorghum, millet, and peanuts. The goals of all agriculture Volunteers in Mali are to improve agricultural practices that will help increase food production, and to increase access to resources that can help local communities generate income and improve their diets.

One Volunteer helped her village establish a women's community garden. The Volunteer helped organize the women and selected an appropriate plot of land for the project. She also provided training in gardening techniques and showed the women how to incorporate vegetables from their gardens in their daily diet.

Business Development

Volunteers work closely with government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and micro-finance institutions. They help small businesses improve the management capabilities of entrepreneurs and increase financial and technical resources. Volunteers also help micro-finance institutions establish management systems, loan-tracking systems, business education programs, and awareness campaigns about the importance of savings and available credit. Other Volunteers work to strengthen existing computer centers and to set up Internet cafés.

Environment

The need to better manage natural resources and conservation has grown with Mali's increasing environmental problems. Volunteers assist Malians in their efforts to use natural resources in more sustainable manners, improve agricultural production, and increase awareness about environmental issues among the general population. Volunteers train people to understand their environment and how to conserve natural resources.

Health and HIV/AIDS

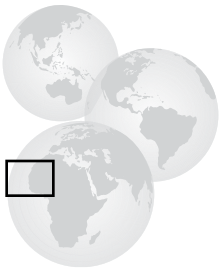
Health Volunteers play an active role in the ongoing restructuring of the public health sector through their work with health care providers, local associations, and individual community members. Volunteers work to raise awareness among Malians of health issues and promote preventive care measures, such as balanced nutritional practices, weaning, breast-feeding, and promoting prevention measures, such as diarrhea and disease control, polio eradication, vaccinations, and HIV/AIDS prevention. Health Volunteers also serve as extension agents with local communities and individuals in well construction and repair, improved latrine and soak pit construction, small-scale irrigation, hygiene education, and environmental sanitation efforts. Volunteers seek to increase safe drinking water sources and encourage the proper disposal of wastewater and solids.

One health Volunteer worked with the community health center in her area to create an infant growth monitoring program. The Volunteer traveled regularly to each of the 11 villages that the health center covered to introduce the baby weighing sessions and present information on other health topics including proper nutrition for infants. Through baby weighing sessions the Volunteer was able to identify under and malnourished children and include them in a two-week long intensive nutrition intervention program which she developed with the help of the health center staff.

"The volunteer experience with the Peace Corps is all-encompassing - giving one a unique opportunity to create a home and form lasting friendships amongst welcoming and open people, and obtain a genuine understanding of a different culture and way of life."

Mali Volunteer
Agriculture Sector

Mauritania



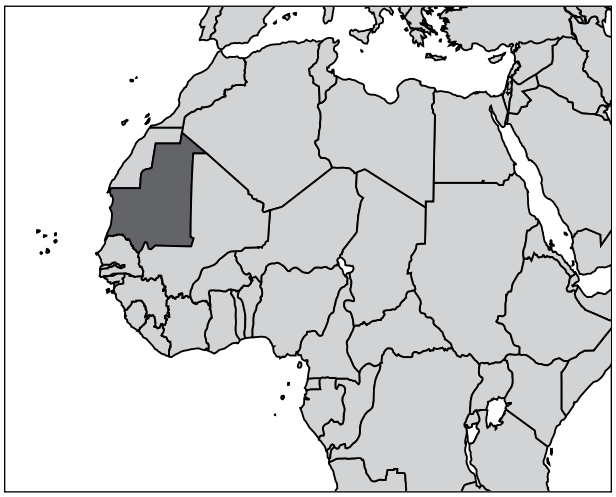
PROGRAM DATES	1967 1971–1991 1991–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Nouakchott
Population	3 million
Annual per capita income	$580
GDP growth	5.4%
Foreign direct investment	$115 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 40% Female: 57%
Infant mortality rate	78 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 70% Measles: 64%
Access to an improved water source	53%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.6%
Religion	Islam
Official language	Arabic

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	131	143
Program funds ($000)	2,968	3,160



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

From its independence in 1960 until 1978, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania was governed by a civilian regime. A number of military governments followed until 1991, when political parties were legalized and a constitution was approved. In August 2005, a bloodless military coup d'état brought to power the Military Council for Justice and Democracy. The military junta oversaw the establishment of a new constitution and legislative elections before turning power over to a democratically-elected president in April 2007. Conflict between Moor and non-Moor ethnic groups centering on language, land tenure, and other issues has been a problem in the country since its independence. Sparsely populated, with most of its land covered by the Sahara Desert, Mauritania is one of the least-developed countries in the world. It ranks 153 of 177 on the 2006 United Nations Human Development Index. Besides mining, the only commercially viable industry is fishing; Mauritania also has limited offshore oil reserves.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Since the 1980s, Volunteers have worked in agriculture, environmental conservation, cooperatives, health education, and Guinea worm eradication. In the 1990s, the Peace Corps merged its agriculture and environmental conservation projects into an agroforestry project; cooperatives became small business development; and the Guinea worm eradication project developed into community health, water/sanitation, and disease control. In 2000, Peace Corps/Mauritania reinstated English as a second language and created a new environmental education project. Girls' education and information and communication technology (ICT) projects were created in 2001. Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. As of September 2007, Volunteers are serving in 12 of the 13 regional provinces.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

In Mauritania's informal economic sector, Volunteers transfer basic business skills to cooperative members and micro-entrepreneurs of all ages and genders. Basic skill development for host country trainers and participants includes planning, financial management, marketing, computing, and artisan training. Volunteers also educate business owners and cooperative members on issues of credit and savings to help create new business opportunities and expand existing ones. Several Volunteers work directly with mayors' offices in

smaller towns on tourism and community economic development issues. Other Volunteers work in regional capitals with vocational or high school students on basic business or computing skill sets. ICT is an increasingly important part of the business development sector incorporating areas such as multimedia and Internet use.

One Volunteer applied her combined interest in design, textiles, fair trade, and business to help a local women's tie-dye cooperative market their product to a Los Angeles-based designer. The designer incorporated the locally-produced fabric into clothes sold to department stores in the United States.

Education

Volunteers teach English throughout Mauritania at the middle- and high-school level to students ages 13–20. They work with their host colleagues to improve English teaching skills, helping teachers become more qualified, creative, and effective in a work environment with limited resources. Volunteers also work with designated technical institutions in the capital city of Nouakchott and in small regional towns to provide input on teacher training and the development of English teaching materials.

Volunteers also organize education-related projects focusing on girls' education and empowerment. Working with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Volunteers and their community partners increased the number of girls' mentoring centers in the country to 19. This same partnership brought together girls from across the country to participate in a week-long education conference in the capital. The girls were paired with female university students who encouraged them to continue their education so that they might attend university themselves.

Environment

Volunteers are part of an integrated development effort to improve agricultural and forestry practices throughout rural Mauritania. They work to improve the capacity of local farmers to produce more nutritious food, while protecting and preserving the environment. They also teach improved gardening skills, fruit tree cultivation, and tree planting.

One Volunteer worked with her local mayor's office to establish an annual waste-management education program for their small town. The month-long campaign sought to educate the local community on the importance of—and health benefits resulting from—proper sanitation. The project resulted in the establishment of a local landfill; led to a reduction in the use of plastic sacks by local merchants; and helped in the development of organizational leadership capacity within the community.

Health and HIV/AIDS

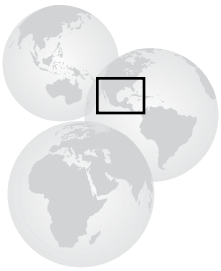
Volunteers strive to improve the health of the rural population by providing communities with the necessary analytical and technical skills to reduce the incidence of water-borne and hygiene-related diseases such as malaria and diarrhea. Activities include teaching community-based health workers and equipping them with tools to better face the challenges of working with limited resources; training youth associations to be HIV/AIDS peer educators; and combining regional malaria campaigns to familiarize communities with protection techniques, mosquito repellent creams, and specific techniques for the treatment of mosquito netting with insecticide. They also promote access to potable water, including building and maintaining wells.

Volunteers have designed and implemented HIV/AIDS trainings of trainers; and, launched major HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in different regions of Mauritania through sports, cultural events, and formal training sessions. A Volunteer worked with a group of local religious leaders to develop a culturally-appropriate HIV/AIDS workshop targeted to young adults. The local religious leaders along with the Volunteer and his counterpart facilitated the workshop discussing basic facts about HIV/AIDS.

"The past two years have truly tested my commitment and fortitude. I leave knowing that my village is a little better off as a result of my time there. I also know that I can never repay my Mauritanian friends for the enormous gift of understanding that they gave me by allowing me into their lives."

Mauritania Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

Mexico



PROGRAM DATES	2004–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Environment

Capital	Mexico City
Population	107 million
Annual per capita income	$7,310
GDP growth	3.0%
Foreign direct investment	$18.7 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 8% Female: 10%
Infant mortality rate	22 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 98% Measles: 96%
Access to an improved water source	97%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.3%
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 89% Protestantism: 6% Other: 5%
Official language	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	61	63
Program funds ($000)	1,958	2,008

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As a nation of 107 million people, Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world. A large percentage of the population lives in poor rural areas, but rural-to-urban migration, as well as migration to the United States, continues to grow rapidly because of rural poverty.

Over the past decade, despite the serious divide between rich and poor, substantial progress has been made in building a modern and diversified economy, improving infrastructure, and tackling the causes of poverty. Educational levels in Mexico have improved in recent decades, and education remains one of the government's highest priorities.

In July 2000, Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN) was elected president. This marked the first time since the Mexican Revolution that the opposition defeated the party in power, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). In July 2006, Felipe Calderón, also of the PAN, was elected after a hotly disputed election. Since his inauguration in December 2006, the Calderón government appears to have stabilized the political situation and has introduced several reform efforts with broad support from the public.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps program in Mexico is a unique partnership that provides an opportunity for the Peace Corps to recruit highly specialized, technically trained, and experienced Volunteers to work alongside Mexican counterparts. The Peace Corps first began exploring the possibility of entering Mexico after Presidents George W. Bush and Fox announced the Partnership for Prosperity initiative during their summit in September 2001. The full partnership accord was signed in November 2003, and the first Volunteers arrived in Mexico in October 2004.

Peace Corps/Mexico seeks to provide top-quality technical assistance by assigning highly experienced Volunteers to help strengthen Mexico's ability to provide jobs to Mexicans and foster economic growth.

Currently, Volunteers work as technical advisors at scientific and research centers of Mexico's Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT). The centers are located mainly in central Mexico, but also in the southernmost state of Chiapas. Volunteers' work with CONACYT has encompassed water and environmental engineering, knowledge management, information and communications technology (ICT), business development, and advanced English teaching.

After a successful start-up phase, the Peace Corps was approached by Mexico's Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) in late 2005 to consider a

similar technical cooperation agreement. After negotiations, an identical agreement was signed in Mexico City on June 13, 2006, between the Secretary of SEMARNAT and the Director of the Peace Corps. In the early stages of the program, SEMARNAT requested that the Peace Corps focus its program on the national forest commission and the national commission for natural protected areas. Volunteers in the environment sector are assigned to these commissions and work primarily in the central region of Mexico.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers are assigned to one of several CONACYT and SEMARNAT entities, where they provide advice and training to help CONACYT become less dependent on federal government funding while better addressing the needs of the private sector. Volunteers work closely with Mexican firms to improve their competitiveness, particularly of small- and medium-sized businesses. Volunteers collaborate in improving business processes, accounting and finance, marketing, and production/operations management.

Volunteers teach English to staff at CONACYT centers to improve their conversational, writing, and technical language skills. In some cases, Volunteers help prepare technical presentations and research findings. The English students include engineers, interns, and CONACYT students involved in research projects.

Volunteers also work in knowledge management to use the most appropriate systems, software, and computer technology to meet data management and information needs. One Volunteer is working with his counterpart to upgrade a data management system so it can be used to produce updated national vegetation maps and forest inventories.

Environment

Volunteers work with CONACYT centers and their clients in activities related to water supply, wastewater treatment, and reducing industrial pollution. Volunteers assess industrial pollution and recommend mitigation strategies and technologies; promote improved hazardous waste-management strategies; assist cities with the planning, design, and implementation of water and sanitation projects; assess and recommend alternative cost-effective water supply and treatment systems; promote watershed protection and management; and seek financial support for pilot projects.

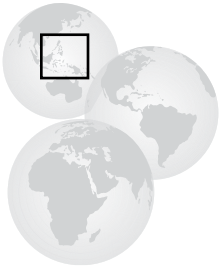
Volunteers working with SEMARNAT focus on alleviating deforestation, forest fires, and soil erosion. They also work on preservation of natural habitats, national parks management, and biospheres. Due to Mexico's critical environmental needs, many state government affiliates of SEMARNAT have also requested to have a Peace Corps Volunteer placed in their agency.

One Volunteer couple is promoting environmental awareness among municipal workers and enhancing the capacity of municipalities to use geographic information systems technology, a computer-based program that assists in resource management, land-use planning, and environmental impact assessments.

"I am using all the experience and knowledge from my previous work in the United States in my Volunteer assignment with my Mexican colleagues. I'm learning as much from them as they are from me. Together, we are producing more energy-efficient industries with less contamination, less discharges, and safer conditions for the people who live here."

Mexico Volunteer
Environment Sector

Micronesia, Federated States of and Palau



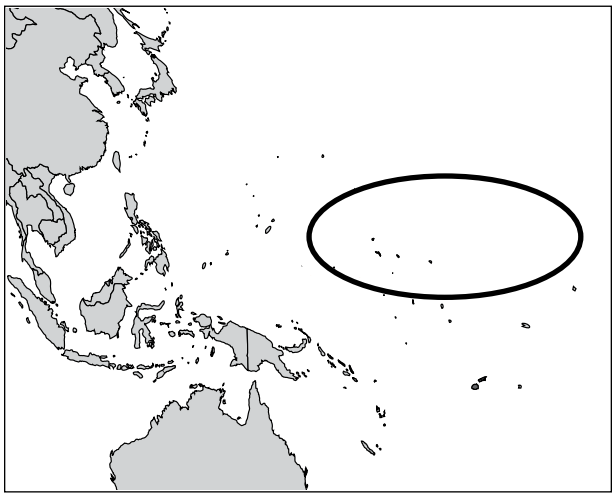
PROGRAM DATES	1966–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education

	FSM	Palau
Capitals	Palikir:	Melekeok
Population	110,500	20,100
Annual per capita income	$2,390	$7,670
GDP growth	1.5%	5.5%
Foreign direct investment	Not available	
Adult illiteracy rate	9%	8%
Infant mortality rate *per 1,000 live births*	33	10
Immunization rate		
DPT:	94%	98%
Measles:	96%	98%
Access to an improved water source	94%	85%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available	
Religions	Protestantism, Roman Catholicism Modekngei (Palau only)	
Official languages	English	

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	76	80
Program funds ($000)	1,933	2,026



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Both the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau are democratic republics, modeled on the U.S. federal system, and each country has a state government. The states of FSM and Palau are highly autonomous, exercising great independence from the federal government. Both countries have economies and governments that are dependent on U.S. Compact of Free Association funds and U.S. foreign aid, which are scheduled to be reduced over time. Both countries lack self-sustaining programs to provide for the needs of their people.

Most people of FSM and Palau have subsistence lifestyles, few private-sector jobs exist, and basic infrastructure, education, and health services are underdeveloped. The new compact agreements require greater accountability for funds and focus on helping FSM and Palau become self-reliant. Developing viable industries and exporting are challenging because of the geographic isolation and small size of FSM and Palau. Additionally, the nations' fragile natural resources are in danger of exploitation.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The focus of the program is to build the capacity of the people so they can provide for their own needs, appreciate and preserve their environment, and provide opportunities and healthy surroundings for youth. Volunteers teach English in schools and work with communities to address locally identified needs. In an effort to give the most disadvantaged students the greatest opportunities for success, Volunteers are placed in schools on remote islands that have the least access to student and teacher resources.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers work in the classroom at the primary and secondary school levels. They teach English as a second language to students and help team teach with local teachers. Volunteers promote a content-based English teaching curriculum that emphasizes current international, national, and island-specific social issues that focus on youth, health, and the environment. Outside the classroom, Volunteers work with host country counterparts to develop teacher-training resources and to conduct workshops to improve teachers' skills and abilities in the classroom.

Additionally, Volunteers work with local youth and community groups on after-school projects involving sports, environmental education, life skills, peer education, and health education with a focus on nutrition-related issues.

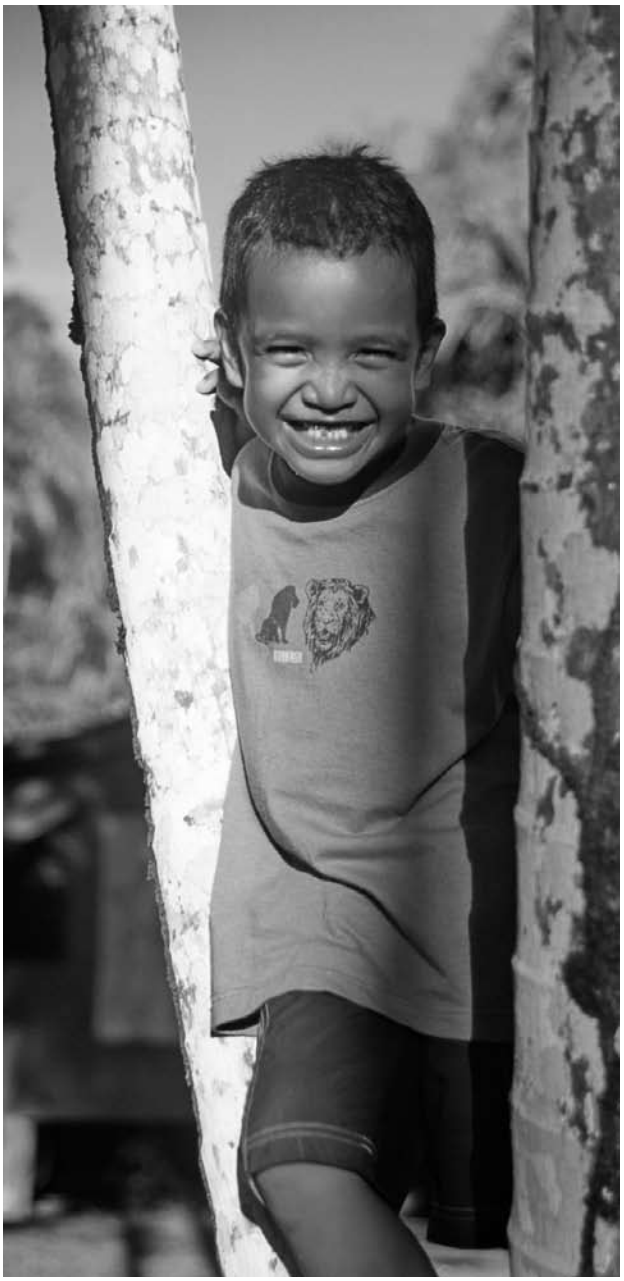
Volunteers help develop youth clubs and peer education groups, including summer camps for island youth.

In addition to teaching at a secondary school, one Volunteer started a successful after-school sports program in his community. Beginning with just a handful of children, the soccer program has grown to include more than 100 children. As popularity of the program grew, adults in the community became interested and volunteered as coaches. The village now has a well-established after-school program with local leadership capable of managing and sustaining the program.

Another Volunteer, working in a very remote island within the State of Yap, teaches at a school that had not had a student pass the national high school entrance exams for more than 10 years. Since the Volunteer began working with students, the school has achieved the number-one ranking in Yap. The school director and community members cite the work of the Volunteer and her inspiration to fellow teachers to excel in their efforts, as the reasons the children performed so well.

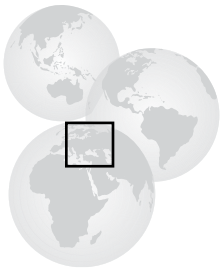
"Palau has enjoyed a wonderful relationship with the Peace Corps over the years. Palauan students have benefited greatly from the work of Peace Corps Volunteers teaching English, math, and science to students in rural elementary schools. It's been working, it's been with us for 40 years, and I hope that it will continue to be around for a long time to come."

President Tommy E. Remengesau Jr.
Palau



Micronesian child at play

Moldova



PROGRAM DATES	1993–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Chisinau
Population	4 million
Annual per capita income	$930
GDP growth	7.1%
Foreign direct investment	$199 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 1% Female: 2%
Infant mortality rate	14 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 98% Measles: 96%
Access to an improved water source	92%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.2%
Religions	Eastern Orthodoxy: 98% Judaism: 1.5% Other: .5%
Official language	Moldovan

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	118	109
Program funds ($000)	2,344	2,284

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Moldova is one of the poorest nations in Europe, though upon independence it was a middle-income country. Rapid rises in energy costs and a ban by Russia on importing Moldovan wine have significantly impacted the local economy and it is one of the region's most heavily indebted countries. Separatist forces in the Transnistrian region along the Ukraine border have prevented the government from exercising full control over its territory, exacerbating economic difficulties. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with the support of the U.S. embassy in Moldova, is seeking a solution to the Transnistrian conflict. Though President Vladimir Voronin has publicly expressed the desire to move toward European Union (EU) membership, the Transnistrian issue must first be resolved. In 2005, Moldova held peaceful parliamentary elections, and the new parliament reelected President Voronin.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Moldovan government is concerned that a lack of English proficiency among its people will inhibit economic contact with the West, and its educational system needs qualified English teachers. The government also recognizes a need to focus on preventive health, though there are no institutions to train health educators and basic healthcare services have deteriorated considerably in recent years. Privatization of the large agricultural industry and dissolution of the centralized control over many aspects of community life have left Moldovans with many needs but lacking some of the skills and approaches needed to make use of available resources and opportunities. Volunteers address these issues with their primary projects; they also work in secondary projects, such as creating information technology centers; leading sports activities, summer camps, and model United Nations programs; and combating human trafficking.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers work with rural business support organizations, farmers, and entrepreneurs to increase income by improving information dissemination channels, enhancing consulting and training centers, and introducing networking and marketing opportunities. Volunteers assist nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with strategic planning and organizational management. They provide training in basic farm management, business planning and financial analysis, and they work to enhance computer literacy.

Two Volunteers helped a local microcredit agency establish a partnership with a large international microcredit institution, resulting in additional funds for projects in the community. Since the partnership began, 83 farmers and rural entrepreneurs have successfully received and repaid their loans.

Education

Volunteers assigned to the teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) program work with students, teachers, and institutions. Volunteers help students improve their skills in the English language, critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making, and they help foster greater environmental awareness. Working with their teaching colleagues, Volunteers lead workshops to train teachers in using content-based instruction in the classrooms. At the institutional level, Volunteers work with schools and communities to improve the quality and the quantity of resource materials available for teaching and learning English. Volunteers also promote the use of information and communications technology inside and outside the classroom.

Two TEFL Volunteers organized a series of seminars to train teachers to use word processing software to create tests and other activities. The seminars also introduced participants to a Volunteer-developed website in which the teachers could find and share lesson plans and other classroom resources.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers works with partner agencies, schools, and healthcare providers to promote health education in Moldova. In schools, Volunteers co-teach health education classes to more than 30,000 students for a minimum of eight hours per week. They also work intensively with students to develop peer-education activities focused on life skills and HIV/AIDS and substance abuse prevention.

One Volunteer collaborated with community partners to conduct lessons and seminars on HIV/AIDS and organized a benefit concert to collect donations for children with HIV.

Youth

Volunteers in the youth sector work with NGOs, local governments, and social service agencies. They focus on organizations that promote sustainable community development, especially in the social welfare field, with activities focused on youth and marginalized groups, such as minorities and the disabled. Volunteer activities range from conducting needs assessments with their organizations to building local bases of resources to implementing community projects.

Several Volunteers designed and implemented a training program for youth camp counselors. The program provided nearly 300 counselors with new tools and techniques to organize youth and leadership development programs.

"The Ministry of Education highly appreciates the activity of Peace Corps Volunteers in achieving our goals for building a democratic society, based on human rights, respect and principles of freedom."

Ludmila Pavlov
Chief, Department of International Relations and European Integration
Ministry of Education and Youth
Moldova

Moldovan school children in the classroom

Mongolia

PROGRAM DATES	1991–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Ulaanbaatar
Population	3 million
Annual per capita income	$690
GDP growth	6.2%
Foreign direct investment	$182 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 2% Female: 2%
Infant mortality rate	39 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 99% Measles: 96%
Access to an improved water source	62%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.1%
Religions	Tibetan Buddhist Lamaism: 94% Islam: 6% Shamanism
Official languages	Khalkha Mongol English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	109	130
Program funds ($000)	2,028	2,127

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In the late 1980s, Mongolia committed to democratization and a free-market economy. While this commitment has remained firm, changes have strained the economic, social welfare, and education systems. Although English language acquisition is important to citizens and the government, most schools do not have enough qualified teachers and resources. The health system faces challenges as it moves from an emphasis on Soviet-style curative treatment to a preventive approach. With 66 percent of the population under 30 years of age, Mongolia is rich with human resources eager to improve quality of life and the future of the country.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps/Mongolia program began with an English education project in 1991 and has since expanded to include programs in other sectors directly relevant to national development priorities. Volunteers focus on sharing skills and knowledge to build local capacity and to assist Mongolians in achieving their development goals.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers assist Mongolia's transition to a free-market economy by building capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Mongolian citizens in business skills and knowledge. Volunteers increase management and strategic planning skills of business owners and transfer knowledge of accounting, bookkeeping, customer service, and information and communication technology. Volunteers have organized seminars on networking, and cost-benefit analysis, and helped rural business owners identify new markets.

One Volunteer consulted with a manager of a rural agribusiness support project on using effective management practices and improving branch operations. Their meetings increased the manager's capacity to effectively serve his clients and provided him with new ideas to develop business and marketing plans as well as negotiate small business loans

Education

In spring 2005, the government named English the official second language of Mongolia. Volunteers build capacity by teaching English to students of secondary schools, colleges, universities, as well as community members. They strengthen educational institutions by training Mongolian English teachers and by developing English education resources.

Volunteers establish libraries and develop audiovisual aids, curricula, and English language newsletters alongside

their Mongolian counterparts. They also work on other activities based on a community's expressed needs, such as life-skills training, literacy, computers, health, ecology, and trafficking in persons.

Twelve Volunteers working with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture organized a summer camp program for Mongolian English teachers. The camps provided an opportunity for the teachers to learn new teaching techniques and to improve their English language skills. One hundred and fifty Mongolian English teachers, representing six regions of Mongolia, participated in the program.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The community health project educates and trains students, community members, and health service providers on disease prevention and public health issues. Volunteers partner with provincial health departments, NGOs, and international agencies to promote public awareness of issues such as sexually transmitted illnesses, including HIV/AIDS, and life skills for Mongolian youth. Volunteers design and implement health education outreach activities and encourage healthy lifestyles.

Volunteers are also developing counselor training curriculum for health service providers, and they help with first aid and CPR training. Volunteers work with the media to disseminate health messages to youth and adults, design training programs in both Mongolian and Kazakh, provide education on nutrition and gardening, and develop health fairs.

A Volunteer working with the Bayankhongor Health Department developed a project to promote basic hygiene and initiated a hand washing program in local kindergartens. To teach the children about hygiene, she wrote a short story in Mongolian about a little boy who did not want to wash his hands until his older brother convinced him. Volunteers and counterparts also modeled hand washing to children and their teachers and parents. After training, follow-up surveys showed that the children, teachers, and parents had learned the lesson well. The project was successfully implemented throughout all local kindergartens in the province.

Youth

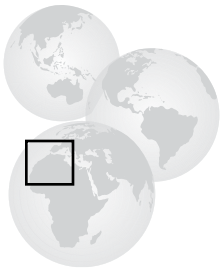
Launched in 2005, the youth development project builds the capacity of youth-serving agencies and supports implementing youth development policies in Mongolia. Volunteers work at local branches of the National Authority for Children, the government body responsible for youth issues in Mongolia. Volunteers are also assigned to nonformal education centers, where school dropouts can receive alternative education.

Volunteers team up with area youth councils, school social workers, NGOs, and other organizations to constructively engage Mongolian youth. In the past few years, Volunteers have initiated numerous projects, including life skills clubs, mentoring and sports programs, and international information exchanges.

"I have always been quite impressed when I came by Peace Corps Volunteers in my travels in the countryside. Peace Corps Volunteers live under difficult circumstances, just like Mongolians."

President H.E. Nambaryn Enkhbayar
Mongolia

Morocco



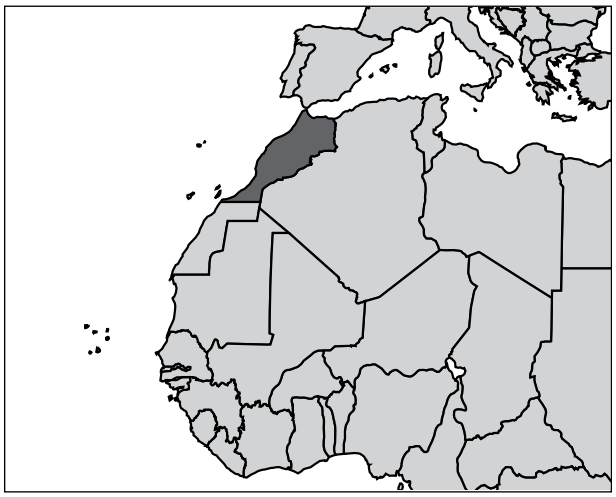
PROGRAM DATES	1962–1991 1991–2003 2003–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Rabat
Population	30 million
Annual per capita income	$1,740
GDP growth	1.7%
Foreign direct investment	$1.552 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 34% Female: 60%
Infant mortality rate	36 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 97% Measles: 95%
Access to an improved water source	81%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.1%
Religions	Islam: 99% Christianity, Judaism
Official language	Arabic

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	235	235
Program funds ($000)	4,028	4,105



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Morocco faces issues typical of most developing countries, including restraining government spending, reducing constraints on private activity and foreign trade, and achieving sustainable economic growth. Morocco remains vulnerable to drought, as rainfall is key to the performance of the agriculture-dominant economy. Financial reforms have been implemented, but long-term challenges remain, such as servicing the debt, improving trade relations with the European Union, increasing education and job prospects for youth, and attracting foreign investment.

Morocco hopes to attract 10 million tourists by 2010 to support small businesses and reduce unemployment. Until then, the government aims to produce quality crafts and to market and export products made by artisans. The kingdom has moved firmly into the reformist, liberalizing camp in the Islamic-Arab world, and has adopted a new family law. The law, considered revolutionary in the Arab and Muslim world, promotes women's rights and places wives on a more equal footing with their husbands.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Nearly a quarter of Moroccans living in rural areas are poor, and literacy rates are low, particularly among girls. Maternal and child health remains a major concern as maternal and infant mortality rates are high. While sexually transmitted diseases are widespread, reports of HIV cases remain low. Climatic swings hamper harvests, while drainage of wetlands, deforestation of public areas, and erosion in national parks present continuing challenges. High unemployment and low wages have limited opportunities for entrepreneurs to access capital, disadvantaging them in a rapidly evolving global economy. Accordingly, Volunteers are assigned to projects in business development, environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Peace Corps Volunteers assist the government in implementing its new small business development strategy at the local level, especially in rural areas. The potential for success of this initiative is based on developing human capital, and Volunteers help with this through participatory training and direct skills transfer. They assist local artisans and build their capacity to be successful in business management, entrepreneurship, organizational development, and computer literacy.

One Volunteer organized a five-day workshop for nearly 30 artisans on using natural dye. Training was provided by a nongovernmental organization that specializes in this technique. The workshop introduced artisans to locally available plants that they can now collect for free from the areas surrounding their communities.

Environment

This project reinforces the government's conservation initiatives and helps rural populations achieve a higher standard of living. Volunteers work with government representatives, youth groups, and environmental interest groups. They assist local organizations, located within national parks and areas of biological and ecological importance, to promote ecotourism and other income-generating activities.

One Volunteer helped 10 women in her community form an agricultural cooperative that produces walnut oil and dried apples, which are sold to tourists. By connecting their agricultural production with local ecotourism, the women are generating income to educate their children and to purchase clothing and medicine for their extended families.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Morocco's high infant mortality rate reflects living conditions associated with poor water quality and inadequate sanitation. Volunteers focus on education for maternal and child health and about safe water. They collaborate to increase community access to health services and assist in educational activities conducted by health officials. With their counterparts, Volunteers have developed and delivered informal after-school health and hygiene lessons and activities for schoolchildren. Volunteers have also organized HIV/AIDS awareness activities in youth centers, high schools, and health clinics.

Seven Volunteers organized a week-long health hike to remote villages to disseminate health information to local women on topics such as water treatment, basic hygiene, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, and vaccinations. Some Volunteers on the hike worked with village leaders to train community members in water treatment procedures that use chlorine provided by local clinics.

Youth

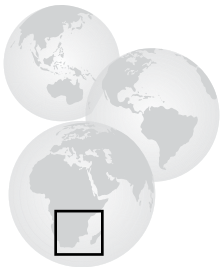
Volunteers encourage youth to attend citizenship and leadership-building activities. They teach content-based English at local youth and women's centers and implement extracurricular activities, such as organizing sports teams, mentoring youth, and teaching computer skills. The Ministry of Youth has made educating girls a priority, so Volunteers and their partners address the needs of local girls, working with teachers, women's centers, and development associations.

Forty Volunteers collaborated to develop and implement a curriculum for English language immersion camps, which were attended by more than 2,500 Moroccan youth. In addition to language instruction, the camps provided participants with valuable lessons on health and leadership.

"English language summer camps have become more significant and valuable in terms of the variety of activities and their content and structure. Our Moroccan youth are exposed to diverse skills in leadership, citizenship, team building and other life skills... ."

Mohamed El Gahs
Secretary General in Charge of Youth
Morocco

Mozambique



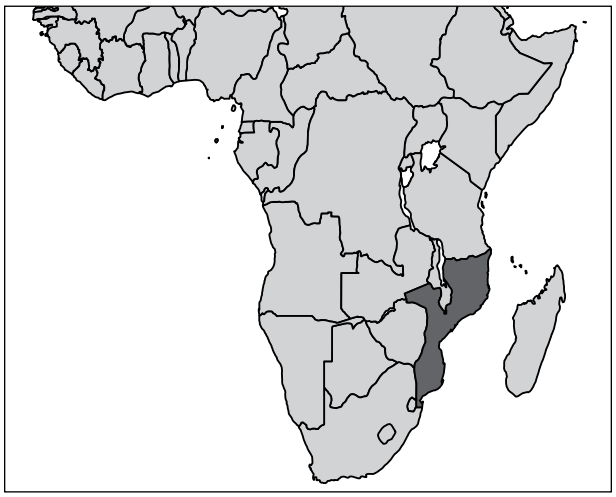
PROGRAM DATES	1998–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Maputo
Population	20 million
Annual per capita income	$310
GDP growth	7.7%
Foreign direct investment	$108 million
Adult illiteracy rate	53.6%
Infant mortality rate	100 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 72% Measles: 77%
Access to an improved water source	43%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	12.2%
Religions	Indigenous and other beliefs: 45% Christianity: 30% Islam: 17%
Official language	Portugese

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	155	149
Program funds ($000)	2,727	2,714



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Mozambique finally achieved a lasting peace in 1992 after nearly 28 years of war. Since its first democratic elections, the government of Mozambique has encouraged development and a free-market economy by privatizing formerly state-owned enterprises, respecting freedom of the press, and promoting the development of an active civil society. In its third general election, conducted in 2004, President Joaquim Chissano stepped down and was succeeded by Armando Guebuza, who had won the popular vote. Since assuming office, the Guebuza government has taken steps to increase educational opportunities, reduce corruption, and support a sustained and energetic campaign to educate Mozambicans about HIV/AIDS and combat the pandemic.

In spite of its low position on the 2006 United Nations Human Development Index—ranking 168 of 177—Mozambique is making progress in developing agricultural, hydropower, and transportation resources. Economic improvements include linking secondary urban centers throughout the country to the power grid of the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric dam; constructing a natural gas pipeline to South Africa; restoring factories; and increasing investment and development in coal and rare-minerals mining. Even with these economic improvements, however, Mozambique is still plagued by extensive rural poverty, poor infrastructure, dispersed population, low education levels, and high rates of HIV/AIDS. Treatable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhea, and respiratory infections remain the most common causes of premature deaths, particularly of children and infants.

PROGRAM FOCUS

In the education sector, the Peace Corps assists Mozambique in secondary-level English and science teaching and primary school teacher training. In the health and HIV/AIDS sector, Volunteers work with international and Mozambican organizations in the countrywide struggle to educate the population about HIV/AIDS and reduce the prevalence of the disease and its devastating effects. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in the promotion of HIV/AIDS awareness.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers provide English and science instruction to students in secondary and technical schools. Last school year, 61 Volunteers taught 19,000 students in English and biology. Additionally, Volunteers support Mozambican teachers in

expanding teaching methodologies, improving English communication skills, and developing educational materials. Volunteers work in training institutes to help future teachers develop resources to create effective visual aids for their classes.

One Volunteer compiled an easily reproducible Portuguese-English dictionary with the most commonly spoken words in Mozambique. This dictionary is now used by Volunteers, teachers, and students in many schools across the country. In addition to their primary assignments, Volunteers promote education outside the classroom with activities such as tutoring, coaching, organizing school libraries, guiding boys' and girls' clubs, organizing inter-school science fairs, promoting community projects, and organizing national boys' and girls' leadership conferences. Volunteers are also trained to be advocates and educators for HIV/AIDS prevention.

Last year, Volunteers hosted a large science fair, bringing together counterparts and students from schools across five provinces. The Regional Science and AIDS Awareness Fair, attended by nearly 1,000 people, showcased student science projects and incorporated educational messages about HIV/AIDS.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers serve across the country to help build the capacity of small organizations and community groups to combat HIV/AIDS. Volunteers help their counterparts improve planning and management; train youth groups on life skills so young people learn to make better health choices; support groups for persons living with HIV/AIDS; provide technical training to staff and community volunteers; and help develop new strategies, ideas, and materials, such as HIV newsletters and radio campaigns. With training and materials supported by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Volunteers provided care for orphans and vulnerable children, offered palliative care to those infected by HIV/AIDS, and educated high-risk groups.

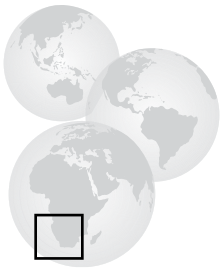
Volunteers helped organize national youth leadership conferences in 2007, which were attended by boys and girls, Mozambican teachers and students from all of the regions of the country. Participants discussed critical issues for young women and men, including gender roles, HIV/AIDS awareness, healthy behaviors, and men's and women's roles in HIV prevention. The students received training in creative HIV/AIDS awareness activities to use in their own communities after the conference, including theater, journalism, photojournalism, and art/mural painting. Volunteers support these micro-projects by helping to obtain funding and by providing technical assistance.

One Volunteer designed a peer education program for girls in her community ages 15 to 20. The girls participated in peer education and health training and then continued with weekly meetings on HIV/AIDS, health, and life skills. The girls in turn facilitated HIV/AIDS and life skills activities and sessions for more than 3,000 community girls. Another Volunteer provided organizational support and training in small business skills to a new women's association. The Volunteer worked with the organization to design and implement a sustainability plan for income-generating activities. The sustainability plan included intensive education components in language, health, life skills, and technical skills.

"My project and my experience in Mozambique has been an awesome learning experience and very worthwhile. It is obvious from the dedication of the leaders in my community that the project that I helped launch will continue long after my Peace Corps service has ended."

Mozambique Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

Namibia



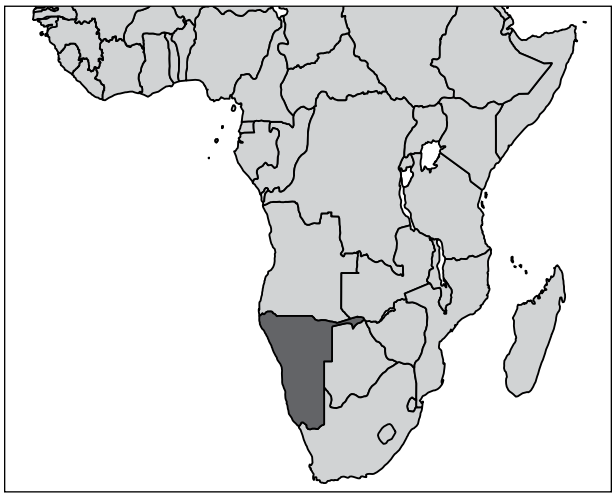
PROGRAM DATES	1990–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Windhoek
Population	2 million
Annual per capita income	$2,990
GDP growth	3.5%
Foreign direct investment	Not available
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 13% Female: 17%
Infant mortality rate	46 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 81% Measles: 70%
Access to an improved water source	87%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	21.2%
Religions	Christianity Indigenous beliefs
Official languages	English (Afrikaans)

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	87	83
Program funds ($000)	2,749	2,743



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since independence in 1990, Namibia has established sound political and economic frameworks that make it one of the most stable countries in Africa. Namibians are encouraged to participate in shaping laws and government policies. Namibia also invests heavily in the social sector, including education, rural development, and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Reflecting its political maturity, Namibia completed without incident its first change of top political leadership since independence when Hifikepunye Pohamba was elected president in November 2004. The economy is growing at an encouraging rate, but serious challenges remain to Namibia's continued progress. The disparity between rich and poor is one of the highest in the world. The apartheid system of job allocation and education continues to negatively influence employment in all economic sectors, with overall unemployment in excess of 30 percent. Namibia has also been devastated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and infection rates are some of the highest in the world. Encouragingly, the government is aggressively implementing efforts to contain the threat.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Immediately after Namibia's independence in 1990, the Ministry of Education began to reform the apartheid-based educational system and to introduce English as the medium of instruction. The first Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Namibia several months after independence and, since then, Volunteers have continued to strengthen these educational reform measures. Peace Corps/Namibia still collaborates extensively with the Ministry of Education and the education program remains the principal platform for the Peace Corps' contribution to Namibia's economic and social development.

In the fight against HIV/AIDS, the Peace Corps has increased its cooperation with Namibia's ministries of Health; Youth and Sports; and Education, along with Namibian faith- and community-based organizations. In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and USAID/Namibia, Volunteers directly support government ministries and faith- and community-based organizations through operational capacity building and by providing community-level training in AIDS prevention, positive living, and home-based care. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Peace Corps/Namibia contributes to educational reform and development through teacher training and support, classroom teaching (science, mathematics, and English), and by promoting new information and communication technologies. One Volunteer provided teacher-training workshops to train teachers on how to mentor and prepare their students for science fair competitions.

Volunteers are also working to open up the "world beyond the village" for their students. One Volunteer organized a field trip for a school girls club, which for many was their first trip to the capital. The girls shadowed different professional women for a day in occupations ranging from work at a printing press, to an environmental consulting group, and even the assistant to the Chief Justice at the Supreme Court.

Volunteers are also working directly with the Ministry of Education to support systemic change. In one example, a Volunteer is working with the ministry to organize a mobile computer lab to bring computer awareness and basic computer skills to isolated schools. Another Volunteer, located in the north, is working with the ministry to develop math reference and examination preparation books to distribute to math students throughout the region. Many Volunteers also organize and stock school libraries and create programs to interest children in reading. One Volunteer organized a "bookmobile" to travel to rural schools that do not have access to a library.

All education Volunteers in Namibia now integrate HIV/AIDS information into their classrooms and their secondary projects. One Volunteer worked with a school AIDS club to plan and implement an HIV/AIDS awareness week that included marches, an assembly program, and the distribution of informational brochures on HIV/AIDS.

Health and HIV/AIDS

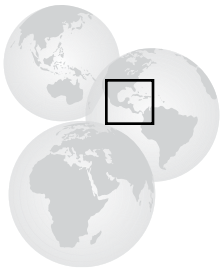
The involvement of Volunteers in HIV/AIDS prevention is expanding. Volunteers are working to strengthen the operational capacity of HIV/AIDS programs in both the government and the community- and faith-based sectors. For example, one Volunteer, a lawyer by training, worked with the Legal Assistance Center on HIV/AIDS law. She prepared a resource book on AIDS law in Namibia. The book is being published and will be distributed to judges and lawyers, and will also be made available to all organizations working in the field of HIV/AIDS. This will provide much needed access to information on the rights of individuals infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, under Namibian law.

Volunteers are also directly involved in youth outreach and HIV/AIDS prevention activities through community mobilization programs, rural HIV/AIDS workshops, and the establishment of youth clubs with an HIV/AIDS focus. One Volunteer organized a youth wilderness camp for a group of orphans and other vulnerable children. The camp provided these children with an opportunity to learn about HIV/AIDS prevention in a safe and supportive environment.

"I want to mention in particular the role played by the U.S. Peace Corps. We honor the sacrifices they [Peace Corps Volunteers] make in always being prepared to serve even in the very remotest areas of our country, where modern facilities are non-existent. I want to take this opportunity, therefore, on behalf of the Government of Namibia, to thank the young Volunteers for the unwavering service they are rendering to the Namibian people."

The Honorable Lempy Lucas, MP
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Namibia

Nicaragua



PROGRAM DATES	1968–1979 1991-present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Managua
Population	5 million
Annual per capita income	$950
GDP growth	4.0%
Foreign direct investment	$241 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 23% Female: 23%
Infant mortality rate	30 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 84% Measles: 66%
Access to an improved water source	79%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.2%
Religion	Roman Catholicism: 85%
Official language	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	205	198
Program funds ($000)	2,874	2,959

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Nicaragua is a constitutional democracy with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The president and members of the unicameral National Assembly are elected to concurrent five-year terms. Though the turbulent events of the past few decades have been widely reported, Nicaragua has become the newest democracy in the Americas. The latest presidential elections resulted in Daniel Ortega's return to power. Mr. Ortega served as Nicaragua's president from 1985 to 1990.

Nicaragua has the appropriate soil, climate, and altitude for cultivating a wide variety of crops and livestock. Its rivers, volcanoes, coastlines, timber, and mineral resources present impressive economic potential as well as a great challenge to sound environmental management.

More than half of Nicaragua's population is underemployed or unemployed. The country has suffered from repeated catastrophic natural disasters that have compromised the fragile food security of many rural areas. Limited access to healthcare and health education has led to a high infant and maternal mortality. More than one-fourth of young women have their first child by age 19. Economic development is critically impaired by the limited availability of business education and poor access to credit.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps' program works to help Nicaraguans respond to the challenges of economic development and improve their quality of life through projects in agriculture, business development, education, environment, and health and HIV/AIDS.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

The agriculture project focuses on raising the standard of living of rural farming families by increasing food security, generating income opportunities, and fostering community development. Volunteers work closely with field technicians from the National Agricultural Technological Institute, development organizations, and community leaders, to assist rural households develop various skills, including gardening.

In collaboration with community leaders, one Volunteer helped build a footbridge over a stream that swells during the rainy season, isolating the community. The new bridge provides year-round access to neighboring schools, health facilities, and markets, which in the past had been inaccessible during the rains.

Business Development

The business development project focuses on the nation's youth, providing them with business and life skills to enhance their capacity to gain meaningful employment and to increase their economic opportunities. In a creative business course, primarily in secondary and vocational schools, Volunteers teach all phases of business enterprise development. Volunteers also provide basic business consulting advice to small business owners in their communities.

One Volunteer worked with her Nicaraguan counterpart to deliver the creative enterprise course to 28 11th-grade students who needed to fulfill a requirement for high school graduation. As part of the course, the students formed four businesses, one of which participated in a fair hosted by the Nicaraguan Rural Development Institute (IDR). The student-run business was well-received and students were invited to apply for a micro-business loan from IDR to formalize their business.

Education

Education sector projects focus on strengthening capabilities and skills of Nicaraguan English teachers. Working directly with the Ministry of Education (MINED), Volunteers build capacity of secondary school English teachers through team teaching and teacher-training activities in urban and rural communities of selected departments. In addition to their work in schools, Volunteers also offer English classes to community members, including nongovernmental organization staff, adolescents, and younger children.

Environment

Volunteers in the environment project have worked with MINED to create and publish an environmental education guide for primary schools. Volunteers assigned to rural school districts work with at least three elementary schools in their respective districts and use interactive, student-centered methods and community efforts to address local environmental concerns.

One Volunteer, who worked on environmental initiatives in a rural community, used her past experience working with the deaf to include a group of local deaf children in lessons and activities. The Volunteer taught environmental education lessons to the children using sign language and also provided sign language lessons for hearing members of the community so that they could better communicate with the deaf children.

Health and HIV/AIDS

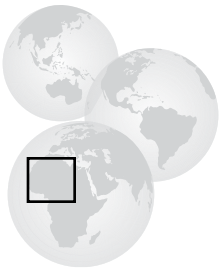
Volunteers teach community members basic prevention techniques that will help them avoid or diminish the effects of some devastating but controllable diseases. Volunteers in the health and HIV/AIDS project works directly with the Ministry of Health and focuses on hygiene education, nutrition, adolescent health, and maternal and infant health. Volunteers also conduct HIV/AIDS prevention activities with youth and at-risk populations.

A Volunteer and his ministry counterpart worked with a youth group to produce a student-run call-in radio show. The show provides a venue to communicate important health messages, such as HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, to a large, diverse audience.

"My service as a Peace Corps Volunteer has allowed me to look at the world in a new way and learn more than I ever thought possible about myself and the world around me. In short, my eyes are a little wider, my vision a little bit deeper, and my heart more open. I have truly become part of a new and different culture and impacted people like I never thought possible."

Nicaragua Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

Niger



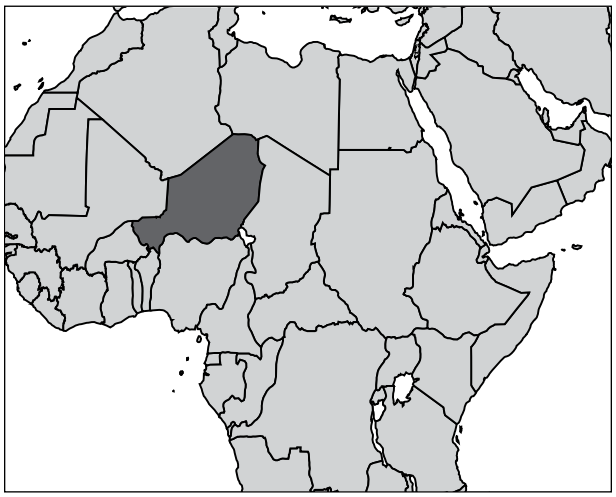
PROGRAM DATES	1962–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Niamey
Population	14 million
Annual per capita income	$240
GDP growth	4.5%
Foreign direct investment	$12 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 57% Female: 85%
Infant mortality rate	150 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 25% Measles: 35%
Access to an improved water source	46%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.2%
Religions	Islam: 95% Indigenous beliefs Christianity
Official language	French

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	141	154
Program funds ($000)	3,098	3,310



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 1960, Niger became a constitutional democracy with an elected president and national assembly, but it was not until 1993 that the country held free and fair elections. A military coup occurred in 1996, but in late 1999, democratic elections were held again. Since then, Niger has remained politically stable. The last elections were held in December 2004, and incumbent President Mamadou Tandja won a second term. The next scheduled elections in Niger are to occur in 2009.

Niger remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 177 out of 177 on the 2006 United Nations Human Development Index. Natural impediments include its landlocked position, its limited arable land, and the drought susceptibility of its agriculturally-based economy. These obstacles are compounded by a large population with limited skills, rapid population growth, intense exploitation of fragile soils, and insufficient health services. According to a 2006 survey by Famine Early Warning System, 30 percent of Niger's population (about 3.6 million people) is malnourished with many more considered vulnerable to malnutrition. The inability to produce, access, and use adequate quantities of food is the central concern for most Nigerien households as well as for the government of Niger.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps entered Niger in 1962 with seven Volunteers teaching English as a foreign language. Volunteers now work in agriculture, business development, education, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS to help Nigerien communities. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Agricultural production is Niger's number-one concern. The agriculture project, in conjunction with the Ministries of Planning, Agricultural Development, and Animal Resources, helps develop local strategies to improve household food production. Volunteers work directly with farmers in their villages on issues such as water harvesting, crop rotation, soil fertility management, and improved animal husbandry.

One Volunteer lived and worked in a small rural community of 50 households near an ancient underground river. The Volunteer helped the women and children build a community garden and set up a community vegetable seed bank so community members could sustain the garden well into the future.

Business Development

The business development project supports the Nigerien government's priority of decentralization and local governance. The project was launched in 2005 with the Ministry of Community Development and Territorial Management and local government councils. Volunteers organize local governance trainings for council members in their communities to help improve local governments through capacity building of the citizenry and public services.

A Volunteer assisted the new municipal government in his area to develop, plan, and conduct their first community census. The Volunteer also helped plan and implement a workshop on local governance procedures and governmental decentralization for 47 new municipal government leaders.

Education

In 2000, the Nigerien Ministry of Education began a 10-year education program designed to ensure access to quality education for all Nigeriens. In 2003, in direct response to the emphasis the government of Niger put on the development of its education system, Peace Corps/Niger reentered the education sector by inaugurating a community- and youth-education project.

Volunteers work with local counterparts to strengthen the capacities of teachers and vocational trainers to work with youth; increase awareness of girls' education at the community level; and teach English as a second language to community members.

A Volunteer and his counterpart organized a workshop for 37 English teachers to expose them to new teaching methodologies, lesson planning strategies, and classroom games. Other sessions covered incorporating HIV/AIDS-related material into lessons and improving classroom management skills. During this workshop, the teachers increased their teaching skills, motivation, and self-confidence.

Environment

In Niger, where food production is a primary concern, the environment and natural resources are often overexploited. Land degradation, the second-highest population growth rate in the world, and diminishing natural resources are critical problems. Volunteers implement land reclamation/anti-erosion activities, organize tree plantings, and conduct environmental education and awareness sessions.

Three Volunteers participated in the annual census count of the last group of wild giraffes in West Africa. They collected data, documented increases in numbers, and developed conservation strategies with local wildlife agents. They also educated local communities on the importance of a healthy giraffe population and habitat, which helped improve eco-tourism in the area.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Niger has one of the world's highest infant mortality rates. More than 40 percent of children under age five are chronically malnourished. The primary focus of the health project is to promote good nutrition skills and practices among mothers.

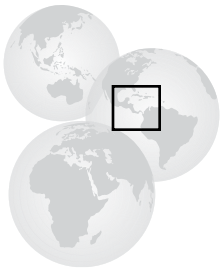
In a successful Guinea worm eradication project, Volunteers educated people in endemic zones and treated infested ponds. Peace Corps/Niger also promotes HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention through an annual AIDS bike ride that reaches several thousand people every year.

One Volunteer, in collaboration with the nongovernmental organization Action Contre la Faim, taught 188 women and 203 girls about basic nutrition at centers in five villages. Knowing that many relief-oriented NGOs do not have the time to focus on basic nutrition education, the Volunteer has worked to assure that the families served by the NGO also benefit from learning how to keep their babies healthy with food they can provide themselves.

"During my time as a Volunteer here in Niger, I have learned patience, how to laugh, and how to make the best of what you've got. It is an experience I wouldn't trade for the world."

Niger Volunteer
Agriculture Sector

Panama



PROGRAM DATES	1963–1971 1990–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Panama City
Population	3 million
Annual per capita income	$4,630
GDP growth	6.4%
Foreign direct investment	$1.027 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 7% Female: 9%
Infant mortality rate	19 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 99% Measles: 72%
Access to an improved water source	90%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.9%
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 84% Protestantism: 15% Other: 1%
Official language	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	178	196
Program funds ($000)	3,263	3,436

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Panama's history has been shaped by globalization and the ambitious dreams of Europeans and Americans. The achievements of the Panama Canal and the construction of skyscrapers in Panama City obscure the reality that nearly 40 percent of Panamanians, particularly members of indigenous groups, live in poverty. Panama is also threatened by a rising incidence of HIV/AIDS.

Panama's greatest resource—and foundation for future success—is its environment, which is in peril. Poor management of natural resources has led to alarming rates of deforestation, erosion, and pollution. Panama's famed biological diversity is threatened as ecosystems, including coastal and marine systems, are degraded. As Panama looks to expand tourism and the Panama Canal, these natural resources are more important than ever.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps works in Panama's poorest rural and indigenous areas to identify, develop, and promote sustainable development projects. The combined effect of these projects leads to greater income-generation opportunities, increased food security, more efficient use and conservation of natural resources, greater environmental stewardship, and improved health and sanitation in Panama's poorest areas. Volunteers partner with the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, and Education, as well as with the National Environmental Authority, indigenous councils, and many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Traditionally, Panamanian agriculture has been based on slash and burn land-clearing techniques, which cause extensive soil erosion and habitat loss. The sustainable agriculture systems project works to preserve natural resources while increasing viable income sources for farmers. Volunteers work with subsistence farmers to increase production using new agriculture methods and principles. Volunteers also work to promote small-scale agribusiness, and they have helped create integrated farm plans, resulting in experimental vegetable plots, irrigation systems, improved pasture grasses, increased production and sales of cacao, new coffee plant nurseries, and reforestation with native tree species.

Three Volunteers worked with local cacao experts to design and implement seminars for small organic cacao and banana producers. Led by the Ministry of Agriculture and two other local organizations, the eight-seminar series

provided 30 farmers with training in improved methods of production and management. Attendees also received a manual containing the information presented at the seminar, enabling them to return to their communities and share the new techniques with other farmers.

Business Development

Volunteers help increase household and community incomes by supporting community cooperatives, community-based tourism initiatives, and youth and information technology programs. To further support youth development and employability, Peace Corps/Panama supports Junior Achievement programs in schools. Volunteers help establish computer centers and training in schools and communities interested in increasing computer literacy to prepare youth for work.

Volunteers are working on projects that focus on preparing rural communities to participate in tourism, the fastest growing sector of Panama's economy. Volunteers increase the capacity of community groups to manage tourism locally while developing infrastructure and providing training in customer service. Additionally, Volunteers partner with the Ministry of Education to provide assistance in teaching English as a second language to both students and adults, increasing their ability to converse with tourists.

Environment

Volunteers help protect Panama's imperiled environment by working in and around priority protected areas, including the Panama Canal watershed. Volunteers work with community-based conservation groups to promote the use of appropriate technologies that conserve resources and increase the quality of life. Volunteers also work in schools and with youth groups to teach environmental conservation and promote greater environmental stewardship.

Five Volunteers developed an environmental campaign with the Ministry of Education based on the *Captain Planet* television series. The campaign encourages elementary school students to participate in educational games and activities based on the elements of water, air, earth, and fire.

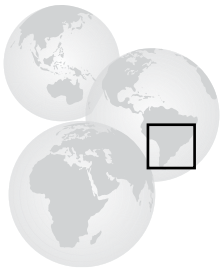
Health and HIV/AIDS

The health project addresses health and sanitation issues in the poorest indigenous communities, as well as HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. With a focus on access to potable water, availability of proper sanitation services, and improving hygiene, Volunteers help the Ministry of Health develop action plans, design infrastructure, and identify needy communities.

Working with the Ministry of Health, a group of Volunteers facilitated workshops for 10 community water committees. The workshops covered watershed management, water committee management, and properly managing water fees.

Volunteers work with children to educate them about their environment

Paraguay



PROGRAM DATES	1967–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Asunción
Population	6 million
Annual per capita income	$1,040
GDP growth	2.9%
Foreign direct investment	$64 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 7% Female: 10%
Infant mortality rate	20 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 76% Measles: 89%
Access to an improved water source	86%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.5%
Religion	Roman Catholicism: 90%
Official languages	Guaraní Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	179	183
Program funds ($000)	3,309	3,396

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Paraguay has labored under serious economic challenges for the past decade, aggravated by inadequate government policies. The current government administration, elected in August 2003, has attempted to tackle the country's problems, but social and economic development continue to be difficult challenges. The next presidential elections are scheduled for April 2008.

Paraguay has a predominantly agricultural economy and vast hydroelectric resources. Its main exports are soybeans, sesame seed, cotton, grains, cattle, timber, sugar, and electricity. Imports account for the vast majority of industrial products. The market economy contains a large informal sector that features re-exporting imported goods to neighboring countries and activities of thousands of micro-enterprises and street vendors.

Limited access to land resources and economic opportunities cause significant migration of the predominantly rural population to Paraguay's urban centers and to neighboring countries. Subsequent urban unemployment and underemployment are pressing challenges for the government.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps opened its program in Paraguay in 1967; since that time more than 3,000 Volunteers have served in this South American nation. To help address Paraguay's critical needs, Volunteers are assigned to projects in the areas of agriculture, business development, education, environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Farming employs 45 percent of the labor force, but the country is experiencing decreased agricultural productivity because of soil erosion and poor pest control practices. Volunteers work with small-scale farmers to improve soils, diversify crops, seek new markets, and identify income-generating activities. Projects promote horticulture and food crops for domestic consumption, reducing dependence on cotton as the single cash crop and increasing nutritional levels in the diet of Paraguayans. Volunteers have assisted farmers with procuring technical information and seeds for farm diversification efforts, provided orientation in planting new crops, and helped organize farmer's markets.

Business Development

Volunteers provide technical training and assistance to rural agricultural cooperatives and farmers' associations to increase income and job opportunities. They work with cooperatives to improve their administrative and organizational operations, management, accounting, and marketing efforts. Volunteers help cooperatives diversify their services in credit and provide technical assistance to farmers and consumer clubs. They provide computer training courses to cooperative employees, members, and their families. Volunteers also collaborate with municipal governments to improve the planning and delivery of services to underserved communities, and they help municipalities modernize their data-collection techniques and services. Volunteers also help train neighborhood commissions on project design and management and civic education.

One Volunteer worked with his municipality to develop a database to track property ownership in the district. The database will improve the municipality's ability to collect property tax payments, and resulting increased revenues will be used to improve services for community members.

Education

Volunteers train kindergarten through third-grade teachers in improved communication and math-teaching techniques. They also help teachers develop lesson plans that incorporate health, hygiene, nutrition, and gender equality issues. Volunteers implement community education projects during summer and winter vacations and assist families and schools in supporting children with special needs. Volunteers also work with community organizations, including health posts, municipalities, neighborhood commissions, nongovernmental organizations, youth, and women's groups in specific community projects. Several Volunteers have been assigned to teacher-training colleges to strengthen student teachers' skills.

One Volunteer planned a career day for girls between the ages of 8 and 12. The girls, from rural communities, traveled to the departmental capital to shadow professional women in their jobs for a day, and they participated in several leadership and self-esteem building activities.

Environment

Environmental degradation is increasing in Paraguay dramatically. Much of the deforestation, contamination, and inappropriate land use are due to lack of knowledge of the environment's importance and the impact that human activity can have on it. Volunteers help to increase crop diversity through the integration of important forestry species on fragile deforested farmland. They also work with farmers to incorporate green manure and other soil-conservation techniques. Volunteers incorporate environmental education into school curricula and participate in village-based projects to support the Ministry of Education's reforms.

Health and HIV/AIDS

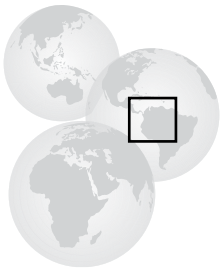
Volunteers work with the Ministry of Public Health to promote preventive healthcare practices among nurses, parents, and community members. In addition, Volunteers work with various national and international agencies such as Paraguay's National Environmental Sanitation Service, Children's Ministry, Plan International, and UNICEF. They focus on dental health, parasite prevention, HIV/AIDS awareness, and nutrition education. They also help construct brick ovens, protect and decontaminate water sources, and construct and improve sanitary latrines.

One Volunteer in collaboration with the Paraguayan National Children's Ministry, held two workshops that taught 100 youth to be peer health educators. Each participant has promised to peer educate 100 other youths, and eventually, more than 10,000 youth will receive education about values, communication, self esteem, and sexually transmitted diseases.

Youth

Volunteers live in marginal urban communities and work to form or strengthen youth groups associated with a variety of formal and informal institutions. Some Volunteers also work with street children. By integrating life-skills education into various organized activities, Volunteers help Paraguayan youth develop appropriate social and job skills, which, in turn, promote community service. Volunteers also help improve youth employment prospects by teaching basic computer skills and other skills to strengthen their employment potential.

Peru



PROGRAM DATES	1962–1975 2002–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Lima
Population	28 million
Annual per capita income	$2,650
GDP growth	6.4%
Foreign direct investment	$2.519 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 7% Female: 18%
Infant mortality rate	23 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 89% Measles: 87%
Access to an improved water source	83%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.5%
Religion	Roman Catholicism: 90%
Official languages	Quechua Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	182	200
Program funds ($000)	3,359	3,518

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Peru has significant development challenges. Some 46 percent of the population lives below the official poverty line ($58 per month), with 19 percent living in extreme poverty (under $32 per month). Peru is plagued by severe unemployment and underemployment, and a significant portion of economic activity occurs in the informal sector. Large segments of the population suffer from nutritional deficiencies and limited access to basic health care services. However, under the leadership of former President Alejandro Toledo and current President Alan García, economic and social programs have been implemented to address these issues, and an array of local and international development agencies are working with the Peruvian government to support these initiatives.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Peru was one of the first countries to welcome Peace Corps Volunteers. Since 1962, more than 2,500 Volunteers have served in-country. Volunteers worked in grassroots health, agriculture, education, and business development projects until the program closed in 1975. Returning in 2002, Peace Corps/Peru is responding to the national development goals of strengthening civil society, reducing poverty, and building human capital. The program has projects in business development, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

To address the critical issues of poverty and underemployment, Volunteers help farmer associations, artisan associations, and other small businesses improve their income and profitability through new marketing approaches, and better administrative and organizational practices. Volunteers are also engaged in linking these small businesses to world markets through information and communication technology.

Last year, 35 Volunteers and 59 Peruvian counterparts participated in an artisan fair sponsored by Peace Corps/Peru and held at the U.S. Embassy in Lima. The fair provided artisans and farmers the opportunity to display and sell their wares to a diverse group of attendees. Participants also attended educational workshops on marketing and product design led by Volunteers.

Environment

Despite a wealth of natural resources and biodiversity, there is a marked lack of environmental awareness among the general population. Rapid urbanization has bought about the loss of fragile ecosystems, problems with waste disposal, and water use issues. In more remote areas, unsustainable exploitation of resources is occurring, and only a small percentage of Peru's territory is protected. Volunteers are helping to build sustained environmental awareness and practices in rural and small urban communities. In cooperation with the public sector and nongovernmental organizations, Volunteers are giving classroom sessions; forming environmental youth clubs; encouraging community members to engage in environmentally sound income-generating activities; training residents in proper forestry and water use techniques; working with authorities on appropriate trash disposal activities; and promoting ecotourism.

A Volunteer worked with the local municipal government to institute a solid-waste management program that included recycling. With the Volunteer's assistance, the municipality established a sanitary landfill, regular trash pickup, and a recycling center. The municipality has been recognized by the national government as being one of only 20 rural communities in the country to institute an effective waste management program, and the program has been used as a model for other communities.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Peru has high incidences of preventable illnesses. In rural areas, there is considerable infant mortality and chronic child malnutrition. Working with the Ministry of Health and nongovernmental organizations, Volunteers carry out health promotion activities with youth, women's groups, and a variety of community organizations. They cover topics such as HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, upper respiratory infections, proper hygiene, and improved nutritional practices. Volunteers work with school-aged children to teach them the importance of hand washing; train community leaders on the importance of clean drinking water; and help establish school and family gardens. Increasingly, Volunteers and their counterparts are using radio and television for their health promotion activities.

Youth

Over 50 percent of the children in Peru live below the poverty line. Many children are sent to the streets to sell candy or find other ways to earn a few coins a day. Facilities that serve orphaned, abandoned, or abused children provide little more than food and shelter, and the residents have almost no chance of finding employment when they must leave at age 18. Among less disadvantaged low-income youth there are significant issues with self-esteem, drug abuse, crime, and unemployment.

Working with Peruvian counterparts, Volunteers teach vocational and life skills, encourage healthy and principled habits, and build self-esteem.

One Volunteer collaborated with the community health center in her area to teach teen mothers healthy lifestyle skills and to assist them in developing small business skills and projects. Traditionally, the vast majority of teenage mothers drop out of school and lose the opportunity to develop a career. These young mothers are now able to make informed decisions regarding their future goals and to become more financially independent.

"The Peace Corps provides an experience that is rich in ways that were previously unimaginable to me. I am continually awestruck by my townspeople's resourcefulness and attentiveness to what is truly important in life. What wonderful Peace Corps Volunteers they would make!"

Peru Volunteer
Youth Development Sector

Philippines

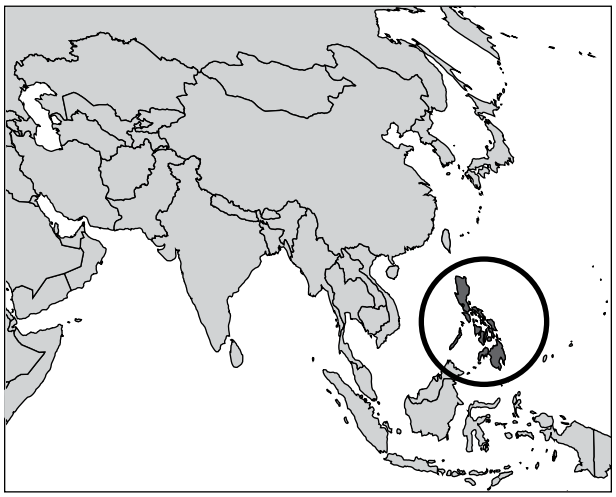
PROGRAM DATES	1961–1990 1992–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Environment Youth

Capital	Manila
Population	83 million
Annual per capita income	$1,320
GDP growth	5.0%
Foreign direct investment	$1.132 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 7% Female: 7%
Infant mortality rate	25 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 79% Measles: 80%
Access to an improved water source	85%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.1%
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 85% Protestantism: 9% Islam: 5% Buddhism and other: 1%
Official languages	English Filipino (based on Tagalog)

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	117	124
Program funds ($000)	2,673	2,682



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Over hundreds of years, interactions of migrants and indigenous people in the Philippine Archipelago created a culture that is uniquely Filipino while encompassing Indo-Malay, Chinese, Pacific, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Spanish, and American elements. In the past century, many Filipinos have had complex and deep associations with the United States. Americans in the Philippines experience a high level of amity that has few rivals across the world.

Philippine politics are very active at national, regional, and local levels. Government structures include a constitution, presidential executive, bicameral legislature, and independent judiciary.

Significant debt service requirements and low levels of effective tax collection leave relatively few government resources for development. Persistent problems of corruption and frequent natural disasters further drain resources that are urgently needed to cope with rapid population growth, declining services, and lagging job creation. An estimated 14 percent of Filipinos—more than 11 million people—live in extreme poverty, while a small elite enjoy an opulent, privileged lifestyle. Millions of Filipinos work overseas, and wage remittances are crucial for the survival of many families.

English and Tagalog are official languages. Historically, a large English-speaking Filipino population helped attract foreign investment. More recently the promotion of Tagalog and a sustained decline in public education have led to widespread loss of English fluency. This is threatening economic development for the Philippines and causing great alarm among business and political leaders.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The program in the Philippines is the second oldest in the Peace Corps. It began with the arrival of 123 education Volunteers in October 1961. Since then, more than 8,000 Volunteers have served in the Philippines. In June 1990, the program was suspended because of communist rebel activity; it resumed in 1992.

Volunteers address the development priorities of the Philippine government through projects in education, the environment, and youth development.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers are assigned to primary and secondary schools as resource teachers for English, math, science, information and communications technology (ICT), and special education. They help Filipino teachers improve English language fluency and introduce new teaching methods. At universities, Volunteers teach classes and work with student teachers and staff. Volunteers and communities improve learning by enhancing school libraries and by developing low-cost instructional materials. Volunteers also organize teacher-training programs to provide professional development for Filipino teachers. In one teacher-training program, more than 900 teachers have traveled to the island of Cebu, where Volunteers provide training in English, content-based instruction in math and science, and ICT.

Recently, the Philippine Education Department has asked the Peace Corps to play a larger role in its efforts to reverse the downward trend in English fluency among Filipinos. In response, Volunteers have introduced new methods to assist students in achieving and retaining English fluency.

Environment

Volunteers promote restoration and conservation of coastal ecosystems through fish censuses, coral reef surveys, and fish-catch monitoring. They restore degraded coastal and marine habitats, facilitate environmental camps and clubs, author brochures and educational materials, and help municipal authorities formulate conservation policies and reforms. Volunteers emphasize coastal resource management improvements through cooperation with provincial and local governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). They directly impact the livelihood of the people who depend on the sea to support their families.

Youth

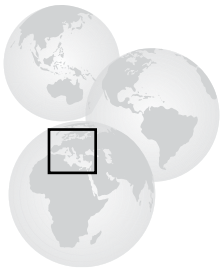
Volunteers work in government and nongovernment centers to provide life-skills training for at-risk children and youth and professional skills training for the centers' personnel. Volunteers enrich staff capacities and skills in care, counseling, and center administration. They develop Philippine youth organization networks and offer training in healthy lifestyles and in preventing family violence and trafficking in persons. Volunteers also give livelihood-skills training, including sewing, gardening, food preparation, marketing, and computer knowledge, and they organize environmental education camps for youth. Volunteers contribute to developing models of proactive programs that can be replicated throughout the Philippines.

Two Volunteers designed and piloted an early childhood learning program which was eventually incorporated by the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in centers for orphans and other at-risk children. More than 150 DSWD centers and DSWD-accredited NGOs that support children and youth have benefited from this program.

"Ultimately in your own way, your volunteering can make a difference in our efforts to build a just, caring, and self-reliant society. The examples you set will always remain to renew our commitment to the age-old Filipino tradition of community cooperation called bayanihan."

Joselito De Vera
Director, Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency
Philippines

Romania



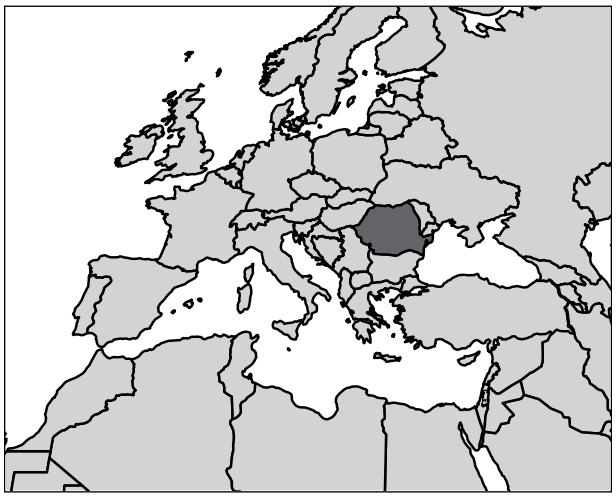
PROGRAM DATES	1991–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Bucharest
Population	22 million
Annual per capita income	$3,910
GDP growth	4.1%
Foreign direct investment	$6.630 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 2% Female: 4%
Infant mortality rate	16 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 97% Measles: 97%
Access to an improved water source	57%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.1%
Religions	Orthodoxy: 87% Roman Catholicism: 5% Other Protestantism: 5% Greek Catholicism: 1% Judaism: <1%
Official language	Romanian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	147	140
Program funds ($000)	3,476	3,466



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Romania is a politically stable member of NATO and the European Union (EU), committed to institutionalizing civil liberties, human rights, freedom of the press, and other democratic principles. To meet qualification standards of these international institutions, Romania has actively pursued administrative, economic, and social reforms. The country has experienced rapid economic growth during the past several years as a result of these reforms and its increased international profile.

Although Romania has received recognition by the EU's European Commission as a "functioning market economy," the country's transition continues to be challenged. Foreign investment is growing, and development aid is readily available through the EU and other sources, provided that Romania can develop and manage effective infrastructure. Although the country has strong potential for growth, access to development resources, poverty, and marginalization of ethnic minorities, youth, and people with disabilities persists.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps is helping Romanians meet many development needs. Program sectors address the country's educational priorities and help build local capacity and sustainability. As Romania seeks to remove social and economic barriers as part of its EU membership, the Peace Corps program focuses on business development, education, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Established in 1993 to work with business advisory centers, the business development project has broadened to encompass community economic development and local capacity building. All project-related activities are conducted with Romanian partner agencies. The project provides assistance in business and nongovernmental organizations(NGO) management, as well as education, agribusiness, and urban development. Volunteers work with a range of economic development organizations, including local and regional agencies, educational institutions, and NGOs.

One Volunteer helped his rural community improve its quality of life by assisting with a grant proposal to bring a water system in the community, helping to introduce a garbage collection system, and training community members to introduce different crops and production methods to generate income. The Volunteer is also encouraging major

industrial farmers in the area in sponsoring community-based development projects.

Education

The education project addresses Romania's expressed need for improved English language instruction. With English as a requirement for many jobs within Romania and internationally, the demand for native-speaking English teachers has escalated. Volunteers work in more than 70 communities with students and teachers to develop their English communication skills. They also organize and participate in a variety of community and summer activities, including writing and drama courses, and environmental, sports, and leadership camps.

One Volunteer assigned to a village in eastern Romania worked with his counterpart and a local NGO to produce eight half-hour video English lessons called "Hello English." The program has been offered to cable companies and television stations around Romania to broadcast in their communities at no cost. Sales of the videos and accompanying manuals have generated income for the NGO to develop additional educational projects.

Environment

Romania's environment suffered considerably during the rapid, unregulated industrialization of the Communist era. Volunteers help Romanian organizations address the challenges resulting from years of disregard for the environment, enhancing public awareness of sustainable environmental management that is compatible with economic development. Volunteers work with environmental NGOs, schools, and governmental institutions.

One Volunteer helped organize a five-day environmentally themed summer camp for high school students. The camp was located in the Bucias Wilderness Preserve, and the students participated in various nature activities and interacted with forest rangers, increasing their awareness of environmental issues. Additionally, camp activities provided the attendees an opportunity to participate in team-building exercises.

Health and HIV/AIDS

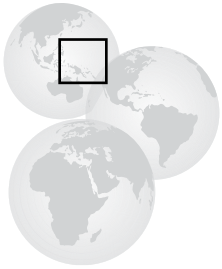
Health and HIV/AIDS sector projects improve the quality and impact of services for at-risk youth and other marginalized populations by establishing and strengthening local institutional capacity. National and local government agencies cannot effectively meet the needs of these populations, so social services are largely left to NGOs. NGO beneficiaries include ethnic minorities, HIV-positive children, people with physical disabilities, orphaned or abandoned children, and the elderly.

Working with a NGO for people with intellectual disabilities, one Volunteer organized a walk-a-thon to raise community awareness of this issue. To generate interest in the event, he facilitated a partnership with an American sports equipment company that donated shirts and caps to participants. The event was covered by the local press, gaining support for the NGO and lessening the stigma of being disabled in the community.

"I wondered what this lawyer-turned-Peace Corps Volunteer could accomplish... especially since I had never worked with persons with intellectual disabilities. Fairly soon, though, I realized that I did not need a Ph.D. or a long list of professional achievements to accomplish something. I just needed my eyes and ears, and my heart and mind."

Romania Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Samoa



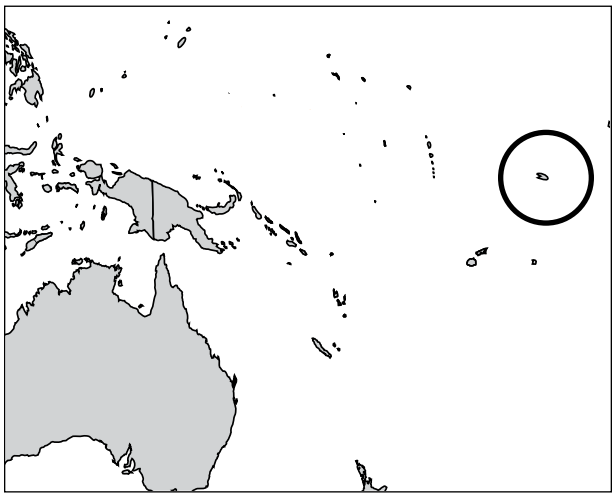
PROGRAM DATES	1967–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Apia
Population	187,000
Annual per capita income	$1,840
GDP growth	2.3%
Foreign direct investment	Not available
Adult illiteracy rate	1%
Infant mortality rate	24 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 64% Measles: 57%
Access to an improved water source	88%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religion	Christianity: 99.7%
Official languages	English Samoan (Polynesian)

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	49	45
Program funds ($000)	1,493	1,518



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 1967, five years after independence and after experiencing a devastating cyclone, the government of Samoa invited the Peace Corps to enter its country. The first Volunteers worked in rural villages leading health and hygiene projects for the Department of Health. While Volunteers have served in most sectors and departments during the Peace Corps' 40-year history in Samoa, the largest numbers have served via the Department of Education as classroom teachers and trainers.

Samoa's agriculture-based economy focuses primarily on crops such as cocoa, copra, and bananas. Other crops, such as kava and nonu, recognized for their medicinal value, have recently gained economic importance as well. The fishing industry also plays a significant part in Samoa's export economy. Tourism may soon overtake these sectors in overall economic importance, though Samoa continues to rely heavily on remittances from its citizens living and working overseas.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Volunteers work with communities to identify development priorities and to provide training in skills required to implement community-designed projects that address priorities in business development, education, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers, in conjunction with the Future Farmers of Samoa and crop extension officers, provide agribusiness training to youth groups and encourage young people to consider agriculture as a viable career option. Young farmers have developed market gardens and improved practices on banana and taro plantations. Volunteers are also working to plant community gardens, and participants learn progressive planting and to reinvest profits into seeds and other materials.

Volunteers also work with community members to prioritize and develop business project areas. Once projects are identified, Volunteers conduct project design and management workshops that strengthen the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of these projects. These workshops have helped establish preschools, women's committee houses, home economics and handicraft centers, homework centers and libraries, improved water and sanitation systems, and income-generating community gardens.

Education

More than half of all Volunteers serve in information and communication technology by mentoring teachers and government officials, and by teaching computer skills to their communities. Several Volunteers teach formal computer courses at various grade levels in schools. Volunteers also work on curriculum development and peer mentoring and facilitating capacity building through skills transfer.

Several Volunteers are assisting with a national communications pilot project that has created community Internet and media centers in 11 women's committee houses. These centers offer residents in rural communities the ability to get acquainted with newer technologies and to improve communication with relatives overseas. The centers also provide educational materials for the community, and new opportunities for small income-generating projects and businesses.

Volunteers with experience in special needs education, such as autism, speech, and language therapy, are working as teacher trainers. They ensure that primary school teachers receive the training necessary to appropriately manage special needs students in their regular classes.

Environment

Volunteers work with environmental and marine nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to improve management of Samoa's water-based resources. Through an integrated coastal management project, Volunteers help communities better manage their environmental resources. Their work includes environmental cleanups and fisheries and marine protected-area management for villages near water.

In collaboration with a local NGO, a Volunteer worked closely with one community to remove several tons of garbage from a nearby marsh, including discarded car batteries, appliances, and tires. To prevent further dumping, the community constructed 20 trash stands and coordinated with the national trash collection service to regularly empty the trash stands.

Health and HIV/AIDS

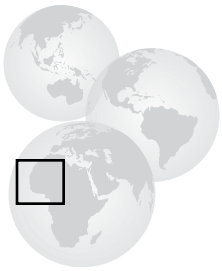
Though Samoa has very few documented HIV/AIDS cases, more NGOs are becoming involved in awareness and prevention outreach for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Several Volunteers working in rural schools have collaborated with community counterparts to initiate activities in their schools and communities to educate people about HIV/AIDS and STD prevention.

Several Volunteers assist the Samoan AIDS Foundation and other health-related NGOs by building websites, creating awareness materials, and organizing local fundraisers. Volunteers also work in their communities to promote health education by organizing trainings for health professionals and community members on basic hygiene, sanitation, and nutrition practices.

"Peace Corps Volunteers have been excellent educators and development workers for Samoa in different sectors of its development since 1967. Current and former Volunteers can reflect back with pride on their great contributions to the youth and future leaders of Samoa."

Tautapilimai Levaopolo Tupae Esera
Chief Executive Officer
Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture
Samoa

Senegal



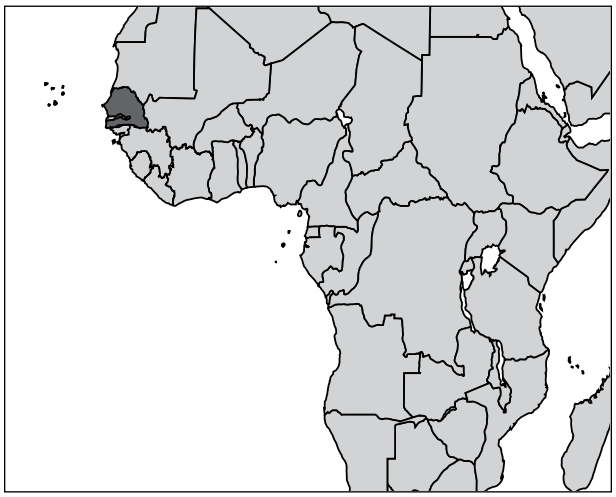
PROGRAM DATES	1963–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Dakar
Population	12 million
Annual per capita income	$700
GDP growth	5.1%
Foreign direct investment	$54 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 49% Female: 71%
Infant mortality rate	61 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 87% Measles: 57%
Access to an improved water source	76%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.8%
Religions	Islam: 95% Christianity: 4% Indigenous beliefs: 1%
Official language	French

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	187	187
Program funds ($000)	3,850	3,915



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Senegal has the distinction of being an African state that has never experienced a coup, and has maintained a stable political climate, a free society, and viable democratic institutions. The government is committed to democracy, permits a flourishing independent media, oversees a generally tolerant sociopolitical culture free of ethnic or religious tensions, and provides a resilient base for democratic politics.

Senegal is one of the world's least developed countries, ranking 156 out of 177 on the 2006 United Nations Human Development Index. Rural migration to urban areas has increased rapidly and the population has more than doubled since 1975. Unemployment is very high (close to 40 percent of the active population) and illegal migration to Europe is rising. Drought has recurred over three decades and agricultural production has declined. Seventy percent of Senegal's population lives in rural areas and is highly vulnerable to variations in rainfall and fluctuations in global commodity prices. Agriculture now represents less than 20 percent of GDP, reflecting continued decay of this once-vital sector. Fishing generates most foreign exchange earnings, followed by phosphate production and a growing tourism industry. Senegal's resource base is pressured by a growing population and the impact of climate change.

PROGRAM FOCUS

In Senegal in 1963, the first Peace Corps Volunteers taught English. Volunteers now work in critically-underserved rural areas, in the areas of agriculture, business development, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. Volunteers also promote skills for income diversification. They help individuals and communities sustainably address their priority development needs and encourage girls' education in their assigned communities. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Volunteers work in agroforestry, sustainable agriculture, improved crop production, and urban agriculture, assisting communities and groups to improve soil fertility and production. They help farmers increase production through improved seed variations and agricultural techniques, and train them in management and conservation methods.

One Volunteer assisted farmers to double their production capacity and develop an effective network of distributors for the chickens they raise. The Volunteer also helped the farmers initiate a project to produce their own chicken feed. As

a result, farmers cut their own costs and were also able to generate additional income by selling excess feed to other farmers in the community.

Business Development

Volunteers provide training and assistance in management, marketing, and finance. They promote business awareness and teach customer service, accounting, and marketing to entrepreneurs, groups, and individuals. They work in traditionally underserved towns and villages, providing information to create business services. In larger towns, Volunteers work with business trainers to expand business services to poorer segments of the population.

Volunteers serve as grassroots counselors, offering business advice and training for entrepreneurs and groups in need. They help build capacity in business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs, including women and youth, and provide understanding of information technology to increase business profitability and facilitate linkages between entrepreneurs and financial resources. One Volunteer taught a class on how to plan and start a business at a vocational center run by the Ministry of Youth. The class provided instruction on business planning, marketing, and accounting.

Volunteers also facilitate the delivery of computer literacy classes for hundreds of individuals (mostly women and young people) on a number of subjects, including basic computer maintenance, various software applications, the Internet, and website creation. Volunteers have helped entrepreneurs use information technology to improve the management of their businesses.

Working with the Tourism Ministry and National Park Service, Volunteers are also active in ecotourism projects. Placed near national parks and protected areas, these Volunteers advise tourism management committees and village representatives on developing ecotourism products and services that can generate income and improve their ability to conserve the environment. They also provide training on business planning, accounting, marketing, and management to individuals and associations in their communities. They have presented training programs, assisted in developing tourist brochures and interpretive guides, and improved marketing of sites as tourist destinations.

Environment

In rural schools, Volunteers work with community leaders to increase environmental awareness. They help teachers design curricula to teach environmental lessons and work with students and community members to teach practical methods linked to classroom activities.

Health and HIV/AIDS

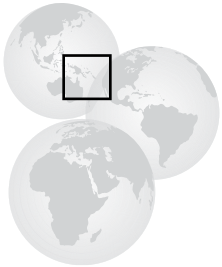
Volunteers educate people in primary healthcare, enabling them to avoid or treat common illnesses. Volunteers train community partners who then train other members of the community. Volunteers train Senegalese in disease prevention and HIV/AIDS awareness using informal education techniques that include art, music, and theater.

One Volunteer developed two lesson plans on malaria, covering malarial symptoms, and breeding places for mosquitoes. The Volunteer also planned malaria-related activities for the village, including a village clean-up day to fill in areas of standing water and bury garbage, and a mosquito net dipping day.

"I have worked with many productive and effective Volunteers throughout my career, and I am happy to have the opportunity to collaborate with Peace Corps again. Peace Corps has given me the opportunity to develop warm personal relationships with a number of Americans."

Ibrahima Ka
Chief of the Local Development Support Agency
Fimela, Senegal

Solomon Islands



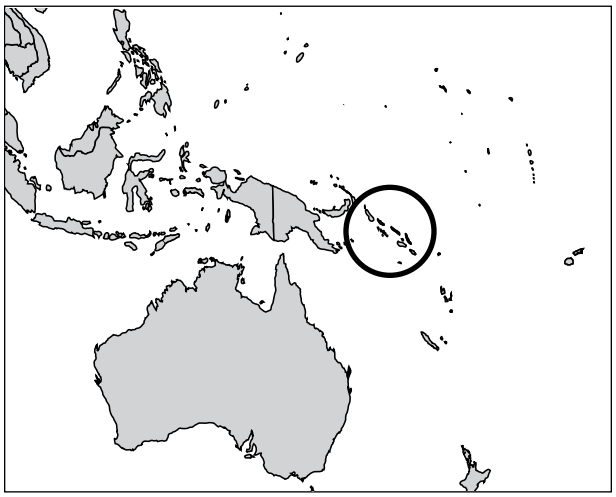
PROGRAM DATES	1971–2000 *(Program suspended in 2000)*
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Youth

Capital	Honiara
Population	552,438
Annual per capita income	$560
GDP growth	4.7%
Foreign direct investment	(-0.8%)
Adult illiteracy rate	23.4%
Infant mortality rate	20 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 82% Measles: 72%
Access to an improved water source	94%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religions	Christianity: 95%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	0	0
Program funds ($000)	26	26



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In the 1890s, the United Kingdom established a protectorate over the Solomon Islands, in part, due to the practice of "blackbirding"—the often brutal recruitment of laborers for the sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji.

The Solomon Islands were the scene of some of the most severe land, sea, and air battles of World War II from 1942 to 1945. One of the most furious sea battles ever fought took place off Savo Island, near Guadalcanal, in August 1942. By December 1943, the Allies were in command of the entire Solomon Islands chain. Following the end of World War II, the British colonial government returned and the capital was moved from Tulagi to Honiara to utilize the infrastructure left behind by the U.S. military.

In 1974, a new constitution was adopted establishing a parliamentary democracy and ministerial system of government. Self-government was achieved in 1976 and independence followed two years later on July 7, 1978. The Solomon Islands is a democracy within the British Commonwealth, with a unicameral Parliament. The British monarch is represented by a governor-general, chosen by the Parliament for a five-year term. The Parliament has 50 members, each elected for four-year terms.

Widespread civil unrest significantly undermined the country's stability in 2000. As a result, the Peace Corps reviewed the security climate, especially in and around the capital of Honiara, and temporarily suspended its program. The Peace Corps continues to monitor the security climate; and although conditions have improved, the agency has not yet made the determination to renew the program in-country.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Approximately 700 Peace Corps Volunteers served in the Solomon Islands from 1971–2000. At the time the program was suspended in June 2000, approximately 60 Volunteers were serving in the youth and education sectors.

The Peace Corps program was suspended due to intensification of the intermittent fighting between rival militia from the provinces of Guadalcanal and Malaita. While the conflict did not affect all provinces of the Solomon Islands, the capital of Honiara was unstable and the ability to travel safely in and out of the country was difficult. The agency decided to maintain an office in Honiara with a skeleton staff to facilitate the return of the Peace Corps when conditions improved.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers provided instruction in math, science, business studies, and environmental education at national and provincial senior secondary boarding schools in remote areas. Volunteers were also assigned to rural training centers, often on remote outer islands. These training centers acted as vocational boarding schools for students who did not pass the examination necessary to advance to the secondary school level. The curriculum of these centers focused on subjects such as small engine mechanics, woodworking, agriculture, crafts production, and small business management.

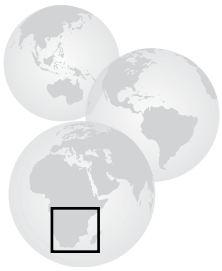
Volunteers worked as advisors to local leaders to strengthen community education programs and rural development projects. Volunteers assisted in the coordination of training events to help communities enhance the management of small-scale development projects, such as the introduction of improved poultry-raising techniques and beekeeping projects.

Youth

Due to inadequate classroom space, large numbers of Solomon Island children were unable to complete high school. In response to this, Peace Corps/Solomon Islands developed a youth project focused on engaging youth in community service activities as a means to discover their self-worth, build confidence, and acquire practical and leadership skills that could be used to find employment. Volunteers worked with the Department of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Education, and local youth and community leaders to facilitate workshops to provide a forum to discuss at-risk youth issues and create collaborative working relationships and action plans.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon addresses Peace Corps staff in Washington in October 2007

South Africa



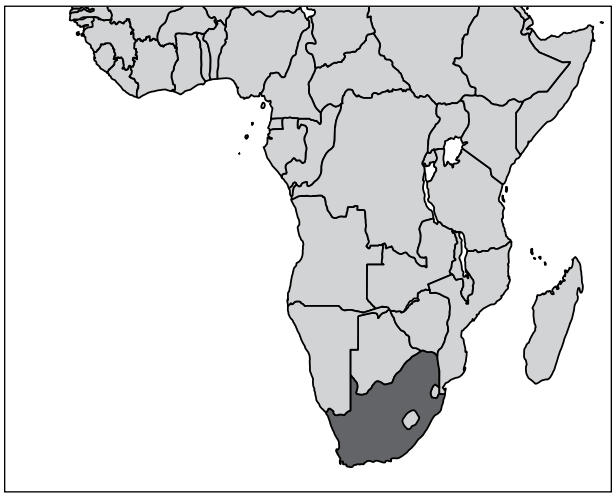
PROGRAM DATES	1997–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Pretoria
Population	47 million
Annual per capita income	$4,770
GDP growth	4.9%
Foreign direct investment	$6.3 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 16% Female: 19%
Infant mortality rate	55 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 93% Measles: 81%
Access to an improved water source	98%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	15.6%
Religions	Christianity; Indigenous beliefs; Islam Hinduism; Judaism
Official languages	Afrikaans; English; Ndebele; Pedi; Sotho; Swazi; Tsonga; Tswana; Venda; Xhosa; Zulu

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	127	121
Program funds ($000)	3,863	3,880



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Now in its second decade as a democracy, South Africa has emerged as a leader on the African continent, with political, economic, and cultural ties around the world. The country's first democratically-elected government under its first president, Nelson Mandela, achieved significant progress on issues of nation-building and reconciliation. South Africa's second president, Thabo Mbeki, has focused on economic growth and ensuring that government services have a direct impact on poverty.

South Africa has a productive, industrialized economy with robust manufacturing, electronics, commerce, service, and agriculture sectors. However, the country continues to struggle with the legacy of apartheid and the challenge of achieving its full social and economic development potential. Despite the nation's abundant wealth, half the population lives below the national poverty line and 40 percent are unemployed. Creating jobs, developing human resources, and tackling HIV/AIDS are three of the most pressing challenges the nation faces.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The government is committed to strengthening the educational system and is very supportive of the Peace Corps. Volunteers work with government officials, teachers, and communities to instill a culture of learning and service as well as to ensure the delivery of quality education, based on a revised national curriculum, in schools and rural communities. The education project operates in predominantly black, rural, primary schools. The health and HIV/AIDS project helps develop the capacity of local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to better support community responses to the pandemic. South Africa has more people who are HIV positive or living with AIDS than any other country in the world. Volunteers play a significant role in developing the human and organizational capacity of NGOs and community-based organizations to make meaningful contributions to this pressing development issue. Recent policy changes and the advent of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief have created new partnerships for Volunteers in this project. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers work as subject matter specialists at educational development support centers. They conduct workshops for teachers from as many as 50 schools in their geographical jurisdiction. Volunteers assigned to primary schools work with teachers to improve the quality of math, science, life skills and English instruction.

South Africa's Department of Education has mandated that, beginning in fourth grade, instruction in all subjects is to shift from the local language to English. Because many teachers are not comfortable using English for instruction, this provides a significant opportunity for Volunteers to assist them in the classroom and in their teaching preparation.

Volunteers are valued for their ability to secure resources and create teaching materials. Several Volunteers have been able to obtain for their schools free computers and software from donors such as the Dell Foundation and Microsoft. Volunteers also help teachers incorporate contemporary community issues and locally-available resources into their lesson plans to make sessions more relevant. This practical orientation—using bottle caps for math or native plant specimens for biology—adds considerable value to the quality of teaching that otherwise tends to favor memorization and theoretical learning.

Health and HIV/AIDS

In addition to working with community-based organizations on HIV/AIDS prevention and relief, Volunteers also work with officials from the Department of Social Development, which is actively addressing the pandemic in rural areas. Volunteer projects benefit youth, orphans, vulnerable children, and their often elderly caretakers, who are innocent victims of the pandemic. Volunteers also excel in linking organizations and mobilizing youth and leaders in the community to support HIV prevention and relief activities.

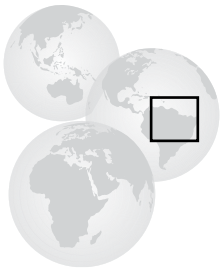
Last year, Volunteers reached 2,260 youth through community outreach activities promoting abstinence; trained 160 peer youth educators and adults in HIV prevention approaches; provided direct support to 850 orphans and vulnerable children; trained 70 caretakers of orphans, and provided technical assistance in strategic planning to 16 community-based organizations involved in HIV/AIDS work.

"As long as you continue to search, believe, and remain open to possibility in spite of all the setbacks, you will ultimately find exactly what you were looking for... and a whole lot more."

South Africa Volunteer
Education Sector

President Bush presents Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Angela Haerre An the President's Volunteer Service Award in May 2007

Suriname



PROGRAM DATES	1995–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Paramaribo
Population	449,200
Annual per capita income	$2,540
GDP growth	5.1%
Foreign direct investment	Not available
Adult illiteracy rate	10%
Infant mortality rate	30 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 91% Measles: 83%
Access to an improved water source	92%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.9%
Religions	Hinduism; Islam; Roman Catholicism Dutch Reformed; Judaism; Baha'i; several other Christian denominations
Official language	Dutch

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	43	41
Program funds ($000)	1,791	1,817

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Suriname installed a freely elected Parliament and inaugurated a democratically chosen president in 1991. In August 2005, the National Assembly elected Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan as president for a five-year term. Suriname hopes to increase international investment to generate greater economic opportunities and employment. Suriname's centralized system of government has traditionally focused on the capital of Paramaribo, generating dependency among the indigenous and tribal peoples of Suriname's Amazon region. However, decentralization efforts by the new government and international and nongovernmental organizations are focusing attention on the sustainable development of the country's remote interior.

Suriname is sparsely populated, with most of its inhabitants living in urban and semi-urban areas along the coast. Approximately 72,000 Maroons and 18,000 Amerindians—the principal inhabitants of Suriname's interior rain forest—face many challenges to their socioeconomic development. Principal among these challenges is the lack of infrastructure for communication and transportation.

The economy is primarily based on resource extraction. Suriname's main exports are gold, bauxite, timber, fish, and bananas. While the economy has experienced promising steady growth over the past few years, more than 85 percent of Surinamese still live below the poverty line.

PROGRAM FOCUS

In 1995, the government of Suriname requested the Peace Corps' assistance in rural community development. Since that time, more than 250 Volunteers have served in Suriname. During the past 11 years, the Peace Corps programs have addressed broad development issues, including community development and nonformal rural community education. Currently, the program focuses on business development and health and HIV/AIDS. The Peace Corps provides assistance in urban, rural, and the Amerindian and Maroon communities in the interior. Volunteers work in community organizing, resource identification, project planning, income generation, life skills, adult education, and capacity building for local nongovernmental organizations.

In 2006, Upper Suriname was devastated by flooding, affecting more than 35,000 people. Because of their organizational abilities, knowledge of the area, and language and cross-cultural skills, Volunteers were requested by the government to assist with relief efforts. Volunteers helped identify community needs and documented the disaster's impact through photographs. This information was crucial

to the work of the Suriname's national crisis team and the International Red Cross.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers support income-generating activities for individuals and organized groups and work to strengthen business practices such as simple bookkeeping and organizational structure.

Volunteers also assist their communities in attracting tourists as Suriname becomes an increasingly popular tourist destination. One Volunteer helped his community open a gift shop that caters to the many tourists visiting that region of the country.

Another Volunteer worked with a women's group in a region without industry to create an income-generating project by importing bread from the capital city. The group members attended a series of bookkeeping classes taught by the Volunteer, and the Volunteer helped the women apply for grants to build their own bread ovens so they could begin to sell bread directly.

Health and HIV/AIDS

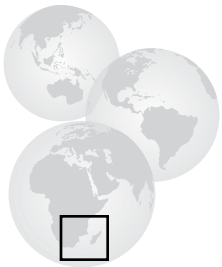
Volunteers support various health-sector providers in carrying out health education and prevention, including HIV/AIDS awareness. Peace Corps/Suriname collaborates with the Ministry of Public Health, which is responsible for overall health planning and services. Volunteers also work with quasi-governmental groups such as the Medical Mission and the Regional Health Service, which have primary responsibility for serving the healthcare needs of the interior and coastal populations of the country respectively. Volunteers support information technology planning in the health sector, and help the Medical Mission distribute health information throughout the interior.

Recently, a group of Volunteers provided health education lessons about personal hygiene, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and other life skills to more than 400 schoolchildren. Another Volunteer helped a group of schoolchildren create and perform a skit for a contest to increase HIV/AIDS awareness. The schoolchildren won the contest and used the prize money to create two murals in the community about HIV/AIDS prevention.

"What I have found most amazing about living in a community as a Peace Corps Volunteer is how a foreign land with a foreign culture and a foreign language somehow becomes, over a short period of time, familiar and indeed cherished to the point where every time you return, you're coming home."

Suriname Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Swaziland



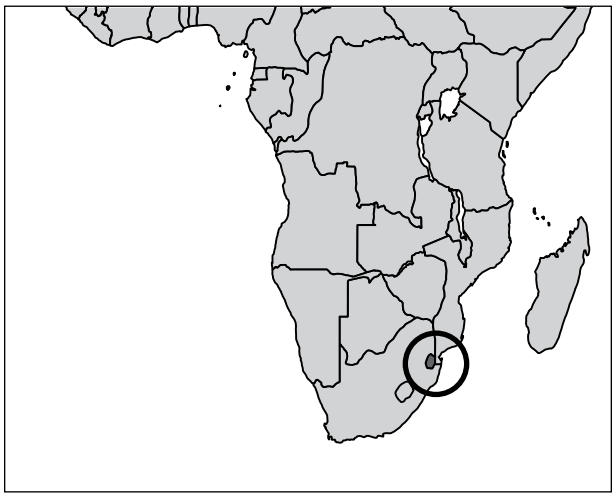
PROGRAM DATES	1969–1996 2003–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Mbabane
Population	1 million
Annual per capita income	$2,280
GDP growth	1.8%
Foreign direct investment	$68 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 19% Female: 22%
Infant mortality rate	110 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 83% Measles: 70%
Access to an improved water source	87%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	38.8%
Religions	Protestantism: 35% Zionism: 30% Roman Catholicism: 25% Other: 9% Islam: 1%
Official languages	English siSwati

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	40	39
Program funds ($000)	1,861	1,882



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Swaziland became independent on September 6, 1968. Though Swaziland's first post-independence elections were held in May 1972, King Sobhuza II repealed the constitution and dissolved parliament in 1973, imposing a state of emergency in which he assumed all powers of government and prohibited all political parties and trade unions from operating. In January 1979, a new parliament was convened, chosen partly through elections and partly through direct appointment by the king. Following King Sobhuza II's death in August 1982, power was concentrated in the Liqoqo, a traditional advisory body. The current monarch, King Mswati III was enthroned in April 1986. Shortly thereafter, he abolished the Liqoqo, and in 1987, a new parliament was elected and a new cabinet appointed. An underground political party, the People's United Democratic Party, emerged in 1988 and called for democratic reforms. In response to this political threat and to growing calls for greater government accountability, the king and prime minister initiated an ongoing national debate on the political future of Swaziland. In 2005, King Mswati III ratified Swaziland's first constitution in over 30 years, which went into effect in February 2006. Although steady external and internal pressure has been exerted on the king, he continues to hold supreme executive, legislative, and judicial powers and is one of the world's few absolute monarchs.

In this small, landlocked country, Swazis traditionally have been subsistence farmers and herders; some now work in the growing urban economy and in government. Manufacturing consists of a number of agro-processing factories, and more recently, garment and textile factories. Exports of soft-drink concentrate, sugar, wood pulp and lumber are the main sources of hard currency. Tourism is also important economically, attracting more than 424,000 visitors annually. Swaziland is heavily dependent on South Africa, from which it receives most of its imports. South Africa and the European Union are the major customers for Swazi exports.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps was invited to work in Swaziland in 1969, a few months after the country gained independence from Great Britain. Over the next 28 years, 1,400 Volunteers served in Swaziland, working in the education and agriculture sectors. The Peace Corps closed its program in Swaziland in 1996.

In light of the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the people of Swaziland, the Peace Corps reentered Swaziland in 2003 with a program focusing on

HIV/AIDS prevention and impact mitigation. In 2006, the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS among pregnant women was 39.2 percent. Approximately 70,000 children have been orphaned as a result of AIDS and life expectancy has dropped to about 33 years of age. Despite King Mswati III's declaration of AIDS as a national crisis, there is no evidence of a reduction in the infection rate. It is estimated that Swaziland's HIV prevalence rate is the highest in the world.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Health and HIV/AIDS

The health and HIV/AIDS program assists the government of Swaziland in HIV/AIDS risk reduction and impact mitigation, with a focus on youth. Volunteers assist Swazi teachers in primary and secondary schools. Classes are conducted in HIV/AIDS prevention through life-skills curriculum developed by Volunteers. The curriculum emphasizes goal-setting, decision-making and peer pressure avoidance. Volunteers also use sports, drama, music and art to engage and instruct Swazi students.

Volunteers plan and implement week-long day camps that recruit community young people who are out of school. The camps provide educational sessions on HIV/AIDS, arts and crafts activities, and involve guest speakers from the community; Discussion periods on topics like assault prevention provide young girls, in particular, with valuable information and resources.

The devastation of AIDS is seen most clearly in the faces of Swaziland's orphans. Volunteers are active at neighborhood care points where orphans and vulnerable children receive a daily meal of donated food. Volunteers have initiated vegetable gardening projects to supplement the staple maize meal provided to these young people; they also teach the basics of trench gardening to enable communities to sustain vegetable yields during times of drought.

Volunteers are actively involved in community capacity building. They partner with KaGogo ("Grandmother's house") center managers to transfer critical management, problem solving, and data processing skills. They work closely with the managers to compile HIV/AIDS statistics on the community and use that data to plan and implement appropriate prevention interventions.

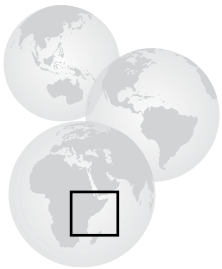
Volunteers are also active in community mobilization. Volunteers facilitate visits by mobile voluntary testing-and-counseling vans, and assist those who test positive to initiate anti-retroviral therapy by linking them to services. Volunteers encourage open dialogue to oppose the prevailing stigma and denial surrounding AIDS.

Peace Corps/Swaziland participates in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Last year, Volunteers worked with groups of in- and out-of-school girls and boys to assist them in HIV prevention activities and life skills. In conjunction with the mentoring, Volunteers conducted a national youth conference themed "Behavior Change for an HIV-Free Youth". It featured inspirational Swazi speakers, a poetry contest, and entertainment focusing on HIV prevention messages for an audience of about 200.

"We are indeed humbled by the continued response, willingness and readiness of our Peace Corps colleagues towards offering us support and encouragement, especially during these trying times in our history."

Her Royal Highness Inkhosikati Make LaNtenteza
Swaziland

Tanzania



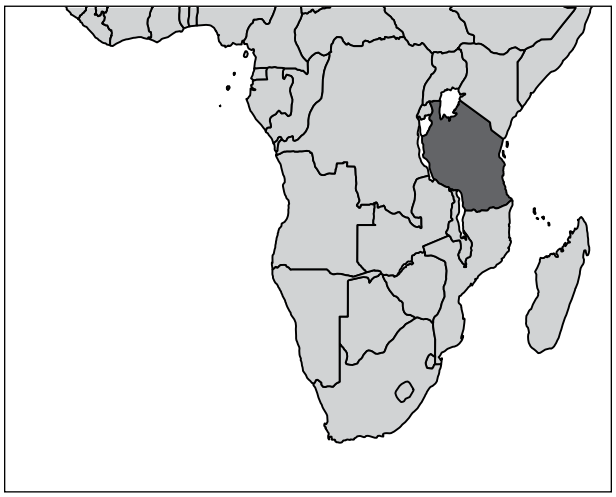
PROGRAM DATES	1962–1969 1979–1991 1991–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Dar es Salaam
Population	38 million
Annual per capita income	$340
GDP growth	7.0%
Foreign direct investment	$473 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 22% Female 38%
Infant mortality rate	76 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 95% Measles: 94%
Access to an improved water source	92%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	7.0%
Religions	Islam: 45% Christianity: 45% Indigenous beliefs: 10%
Official languages	Kiswahili English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	147	169
Program funds ($000)	2,831	2,952



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Tanzania has made some progress in restoring macro-economic stability during the past several years, but widespread and persistent poverty is still a challenge. Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 162 out of 177 on the 2006 United Nations Human Development Index. Once poverty was concentrated in rural areas, but urban poverty is now increasing. The rising rates of HIV infection and an unpredictable influx of refugees have aggravated the situation, and more than 36 percent of Tanzanians live below the poverty line. There is a small, but growing manufacturing sector and agricultural products account for approximately 85 percent of exports. Inefficient land and labor markets, deteriorating environmental conditions, slow progress in improving infrastructure, and limited human capacity continue to be major challenges.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps arrived in Tanzania in 1962. Since then, Volunteers have served in agriculture, education, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. Their work continues to be highly regarded by the government, and is seen as an important contribution to Tanzania's efforts to achieve community and national development. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Tanzania has a shortage of math and science teachers. Volunteers are helping address this critical need with their work in secondary schools, teaching science, mathematics, and information and communication technology to students and, recently, in teacher colleges as well. Volunteers prepare students for national examinations and promote the development of critical thinking skills. They collaborate with teachers to develop subject resource materials; organize math and science clubs; facilitate HIV/AIDS seminars and girls' empowerment workshops; and promote environmental awareness in schools.

One Volunteer, in addition to teaching advanced-level physics, also coordinated a makeover of his school's library. Working with teachers and students, the Volunteer helped redesign the library to accommodate a larger percentage of the school population. The Volunteer also led an effort to acquire new books and computers, which were placed in the library for both student and teacher use.

Environment

Volunteers raise awareness of environmental conservation; assist village communities in effectively managing their natural resources; and promote sustainable agriculture practices. They teach soil improvement techniques, agroforestry (including tree planting and conserving indigenous community natural forests), beekeeping, and fish farming. They work to improve vegetable gardening, and encourage live fencing (planting trees around home gardens instead of using wooden fencing or other nonsustainable methods). Volunteers teach farmers how to construct and use appropriate technologies, such as energy-efficient stoves. They also promote improved livestock practices, including raising goats, cows, and pigs.

Volunteers engage youth in environmental education activities through school clubs, eco-camps, and experiential education. Particular emphasis is given to working with women and youth. Several Volunteers teach the principles of permaculture. These practices encourage rural communities to develop and maintain well-managed, intensively prepared garden beds near their households. The goal is to provide each household a means of producing most of their daily requirement of vitamins and minerals. Volunteers also work toward poverty alleviation by introducing small-scale, income-generating activities to communities.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The health and HIV/AIDS education project was initiated as a way to help Tanzanians to reduce the spread of the pandemic. The project empowers young people to make healthy choices about their lives. Volunteers train Tanzanian teachers and community leaders in life skills and HIV/AIDS awareness using content and participatory methods, increasing their ability to effectively teach about these critical issues. Volunteers also train peer educators who, in turn, work with other youth to foster increased HIV/AIDS awareness using drama, discussion groups, and organized debates.

Volunteers celebrate international commemoration days in their communities such as the annual World AIDS Day candle-lighting ceremony. Volunteers have also formed support groups for people living with AIDS and conducted trainings to show group members how to improve nutrition through the use of permaculture and home-gardening techniques.

One Volunteer recruited 13 nurses and one doctor from the village's health center to promote health information to various groups throughout the community. The doctor and nurses presented information on health issues to women's groups and to students at school events. These information sessions provided an opportunity for community members to ask the medical staff questions outside the formal clinic setting.

"I am happy that I had an opportunity to work with the Peace Corps as a Volunteer. It has been an amazing experience visualizing how I have contributed to the efforts improving my rural community and their livelihoods."

Tanzania Volunteer
Environment sector

Peace Corps Volunteers experience diverse people and landscapes around the world and bring those experiences home to the United States

Thailand

PROGRAM DATES	1962–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education

Capital	Bangkok
Population	64 million
Annual per capita income	$2,720
GDP growth	4.5%
Foreign direct investment	$4.5 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 5% Female: 9%
Infant mortality rate	18 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 98% Measles: 96%
Access to an improved water source	95%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.5%
Religions	Buddhism: 94% Islam: 4% Brahmanism; Christianity; Hinduism; Other
Official language	Thai

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	93	86
Program funds ($000)	2,404	2,404

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Thailand has a constitutional monarchy. The king has little direct power, but he has great moral authority and is a symbol of national identity and unity. Thailand's 76 provinces include the metropolis of greater Bangkok. While Bangkok's governor is popularly elected, leaders in the remaining provinces are career civil servants appointed by the Ministry of Interior. Thailand has a free-enterprise economy and welcomes foreign investment. Thailand's economy continues its robust recovery from the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

While the political system has been relatively stable for the past decade or so, Thai leadership of the country at the national level has experienced considerable turmoil over the past two years. Following months of political unrest, the Thai military staged a coup on September 19, 2006, and a military junta assumed control of the government and installed an appointed prime minister. A new constitution was drafted, and a national election was held in December 2007 to elect a civilian government. The election, deemed free and fair by international observers, resulted in the People's Power Party winning a simple majority of the seats—but not the minimum number required to form a new government. Negotiations are ongoing to form a coalition government. The Thai National Election Commission anticipates that the new government will be seated in early 2008. These developments are not expected to have a negative impact on the Peace Corps' program.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps has collaborated with the Thai government and Thai communities for over 45 years. Volunteers have worked in education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture, the environment, and rural community development. Currently, Volunteers are assigned to projects in business development and education. Volunteers also helped with post-tsunami reconstruction efforts in 2005 and 2006.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

The Thai government initiated historical change in the local government administration system in 1994, when it passed the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act. This initiative decentralized power and supported initiatives to promote greater economic development at the local community level.

To support the government's initiative, in 2003, the Peace Corps developed a community-based project to help rural communities develop income-generating enterprises through the Tambon Administrative Organization; the program was reviewed and revised in 2007. Volunteers share experiences, strategies, and resources with communities at the grassroots level. They focus on capacity building within community groups, including small business groups, women's groups, youth groups, and farmers' groups to improve the quality of products and services.

One 50+ Volunteer worked with the people of her isolated mountain community to transform their annual cultural festival into a tourist attraction. She helped translate and prepare books, pamphlets, and a museum exhibit on the history of the festival; her later efforts helped further develop and sustain the community's potential as a unique tourist destination.

Education

To address Thailand's expressed needs in education, Peace Corps/Thailand initiated a teacher collaboration and community outreach project in 2003. This project focuses on reforming education and improving the quality of life through sustainable community development initiatives. Volunteers and their Thai co-workers collaborate in English language classrooms to support the government's 1999 National Education Act, and they help develop and enhance teachers' student-centered instruction skills.

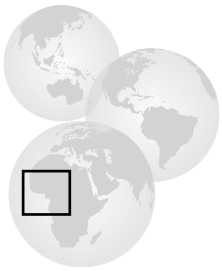
Another 50+ Volunteer, a highly experienced teacher, worked with school leaders in her area to reduce class sizes so students could receive more individual attention. She also worked with her counterpart teachers to devise more effective ways of teaching by developing creative teaching aids.

"I would like to congratulate the government and people of the United States for the Peace Corps/Thailand 45th anniversary celebration, the collaborative endeavor which continues to strengthen the ties that bind our two nations."

HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn
Thailand

Peace Corps Volunteers have the opportunity to share in the rich cultures and traditions of the countries in which they serve

Togo



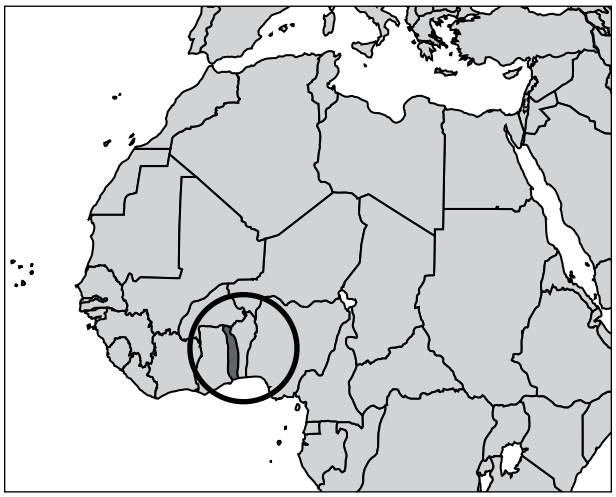
PROGRAM DATES	1962–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Lomé
Population	6 million
Annual per capita income	$350
GDP growth	2.8%
Foreign direct investment	$3 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 31% Female: 62%
Infant mortality rate	78 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 71% Measles: 70%
Access to an improved water source	80%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	4.1%
Religions	Christianity: 47% Animism: 33% Islam: 14% Other: 6%
Official language	French

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	140	135
Program funds ($000)	2,900	2,945



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Togo attained independence from France in 1960. The first elected president was killed in a coup d'état in 1963. In 1967, General Gnassingbé Eyadéma became president until his death in 2005. A power struggle gripped Togo. On May 2, 2005, Faure Gnassingbe, the son of the previous president, was declared winner of the presidential election. In 2006, the government and opposition parties signed an agreement to form a national unity government. Togo held legislative elections on October 14, 2007. The elections were declared peaceful and transparent by international observers, a prerequisite for restoration of relations with the European Union and other donor countries.

Togo remains a poor nation, ranking 142 of 177 countries on the 2007 United Nations Human Development Index. The economy suffers from the aftermath of political instability. Signs of revival are present, but more is needed to move the economy to stable footing. Its coastal location, harbor, and infrastructure in the capital, Lomé, hold potential for economic growth. Agriculture contributes nearly 40 percent of the country's GDP and employs 70 percent of the workers. Corn, sorghum, millet, cassava, yams, cowpeas, and rice are the major food crops. Cash crops include coffee, cocoa, and cotton. Industry and manufacturing account for a quarter of Togo's GDP.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps began its work in Togo in 1962, and more than 2,300 Volunteers have served since the program's inception. Volunteers have a successful history of collaboration and involvement with the Togolese people at all levels. Their efforts build upon counterpart relationships and emphasize low-cost solutions that make maximum use of local resources. Partnering with local and international organizations is an important component of Volunteer project activities. Volunteers work to promote self-sufficiency in business development, education, environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Togo's informal sector offers the best opportunity for economic development. The business development project improves basic business and entrepreneurial skills, fostering opportunities for job creation and growth. Volunteers are assigned to local credit unions or nongovernmental

organizations (NGOs) and offer business training and consulting to members to improve their business skills. Workshops covering accounting, finance, marketing, and feasibility studies are offered to groups of tailors, retailers, and other business people. Working with youth and women are also program priorities.

One Volunteer worked with a community development association to help the staff improve project organization, development and implementation. The association provides programming such as assistance to women's groups, computer training, HIV/AIDS education, and a savings and loan program. By concentrating on building organizational capacity, the association was able to more effectively serve the community.

Education

Women are severely underrepresented in the country's development process. Volunteers work with community groups to develop an understanding of the importance and benefits of girls' education to increase their access to formal and nonformal education. They work with teachers to improve retention rates for female students. The project also addresses the educational needs of apprentices and the trafficking of children.

One Volunteer, in collaboration with representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, created a mentoring center for school-aged girls. At the center, girls received training in study skills and life skills as well as opportunities to participate in income generating activities.

Environment

While the Togolese economy is based on agricultural production, traditional farming practices cannot meet the needs of Togo's growing population. Soils are severely degraded and increasing demands for fields and fuel wood are resulting in the removal of trees and vegetation from the land. Volunteers work with farmers, youth and NGOs to introduce sustainable farming practices that will improve farm yields and reduce environmental degradation. Volunteers are also working with their communities on reforestation and tree nurseries.

One Volunteer established 11 tree nurseries, which assisted 12 different communities to increase the rate of tree planting and better understand the consequences of deforestation.

Health and HIV/AIDS

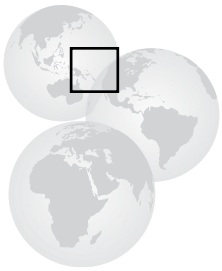
Volunteers train and supervise community health workers and peer educators focusing on preventive health practices. They help local health personnel promote community health activities that address HIV/AIDS, malaria, nutrition, and community management of rural pharmacies. Activities addressing HIV/AIDS have grown from awareness raising and prevention to include palliative care for persons living with HIV/AIDS and care for orphans and vulnerable children. Projects include constructing family latrines, wells, and health huts—small dispensaries created in remote villages to help with simple health issues and childbirth.

One Volunteer worked with community members to create a sports center at which to provide lessons in Aikido, a Japanese sport and nonviolent form of self-defense. The young people who participated in the Aikido program taught lessons on life skills, the prevention of HIV/AIDS and were also trained to serve as peer educators and role models in the community.

"The Peace Corps has given me firsthand perspective on how others in the world live. I feel that through this experience I have been endowed with a sense of responsibility—which I gladly accept—that wherever I am or whatever I am doing, a part of my life must be given towards helping those less fortunate than I."

Togo Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS sector

Tonga



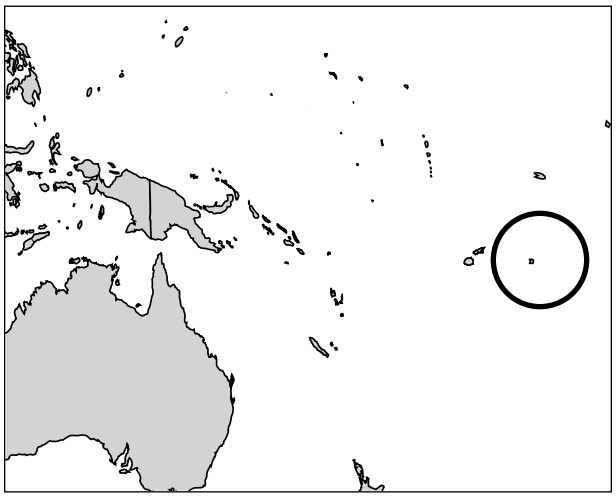
PROGRAM DATES	1967–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education

Capital	Nuku'alofa
Population	102,300
Annual per capita income	$1,970
GDP growth	2.3%
Foreign direct investment	5 million
Adult illiteracy rate	1%
Infant mortality rate	20 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 99% Measles: 99%
Access to an improved water source	100%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religion	Christianity
Official languages	English Tongan

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	38	48
Program funds ($000)	1,485	1,564



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since the adoption of its constitution in 1875, the Kingdom of Tonga has been a hereditary monarchy. The past few decades have seen the biggest changes in Tonga, especially in its international status. In 1975, Tonga developed economic and political ties with the European Economic Community (now the European Union); in 2000, Tonga became a full member of the United Nations and adopted the Millennium Declaration; and in June 2007, Tonga became the 151st and newest member of the World Trade Organization. These events led to an inflow of foreign aid from developed nations and international agencies, enabling the country to improve social services and build essential infrastructure.

Most Tongans are dependent on subsistence agriculture and fishing, which they supplement with remittances from relatives abroad. Reliance on agriculture and fishing depletes already scarce natural resources and degrades topsoil, rain forests, coastal reefs, and freshwater supplies. With almost 40 percent of its population under age 14 and a sluggish economy, Tonga faces many challenges in providing its youth with educational and economic opportunities. The government of Tonga is heavily dependent on development support for capital investments. With the sharp increase in government operating costs due to increased salaries for civil servants, it will have even fewer internal resources available for infrastructure development.

PROGRAM FOCUS

At the request of the Ministry of Education, Peace Corps projects focus on preparing Tongan youth to become productive members of their communities. The education sector programs work primarily in rural areas with primary school students, teachers, and community associations to strengthen English literacy and support educational outreach. Business development programs address the needs of out-of-school youth, entrepreneurs, and community associations by building capacity to initiate and manage small businesses. Both programs help prepare young people by improving educational and professional opportunities through English literacy, leadership, and business and information and communications technology.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers work with students, business owners, service providers, and schools to establish and manage small businesses to generate income. Through the support of Volunteers,

these small businesses are developing improved business practices, better products, and greater community employment.

One Volunteer collaborated with the Ministry of Labor, Commerce, and Industries and the Tongan Chamber of Commerce to establish a jointly administered business development services unit (BDS). The BDS is strengthening existing small businesses and promoting development of new businesses. BDS has established coordination among existing suppliers and users of business advisory services, and it has developed subsidized basic business advisory services for micro-enterprises and new entrepreneurs.

The BDS also connects individuals in the private sector with those in the government. This facilitates greater participation in the regulatory reform process that addresses legislative issues that are impeding new business startups. In one instance, a Volunteer identified a restriction in new legislation that prohibited any youth under the age of 18 from obtaining a business license. This rule conflicted with the Tongan government's desire to promote youth micro-enterprise. Through the BDS, the Volunteer brought this issue to the attention of the Ministry of Youth, Training, Employment, and Sports.

Education

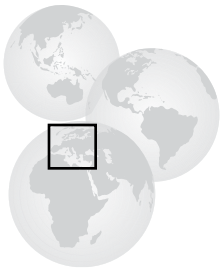
Volunteers are assigned to mostly rural areas throughout Tonga to provide direct instruction to preschool and primary school students. They also co-plan and co-teach with village teachers. They obtain, develop, and apply culturally appropriate English language instruction materials, and they design and implement activities that encourage students to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Volunteers also engage students, schools, and community partners in participatory processes to identify and mobilize resources to support community-driven development initiatives.

One Volunteer, in collaboration with the primary school teachers in his village, developed a resource guide for Tongan teachers to prepare sixth-grade students for the national secondary school entrance exam. To date, Tongan teachers in more than 20 schools in Vava'u and Tongatapu have implemented lessons using this resource guide to improve the English communication and comprehension skills of more than 500 Tongan students.

"The Peace Corps experience is different for everybody, and that is the beauty of it. I would not trade this experience for any other at this point in my life, so many doors have opened for me, but most importantly I realized what really matters to me."

Tonga Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Turkmenistan



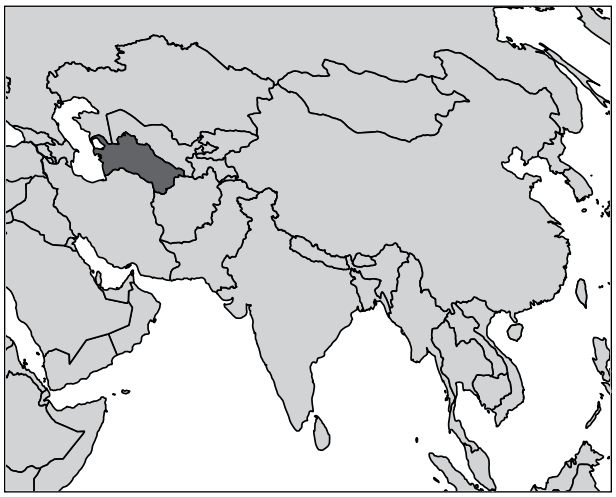
PROGRAM DATES	1993–2001 2002–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Ashgabat
Population	5 million
Annual per capita income	$8,500
GDP growth	6%
Foreign direct investment	$62 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 1% Female: 2%
Infant mortality rate	81 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 97% Measles: 97%
Access to an improved water source	93%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.1%
Religions	Islam: 89% Eastern Orthodoxy: 9% Other: 2%
Official language	Turkmen

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	96	104
Program funds ($000)	1,961	2,029



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since Turkmenistan's independence in 1991, the country has been controlled by the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan. Saparmurat Niyazov (Turkmenbashi), the appointed leader for life, died on December 21, 2006, with no predetermined successor. Former Minister of Health Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov assumed the interim leadership position, and was the favorite among five other candidates leading up to the February 2007 election. While the presidential election was the first ever with more than once choice on the ballot, only candidates approved by the regime competed. As anticipated, Berdymukhammedov won the election and was inaugurated on February 14, 2007. Turkmenistan's new leader is expected to keep Turkmenistan's officially declared neutral status, though Berdymukhammedov has promised to reverse some of the most unpopular decisions made by Niyazov, particularly in healthcare, education, and access to information. Turkmenistan's economic future under new leadership likely will continue to have Soviet tendencies, as major industries and public services are almost entirely provided by government-controlled entities. Though Turkmenistan is one of the world's largest producers of cotton and reportedly has one of the largest reserves of natural gas, developing these natural resources remains challenging due to continued dependence on Russian ownership of gas pipeline export routes and weak cotton harvests.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Since gaining independence in 1991, Turkmenistan has experienced broad political, economic, and social changes, prompting the need for international assistance in training its professionals. Currently, Peace Corps Volunteers work in two projects: education, which provides training to English teachers and schoolchildren; and health and HIV/AIDS, which trains health professionals and grassroots communities.

The Peace Corps program was suspended following the events of September 11, 2001, but after a favorable reassessment in February 2002, Volunteers returned to Turkmenistan in April 2002 to complete their service. Currently, Volunteers are placed at sites throughout the country serving in schools and clinics and working with a broad base of community members.

Recently, the president proclaimed that all schools must teach English beginning in the 2007-2008 academic year. To date, the government has proposed more rural site placements for Volunteers in underserved schools just beginning their English-teaching curricula.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers focus on teaching English as a foreign language, including working in classrooms and training teachers. Many Volunteers have regular classroom hours co-teaching with their host country counterparts and others help lead after-school English clubs.

Several Volunteers helped coordinate an English teachers' conference, which was held during summer vacation. The community-led conference convened English teachers from all five provinces to share and discuss new methods to improve the English curriculum in their local schools.

Health and HIV/AIDS

A lack of supplies, training, and technology has contributed to a decline in basic healthcare services since Turkmenistan's independence. Most Volunteers work at local clinics in rural and city settings, developing trainings on a wide variety of topics, including healthy lifestyles, communicable disease prevention, and maternal and child health.

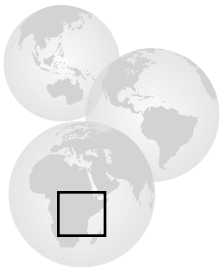
One Volunteer helped her community design and paint 10 large wall panels. Each panel depicted various scenes involving proper infant healthcare. The panels were assembled into a mural and installed on walls surrounding the outside of the local health clinic where the Volunteer works. The mural has increased traffic to the clinic; individuals now come from all over the village to view the mural and then come into the clinic to talk to the doctors and to get more information.

"Implementation of [Peace Corps] programs occupies a significant place in the bilateral cooperation of Turkmenistan and the United States of America and in the friendly relations between the peoples of the two countries."

President Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov
Turkmenistan

Education Volunteers teach English to students in Turkmenistan

Uganda



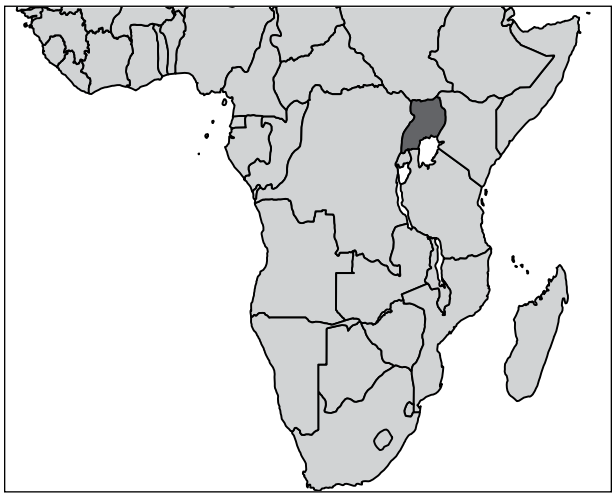
PROGRAM DATES	1964–1973 1991–1999 2000–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Kampala
Population	29 million
Annual per capita income	$280
GDP growth	6.6%
Foreign direct investment	$257 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 23% Female: 42%
Infant mortality rate	79 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 87% Measles: 91%
Access to an improved water source	60%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	4.1%
Religions	Christianity: 66% Indigenous beliefs: 18% Islam: 16%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	95	96
Program funds ($000)	2,438	2,322



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In Uganda, economic change has accompanied political reform. In 2006, the country held its first multi-party presidential elections since President Yoweri Museveni rose to power in the mid-1980s. The government's strong efforts to reform Uganda's educational system, promote sustainable growth in key sectors, and move to a more liberalized, private sector-driven market economy have, over the past decade, encouraged international investment and involvement from international development agencies. Corruption is an increasingly significant issue with the potential to slow economic growth as investors and donors turn to more transparent economies.

Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, regular rainfall, and sizable deposits of copper and cobalt. Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, employing more than 80 percent of the workforce. Coffee is the primary export crop, accounting for more than half of export revenues. Since 1987, the government—with the support of donors—has rehabilitated and stabilized the economy by undertaking currency reform, raising producer prices on export crops, increasing prices of petroleum products, and improving civil service wages. The policy changes are intended to reduce inflation and boost production and export earnings. Significant donor assistance has been vital in supporting growth policies.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Currently, Peace Corps/Uganda has an education project and a health project focusing on HIV/AIDS. These projects are based on the interests and needs expressed by the government of Uganda and the communities where Volunteers work. In response to the AIDS pandemic, the Ugandan government and civil society groups launched a nationwide, multi-sector effort to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. Uganda has more than one million AIDS orphans, and two million additional children have parents who are HIV positive. Thus, Volunteers partner with Ugandans both on HIV/AIDS education and prevention and on providing community support and care to those affected by the disease. All Volunteers in Uganda are trained to support HIV/AIDS initiatives.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Improving the quality of education, especially at the primary school level, has long been a priority of the government. With the introduction of universal primary education, the demand for primary teachers has doubled and, in some locations, even

tripled. Each Volunteer works with a Ugandan counterpart to train teachers in teaching methodology, train school administrators in effective instructional leadership, and work with school communities to improve community and school relations. More broadly, Volunteers help improve the education of students by establishing children's clubs, conducting teacher workshops, and working with teacher and community organizations. Volunteers have worked to mobilize communities to connect with and support their primary schools, and they help develop links between schools and their communities through a variety of projects with a particular emphasis on providing support to orphans and vulnerable children and people living with HIV/AIDS.

Volunteers assist the Ministry of Education to develop and support information and communications technology infrastructure at teachers' colleges, in schools, and in their communities. Overall this effort has resulted in the establishment of new computer centers at two colleges, six primary schools, and two community centers.

Fourteen Volunteers and their counterparts worked with over 75 school administrators to develop school improvement plans and other projects. Sixty-four school and community development projects were initiated and 24 were completed. Seventeen Volunteers worked with 161 school administrators on developing skills in supporting teachers to be better educators.

Volunteers also work with different organizations to provide support to people living with HIV/AIDS, orphans, and vulnerable children. Last year, Volunteers provided training to almost 300 people living with HIV/AIDS on ways to generate additional income for themselves and their families. Nearly 800 orphans and vulnerable children benefited from Volunteer projects that focused on improving both health and educational opportunities for these children.

Health and HIV/AIDS

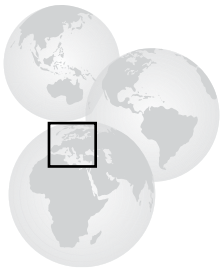
Volunteers are assigned to small, community-based organizations, hospitals, and government health centers. They help these organizations provide information and support to people, families, and communities infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Volunteers work on basic health promotion and HIV/AIDS prevention, provide holistic care to orphans and vulnerable children, and those living with HIV/AIDS; and they organize support groups for women and youth. This comprehensive project also works to develop income-generating projects and activities, particularly for individuals in rural areas who have been impacted by HIV/AIDS.

Volunteers and their counterparts are all trained in organizational development and strategic planning. This training, along with ongoing support by Volunteers, has improved the capacity of at least 12 organizations to provide better care and support to orphans and vulnerable children. Volunteers and their counterparts have worked together to provide nearly 3,000 of these young people with better access to schools, nutrition, water, and insecticide-treated bed nets. Volunteers and their counterparts use sports, including soccer, baseball, and softball as a means to draw youth together for healthy entertainment. These activities provide Volunteers and their counterparts an opportunity to share important life skills and HIV/AIDS-awareness messages with large groups of youth. Volunteers and their counterparts also host life-skills day camps to teach youth how to pursue healthy and proactive life styles. These camps reached nearly 2,800 youth with life skills and HIV/AIDS prevention messages.

"I'm excited to see the difference between the Uganda I found when I arrived and the Uganda that I will leave after my service. I hope the work that I have done will have had a hand in changing Uganda for the better."

Uganda Volunteer
Education Sector

Ukraine



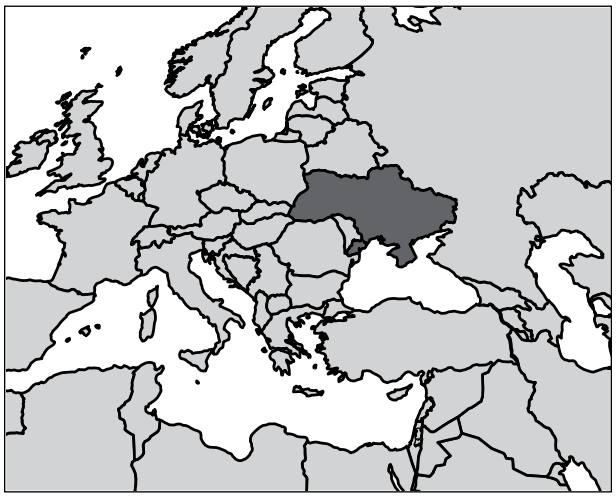
PROGRAM DATES	1992–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Youth

Capital	Kiev
Population	47 million
Annual per capita income	$1,520
GDP growth	2.6%
Foreign direct investment	$7.808 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	<0.5%
Infant mortality rate	13 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 99% Measles: 99%
Access to an improved water source	100%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.4%
Religions	Ukrainian Orthodoxy Ukrainian Greek Catholicism Judaism; Roman Catholicism; Islam
Official language	Ukrainian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	334	294
Program funds ($000)	5,352	5,178



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

With a population of 48 million, Ukraine is Europe's second largest country. Following its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, successive Ukrainian governments allowed sporadic growth of civil society and the development of some democratic institutions. This process peaked in late 2004 with the Orange Revolution, a series of protests and political events resulting from the 2004 elections. Since the new government assumed power in January 2005, Ukrainian society has become more open in press freedom, tolerance of criticism of the government, and rights of opposition political parties to operate. However, the election results of March 2006 have cast uncertainty on the future of Ukraine's integration into the European Union (EU).

In villages and urban centers, millions of Ukrainians lack dependable supplies of water, heat, and electricity. They also lack access to quality educational, social, and medical services. People throughout Ukraine are affected by poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, and the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps program helps communities build necessary skills as they seek possible integration into the EU and the broader global economy. Volunteers teach English, share effective business practices, and develop greater opportunities for young people. Their work positively affects Ukrainians' readiness to build democracy and a market economy and to communicate and transact business on a global scale.

Working in more than 226 Ukrainian communities with youth, teachers, activists, and businesspeople, Volunteers challenge their students and colleagues to think independently, and they facilitate community improvement projects that address critical needs. In response to Ukraine's HIV epidemic, and with funds from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Volunteers and their counterparts are creating HIV prevention programs for young people in 32 highly affected communities across Ukraine.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers help establish and strengthen cooperation among community members and groups, enabling them to effectively plan and implement social and economic development. Volunteers organize trainings on marketing, sales techniques, advertising, and public relations for entrepreneurs and business students. These help businesses to improve profitability

and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to achieve sustainability and expand services. Citizen involvement in local governance is encouraged through programs on inclusive budgeting processes, citizen information bureaus, community forums, and cooperative investment strategies.

One Volunteer, in collaboration with a local NGO, helped establish a store for community artisans to sell their products. Located near a popular tourist site, the store has enjoyed a steady stream of customer traffic. Recently, the president of Ukraine visited the store and expressed his enthusiasm about the development of such an endeavor to support the arts and preserve the traditional handicrafts of the region.

Education

Volunteers work in educational institutions as English secondary school teachers, university teachers, and teacher trainers. By creating an interactive learning environment and by using contemporary methods and materials, Volunteers enhance students' and teachers' communication skills and encourage independent thinking and problem solving.

The priorities of the teaching English as a foreign language project focus on three aspects: teaching English to students at secondary schools; teaching English and other content-based courses to students at teaching colleges and universities; and providing in-service training for secondary school teachers on the job and at in-service teacher-training institutes and district education departments.

Secondary school Volunteers and interested village teachers hold regular professional trainings to improve language skills and promote communication-based methods in classroom teaching.

During the last school year, 50 Volunteers facilitated biweekly methodological trainings for inexperienced village English teachers, exposing them to effective new methods of teaching English. Volunteers received positive feedback and have been invited by the teachers to observe how the new methods are being used in the classroom.

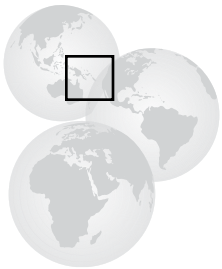
Youth

Currently 72 Volunteers work on youth development projects to help youth from disadvantaged communities develop skills to improve their ability to lead healthy lives, obtain gainful employment, and be active and responsible citizens. In May 2007, a memorandum of cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine; the Ministry for Family, Youth, and Sports; and the Peace Corps was signed, officially registering the project until 2013. Youth development Volunteers are assigned to 69 communities across Ukraine, working with schools and cooperating with youth centers, social services entities, youth NGOs, and orphanages. Volunteers also organize summer camps that promote active citizenry, initiate journalism programs, and implement Big Brother/Big Sister programs to mentor orphans and disadvantaged youth.

In collaboration with Ukrainian counterparts, one Volunteer founded a youth center to promote healthy lifestyles, meaningful recreation, and entrepreneurship in a small town in western Ukraine. The center provides a safe and healthy environment for educational and recreational activities for more than 2,500 youth from the town and four neighboring villages.

Education Volunteer in the classroom in the Ukraine

Vanuatu



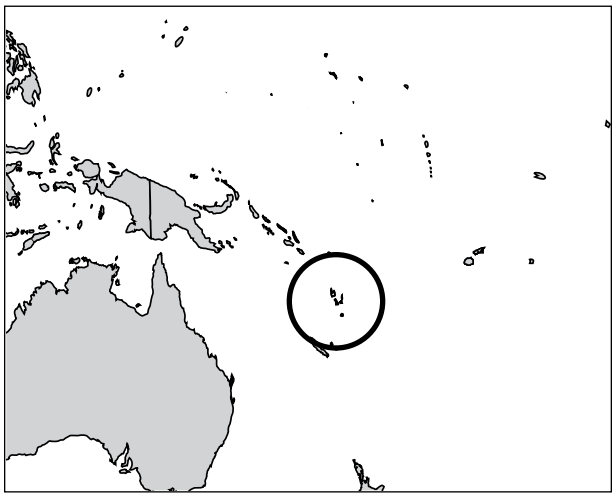
PROGRAM DATES	1990–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Port Vila
Population	211,400
Annual per capita income	$1,620
GDP growth	2%
Foreign direct investment	13 million
Adult illiteracy rate:	26%
Infant mortality rate	31 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 66% Measles: 70%
Access to an improved water source	60%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religion	Christianity
Official languages	Bislama; English; French

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	106	100
Program funds ($000)	2,560	2,605



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Vanuatu is an independent republic consisting of 83 islands in the Southwestern Pacific Ocean. Beginning in 1906, Vanuatu was governed under a special agreement between the British and the French, which divided the country and created separate systems of government and education. Upon gaining independence in 1980, the country united under one democratic government. However, with more than 100 local languages and a population spread over 65 inhabited islands, Vanuatu struggles to provide public services and education to its people.

The economy of Vanuatu is based primarily on subsistence or small-scale agriculture, which provides a living for most of the population. Copra and beef exports, fishing, offshore financial services, and tourism are the other main sources of revenue. Economic development is hindered by dependence on relatively few commodity exports, low market prices, vulnerability to natural disasters, long distances between main markets, and poor infrastructure. Although most of Vanuatu's population still lives in isolated rural areas, urbanization is increasing.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Peace Corps Volunteers contribute in very important ways to Vanuatu's national goal of increasing opportunities for Ni Vanuatu, particularly those living in rural areas. They support the work of development partners that include government departments and non-governmental organizations, as well as local institutions and communities. Ni Vanuatu counterparts work with Volunteers to build capacity and to make projects sustainable beyond the service of the Volunteer.

At the request of the government of Vanuatu, the Peace Corps is helping teachers implement improved methodologies for teaching literacy at the early primary school level. The program also provides teachers with training for nonformal community education and development activities. These activities focus on generating income, food security, sustainable agriculture and management of natural resources, conservation, promoting profit and nonprofit enterprises, and youth development. The Peace Corps is now in its third year of implementing a community health project, which focuses on developing health strategies at the community level, thereby reducing the need for costly curative services.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Volunteers promote sustainable farming practices and agroforestry to improve food security and income generation. Collaborating with national and international organizations, Volunteers help farmers develop export-quality crops, while also reinforcing traditional farming practices to ensure food security. Volunteers have developed a highly popular training program, called "Agriculture as a Business," for extension officers and agriculture instructors. This program has been adopted by the Department of Agriculture as part of its nationwide professional development program.

Business Development

Volunteers work with rural and urban institutions facilitating training in business and organizational management, bookkeeping, credit management, cooperative philosophy, and product diversification. They work with organizations and individual entrepreneurs to conduct business feasibility studies, start small businesses, identify local and regional markets, and undertake small-scale processing of local resources. Volunteers have helped producer organizations to develop their institutional capabilities and understanding of market mechanisms, resulting in dramatic increases in the production of high value crops such as coffee and cocoa.

Education

Volunteers serve in schools and community-based rural training centers. Volunteers work with disadvantaged students in secondary schools, teaching math, science, information technology, and English. They also enhance the quality of education through teacher trainings, curriculum and resource development, and school-based strategic planning.

In an effort to improve the capacity of primary school teachers to reverse declining rates of literacy, several Volunteers worked together to develop and implement the Ministry of Education's first in-service training program for teachers. The training focused on strengthening teaching skills and introduced new methodologies that teachers could use in their classrooms.

Environment

Communities have a strong interest in improving the management of their natural resources, including coral reefs, forests, wildlife, and agricultural lands. Volunteers help communities promote sustainable land-use practices, develop natural resource management plans, establish conservation areas, promote ecotourism, and create conservation enterprises. Most activities promote conservation and sustainable use while generating income for community members.

More than a dozen Volunteers introduced a 'reef check' program in their communities to promote awareness and protection of nearby coral reefs. This program was so successful in drawing attention to the negative effects of pollution on the coral reefs that the Department of Fisheries decided to establish a national 'reef check' program to protect marine resources through out the island nation.

Health and HIV/AIDS

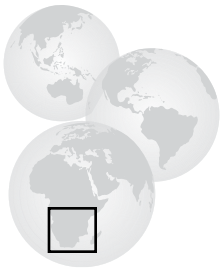
Volunteers help the government of Vanuatu reverse declining health indicators by strengthening village health committees and the capacity of government ministries to measure the incidence of poor health. Volunteers also help strengthen the ability of local health centers to promote good health practices and improve access to clean water and nutrition.

A group of Volunteers organized a census that was completed by traveling from house to house to collect population and demographic data. The data was then used by the Ministry of Health to predict future health care needs for the islands.

"I would like to thank the Peace Corps for the increasing contributions of Peace Corps Volunteers, who have helped in a big way to improve the lives of the people in rural areas."

Prime Minister Ham Lini
Republic of Vanuatu

Zambia



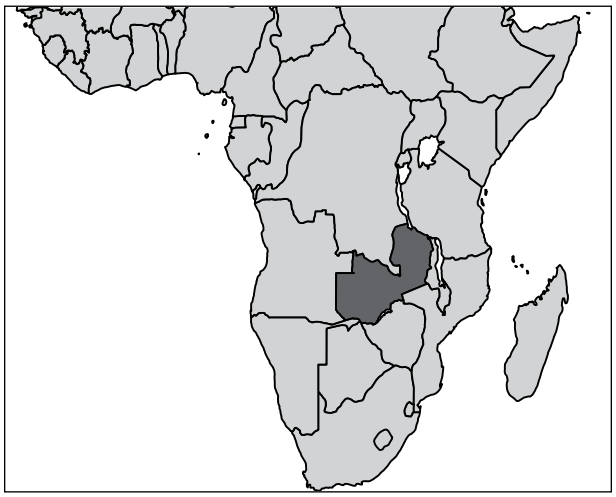
PROGRAM DATES	1993–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Lusaka
Population	12 million
Annual per capita income	$500
GDP growth	5.2%
Foreign direct investment	$259 million
Adult illiteracy rate:	Male: 24% Female: 40%
Infant mortality rate	102 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 80% Measles: 84%
Access to an improved water source	58%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	15.6%
Religions	Christianity Indigenous beliefs Islam Hinduism
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	127	126
Program funds ($000)	4,190	4,196



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Republic of Zambia, formerly known as Northern Rhodesia, gained its independence from Britain in 1964. Kenneth Kaunda, leader of the United National Independence Party, was named the first president and remained in power for three decades. In November 1991, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy won Zambia's first free presidential elections since 1968. Frederick Chiluba became the nation's second president and was reelected in 1996. He was succeeded by Levy Mwanawasa in January 2002. President Mwanawasa was reelected for a second term in September 2006.

Zambia is one of sub-Saharan Africa's most highly urbanized countries. Approximately half of the country's 12 million people are concentrated in a few urban zones strung along major transportation corridors. Unemployment is a serious problem, and Zambia has a low per capita income.

Zambia's economy has been improving steadily. Maize is the principal cash crop. Zambia contains one of the world's largest copper deposits and remains a leading world producer of refined copper and cobalt, which together comprise 95 percent of all exports. Copper prices have been increasing and are currently at a record high.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Zambia received its first group of Peace Corps Volunteers in 1994. Volunteers currently serve in agriculture, education, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Volunteers help the Department of Fisheries develop fish-farming projects to improve livelihoods in rural communities. Volunteers provide technical assistance in establishing dams, furrows, fish ponds, and integrated agriculture. In addition to providing an excellent source of nutrition for rural families, surplus fish and agricultural products are sold to provide substantial supplementary income.

Volunteers in Northern Province worked together to organize biennial regional meetings for fish-farmer organizations. What began as mostly a Volunteer-led activity involving four communities has evolved to include seven communities encompassing three districts. Regional farmer association meetings are now planned and executed by the farmers themselves with Volunteers playing only the supporting role. The meeting provides a chance for farmers to

share experiences, problem-solve and create their own agendas and teach their own workshops. When attendees return to their home village to teach what they have learned, over 150 fish farmers benefit directly.

Education

Volunteers work closely with Ministry of Education counterparts at the district and zonal levels. They collaborate with counterparts to increase the quality of education delivered at government and community schools, and to expand access to education in rural areas. Their work includes increasing the use of the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) program in schools; developing radio schools where no government schools exist; building the capacity of communities to support their own schools; assisting in implementing IRI training for community school mentors; developing zonal resource centers; training teachers, monitoring schools, teaching English classes and starting school clubs.

In conjunction with the USAID-funded Education Development Center and their rural communities, three Volunteers are piloting the use of new technology to increase access and quality of education in rural areas. They have been involved in the IRI iPod Project which allows access to Ministry of Education radio lessons in rural areas that have poor radio reception. It also provides teachers the opportunity to receive visual training via iPod video.

Environment

In 2005, the environmental program formed an alliance with the Department of Forestry. With their counterparts, Volunteers promote sustainable forest utilization to more than 60 Joint Forestry Management committees comprising more than 208 men and 173 women. They work with teachers in more than 120 schools to develop environmental education lessons. Communities are taught alternative means of enhancing food security through promotion of conservation farming, agroforestry, and seed multiplication.

Health and HIV/AIDS

In conjunction with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Volunteers are fully engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS. They live in rural communities throughout Zambia and work closely with their Ministry of Health partners in HIV/AIDS education, home-based care, prevention, and enhanced food stability and nutrition.

Volunteers work with counterparts from rural health centers to build the capacity of neighborhood health committees to address health problems at the village or community level. Volunteers facilitate training in community-based prevention of malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and water- and sanitation-related diseases. They also educate their communities about child health and nutrition,

One Volunteer coordinated 2,000 insecticide-treated nets for distribution to rural households. The distribution effort included working with a local district organization to help distribute nets to the often overlooked population of orphaned and vulnerable children. The Volunteer also provided training on the proper utilization of the nets to ensure effective prevention of malaria.

Peace Corps Response Volunteers continue to be placed in local nongovernmental organizations to focus on capacity building for those involved with HIV/AIDS projects, such as training caregivers and establishing databases for monitoring purposes. One Peace Corps Response Volunteer trained 30 primary caregivers in her community, who in turn trained 306 people through outreach activities.

"These new Peace Corps Volunteers, as they work with communities throughout Zambia, will see and feel the impact that HIV/AIDS has on our lives, our families, and our workforce. The work of Volunteers in all three projects will help address: Quality of life for HIV/AIDS patients; stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS; behavior changes that leave people vulnerable to the virus; and improved food security, health and nutrition for those with HIV/AIDS in our rural communities. With all the hard work, collaboration, and partnership, I am sure we can continue to save lives of men, women, and children who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in Zambia."

Albert Mulonga
Deputy Minister of Agriculture
Zambia

THIS PAGE WAS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK