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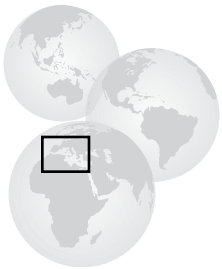
The statistical data in the following country profiles come primarily from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators 2007*. Additional sources are the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNICEF, the United Nations Statistics Division, the U.S. State Department, and the World Health Organization.

Albania



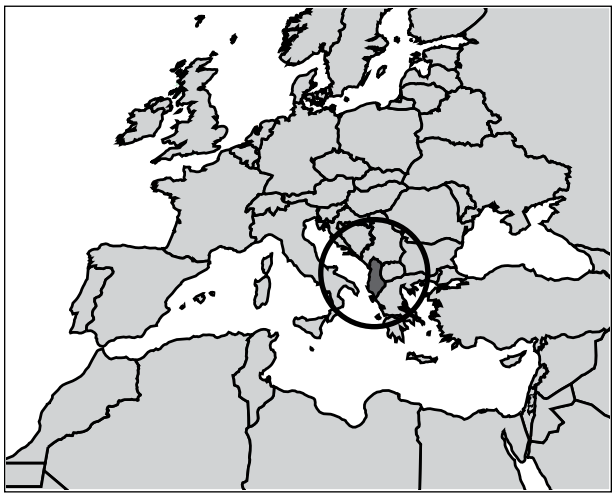
PROGRAM DATES	1992–1997 2003–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Tirana
Population	3 million
Annual per capita income	$2,570
GDP growth	5.5%
Foreign direct investment	$262 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 1% Female: 2%
Infant mortality rate	16 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 97% Measles: 96%
Access to an improved water source	96%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religions	Islam: 70% Albanian Orthodoxy: 20% Roman Catholicism: 10%
Official language	Albanian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	70	74
Program funds ($000)	2,127	2,179



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Albania overwhelmingly approved a new constitution in 1998 as a step toward strengthening democracy. The country has progressed to a democratic, pluralistic system, which led to successful parliamentary elections in June 2005 and to local government elections held in the winter of 2007. The transition to the new government has tested the country's commitment to democracy.

Albania is very poor by European standards and still in the midst of the transition to a more open-market economy. The government is taking measures to curb crime and revive economic activity by integrating western and central Europe into its foreign policy. Major challenges are low living standards, poor infrastructure, and high unemployment. Remittances from Albanians abroad allow many families to survive. Lack of sufficient arable land, land disputes, remote schools and health centers, lack of agricultural technology, poor transportation systems, unreliable electricity, and limited rural credit have led to urban migration, especially among the younger population. Albanian demographics are changing rapidly as the rural population moves to urban areas to seek work and educational opportunities.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps initiated a program in Albania in 1992 with Volunteers serving in business development, education and the environment. In 1997, the program was suspended and Volunteers evacuated due to a breakdown in civil order and public safety. The Peace Corps returned to Albania in 2003, and currently has 74 Volunteers serving in three projects: business development, education, and health and HIV/AIDS. Volunteers serve in towns and in smaller communities, helping local institutions build their capacity to address local issues. Albania is slowly decentralizing responsibilities and resources from the national government to local governments, and communities are gaining control over local water systems, roads, schools, clinics, and public services for the first time. Volunteers work with city halls, community organizations, microfinance institutions, resource centers, universities, schools, and health clinics.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers in this sector work in a project that builds the capacity of community organizations and institutions to promote local development. Volunteers work with local governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and business development organizations to improve their orga-

nizational and management capabilities. Volunteers also promote collaborative activities among local governments, NGOs, businesses, and citizen groups.

Two Volunteers at a World Heritage site of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) collaborated with a local travel business and an international NGO to open the town's first tourist information center (TIC). The TIC offers free informational materials to tourists that were created by staff and Volunteers, including brochures, pamphlets, and maps. The Volunteers have also provided training for TIC staff and community volunteers on tourism development and promotion, marketing, and customer service.

Education

Education Volunteers teach English as a foreign language in secondary schools and work with the English instructors to improve their teaching skills. A few Volunteers are also placed in universities and schools of foreign languages to prepare future teachers of English, as well as to promote a nascent teacher-training program. English educators develop school and community activities to promote the use of conversational English.

One Volunteer developed a continuing education program for 30 English teachers in her district. Working with her counterpart, the Volunteer organized a series of lectures for the teachers on topics such as English writing skills, grammar, public speaking, critical thinking, and problem solving. The trainings provided the teachers who participated with new ideas and methods to implement in their classrooms.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers promote healthier communities by working with health promotion offices, local clinics, schools, and community groups to provide education on maternal and child health, dental hygiene, water and sanitation, drug awareness, and HIV/AIDS prevention. They also help develop health education programs and materials for use at the local level, and work with local counterparts to improve the delivery of health education.

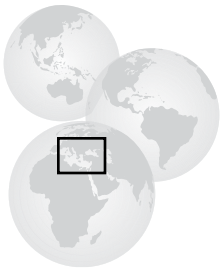
Working with a local cancer-patient support NGO, and funded by the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation, a team of three Volunteers helped develop and implement a breast cancer awareness campaign in their region. The team designed the campaign, created brochures and posters that provided information on breast health awareness and self-exam, and promoted mammograms. Posters were placed on billboards and buses, and programs on local television and radio discussed the campaign. A health Volunteer placed in a smaller town used the campaign's materials to conduct a training of trainers with local women leaders. Working with a local doctor and cultural center director, she trained the women on topics related to breast health.

One Volunteer worked with orphans and homeless children on small-scale financial management, enabling these older orphans and homeless children to keep financial records for small-scale activities. Another Volunteer worked with a district municipality to carry out a workplace prevalence survey that led to 755 employees attending HIV/AIDS educational sessions; 86 percent of those attending the workshops were tested.

"I believe that the dedication, commitment, and passion of these Volunteers will be imprinted in the memory of our town like a chronicle in the stone, and will never be forgotten."

Sadi Petrela
Director, PACKARD Humanities Institute
Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Office
Albania

Armenia



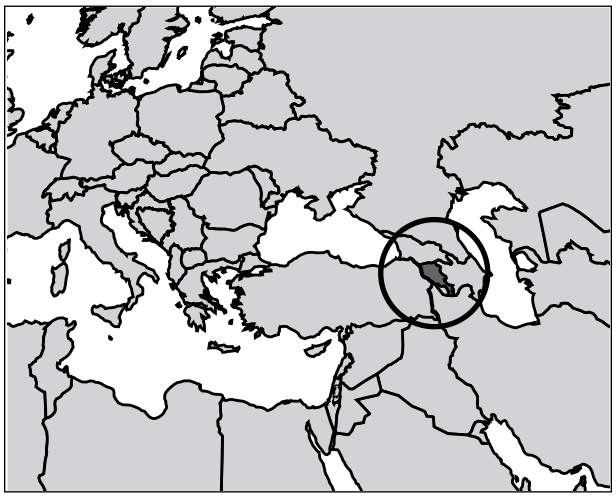
PROGRAM DATES	1992–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Yerevan
Population	3 million
Annual per capita income	$1,470
GDP growth	14.4%
Foreign direct investment	$258 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 0% Female: 1%
Infant mortality rate	26 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 90% Measles: 95%
Access to an improved water source	92%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.1%
Religion	Armenian Apostolic Christianity
Official language	Armenian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	80	82
Program funds ($000)	2,022	2,003



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Armenia was once one of the most industrialized republics of the Soviet Union, exporting industrial and high-technology goods to the other republics. The breakup of the Soviet Union, combined with the collapse of trade and financial systems, dealt a crippling blow to Armenia's industries. Additionally, economic effects from a 1988 earthquake, which killed more than 25,000 people and left more than 500,000 homeless, are still being felt. A blockade resulting from the conflict with Azerbaijan has devastated the economy and intensified Armenia's dependence on external supplies of energy, food, and materials. The combination of these events has caused a 90 percent loss of GDP, by far the largest drop of all former Soviet republics. Though much has improved, half of all Armenians still live in poverty; more than one in six live in extreme poverty.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Armenia is in the midst of historic change. Despite its setbacks, the country is slowly transitioning to a market economy and a democratic society. Private-sector activities are emerging, and wide-scale entrepreneurship needs to be supported through training and education. Armenians recognize the importance of English to link themselves to outside economic, educational, and technological opportunities. More attention is being given to health education and prevention as an alternative to the traditional curative approach. Armenians are beginning to recognize the importance of the environment as a priceless but threatened national resource. The Peace Corps supports Armenia's developmental challenges by providing programs in business development, education, the environmental and health and HIV/AIDS.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

A key challenge facing Armenia is initiating and sustaining new industries and services that grow, attract investments, create new jobs, and allow the country to flourish within a broader regional and international market. Peace Corps Volunteers help develop Armenian organizational and community capacity by providing consulting and technical assistance services to business centers and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Volunteers provide training in project design and management, marketing, finance, organizational development, and project monitoring and evaluation.

One Volunteer, in collaboration with community members, gathered information and pictures of the area's notable historical sites. With this information they redesigned tour-

ism materials for a local tourism center. The Volunteer also worked with local organizations to obtain funding to print 750 tourism maps, 750 brochures, and 150 welcome books. Additional funds were used to provide training in customer service and hospitality for the local tourism industry and to create a tourism website.

Education

The project that teaches English as a foreign language increases the quality of English education throughout Armenia. Volunteers teach in secondary schools, colleges, universities, training centers, and educational NGOs. Instruction is provided in schools and through nonformal educational activities, such as after-school clubs. Volunteers provide professional development for teachers through team teaching and workshops. Many Volunteers also work on information and communications technology projects.

Several Volunteers helped organize an International Outreach Coalition camp that was hosted in Armenia last summer. The camp's academic curriculum included topics such as civil leadership, country studies, and cultural awareness. Students from Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine attended the camp and participated in various activities including model European Union debates.

Environment

The environmental education project raises communities' environmental awareness. It also introduces experiential learning skills to youth, increasing their appreciation of the environment. Volunteers work with secondary school science teachers and community members at schools and local NGOs. They also work with local counterparts to develop and adapt environmental education learning resources in the Armenian language; run after-school environmental clubs and summer ecological camps for youth; and organize community-wide environmental activities.

With local partners, several Volunteers organized five-day environmental conservation youth camps, which were held throughout Armenia. In addition to teaching youth important lessons about environmental conservation, Volunteers also worked with adult community members to teach them the skills they needed to continue this critical environmental education. Topics such as organizational leadership, budgeting, time management, staff supervision, and managing environmental programs were covered with the adults to enable the camps to continue in the future.

Health and HIV/AIDS

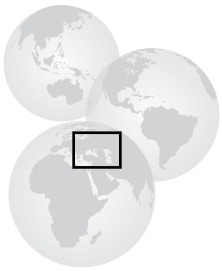
Volunteers organize health classes, seminars, community and professional lectures, and discussion groups on topics such as general health and hygiene, women's health, self-esteem, nutrition, exercise, HIV/AIDS prevention, and physical therapy. Volunteers also train health workers in clinics and hospitals, enhancing their professional development.

One Volunteer, working with local healthcare providers, organized a free three-day diabetes diagnostic clinic. Attendees received a free basic health checkup, including height and weight measurements, blood pressure, pulse, body mass index, and blood sugar levels. As a result of this free clinic, five people were newly diagnosed with diabetes, and they were provided with additional care and information about their condition.

"Peace Corps has been one of the most incredible experiences of my life. My greatest success has been watching my community take over the NGO and make it their own."

Armenia Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

Azerbaijan



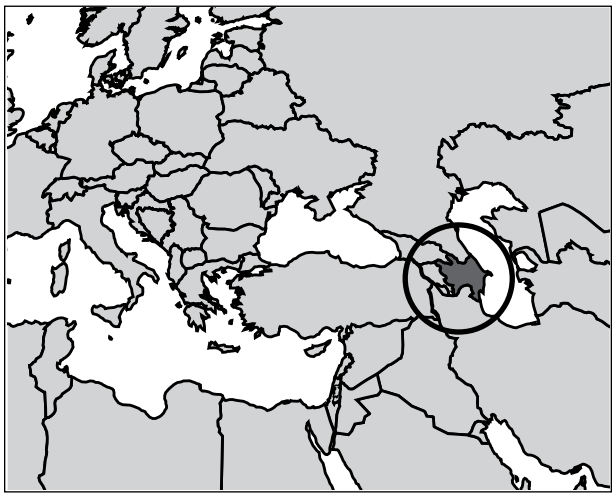
PROGRAM DATES	2003–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Youth

Capital	Baku
Population	8 million
Annual per capita income	$1,240
GDP growth	26.2%
Foreign direct investment	$1.680 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 1% Female: 2%
Infant mortality rate	74 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 96% Measles: 98%
Access to an improved water source	77%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.1%
Religions	Islam: 93% Russian Orthodoxy: 3% Armenian Orthodoxy: 2% Other: 2%
Official language	Azerbaijani (Azeri)

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	106	121
Program funds ($000)	2,135	2,225



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Azerbaijan has one of the world's fastest-growing gross domestic products and is experiencing growing regional influence due to its geographic location and energy resources. Continuing negotiations with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjoining territories remain high on Azerbaijan's political agenda. Other priorities include addressing the problems of a burgeoning economy and preparing Azerbaijan to use revenues from oil and gas reserves that are beginning to flow into the economy. A British Petroleum-led consortium of oil and gas producers is funding development projects along the route of Azerbaijan's newly opened oil pipeline from Baku to the Black Sea.

Presidential elections in 2003 and parliamentary elections in 2005 were improvements from prior years, but irregularities remain, and Azerbaijan has not yet met international election standards. The international community will again scrutinize Azerbaijan's democratic process in the presidential elections scheduled for October 2008.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Current programming includes a business development project, an education project, and a new youth project. In 2005, Volunteers piloted a business development project, and Volunteers have served 37 organizations in 16 regions, building capacity in business and communication skills and assisting with organizational development. To date, five groups of English language teachers have arrived in Azerbaijan since the first group arrived in 2003, serving in 42 regions and at more than 115 schools. Volunteers team-teach with Azerbaijani English teachers, using communicative methods and a variety of resources to enhance their teaching. In late 2007, Peace Corps/Azerbaijan initiated a youth development project in which Volunteers work with youth at the community level in 14 regions throughout the country.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Business development Volunteers serve as business facilitators, advisors, educators, and community development workers at the grassroots level. They serve as resource specialists, trainers, skills specialists, business advisors, and motivators, enhancing the capacity of intermediary organizations to develop businesses, organizations, and communities. Volunteers also initiate and collaboratively implement needs-based community projects. Host organizations include business and marketing centers, nongovernmental business groups, community development programs, agriculture

service centers, information and resource centers, microfinance institutions, and vocational schools.

One Volunteer and her counterpart conducted a training seminar on financial management for 21 agricultural extension agents and staff. Extensionists can now manage their financial records more professionally, and staff members use their new skills to better manage the center's finances. In addition to conveying technical information, the Volunteer introduced her colleagues to new teaching methods that can be used in future trainings.

Education

English teaching Volunteers are assigned to secondary schools and universities throughout Azerbaijan. Volunteers team-teach with Azerbaijani English teachers, focusing on improving English communication skills of students and teachers and supporting teachers in implementing communicative teaching methodologies. Volunteers also hold after-school conversation clubs and provide support to libraries and resource centers.

In addition to classroom teaching, Volunteers have inventively supported community activities. Through the USAID-supported small projects assistance program, one Volunteer and local counterpart trained 16 computer teachers from 10 schools located in small towns and villages. The course gave the teachers a working knowledge of basic computer programs so they could, in turn, teach their students. Participants were introduced to interactive teaching methods and given guidance on using new government-provided textbooks.

Youth

Youth development Volunteers work at the community level in cities, towns, and villages throughout Azerbaijan. Volunteers work with youth support organizations at their sites, including schools, resource centers, and local governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Volunteers work with youth, local service providers, parents, and community leaders to create opportunities for young people to engage in activities that help them lead healthier lifestyles and develop their leadership, life, and employment skills.

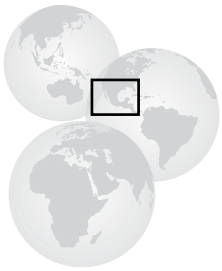
A Volunteer and a local counterpart developed a youth art exhibit entitled "How Do You See Your World?" There were more than 60 submissions that ranged from anti-drug trafficking and narcotics to world peace and the end of regional conflict. Their artwork helped raise the visibility and understanding of these important issues in the community.

"Everything I have heard about the progress of the Peace Corps is excellent. These English teachers are doing a wonderful job, and the people of Azerbaijan deeply appreciate their contribution."

President Ilham Aliyev
Azerbaijan

The Honorable Anne Derse, the United States Ambassador to Azerbaijan, addresses staff at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Belize



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

Capital	Belmopan
Population	291,800
Annual per capita income	$3,570
GDP growth	3.10%
Foreign direct investment	$126 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 23% Female: 23%
Infant mortality rate	15 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 96% Measles: 95%
Access to an improved water source	91%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	2.5%
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 50% Protestantism: 48% Other: 2%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	67	60
Program funds ($000)	2,159	2,206

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Although Belize is the most sparsely populated country in Central America, it is rich in cultural and environmental diversity. Many different groups of people, including Mayan, Mestizo, Garifuna, and Mennonite live together peacefully. Historically, agriculture drove the Belizean economy. Today, the government is focused on increasing ecotourism travel to the largest coral reef in the Americas, numerous Mayan archaeological sites, and vast pristine jungles.

Belize celebrated its 25th anniversary as an independent country in 2006. As a young nation, the country continues to have many development needs. In contrast to Latin American trends, Belize's ranking on the United Nations Human Development Index has been declining. One-third of its population lives in poverty; literacy rates have been declining, and access to secondary education is still not universal.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps has been operating continuously in Belize for 45 years and continues to enjoy strong government support. Over the years, programs have adapted to meet the needs of the people of Belize. Today, Volunteers focus their efforts in the areas of business development, education, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers provide critical assistance to fledgling community-based organizations and businesses that are committed to creating local income-generating opportunities. Volunteers assist community businesses, including women's groups, cooperatives, agro-producers, artisans, and ecotourism ventures. Through Volunteer technical support, these organizations are improving their knowledge and use of sustainable business practices. Volunteers also strengthen the leadership and planning skills of the village councils responsible for the economic development of rural communities.

One Volunteer helped a community group write a business plan to provide horse-and-buggy cultural tours for tourists visiting a nearby archaeological site. This new endeavor fills a niche in the ecotourism sector, and it will attract visitors to an otherwise isolated community, where they can experience the rich cultural history of the rural village. These tours also will attract customers to several small businesses in the community, including a local artisan cooperative, butterfly farm, and restaurant.

Education

Volunteers help the Ministry of Education enhance the skills of untrained primary school teachers. Volunteers create teacher-training programs that build the talents of the teachers with whom they work. They also mentor teachers and administrators on the use of research-based education methodologies which focus on literacy and English language instruction methods to promote student achievement. To support the government's initiative to expand preschool programs, Volunteers train teachers in early childhood education methods. Most Volunteers work directly with a specific school, but others create outreach programs through their work at district education offices in developing appropriate curriculum to reverse declining literacy rates.

One Volunteer provided training and support to five teachers in her community. The training focused on methods to improve student reading and writing skills. The teachers implemented the new methods in their primary school classes and saw great improvement in student reading ability. Students also achieved a higher passing rate for an annual exam given to primary school students.

Health and HIV/AIDS

People living in Belize's rural communities continue to struggle to meet their basic needs, such as clean water, proper waste management, and healthy living. Volunteers assist families in these communities to enhance hygiene, nutrition, and sanitation through education and gardening programs at schools and in the community. They also help construct and maintain latrines and water systems.

Belize has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in Central America. Volunteers support organizations that fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic by creating outreach programs about the disease, its prevention, and its treatment. Volunteers also collaborate with the Ministry of Education to implement its new Health and Family Life Education program with school-age youth.

One Volunteer assisted in the launch of a weekly radio show produced and hosted by young people for young people called *The Real Deal*. These lively discussions encourage living healthy lifestyles with a strong focus on reducing the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Other topics have included substance abuse, decision making, and discrimination.

Youth

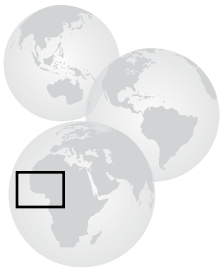
With nearly three-quarters of the population under the age of 30 and less than half of 13- to 16-year-olds enrolled in high school, youth development is a government priority. Volunteers encourage youth to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives by increasing access to high-quality youth programs. Volunteers strengthen the abilities of organizations and schools to create programs to engage youth in positive social and peer interactions. They also involve youth and youth groups in activities to enhance their life skills and reinforce a positive transition to adulthood.

Other Volunteer programs improve youth job readiness skills. Last year, several Volunteers provided training to more than 125 teachers in 11 schools on facilitating and implementing Junior Achievement programs, which educate youth about small business and entrepreneurship. As a result, nearly 900 students participated in these activities that focused on work readiness and financial literacy.

"Senator Reid makes it a point on his trips and I make it a point on mine to meet with Peace Corps Volunteers... They are making a difference."

The Honorable Dick Durbin (D-IL)
Member of the U.S. Senate
January 2007

Benin



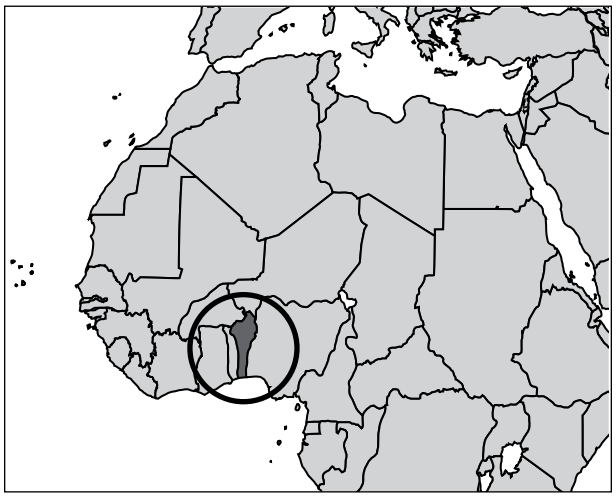
PROGRAM DATES	1968–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Porto-Novo
Population	8 million
Annual per capita income	$510
GDP growth	3.9%
Foreign direct investment	$21 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 52% Female: 77%
Infant mortality rate	89 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 83% Measles: 85%
Access to an improved water source	67%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.9%
Religions	Indigenous beliefs: 50% Christianity: 30% Islam: 20%
Official language	French

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	93	93
Program funds ($000)	3,151	3,212



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

One of the most stable countries in Africa, Benin has held four consecutive successful presidential elections. The last one, conducted in March 2006, led to a peaceful handover from President Mathieu Kerekou to Thomas Boni Yayi. The new government continues to reform the educational system, provide opportunities for private economic initiatives, reduce corruption, improve healthcare delivery systems, decentralize government functions, and implement a broad liberalization program in the cotton sector, Benin's primary source of foreign exchange.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Although the government has improved the well-being of the Beninese people, the country's human and material resources are often insufficient to provide enough qualified teachers, provide adequate health education and HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns (particularly in rural areas), preserve and restore the natural environment, and promote and provide training and credit facilities for small business owners. Volunteers address these needs through a broad range of activities in business development, education, environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. Regardless of sector, Volunteers receive training on how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and incorporate gender sensitivity into all sector activities.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and micro-entrepreneurs need assistance with basic management skills, and Volunteers work with entrepreneurs, village associations, women, and NGOs to teach marketing, accounting, business management, and organizational techniques. Some Volunteers provide training in savings and financial management to gardening associations of illiterate women. Volunteers also work with communities to create business centers that provide business trainings and consultations for the community workforce.

Benin's information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure is rapidly maturing. Fiber optic lines stretch across the country, Internet access continues to expand, and there is a vast network of mobile phone coverage. Volunteers provide training in website development to entrepreneurs and NGOs. One Volunteer created a computer center and a website to distribute business registration information to entrepreneurs. These services have reduced the high costs of collecting the information required to start

and run a business. The website contains hundreds of documents to help entrepreneurs launch their businesses throughout West Africa.

Education

Volunteers work in secondary schools teaching English and incorporating development themes into their lessons, such as HIV/AIDS education and prevention, ICT, and environmental stewardship. Volunteers also transfer innovative, participatory methodologies to their colleagues and organize HIV/AIDS training and computer training in their communities.

One Volunteer organized a library and book-lending program at the school where she taught. During the summer, she used the library to develop a reading program to encourage students to read outside of class. Students borrowed books from the library and then had their parents confirm that they had read the books. Prizes were given to the students who read the most pages during the summer break.

Environment

Peace Corps Volunteers work directly with local governments, NGOs, and community members to address deforestation and rapidly declining soil fertility. Volunteers in Benin work on environmental education, agroforestry, and environmental protection activities. Volunteers are also promoting ecotourism, and they work with NGOs that guide international visitors.

Several Volunteers established environmental clubs to educate and implement environmental protection activities. One Volunteer conducted interactive photography and journalism training with her environment club. Each club member developed an in-depth research project on a relevant environment topic and presented their findings and photographs in two national expositions. Other club activities included producing a bimonthly environmental radio show, creating a mural that encourages tree planting, and planning a community waste management day.

Health and HIV/AIDS

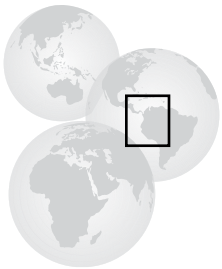
Volunteers collaborate with social service and health centers throughout Benin to conduct health education focused on maternal and child nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, and HIV/AIDS prevention. Volunteers assist in prenatal and post-natal consultations by providing life-saving maternal and infant nutritional counseling. Volunteers initiate child-growth monitoring programs, such as weekly weigh-ins and vaccination campaigns, in remote areas where there have been no previous means to track child nutritional status. Volunteers also promote essential hygiene and sanitation behaviors. Volunteers work with peer educators from their communities in an ongoing HIV/AIDS peer-education program.

Two Volunteers helped a Beninese NGO secure funding to improve services of a rural health center located near their community. With grants provided by the Peace Corps Partnership Program, the NGO hired additional health-care providers, including a midwife, to staff the center. The extra staff enabled the health center to treat the nearly 150 patients who seek care for problems stemming from malaria, childbirth, and infections each month.

"I believe my biggest impact on Benin and Benin's biggest impact on me will be the handful of deep friendships that I've had here. It was also those same friendships that allowed me to reach hundreds of artisans and small entrepreneurs and teach them basic financial planning and responsibility. My personal relationships will continue, and if even a few of those artisans keep using what I taught them then I believe we've achieved the Peace Corps mission."

Benin Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Bolivia



PROGRAM DATES	1962–1971 1990–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	La Paz
Population	9 million
Annual per capita income	$1,010
GDP growth	4.1%
Foreign direct investment	(-$277 million)
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 7% Female: 19%
Infant mortality rate	52 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 81% Measles: 64%
Access to an improved water source	85%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.1%
Religion	Predominantly Roman Catholicism
Official languages	Spanish Quechua Aymara

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	157	160
Program funds ($000)	2,975	3,061

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Juan Evo Morales, a member of Bolivia's indigenous Aymara and a populist, assumed the presidency of Bolivia in January 2006. Since then, he has implemented policies such as the establishment of a constitutional review process targeted toward nationalization, increased taxes, land reform, literacy campaigns, and increased medical services to rural areas.

Bolivia's economy remains dependent on foreign aid from multilateral lenders and foreign governments. Bolivia's principal exports are natural gas, soybeans and soy products, crude petroleum, zinc ore, and tin. Bolivia had a record six percent fiscal surplus for 2006, and the country benefits from the loan forgiveness programs of the Group of Eight, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. In 2005, the GDP per capita was approximately $2,700 (USD), which is one of the lowest in Latin America. The United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index ranks Bolivia as the least developed country in South America.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Since the initial opening of the program in 1962, more than 2,500 Volunteers have served in Bolivia. After a nearly 20-year hiatus, the government of Bolivia formally requested the Peace Corps return to Bolivia, and the Peace Corps resumed operations in 1990. Today, there are approximately 140 Volunteers in-country, working in agriculture, business development, education, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. Where appropriate, the Peace Corps integrates information technology into projects to expand technology access for Bolivian youth, farmers, entrepreneurs, and municipalities.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Bolivia's farmers face serious challenges in meeting basic needs for adequate nutrition and income. Agriculture Volunteers help farmers gain skills in sustainable farm practices, improving crop yields, product storage, and product transformation, as well as agricultural business and marketing practices. Volunteers also help farmers with beekeeping and fish farming.

One Volunteer works with a small technical university, teaching business and marketing classes and product transformation, including how to make peanut butter and jams. He is also working on a community fish farming project, which has grown to 10 working fish ponds. The yield of these ponds will be dedicated to local consumption and sale to increase family incomes.

Business Development

To address rural poverty, Volunteers help communities develop business skills and income-generating activities. This includes training local artisans, improving micro-enterprise practices, teaching basic business skills, and facilitating the development of local tourism plans.

One Volunteer is teaching daily computer classes to girls in an orphanage; teaching micro-enterprise classes to university students and women's groups, and supporting two artisan groups to improve business and marketing practices. In addition, he helped to secure 12 computers to start teaching computer classes at a technical institute, and is training teachers to run the center after he completes his service.

Education

Volunteers help improve the self-esteem and health of rural families by providing training and promoting activities related to nutrition, self esteem, and family health. Volunteers also train educators in participatory teaching techniques, development of active teaching materials, ways to incorporate health education curricula in the classroom, initiating or expanding computer skills, and creative nonformal education techniques.

One Volunteer helped establish a school library in her community. She sought book donations, set up a cataloging system, and trained a community member to be the librarian. Nearly 500 students in her area now have improved access to books and other educational materials.

Environment

Bolivia faces rapidly deteriorating natural resources from destabilizing mineral extraction and agricultural practices. The natural resource management project aims to protect the environment and create an ethic of good stewardship. Volunteers work with communities on soil conservation, watershed management, and re-vegetation activities. Youth conservation clubs and teacher training help expand positive conservation practices.

One Volunteer, working with the municipal government and superintendent of schools, regularly conducts training sessions to help teachers understand and incorporate environmental principles and activities into their curricula. She has formed youth eco-clubs, and she coordinated an environmental fair, which was financed by the municipality and attracted more than 2,000 participants. She is also developing a school recycling initiative.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Access to potable water and waste disposal systems is a major development challenge in Bolivia. Partnering with local and national organizations, Volunteers improve rural household water availability and sanitary conditions and habits. Volunteers promote the design and construction of water systems and bathrooms, organize and train local water boards, train hygiene education workers, and help communities to improve solid-waste management, recycling, and composting practices.

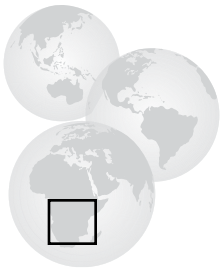
Collaborating with a local nongovernmental organization, one Volunteer works with more than 20 communities on water issues, strengthening community water committees and training them in administration, water management, and water system maintenance. The Volunteer also assists in the construction of new drinking water systems, grey water systems, and latrines, and he teaches hygiene to children and women's groups.

"The Peace Corps Volunteer's work was excellent. She was always willing to help and to cooperate; she is a very kind person, and through herself and her work, I learned more about Peace Corps."

Dr. Edgar Valdez Carrizo
Director, Instituto para el Desarrollo Humano SidAccion
Bolivia

Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) visits with Volunteers and host-country staff in Bolivia, December 2006

Botswana



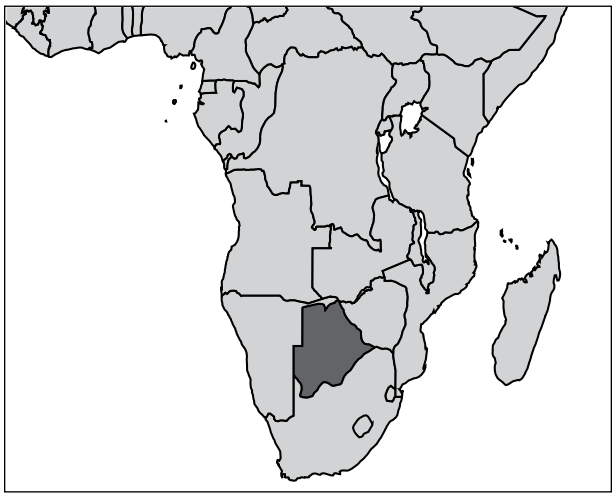
PROGRAM DATES	1966–1997 2003–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Gaborone
Population	2 million
Annual per capita income	$5,590
GDP growth	6.2%
Foreign direct investment	$279 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 20% Female: 18%
Infant mortality rate	87 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 97% Measles: 90%
Access to an improved water source	95%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	37.3%
Religions	Christianity: 60% None: 20% Indigenous beliefs: 6% Other: 4%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	56	59
Program funds ($000)	1,712	1,748



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Republic of Botswana has enjoyed a stable and progressive political climate since independence in 1966. Although it is a multiparty democracy, its politics have been dominated by the Botswana Democratic Party, which has won every presidential election for the past three decades—from the first president, Seretse Khama, through the second, Quett Ketumile Masire, to the third and current one, Festus Mogae. The vice president, Ian Khama, is waiting in the wings for his presumed ascendancy in March 2008.

Through fiscal discipline and sound management, Botswana has transformed from one of the poorest countries in the world into a middle-income country. However, despite its high GDP, Botswana has high unemployment and income disparity. Revenue from diamonds and profits from the large foreign-exchange reserves of the Bank of Botswana have largely sheltered the country from recessions that have hurt most other countries in the region.

With a population of only 1.8 million people, Botswana is experiencing the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic not only as a health problem, but as a development problem affecting every aspect of the lives of the Batswana people.

PROGRAM FOCUS

From 1966 to 1997, Peace Corps projects touched nearly all aspects of Botswana's development, with Volunteers working in business development, education, the environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. Because of Botswana's economic success, the Peace Corps program closed in 1997.

In 1998, the government of Botswana declared HIV/AIDS a national crisis, and President Mogae dedicated his first five years in office to fighting HIV/AIDS, poverty, and unemployment. In 2001, President Mogae asked President Bush to reestablish the Peace Corps program to assist with the pandemic. Following an assessment by the Peace Corps in 2002, the program reopened, and the first group of Volunteers dedicated to combating HIV/AIDS arrived in March 2003.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Health and HIV/AIDS

As one of only three Peace Corps programs worldwide focused exclusively on HIV/AIDS activities, Volunteers in Botswana collaborate with the government of Botswana and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners in a multifaceted approach to fight the disease. Under the guidance of the National AIDS Coordinating Agency, the Peace Corps began its activities in 2003 in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government (MOLG), specifically with its AIDS

coordinating unit. As part of the national campaign, this unit mainstreams HIV/AIDS education and programming at the national, district, and village levels.

Additionally, all government-sponsored development programs are to include HIV/AIDS training and education for the workforce and the recipient community.

Volunteers work as counterparts to AIDS coordinators at health districts throughout Botswana. They provide assistance to the district AIDS committees in developing multisector, district-wide responses to HIV/AIDS. They also help develop village AIDS committees; monitor, evaluate, and document HIV/AIDS programming and its impacts; facilitate district plans to ensure that HIV/AIDS activities are integrated into all development projects; and help form and train support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS.

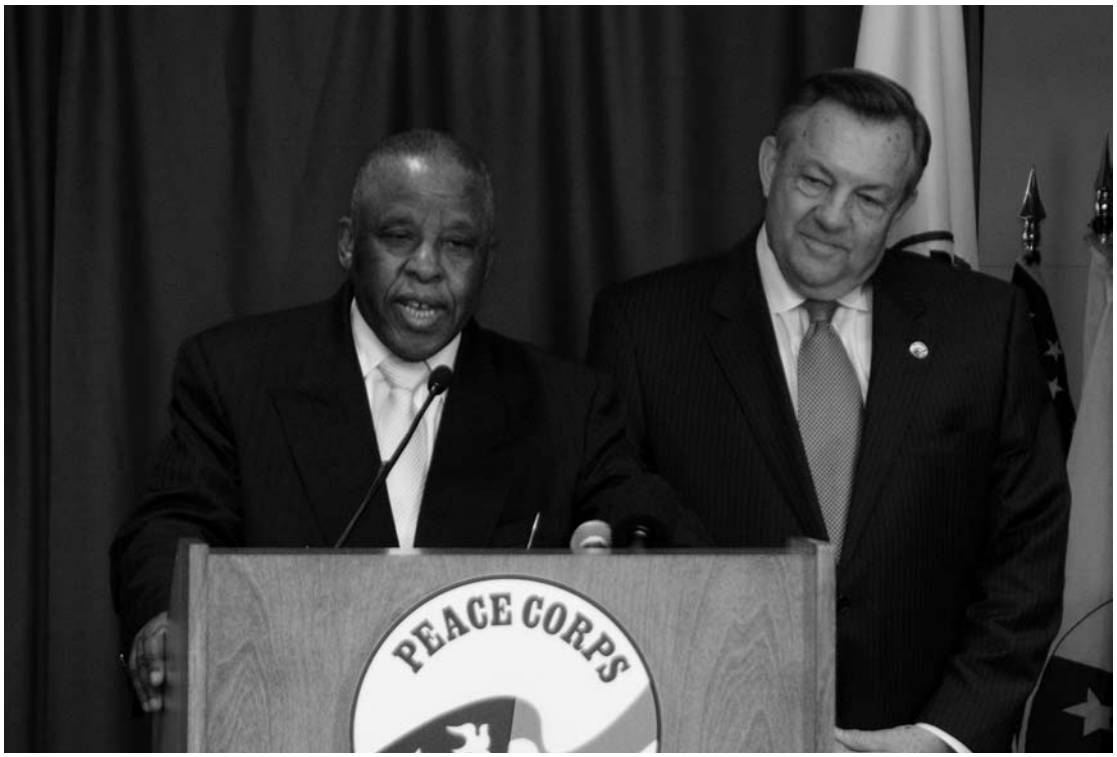
In 2004, Peace Corps/Botswana, again in partnership with MOLG, assigned Volunteers to help build community capacity to address high-priority HIV/AIDS-related challenges. Volunteers work with social worker counterparts at the village level to build capacity for home-based care clients as well as for orphans and vulnerable children. Other Volunteers collaborate with the ministry of health to support healthcare professionals at village clinics that provide services to prevent mother-to-child transmission.

In conjunction with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Peace Corps posts Volunteers at fledgling community-based organizations, particularly those helping orphans and vulnerable children. Examples of Volunteer activities in this program include forming abstinence clubs for youth, training peer educators, and teaching NGO staff to write effective proposals.

Last year, four Volunteers supported the Ministry of Education in rolling out a life-skills curriculum. Building on that project, 15 new life-skills Volunteers are expected to arrive in April 2008.

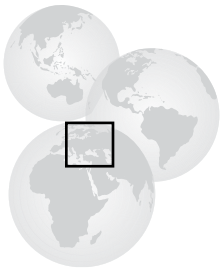
"It is with the greatest humility and respect that I, on behalf of a grateful nation, commend the Peace Corps, past and present, for being amongst those members of the human race who have decided, not in exchange for any material reward, to make a positive difference to the lives of others."

President Festus Mogae
Botswana



President Mogae addresses returned Volunteers, dignitaries, and staff at headquarters in Washington, D.C., 2007

Bulgaria



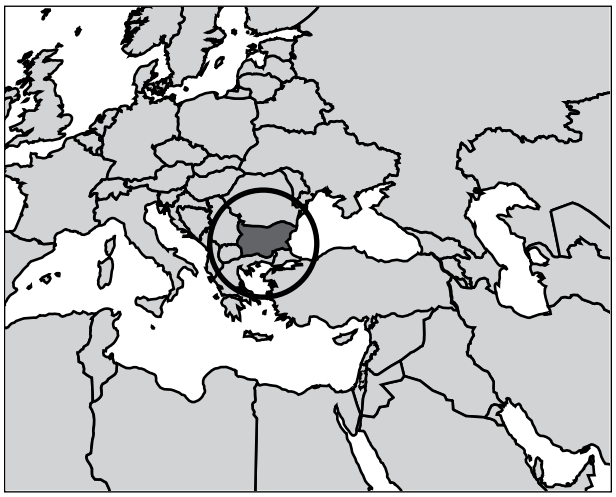
PROGRAM DATES	1991–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Youth

Capital	Sofia
Population	8 million
Annual per capita income	$3,450
GDP growth	5.5%
Foreign direct investment	$2.614 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 1% Female: 2%
Infant mortality rate	12 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 90% Measles: 81%
Access to an improved water source	99%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.1%
Religions	Bulgarian Orthodoxy: 83% Islam: 12% Others: 4% Protestantism: <1% Roman Catholicism: <1%
Official language	Bulgarian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	161	144
Program funds ($000)	3,377	3,284



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since 1990, when peaceful public protest changed Bulgaria's political structure and direction, Bulgaria has continued to transform its political, economic, and social systems. Bulgaria has made exceptional progress toward creating a more stable environment and a market-oriented economy, particularly in urban areas. Membership in NATO and admission to the European Union (EU) in January 2007 bode well for the development of civil society. Despite these major accomplishments, much work remains to be done, particularly with underserved populations and in rural communities.

Even as national economic statistics and structural reforms have raised hopes, progress has been frustratingly slow for many Bulgarians, who still feel the effects of the economic collapse of 1996. Ethnic minorities, people in rural communities, and the elderly often struggle near the bottom of the social and economic order, a development gap that is rapidly widening.

Bulgaria's position in southeastern Europe makes it a bellwether for regional stability in the Balkans. If Bulgaria can evolve into an open and prosperous nation, this will demonstrate to other countries in the region that societies committed to openness and ethnic tolerance achieve more—economically, socially, and politically.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps serves Bulgaria through programs in business development, education, and youth. Volunteers partner with change agents in their communities to identify local needs, create development strategies, transfer skills, and build civil society through community cooperation.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers help build cooperation at the grassroots level, and they encourage cooperation among local governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), entrepreneurs, and civic groups.

Volunteers help communities conduct needs assessments and create programs to address these needs. They promote volunteerism, assist with local economic development, teach management and organizational skills, facilitate environmental education, and help communities recognize their strengths and assets.

One Volunteer helped the tourist information center in her area develop and produce training for local business owners and youth. The training focused on improving customer service, developing ecotourism, protecting the environment,

and promoting tourism sites, including Roman ruins and mineral springs. Additionally, she organized a group to produce and install multilingual signs for the town's most popular tourist attractions. Service in the town's tourism sector has notably improved, and the information center will offer ongoing tourism training to strengthen this promising local business sector.

Education

English language education is a national priority. Bulgaria is now a member of the EU and is striving to become fully active in the global community. The Peace Corps helps address this need by providing Volunteers in primary and secondary schools to help both students and teachers with English language acquisition. Education Volunteers also work on community projects, including youth camps, adult English courses, and minority integration training. Volunteers work with students and counterparts on business skills, peer education, HIV/AIDS awareness, and human trafficking prevention.

In addition to teaching English in a small mountain town, one Volunteer partnered with community members to convert an unused classroom into a multimedia conference room by adding computer equipment, an overhead projector, and wireless Internet access. The Volunteer trained teachers at the school to use this equipment, and they now effectively incorporate videos and other multimedia assets into their lesson plans. The room is also used as a movie theater once a week, and donations collected from moviegoers will be used to purchase additional multimedia equipment.

Youth

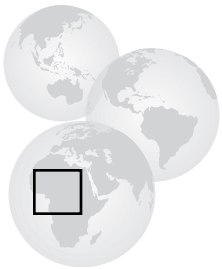
Youth development offers the Peace Corps the opportunity to invest in Bulgaria's future community and national leaders. Volunteers support three national initiatives: provide all youth with greater opportunities for personal development; improve the conditions of the more than 30,000 children living in orphanages and other state institutions; and contribute to the national effort to combat human trafficking in Bulgaria. Volunteers work with disabled youth, orphans, youth parliaments, and European-integration centers. Volunteers help local partners organize camps and after-school programs in leadership, career development, community service, and tolerance-building.

One Volunteer worked with an NGO focused on Roma community development to help create a community center. The center offers classes in English for youth and women, leads youth and sports camps, and conducts life skills classes for women to help improve Roma participation in mainstream Bulgarian society.

"Peace Corps Volunteers' dedication to this noble cause is impressive. Across thousands of kilometers, they build stable bridges between the two cultures and peoples through mutual respect and understanding."

Daniel Valtchev
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Education and Science
Bulgaria

Burkina Faso



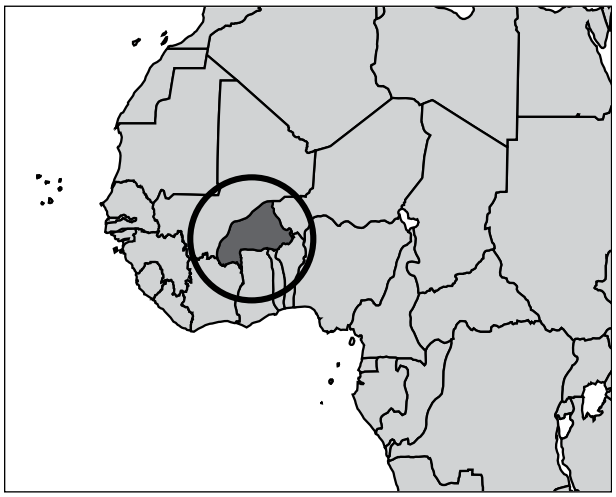
PROGRAM DATES	1966–1987 1995–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Ouagadougou
Population	13 million
Annual per capita income	$400
GDP growth	4.8%
Foreign direct investment	$19 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 71% Female: 85%
Infant mortality rate	96 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 88% Measles: 78%
Access to an improved water source	61%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.8%
Religions	Islam: 55% Christianity: 25% Indigenous beliefs: 20%
Official language	French

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	101	110
Program funds ($000)	3,282	3,373



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Burkina Faso, formally known as Upper Volta, gained independence from France in August 1960. In 1966, the civilian government was overthrown by a military coup, which then characterized the mode of government for the next 25 years. In 1984, the country's name was changed to Burkina Faso, which means "Country of the Upright/Honorable People." In 1991, a former military ruler, Blaise Compare, was the sole candidate and won the presidency; he was reelected in 1998 with nearly 90 percent of the vote and elected again in 2005. Since 1991, the country has experienced a high level of stability. The majority of its population engages in subsistence agriculture, which is hampered by frequent droughts. Though foreign investment and private-sector development are increasing, healthcare remains inadequate and conditions such as malaria and malnutrition are endemic.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps entered Burkina Faso in 1966. Though the program phased out in 1987, Volunteers returned to Burkina Faso in 1995 as part of a newly established health project. One year later, the Peace Corps established a secondary education project, and in 2003, the Peace Corps introduced a small business development project to complement the government's poverty-reduction and private-sector promotional programs. In 2005, the Peace Corps started a girls' education project to increase girls' access to education. This was identified as a priority by the Burkina Faso government and the Millennium Challenge Corporation.* All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Peace Corps/Burkina Faso works to promote business development and agribusiness. Volunteers work with entrepreneur associations and cooperatives to market crafts and agribusiness products as well as to promote cultural tours and tourism. Volunteers work with savings and credit clubs, handicraft associations, and agribusiness cooperatives to improve business practices and the viability of commercial activities.

One Volunteer worked with an association of handicapped artisans to build a workshop with a sales area. He also provided training for members in accounting and marketing and helped in outreach activities to inform both the community and tourists about the center.

Education

Volunteers in the secondary education project work in underserved middle and high schools as math and science teachers. Teachers typically have large classes, sometimes with more than 100 students, and they teach up to 20 hours per week. Volunteers teach all classes in French, and they work with their counterparts to build students' capacities for critical thinking and problem solving, and to gain important life skills.

One Volunteer taught his ninth-grade biology students about volcanoes by having them construct their own models. The artificial volcanoes were made from mud, baking soda, vinegar, liquid soap, tissue, and water. This creative lesson plan provided the students with a hands-on learning opportunity and also provided the Volunteer's teaching colleagues with new and innovative teaching ideas.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers are assigned to village health and social promotion centers. They work with communities to strengthen local health management committees and help develop health-promotion programs that address childhood communicable diseases, malaria, HIV/AIDS, and nutrition.

Volunteers have successfully built the capacity of community-based organizations (CBOs) to take a leadership role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Volunteers collaborated with counterparts to train more than 80 CBOs in educating their communities about HIV/AIDS and other health issues including malaria, polio, tuberculosis, and family planning.

One Volunteer worked closely with a community theater group that used theater as a way to conduct health education activities. Based on their successful performances, the health district of Zabré has contracted the group to perform UNICEF-sponsored education activities for the entire district on preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Youth

Volunteers in the girls' education and empowerment project increase the enrollment, retention, and transition rates of girls from primary to secondary school. They work with communities and schools to promote the value of education and to design and implement activities such as girls' clubs, sports groups, study groups, theater groups, life-skills training, girls' camps, self-esteem and leadership games, and exchanges through the Coverdell World Wise Schools program.

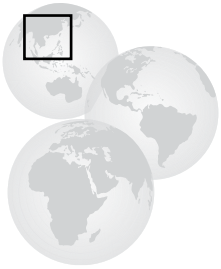
One Volunteer organized a week-long girls' camp to encourage girls to stay in school, give them an opportunity to discuss health concerns, and enhance their self esteem and leadership skills. Participants visited women in the workplace to discuss the women's education, career path, and obstacles they had encountered. Through the camp experience, the young girls broadened their ideas about women's roles and opportunities as well as the obstacles they may confront to succeed.

"Living in Burkina Faso, I have had the opportunity to discover that there is something far greater than nationality, ethnicity, race, or religion; that we are all members of a global community and it is within this community that we work together to better ourselves as human beings."

Burkina Faso Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

* *Launched by President George W. Bush, with bipartisan Congressional support, the Millennium Challenge Corporation was established by Congress in 2004 to administer the Millennium Challenge Account, an innovative foreign assistance program designed to make U.S. aid more effective by rewarding countries with sound policies and good governance.*

Cambodia



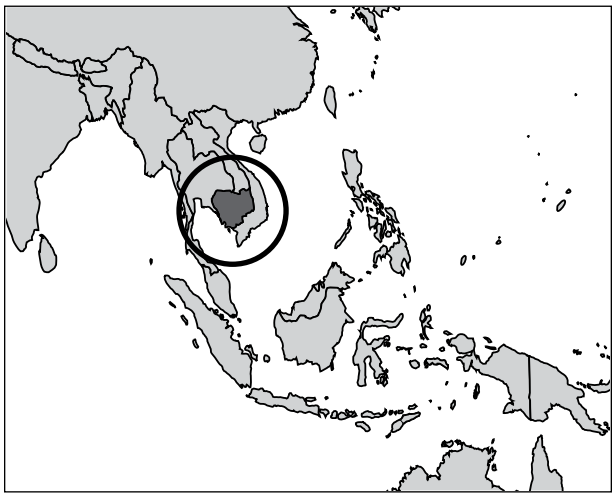
PROGRAM DATES	2006–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education

Capital	Phnom Penh
Population	14 million
Annual per capita income	$448
GDP growth	13.4%
Foreign direct investment	$379 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 15%
	Female: 36%
Infant mortality rate	58 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 82%
	Measles: 79%
Access to an improved water source	41%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.6%
Religions	Theravada Buddhism: 95%
	Christianity, Islam
Official language	Khmer

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	59	68
Program funds ($000)	1,422	1,574



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cambodia is a tropical country about the size of Minnesota dominated by the Mekong River and its floodplain. The government is a constitutional monarchy and, since the 1993 United Nations-supported elections, enjoys a multiparty system. The chief of state is King Norodom Sihamoni, and the head of state is Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Cambodia faces significant challenges in its efforts to spur economic growth. Roughly 80 percent of the population is engaged in subsistence agriculture, a sector with insufficient productivity to provide jobs for a labor force that is growing at more than five percent a year. Garment manufacturing and tourism are the two major cash industries and growth sectors, but they employ only one-tenth of the labor force. The government encourages the development of small and medium enterprises, but expertise and capital are extremely limited.

Cambodia is ethnically homogeneous. More than 90 percent of the population is ethnic Khmer; the remainder is Chinese, Vietnamese, Cham, Khmer Loeu, and Indian. Theravada Buddhism, suppressed by the Khmer Rouge but now revived, is the dominant religion, but Islam and Christianity are also practiced.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Royal Government of Cambodia first invited the Peace Corps to open a program in November 1992. The agency sent an assessment team the following year and a country agreement was signed in October 1994. However, the political situation at that time was deemed too unstable for the agency to send Volunteers. A second assessment team visited in 1996. Although improvements in the political and safety situation were noted, additional concerns remained.

In 2004, Cambodia's Ministry of Education again expressed an interest in establishing a Peace Corps program. The Peace Corps sent an assessment team, which found improvements in the administrative and security infrastructures and opportunities for Volunteers to work safely and effectively. The Peace Corps office officially opened in 2006.

Education is highly valued in Cambodia. Unfortunately, the entire educational system was dismantled by the Khmer Rouge, which from 1975 to 1979 targeted anyone with an education for elimination. Although investments were made in basic education in the 1980s, gaps in teacher training have still not been addressed. The initial focus of the Peace Corps program is secondary-level English teaching and teacher training. Since their swearing-in in April 2007, Volunteers have had a positive impact on their co-teachers, students, and their communities.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

The first 30 Peace Corps Volunteers in Cambodia arrived in early 2007. The Peace Corps program emphasizes English teaching and English teacher training, with secondary projects in life-skills development. Most education agencies and nongovernmental organizations in-country focus on primary and lower secondary education to support Cambodia's goal of universal ninth-grade education for all Cambodian children.

The education project is geared toward classroom teaching of English at the upper high school level. Volunteers support high school English teachers in Cambodian provinces and districts to improve their English language and English teaching skills. Volunteers also collaborate with community groups and individuals to enhance the quality of life through developing community-initiated projects, promoting life-skills development; and introducing sustainable community activities.

All education Volunteers work on community projects throughout their service. They work with community members and other development partners to help design, plan, and implement small-scale sustainable projects to address community-identified priorities. They work closely with community partners in all phases of project implementation to ensure skills transfer, cross-cultural exchange, and project sustainability. As secondary projects, Volunteers work with youth in their communities to improve their knowledge about nutrition, disease prevention, HIV/AIDS, and other health issues.

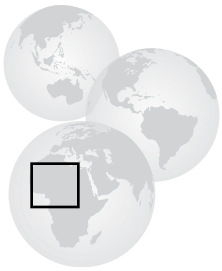
Two Volunteers inspired the students and faculty of the Kampong Leav Upper Secondary School in Prey Veng province to complete a 9- by 18-foot world map. All funding for this project was raised by the school's students and teachers. Students did the drawing and painting, and the completed project is a source of great pride to the students and faculty.

Volunteer in Cambodia

"Peace Corps Volunteers will make significant contributions to Cambodia. Volunteerism will start again in the younger generation of Cambodians. We welcome the culture of volunteerism and hope this will link to the volunteerism that formerly existed in Cambodia."

Kol Pheng
Senior Minister of Education, Youth and Sport
Cambodia

Cameroon



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

Capital	Yaounde
Population	16 million
Annual per capita income	$1,000
GDP growth	2.0%
Foreign direct investment	$18 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 23% Female: 40%
Infant mortality rate	87 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 73% Measles: 64%
Access to an improved water source	66%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	5.5%
Religions	Christianity: 53% Indigenous beliefs: 25% Islam: 22%
Official languages	French English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	154	156
Program funds ($000)	3,510	3,534

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cameroon continues to move toward democracy. Political reforms are having a positive effect and the nation's multiparty system is enabling elections to become more competitive. Agriculture is the mainstay of Cameroon's economy; it provides a living for 80 percent of the population and accounts for one-third of GDP and more than one-half of all export earnings. Cocoa and coffee are the main cash crops; other exports include timber, aluminum, cotton, natural rubber, bananas, peanuts, tobacco, and tea.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps entered Cameroon in 1962 with 20 math and science Volunteer teachers. Currently, the Peace Corps operates within four project sectors in 10 provinces of Cameroon: agriculture, business development, education, and health and HIV/AIDS. All projects have four common themes—counterpart involvement, Volunteer competence, HIV/AIDS awareness and mitigation, and organizational professionalism.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Increasing competition for land has led farmers to cultivate on steep hillsides and in ecologically important forested areas. Volunteers are establishing a network of farm leaders who understand the benefits of agroforestry and permanent farming systems and can promote these techniques and benefits to other farmers. Volunteers have trained farmers in agroforestry techniques and established demonstration plots. They have helped farm families establish 100 nurseries that produced more than 90,000 seedlings and cuttings while maintaining 40 active seed banks.

One Volunteer mobilized her village to become involved in the conservation of a forest that has high tourism potential. She guided her community through the process of establishing the forest as a recognized park by the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife. She also helped establish a park management committee and helped train 18 members of the community as tourist guides. In the first year, more than 30 tourists visited the park, which generated extra income for the community.

Business Development

Business development Volunteers provide technical assistance to microfinance institutions and small enterprise development organizations. Thousands of Cameroonians participated in meetings, workshops, and other training sessions organized by Volunteers to improve business, credit, and loan portfolio management skills. Volunteers have promoted the prudent use of credit and the importance of loan recovery. As a result 2,300 Cameroonians can better provide credit management and counseling to entrepreneurs and assist financial institutions in providing secure loans with a minimal delinquency rate.

One Volunteer helped a credit union in her community computerize files and develop electronic financial and membership databases. She also provided computer literacy training to staff and streamlined processes, which gave staff more time to focus on loan recovery, risk assessment, account analysis, and management responsibilities. Most importantly, the computerization has created more transparent financial operations.

Education

Education Volunteers have taught computer literacy, English and didactics, math, and science to more than 198 student teachers in teacher-training colleges and approximately 18,000 secondary school students. Volunteers developed school-based libraries and teaching materials applicable to Cameroonian institutions. Health and environmental education curricula were integrated into daily lessons.

One Volunteer organized a leadership seminar for youth at a community library. Topics included communication, personal budgeting and finance, small project implementation, professionalism, and leadership. The Volunteer also provided information sessions on how to use library resources, basic computer skills, and Internet research.

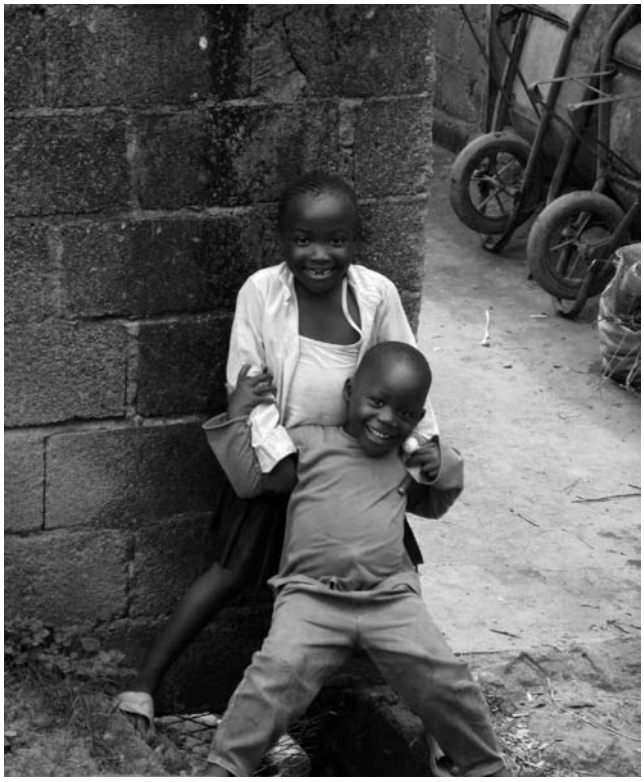
Health and HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a major public health concern in Cameroon. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in prevention, mitigation, and behavior change strategies for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Volunteers also receive training in Cameroon's National AIDS Control Plan to facilitate their participation in local strategies. Last year, Volunteers trained more than 500 peer educators on HIV/AIDS and STD issues and educated nearly 13,000 community members on the prevention of HIV and STDs. Volunteers also trained more than 950 adolescents in life skills, enabling them to make positive choices and live healthier lifestyles.

One Volunteer worked with a local doctor to plan and implement volunteer counseling and testing interventions in her community, including one specifically for high school students. The Volunteer facilitated a week-long education program for 350 students on HIV prevention/transmission and living positively with HIV/AIDS. At the end of the program, free testing and pre- and post-test counseling were offered to all students. One hundred and ninety students were tested and approximately 65 percent collected results. The Volunteer is working to establish an annual education and testing program at the high school.

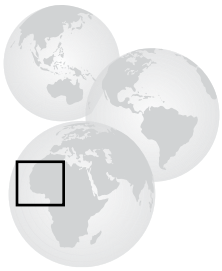
"Applying to the Peace Corps was the best decision I ever made. I entered the country eager, yet timid. Now, in my third year, I am strong minded and determined. The Peace Corps is like nothing else you will ever experience."

Cameroon Volunteer
Education Sector



Children in Cameroon

Cape Verde



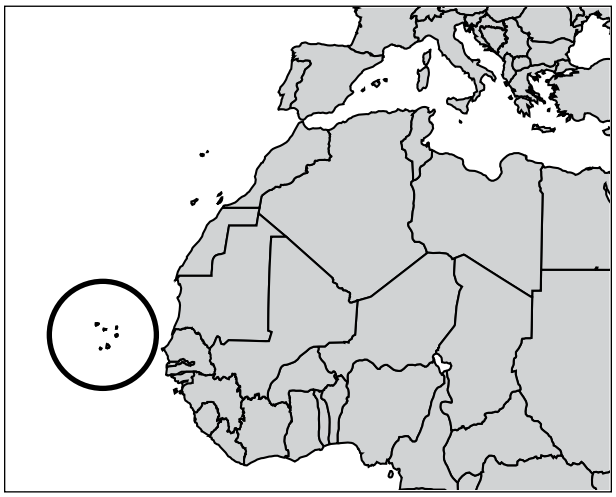
PROGRAM DATES	1988–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Youth

Capital	Praia
Population	506,800
Annual per capita income	$1,980
GDP growth	11.9%
Foreign direct investment	$54 million
Adult illiteracy rate	24%
Infant mortality rate	26 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 73% Measles: 65%
Access to an improved water source	80%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religions	Protestantism Roman Catholicism
Official language	Portuguese

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	52	52
Program funds ($000)	1,935	1,943



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Cape Verde is a stable, transparent democracy. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde governed the country as a one-party state from Cape Verde's independence in 1975 until its first democratic elections in 1990. The Movement for Democracy Party won the 1990 and 1995 elections, but was defeated in 2000, when the former ruling party, renamed the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV), regained control. PAICV won national elections again in 2006.

Economic reforms were launched in 1991 to develop the private sector and attract foreign investment, and by 1998, Cape Verde's constitution was changed to remove state control from the main productive sectors of the economy. The economy is mainly service-oriented, and commerce, transport, and public services account for almost 70 percent of its GDP. In July 2005, Cape Verde signed a five-year $110-million compact with the Millennium Challenge Corporation* for infrastructure improvements to support increased economic activity and provide access to markets, employment, and social services. Today, Cape Verde has a relatively high per capita GDP due, in large part, to increased foreign investment in tourism, transportation infrastructure, and emigrant remittances. Cape Verde is graduating from least-developed to lower middle-income country status.

In spite of these advances, Cape Verde's semi-arid climate and poor natural resource base are especially susceptible to the serious water shortages caused by periods of long-term drought. About 90 percent of Cape Verde's food supply is imported, while the potential of the fishing and service industries have yet to be fully exploited.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The government of Cape Verde invited the Peace Corps to participate in the nation's development efforts in 1987, and the first group of Volunteers arrived in 1988. Volunteers work on eight of the nine inhabited islands—all except Brava. Cooperating closely with the government's development goals, Volunteers work as English teacher trainers, secondary school English teachers, and vocational education teachers. They also work to develop capacity at municipal levels, and they implement youth development initiatives that include information technology, small business and credit, leadership training, and life-skills enhancements. Volunteers are an important part of the nation's program to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and all Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in HIV/AIDS education, actively participating in World AIDS Day and other events.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers continue to promote information technology as a tool to implement sustainable, small-scale community development projects. Volunteers have trained community members, among them students and businesspeople, in basic computer applications, built and repaired computer networks for cybercafés, and taught professionals how to use design and drafting software. Volunteers also advise small businesses to increase their profitability, viability, and access to credit. One Volunteer living in a remote village on Santiago helped establish and train a women's cooperative. The cooperative now produces, markets, and sells high-quality jelly and jam products, becoming the main source of income for 50 poor rural families.

Education

The education project provides English teachers, English teacher trainers, and vocational education teachers. These Volunteers work in classroom instruction, teacher training, and skills transfer, and they enhance teaching materials, lesson planning, and community programs. Volunteers address the needs of those with limited access to educational resources and opportunities as they seek sustainable results that complement other development efforts using local participants as partners.

Two Volunteers assisted in the opening of a library at the English Studies Center, which is part of the National Teaching Institute. The Volunteers also helped raise funds to provide computers and other necessary supplies, such as books and shelving. The library is a significant resource for students, providing them with access to written materials and the Internet so they can further improve their English language skills.

Youth

Since more than 60 percent of Cape Verdeans are under 25 years old, and 40 percent are under 15, working with youth is a major focus for Volunteers. Volunteers work in national youth centers, where they mobilize youth by promoting sports and cultural activities as a strategy to launch discussions about issues such as HIV/AIDS prevention, alcoholism, and teen pregnancy. Volunteers train youth in computer use, English, music, leadership, and life skills. They also help center staff enhance their organizational development.

One Volunteer, in addition to her regular teaching commitment, organized a beach clean-up project that she called the Corpo das Praias (Beach Corps). Students were recruited from five high schools, youth associations, and churches. The Volunteer coordinated weekend cleanups for three of the most polluted beaches in her community. Her project received support from the local municipal government, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, and various nongovernmental organizations. During the day, students learned environmental lessons as they removed trash from the beach. During an overnight stay on the beach, the youth participated in activities that promoted team building and leadership skills.

"We recognize that English is the language of commerce, education, and international relations. Without the presence of Peace Corps in Cape Verde we could be severely handicapped in reaching our goal of securing Cape Verde's place in the globalization process."

Victor Borges
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Cape Verde

* *Launched by President George W. Bush, with bipartisan Congressional support, the Millennium Challenge Corporation was established by Congress in 2004 to administer the Millennium Challenge Account, an innovative foreign assistance program designed to make U.S. aid more effective by rewarding countries with sound policies and good governance.*

China

PROGRAM DATES	1993–2003 2004–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education

Capital	Beijing
Population	1.305 billion
Annual per capita income	$1,740
GDP growth	10.2%
Foreign direct investment	$79.1 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 5% Female: 13%
Infant mortality rate	23 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 91% Measles: 84%
Access to an improved water source	77%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.1%
Religions	Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism *(Officially atheist)*
Official language	Mandarin

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	118	120
Program funds ($000)	1,980	2,057

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

China has been reforming its economy since 1979. The Chinese leadership has adopted a pragmatic approach to many political and socioeconomic problems, sharply reducing the role of ideology in economic policy. Political and social stability, economic productivity, and public welfare are paramount. The government has emphasized raising personal income and consumption, and it has introduced new management systems to help increase productivity. It has also focused on foreign trade as a major vehicle for economic growth. Although these reforms have opened China to global markets, rapid economic development has left behind many Chinese without the skills to participate in the new economy.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Chinese government first expressed interest in establishing a Peace Corps program in 1988. The first group of 18 Volunteers arrived in 1993 as part of a pilot education project in the Sichuan province; they were called "U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers." In 1998, an official country agreement formalized the program's expansion into more areas. Volunteers have served in the Sichuan, Guizhou, and Gansu provinces, as well as the Chongqing municipality. The program was temporarily suspended in April 2003 following an outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome. The Peace Corps returned to China in the summer of 2004.

English teaching remains a top priority in China, and Volunteers help teach English as a foreign language at teacher colleges, universities, and vocational colleges. Volunteers teach English, Western culture, and content-based English in fields such as business, science, and tourism. They continue to be called U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Development of English language skills is an integral part of China's plan to modernize and participate in the global community. Learning English facilitates greater access to information available internationally and provides expanded opportunities for the Chinese to learn technical skills, conduct business, and fulfill research projects. Peace Corps Volunteers provide this training to both Chinese educators and students.

Volunteers teach English to students being trained as middle school English teachers in the rural areas, and they train English instructors at the university level. Volunteers also teach specialized courses in Western culture, history, lit-

erature, linguistics, and critical theory; and they enhance problem-solving skills among their students and teacher trainees. Volunteers work closely with Chinese colleagues to exchange ideas and teaching methodologies. Daily contact with native English speakers helps Chinese teachers become more proficient in English and more confident in using English in their classrooms. Volunteers introduce other issues into their classroom teaching, including HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, environmental protection, and diversity. Discussing these themes promote students' awareness and develop creative and critical thinking skills.

Volunteers have organized and facilitated workshops for Chinese English teachers that focus on current teaching methodologies. They have also started English language drama clubs for their students, created student English newspapers, established resource centers, and offered community lectures on Western culture. One popular communication venue is the "English Corner," where speakers of English gather on street corners, parks, hallways, and anywhere else they can find room to accommodate a group of people and simply speak English for an hour. All English-teaching Volunteers participate in these weekly forums.

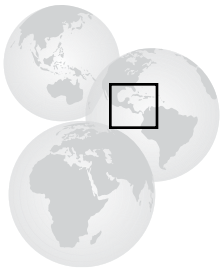
In 2007, a group of 47 Volunteers participated in a two-week teacher-training project organized by provincial leaders from western China. This project encompassed seven communities in three provinces and one municipality. In the workshop, 610 Chinese English teachers from middle and primary schools received training in improving pronunciation skills, increased confidence in speaking English, and an introduction to new teaching methods. Volunteers shared language teaching methodologies, classroom management skills, and student-centered learning activities. Chinese teachers were able to practice incorporating the new methodology, skills, and activities into their own teaching styles. Volunteers also introduced the teachers to HIV/AIDS education and Western culture through content-based English.

Peace Corps Volunteers bring English language training to the citizens of the world's most populous country

"Peace Corps Volunteers have made remarkable contributions to the English education development in Chongqing municipality. Their dedication and effective work have won them wide recognition... I witnessed and was moved by their spirit. Since then I've been proudly telling people that Volunteers are great!"

Fu Minghua
Standing Deputy Director of International Cooperation
Department of Chongqing Municipal Education Commission
China

Costa Rica



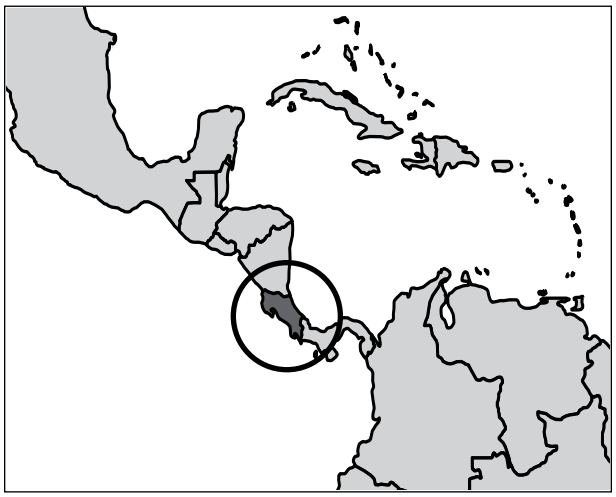
PROGRAM DATES	1963–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Youth

Capital	San José
Population	4 million
Annual per capita income	$4,700
GDP growth	5.9%
Foreign direct investment	$861 million
Adult illiteracy rate	5%
Infant mortality rate	11 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 90% Measles: 88%
Access to an improved water source	97%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.6%
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 69% Protestantism: 18% None: 12% Others: 1%
Official language	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	89	83
Program funds ($000)	2,203	2,223



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Costa Rica has maintained democratic institutions and an orderly, constitutional system for leadership succession throughout its history. Several factors have contributed to this stability, including enlightened government leaders; comparative prosperity; flexible class lines; educational opportunities, which have created a stable middle class; and general access to potable water, electricity, and basic health services.

While Costa Rica has made impressive gains in many social areas, such as life expectancy, education, and health-care, many families and communities in both urban and rural areas do not benefit from these social gains.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps program has changed to respond to the needs of Costa Rica and its people. In his inaugural speech, President Óscar Arias identified his priorities for Costa Rica: creating more and better jobs for Costa Ricans, especially youth; reducing poverty; providing universal secondary education, increasing economic support from the state to the poorest families so adolescent children stay in schools; protecting the environment, and increasing sustainable development. Peace Corps/Costa Rica's programs respond to growing social needs and align with government priorities with projects that focus on issues of business development, education, and youth development. Since 1963, more than 3,000 Volunteers have served in Costa Rica in a variety of projects, and throughout the program's history, Volunteers have been well-received by Costa Ricans and counterpart agencies.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

The business development project strengthens the capacity of micro-enterprises, micro-entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and communities to promote locally driven projects and income generation. Volunteers collaborate with individuals, professionals, non governmental organizations, and communities to strengthen and improve businesses by increasing knowledge and skills in business planning and basic business management practices. They help build the capacities of micro-enterprises and rural community groups to promote responsible ecotourism and to raise awareness of environmental conservation.

One Volunteer organized English language lessons for a group of at-risk women and single mothers. The Volunteer also helped the women open a small ice cream parlor in their

community. With a grant from the Costa Rican government and equipment and monetary donations from an American based ice cream maker, the women are generating additional income to support themselves and their families.

Education

Most Volunteers in the education program teach English as a second language, nutrition, and self-esteem to school students and adult groups in their communities. They assist with basic community development projects, including developing computer labs in schools and helping to construct health centers.

Volunteers work on project planning and community development to help communities combat the growing gap between the rich and poor and the high levels of poverty in rural areas. Volunteers collaborate with the National Office on Community Development on several activities. Their work addresses organizational development of local associations and governmental and nongovernmental organizations, income generation for small businesses and households, and formal and nonformal education.

One Volunteer worked with his local community development association to repair and improve the gravity-based aqueduct system that provides running water to his area. This project improved the overall health of the community by providing a much-needed source of clean water. Community members provided most of the labor and the sustainable project was funded by private donations and community resources.

Youth

The youth program promotes a national culture in which all children, youth, and families are respected and granted basic human rights. Volunteers address the needs of youth and families living in marginal communities by providing skill-building and remediation programs to students and family members, and they help strengthen the capacity of the Costa Rica Child Protection Agency.

Volunteers promote and support a variety of educational programs, organize academic support programs for students such as tutoring, and work with schools to build their capacity to seek needed resources.

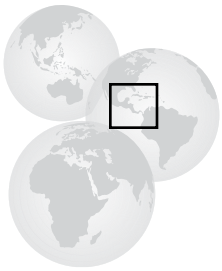
One Volunteer created a series of freestyle hip-hop workshops for at-risk youth throughout different regions of the country. The workshops provided a safe space for youth to discuss and express their concerns of the social issues they face, including racism, poverty, HIV/AIDS, discrimination, social injustice, drug abuse, and alcoholism.

"We have been working with Peace Corps Volunteers since 1991 in the youth project, and there is not a single Volunteer we have forgotten. They have left their mark on our agency and with every child they have worked with while here. Their creativity and dedication to children teach us so many things. If we could have an entire office full of Volunteers, we would take them all."

Ana Lucia Gomez
Head of Puntarenas Regional Office
PANI (Patronato Nacional de la Infancia)
Costa Rica

Volunteer with host-country youth, Costa Rica

Dominican Republic



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

Capital	Santo Domingo
Population	9 million
Annual per capita income	$2,460
GDP growth	9.3%
Foreign direct investment	$1.023 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	13%
Infant mortality rate	26 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 71% Measles: 79%
Access to an improved water source	95%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1%
Religion	Roman Catholicism: 95%
Official language	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	196	190
Program funds ($000)	3,550	3,642

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean. A country with a relatively stable political environment, it has, in the recent past, experienced peaceful transitions following democratic elections. The presidential inauguration in August 2004 brought Leonel Fernández—president from 1996 to 2000—back into power. His policies have inspired confidence in the population and economic markets, which has led to increased investment and growth. Inflation has remained stable, although poverty in rural and peri-urban areas remains a significant challenge.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Since 1962, 4,400 Volunteers have provided development assistance to the people of the Dominican Republic. The Peace Corps enjoys strong support from the Dominican government and its people. Volunteers and staff are committed to contributing to areas identified by the government as priorities. Peace Corps in-country programming focuses on business development, education, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development. All Volunteers, regardless of project, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers partner with farmers' associations and agricultural cooperatives in the areas of coffee, cocoa, and fruit production to improve quality and to seek export markets. In tourist areas, Volunteers partner with handicraft-producing groups and tour operators to strengthen customer service, safety, and overall competitiveness. Volunteers promote sustainable economic growth by providing training in accounting, organic certification, and marketing.

Last year, three of five coffee associations supported by Volunteers took prizes at the first annual Specialty Coffee Awards in Santo Domingo. Volunteers helped these associations improve their business administration and coffee quality through fair trade and organic certification. Volunteers have also partnered with local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to develop the "Build Your Dreams" national youth business plan competition.

Education

Volunteers partner with the Ministry of Education, the Office of the First Lady, and Codetel, the Dominican Republic's telephone service provider, in computer centers to train teachers and students in computer use. They also form youth technology clubs and promote community access to technology. Three Volunteers have used student-run newspapers and yearbooks to train students in software applications and basic computer use. These activities have opened communication and promoted creativity among youth, and the publications highlight local issues and promote social discourse in the communities served.

In the special education project, Volunteers train teachers and school counselors to improve teaching methods and classroom management in schools that serve students with special needs. One Volunteer with a hearing impairment started a small school for the deaf in his community. The school focuses on teaching families of deaf children basic sign language and other communication skills. As part of the project, the Volunteer also acquired 60 hearing aids that were donated to the hearing impaired in his community.

Environment

Volunteers participate in conservation, environmental education, and ecotourism. Volunteers promote environmental conservation practices with local environmental NGOs and government representatives. They teach basic conservation principles in schools, protected areas, and national parks. Volunteers have created more than 50 Brigada Verde (Green Brigade) youth groups that train community members in principles and practices of environmental conservation, and their activities promote volunteerism in rural communities. The groups have completed community clean-up activities, and they have planted thousands of trees throughout the country.

One Volunteer helped a youth group develop an ecotourism operation with a local hotel. The group provides eco-friendly guided tours and hikes for visiting tourists. The project is an income-generating opportunity for the youth and serves as a strong incentive for them to protect their local environment.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers provide assistance in improving sanitation, reducing diarrhea (the leading cause of child mortality), and increasing HIV/AIDS awareness. The HIV/AIDS program benefits from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief support to train youth as peer educators to reduce HIV/AIDS infection among young people. It forms one of the three strategies in the Healthy Families project; the other two strategies are nutrition education, including production of nutritious foods, and maternal-child health.

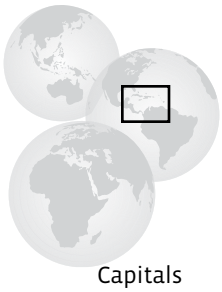
Youth

Volunteers partner with organizations as they promote the healthy physical, social, and cultural well-being of marginalized youth in rural and urban communities. The project strengthens youth, their families, and communities in a manner that enhances knowledge and skills, facilitates healthy relationships, and creates potential for positive impact within the community.

"When I arrived... I met this distinguished young woman who greeted me as a representative of the Peace Corps who has been here in Las Taranas for one and a half years dedicated to teaching English and computers... with this extraordinary school that we have here with representatives of the United States, with computers, with Internet, with access to knowledge, I imagine that the next ministers and presidents of the Republic will come out of Las Taranas."

President Leonel Fernández
Dominican Republic

Eastern Caribbean



PROGRAM DATES	1961–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

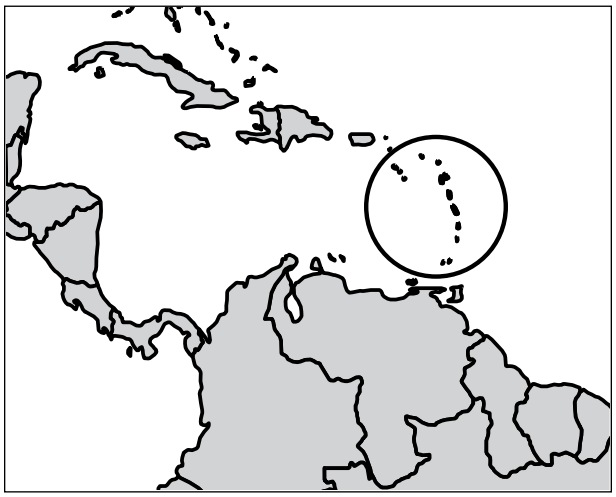
Capitals	Antigua and Barbuda:	St. John's
	Dominica:	Roseau
	Grenada/Carriacou:	St. George's
	St. Lucia:	Castries
	St. Kitts and Nevis:	Basseterre
	St. Vincent and the Grenadines:	Kingstown

Avg population	98,864
Avg annual per capita income	$5,893
Avg GDP growth	3.72%
Avg foreign direct investment	$52.6 million
Avg adult illiteracy rate	7%
Avg infant mortality rate	15 per 1,000 live births
Avg immunization rate	DPT: 94% Measles: 98%
Access to an improved water source	95.7%
Avg HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religions	Protestantism, Roman Catholicism
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	122	117
Program funds ($000)	3,542	3,618



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The six island nations (Antigua and Barbuda; Dominica, Grenada/Carriacou; St. Lucia; St. Kitts and Nevis; and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) comprising the Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean enjoy political stability. Notwithstanding, the islands face special development challenges because of their small domestic markets, scarcity of trained labor, absence of raw materials, and vulnerability to natural disasters.

With a combined population of approximately 590,000, the per-capita cost of economic and social infrastructure is high for each island nation. They are poised for technological innovation, yet hampered by limited economies subject to changes in the global economy. Hurricanes and floods regularly reverse economic gains by destroying fixed investments and disrupting economic activities, particularly in the agriculture and tourism sectors. The drastic decrease in banana exports and a large disenfranchised youth population has resulted in a critical need for economic reform and diversification.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps began working in the Eastern Caribbean in 1961 when St. Lucia became one of three pilot posts worldwide. Since then, more than 3,500 Volunteers have served on various island nations throughout the region. Many social and economic problems face Eastern Caribbean youth, who make up about 65 percent of the population. Consequently, Peace Corps programs focus on their educational, health, employment, and life-skills needs. Programming focuses on business development, education, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development. All Volunteers, regardless of project, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers help nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), village councils, and other community-based organizations develop business plans and improve management, communication systems, and entrepreneurial and marketing training. Volunteers focus on innovative ways to build capacity and transfer skills. Volunteers help young people improve their skills in using computers, thereby enhancing their employment opportunities.

A Volunteer in Dominica worked to expand an indigenous model village that celebrates the culture and history of the Carib Indians. With his counterparts, they developed a

marketing strategy and business plan to increase tourist traffic to the area. To provide additional income, plans were also made to sell locally produced artisan crafts to tourists visiting the site.

Education

Volunteers have furthered special education availability on the islands. There are now classes for those with learning disabilities and other special needs, and government ministries specifically recruit special education staff. Volunteers transfer teaching techniques and methodologies to their counterparts in schools and provide support to parents. They work with youth outside of school through school-based programs, such as 4-H and Junior Achievement, and with out-of-school youth in NGO programs, community centers, and vocational schools.

A Volunteer in St. Lucia introduced the "Character Counts" program, which focuses on developing life skills in youth. The Ministry of Education embraced the program and supported teacher-training workshops throughout the island. The workshops helped teachers address conduct, discipline, and educational challenges at all age levels, and students, teachers, and administrators have praised the program's results.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers work with ministries of health to develop national HIV/AIDS policies. In primary healthcare centers, Volunteers train health professionals and develop health education materials to address primary healthcare and HIV/AIDS. Other Volunteers develop life-skills materials to help students with issues such as assertiveness, decision making, behavior modification, and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Volunteers from throughout the region helped produce a user-friendly manual that addresses methods to educate for behavior change.

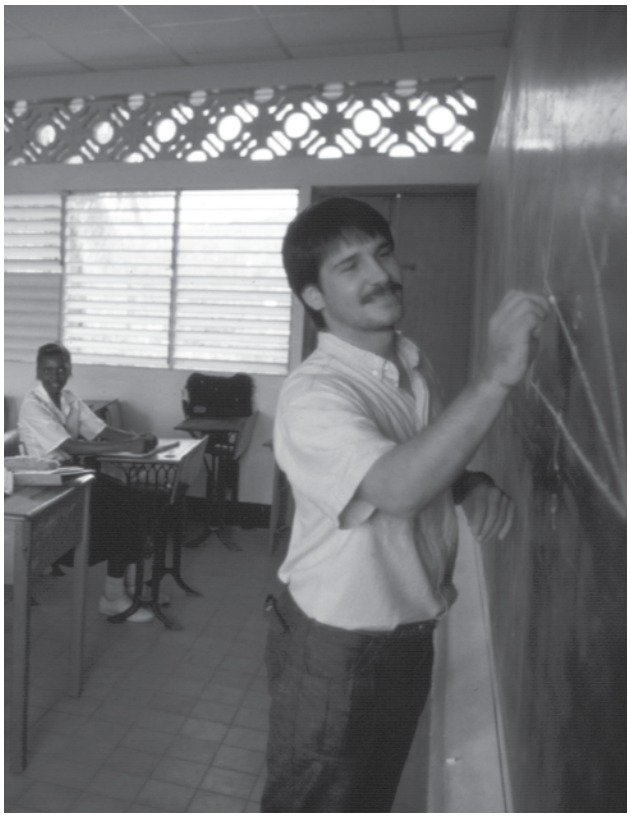
Several Volunteers joined together on St. Vincent to produce colorful costumes and other items related to HIV/AIDS education and prevention for the island's annual Carnival celebrations. The creative, attention-grabbing materials successfully conveyed critical information about living healthy lifestyles and HIV/AIDS awareness.

Youth

Many communities are predominantly composed of out-of-school and out-of-work youth. Volunteers provide life skills to these youth, capturing their imagination and energy through after-school programs. On Antigua, Volunteers work with the Big Brother/Big Sister program, promoting mentoring throughout local communities to raise the self-esteem and self-confidence of youth and to improve their interpersonal skills. Volunteers train youth in drug prevention education, life skills, and peer counseling. Males are increasingly marginalized throughout the region, and Volunteers on Dominica engage young men in constructive activities through vocational education, sports, and culture.

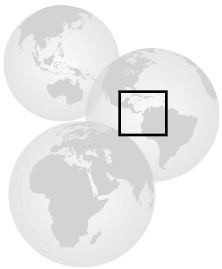
"Since Peace Corps began in 1961, year after year enthusiastic persons like you have arrived on our shores and quietly gone into every corner of our islands making invaluable contributions in community development, sports, education, health, and other social issues. All of these have touched the lives of so many St. Lucians in such positive ways."

Janice Compton
First Lady
St. Lucia



Education Volunteer, Eastern Caribbean

Ecuador



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

Capital	Quito
Population	13 million
Annual per capita income	$2,620
GDP growth	4.7%
Foreign direct investment	$1.646 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 8% Female: 10%
Infant mortality rate	22 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 90% Measles: 99%
Access to an improved water source	94%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.3%
Religion	Roman Catholicism: 95%
Official language	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	154	150
Program funds ($000)	3,166	3,239

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since becoming a democracy in 1979, Ecuador has experienced political instability, with an average of about one president per year. Despite the political unrest, the Ecuadorian government focuses on poverty alleviation, economic reforms, and anticorruption efforts. The government faces an array of challenges, including the impact of Colombia's civil war on the country's northern border and the need for serious fiscal and governmental reforms.

The Ecuadorian economy is based on petroleum production and exports of bananas, shrimp, cut flowers, and other agricultural products. A severe economic and financial crisis in 1999 and the resulting dollarization of Ecuador's economy exacerbated chronic problems of underdevelopment. Large sectors of the population suffer from nutritional deficiencies and a high infant mortality rate. An estimated 88 percent of the rural population lives at or below the poverty level.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Ecuador first welcomed Peace Corps Volunteers in 1962. In response to the economic crisis facing most Ecuadorians, the Peace Corps has redoubled its efforts in sustainable agriculture, business development, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development. Moreover, the Peace Corps has integrated income generation and business-development activities into all of its projects.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Volunteers train farmers to adopt environmentally sound land-use practices, and they train farm families in small-animal husbandry practices to meet nutritional and economic needs. To address the eroding income of rural families, Volunteers help farmers and cooperatives improve their business and marketing skills. The most important program strategy is supporting projects to increase value-added processes. For instance, Volunteers and staff created a cocoa sub-program to increase the organic cocoa offered for export and to make final products.

Two Volunteers supported a quinoa project that produces organic and fair trade-certified quinoa for export to the United States, France, and Italy. As quinoa becomes increasingly popular as a health food, Volunteers are playing an important role in helping to keep up with the increased demand.

Business Development

Last year, Volunteers helped start more than 30 new businesses in small Ecuadorian communities. Volunteers have helped expand an innovative community savings/banking project to nearly 600 communities. Community banks help people save and manage their finances, and they provide credit to rural families. This past year Peace Corps/Ecuador organized four community banking workshops to promote the program in local institutions and communities. Fifty new community banks were formed and eight institutions adapted the savings and credit program for their own organizations.

Environment

To address the high rate of environmental degradation, Volunteers work in three key areas: sustainable community management of natural areas, environmental education, and income-generation activities. Volunteers promote responsible management of natural areas by stakeholders, promote native species of flora and fauna, provide environmental education in and out of schools, and help develop income-generating activities that benefit thousands of Ecuadorians. Seeking an alternative to exploitive fishing practices, one Volunteer helped execute an aquaculture project consisting of 11 native fish ponds. The project has helped to conserve aquatic resources, provide food security, and generate household income in the five participating communities.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Despite many improvements in key health indicators in the country, there is still a weak public health system, especially in rural areas. The most relevant health problems are malnutrition and diarrhea among children under five, an increasing trend of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, tuberculosis, malaria, and dengue. Working closely with local health promoters, teachers, women's organizations, and youth groups, Volunteers engage in health promotion and disease prevention activities to promote healthy lifestyles and behaviors.

Youth

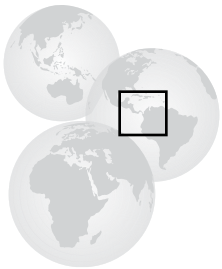
Volunteers work with youth and families in marginalized neighborhoods to address high school dropout rates, illiteracy, drug abuse, gangs, and unemployment. They strengthen youth organizations and provide youth with employment and leadership training. In 2007, Volunteers worked with nearly 700 Ecuadorians on human rights and anti-trafficking in persons (TIP) issues through life-skills training. Volunteer-led TIP prevention workshops have been successfully held throughout the country.

One Volunteer led a TIP task force that networked with national and international organizations and provided TIP training in schools, nongovernmental and governmental sectors, and at the grassroots level. Participants learned about human rights, the risks of migration, and important life skills.

"A local radio announcer and I designed a radio program: La Salud esta en tus manos *(Health is in your hands). The radio program addresses several health issues such as the cycle of violence, types of violence, vaccines, discipline, nutrition, and rabies. Not only do I have fun doing this, but I usually get stopped in my town to answer more questions about a health issue we have presented on the show."*

Ecuador Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

El Salvador



PROGRAM DATES	1962–1979 1993–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	San Salvador
Population	7 million
Annual per capita income	$2,450
GDP growth	2.8%
Foreign direct investment	$517 million
Adult illiteracy rate	22%
Infant mortality rate	23 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 90% Measles: 93%
Access to an improved water source	84%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.7%
Religion	Roman Catholicism: 55%
Official language	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	159	148
Program funds ($000)	2,773	2,801

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The government of El Salvador is pursuing a program of decentralization that places more responsibility on municipal leaders. As part of this effort, the government has requested the Peace Corps' assistance in improving municipal services and increasing community awareness and participation. Volunteers coordinate with local municipalities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and community groups to develop better water systems, make health and sanitation improvements, provide environmental education, and assist in business development projects.

El Salvador, the smallest, most densely populated country in Central America, faces tremendous economic, social, and environmental challenges.

In addition to chronic deforestation and poor land management, disasters such as Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and major earthquakes in 2001 resulted in loss of fertile topsoil, decreased crop yields, and displaced communities. These natural disasters have negatively impacted healthcare, sanitation, infrastructure, and waste management systems.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The program in El Salvador, which began in 1962, was one of the Peace Corps' earliest efforts. The program was closed in 1979 because of civil war and reopened in 1993 after the war ended. Currently, 146 Volunteers work in agriculture, business development, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development .

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Deforestation and the resulting soil erosion have affected more than 80 percent of El Salvador, decreasing the availability and sustainability of arable land. Volunteers educate farmers about sustainable soil conservation and integrated pest management practices that incorporate environmentally sound and organic applications.

A Volunteer couple planted a demonstration plot in their backyard with a variety of vegetables to teach organic farming techniques to their community. There has been such interest in these practices that the Volunteers have added several species of flowers to the garden to introduce cut flower production as a new income source for the community.

Business Development

Volunteers continue to strengthen El Salvador's nascent democracy by working with municipal governments to increase citizen participation, helping to improve the effi-

ciency of local government institutions, and working with local development associations on community initiatives. These initiatives include efforts to pursue small infrastructure projects, encourage local economic development, and encourage women and youth to participate in the civic life of their communities.

One Volunteer worked with municipal government representatives, volunteers from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, and a local development association to hold a 10-day project design and management workshop. During the workshop, participants identified top development priorities for their communities and learned how to prepare project plans and proposals needed to secure funding. Using the skills developed in the workshop, a community group created a plan to expand their local school and was successful in winning funding for their project.

Environment

Volunteers work with the government, NGOs, and community organizations to teach Salvadorans environmentally sound practices. Volunteers give presentations to teachers and students on community environmental assessment; sources and impacts of air, water, and soil contamination; and trash and recycling. Volunteers plan environmental protection activities with youth ecological clubs and teach about flora and fauna, protected national parks, and reforestation.

One Volunteer worked with six rural schools, the local mayor's office, and several community organizations to organize an Earth Day celebration, which attracted 2,000 attendees. During the event, community members and students asked the mayor about environmental issues such as garbage collection and disposal and the contamination of a local lake from poor agricultural practices. This event had special significance as it was the first time local and regional officials participated in a public question-and-answer session on these topics.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers improve community health by increasing access to, and knowledge about, water and sanitation services. Through participatory activities, Volunteers educate community groups about maintaining, managing, and monitoring water systems and latrines and proper hygiene practices. Volunteers also create communication and cooperation networks among national and international agencies to share best practices and improve future efforts to provide water and sanitation systems to the most vulnerable communities.

El Salvador is a potentially high-risk AIDS nation, and youth in rural communities have little reliable information about the spread of HIV/AIDS. To address these concerns, HIV/AIDS has been added as a component of the rural health and sanitation project. Working with rural health promoters from the Ministry of Health and local NGOs, Volunteers develop educational materials, provide organizational support, conduct home-health visits, and assist with seminars on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention.

One Volunteer created a first aid manual for illiterate women in her community. With her Ministry of Health counterpart, she then trained seven groups of women in six communities in basic first aid. The first group of Volunteer-trained women are now training women in surrounding communities.

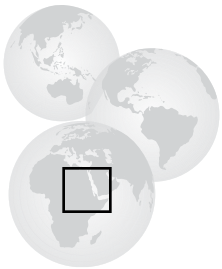
Youth

Volunteers in El Salvador work to prepare youth to face the challenges of life. They promote life-skills training, organize cultural and recreational activities, teach English as a second language, and provide information technology training to teachers.

"The myriad emotions we experience while working in grassroots development can be difficult to describe at times. These moments, good or bad, are to be treasured, stored in some compartment of our mind or held close to our heart. They are what make us unique in this increasingly homogenous world."

El Salvador Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

Ethiopia



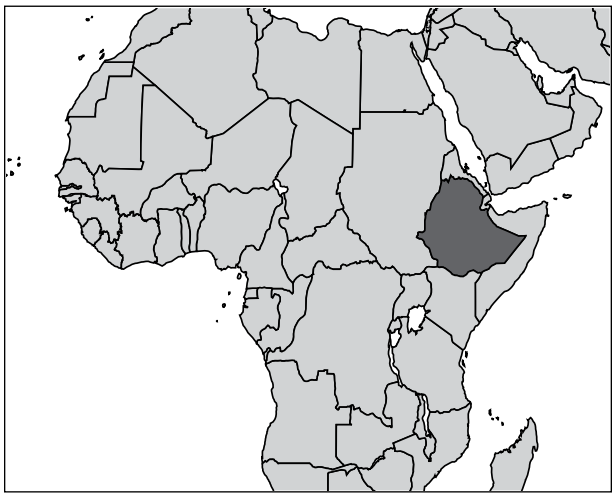
PROGRAM DATES	1962–1977 1995–2000 2007–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Addis Ababa
Population	71.3 million
Annual per capita income	$160
GDP growth	10.2%
Foreign direct investment	$265 million
Adult illiteracy rate	57%
Infant mortality rate	78 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 69% Measles: 59%
Access to an improved water source	22%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.4%
Religions	Sunni Islam: 45% Ethiopian Orthodoxy: 40% Other: 10% Protestantism: 5%
Official Language	Amharic

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	8	21
Program funds ($000)	1,007	1,130



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Ethiopia is the oldest independent country on the continent of Africa and, despite a five-year occupation by Italy during World War II, has never been colonized. Ethiopia defeated Italian troops with Britain's help in 1941, and the two nations enjoyed a strong friendship for the next 20 years. After the last emperor, Haile Selassie, was dethroned by Marxist rebels in 1974, the Ethiopian government and military were influenced and supported by the Soviet Union. In the 1970s and 1980s, much of the Ethiopian population was on the brink of starvation due to widespread famine and drought. The government of then President Mengistu Haile Mariam was unable to address the crisis and was overthrown in 1991. Eritrea won its independence in 1993, leading to border disputes in the northern part of the country. The current government is headed by President Woldegiorgis Girma and by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who was reelected in 2005. After the collapse of the military dictatorship in 1992, Ethiopia saw a major policy shift towards democracy and economic development.

Ethiopia has the second-largest population in Africa and is a poor country confronted by many of the issues affecting developing countries, including drought. Ethiopia's economy relies heavily on agriculture and coffee exports, which are impacted by poor rainfall. Approximately 80 percent of the population farms 15- to 20 percent of the arable land, and much of the population depends on international food aid. Approximately two-thirds of the adult population is illiterate. Rates of HIV infection are rising, and the pandemic has become a critical issue in the country.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps entered Ethiopia in 1962, but left in 1977 due to political instability. It returned in 1995, but closed in 2000 as a result of Ethiopia's war with Eritrea. Volunteers served in agriculture, business, education, and health.

The Peace Corps reentered Ethiopia in 2007 with 42 Volunteers working solely in the health and HIV/AIDS sector. Volunteers work under the Ministry of Health to support and strengthen the delivery system to fight HIV/AIDS. The government of Ethiopia is strongly committed to a unified national HIV/AIDS action framework and is moving all of its HIV/AIDS coordinating bodies under the direction of the Ministry of Health.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Health and HIV/AIDS

Peace Corps/Ethiopia administers one of only three programs in the world focused exclusively on HIV/AIDS activities. Volunteers are engaged in a multifaceted approach in close collaboration with the government of Ethiopia and nongovernmental organization partners.

Volunteers support the government of Ethiopia in the development of national prevention, care, and treatment guidelines and protocols for HIV/AIDS. They assist communities to improve the health status of their members by providing adequate health education. Volunteers also work with the Ministry of Health and several international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to support and strengthen the health service delivery system in the area of HIV/AIDS along the continuum of prevention, care, and support services.

In Ethiopia, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is in urban areas and among young people and women. To reach these vulnerable populations, Volunteers work with government agencies and NGOs to develop and implement effective HIV/AIDS prevention programs. Volunteers carry out prevention activities with youth groups focusing on behavior change and life skills programs. Additionally, they train youth to serve as peer educators and to promote HIV/AIDS awareness in their communities.

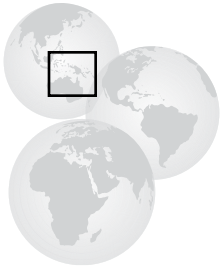
Volunteers also work with community and NGO partners to strengthen the capacity of local organizations to provide care to people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. They organize support groups, help link individuals with service providers, and develop income-generating activities for those affected by HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that there are more than five million orphans in Ethiopia, nearly 15 percent of which have lost their parents as a result of HIV/AIDS. In conjunction with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, Volunteers also help communities to develop the capacity to support the needs of orphans and vulnerable children.

"By living and working amongst Ethiopians you will ... offer a great deal in helping us improve the health competencies of Ethiopian families, leaving them with the hope that they can through their collective efforts make a difference."

Ato Mekele
Deputy Director, HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office
Ethiopia

Peace Corps Volunteers in Ethiopia at their swearing-in ceremony, December 2007

Fiji



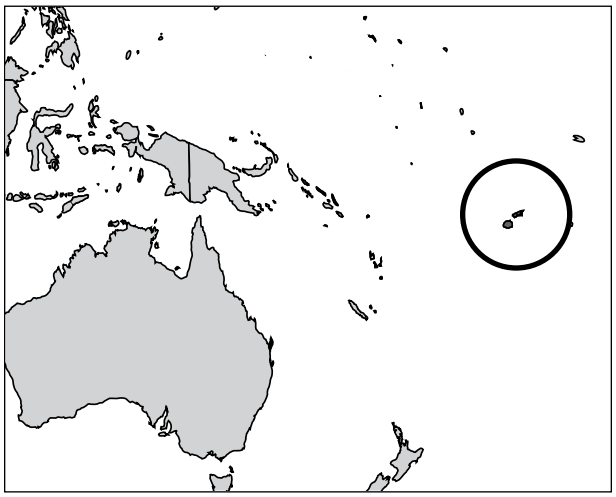
PROGRAM DATES	1968–1998 2003–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Suva
Population	847,000
Annual per capita income	$3,170
GDP growth	0.7%
Foreign direct investment	(-$4.0 million)
Adult illiteracy rate	7%
Infant mortality rate	16 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 75% Measles: 62%
Access to an improved water source	47%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.1%
Religions	Christianity: 52% Hinduism: 33% Islam: 7%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	48	50
Program funds ($000)	1,873	1,895



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

For several years following its independence from Britain in 1970, Fiji was cited as a model of human rights and multiracial democracy in the Pacific region. Subsequently, a succession of coups—in 1987, 2000, and 2006—left Fiji struggling to regain its political and economic stability. Much of the turmoil has been tied to ethnic tensions between indigenous Fijians and the Indo-Fijian descendants of indentured laborers. Indigenous Fijians control land rights and are guaranteed political authority by the current constitution; most entrepreneurs and sugar cane farmers are Indo-Fijians, and they have great influence on the economy and politics. Notwithstanding the tensions, rule of law is still firmly established. Elections were held in May 2006, after which both groups agreed to work to reconcile political differences and reinvigorate the economy. Unfortunately, a December 2006 coup impeded whatever progress had been made.

Although Fiji has one of the most developed economies in the Pacific, political instability and fluctuations in world sugar markets have impeded economic growth. Since the coups, Fiji has suffered a high rate of emigration of skilled and professional personnel, which has caused shortages in the service sectors and in the areas of education and healthcare. Half of the population lives below or close to the poverty line, particularly in rural areas. Over-fishing and environmental degradation have reduced food security from traditional sources.

While revenues from tourism, expatriate remittances, and exported sugar and garments remain the largest contributors to the economy, Fiji also has timber and mineral reserves. Fishing is an important export revenue generator and has contributed in domestic consumption and commerce. Long-term problems include a potential collapse of the sugar industry, unsustainable use of imported petroleum-based products, continued low foreign investment rates, and uncertain property rights.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps has a long history of service in Fiji. More than 2,200 Volunteers served from 1968 to 1998. The program reopened in late 2003; currently 48 Volunteers are serving throughout the country. Ample programming opportunities exist, but current projects primarily address nonformal education needs in the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Environment

Volunteers live and work in communities with existing environmental projects to provide technical assistance. A predominant concern is the degradation of the marine and terrestrial environments, which is jeopardizing traditional food supplies in many parts of the country. A focus on long-term stewardship and management of environmental resources will increase food security, improve diet and nutrition, raise awareness and involvement from women and youth in environmental projects, and increase income generated from sustainable ecotourism.

One Volunteer started a waste management system at a school in his community. The Volunteer taught proper recycling practices through demonstrations and a film on recycling. The school hosted tours of their recycling program, which led to the development of recycling programs in schools across the southwestern portion of the island.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers, in partnership with Fijian health educators, provide rural health education and promotion activities related to non-communicable diseases, HIV/AIDS education and prevention, nutrition, and life skills for youth. Volunteers focus on skills transfer and capacity building for newly created health-promotion units at regional and sub-regional health centers. They also provide village-based health education to build local capacity to respond to basic health issues.

Health Volunteers have trained more than 600 people on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. In commemoration of World AIDS Day, one Volunteer worked with a youth soccer team to create and perform a drama at local carnival. The skit provided an opportunity to promote healthy lifestyle choices and awareness of HIV/AIDS to the local community.

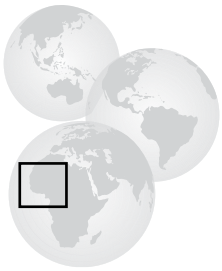
Youth

Youth development activities focus on life skills, information technology, and income generation. Volunteers partner with local service organizations to engage Fijian youth in activities that enhance life skills for their future roles in their families, communities, and society. Among the topics presented are leadership, decision making, healthy lifestyles, information technology, career planning, civic responsibility, and income generation. Volunteers also help build organizational capacities and improve outreach programs conducted by local and international youth-related service providers.

"Peace Corps provided me with the skills and insights needed for my job. Now, in my own village I am able to identify needs and can then encourage people to work together to better our community."

Emosi Racule
Development Planning Officer
Ministry of Cooperatives
Fiji

The Gambia



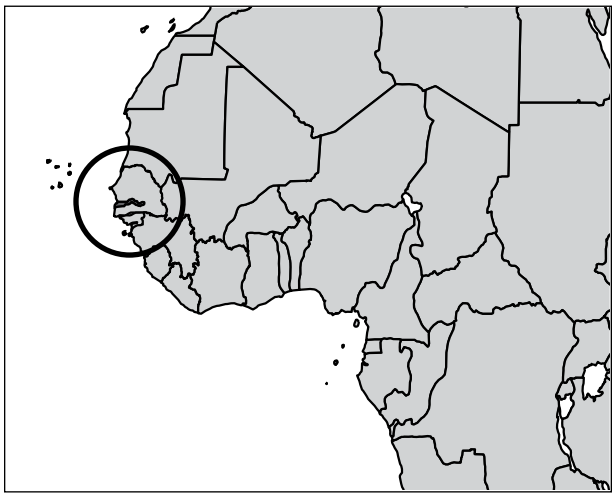
PROGRAM DATES	1967–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Banjul
Population	1.5 million
Annual per capita income	$290
GDP growth	5.0%
Foreign direct investment	$52 million
Adult illiteracy rate	62%
Infant mortality rate	97 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 92% Measles: 90%
Access to an improved water source	82%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.2%
Religions	Islam: 95% Christianity: 4% Animism: <1%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	112	115
Program funds ($000)	2,037	2,135



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Since its independence from Great Britain in 1965, The Gambia has had a series of stable governments. This stability was temporarily interrupted by a military coup in 1994, which overthrew the party that had been in power since independence. President Yahya Jammeh first ruled as the head of the military junta. He then retired from the military, ran for office, and won as a civilian in democratic elections in 1997. He won a subsequent democratic election in 2001 and was reelected in September 2006.

The Gambia has no important mineral or other natural resources and has a limited agricultural base. Seventy-five percent of the population depends on the agriculture and natural resource sectors for its livelihood. However, production of cash and food crops has steadily declined during the past two decades because of environmental degradation. Small-scale manufacturing includes processing peanuts, fish, and animal hides. Growth in the tourism industry is being planned.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps' relationship with The Gambia dates back to 1967, when the Peace Corps signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of External Affairs. Volunteers began working in The Gambia later that year, initially serving as mechanics and teachers. The Peace Corps' work addresses the development priorities of the Gambian government in the areas of education, environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. An important focus in the education sector is information and communication technology (ICT). All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness. Volunteers in all sectors participate in HIV/AIDS initiatives, and many focus activities on girls, women, and youth.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Education Volunteers build the capacity of teachers, teach math and science, introduce student-centered teaching techniques and the effective use of learning aids, teach literacy, and launch libraries and resource centers. Volunteers also promote e-learning, teach computer literacy, and assist the private sector in improving their operations. Due to the importance the government attaches to these efforts, the Department of State for Higher Education, Research and Technology was created. This department gives tertiary education the attention it deserves and also provides the department with the opportunity to enhance basic and secondary education. Additionally, while teachers are receiving

more targeted pre-service and in-service training, steps are also being taken to positively impact classroom teaching and improve the performance of students. Volunteers are involved in all of these activities as they now work at the planning unit of Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education, assisting with the administration of the Education Management Information System and training staff. They are also engaged in capacity-building activities at five tertiary institutions including the University of The Gambia.

Environment

Volunteers work on a variety of environmental education projects that focus on natural resource management, small enterprise development, wildlife protection, and biodiversity conservation. Some Volunteers work with community groups to establish tree nurseries and commercial fruit orchards. They also work to protect the environment by promoting national tree-planting campaigns in schools. Other Volunteers work with women and schoolchildren on community garden projects.

Volunteers have held many beekeeping workshops in villages nationwide, attracting more than 100 community members. The workshops teach rural Gambians to construct and maintain beehives and to secure revenue. Volunteers have also worked to promote seed diversity by training locals to grow soy or drought-resistant rice. They work in wildlife protection by developing and working with education and ecotourism centers to protect The Gambia's vulnerable indigenous diversity. Volunteers have worked to procure funds to construct and maintain primate enclosures for a national park, and a national biodiversity education center for a wildlife refuge area. Volunteers have also worked to fund libraries, solar energy projects development, the installation of low-impact water lifting devices.

Health and HIV/AIDS

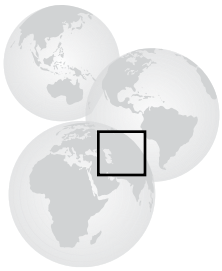
Most Gambians live in small communities in rural areas and are engaged in subsistence farming. Volunteers work with these communities to design and implement activities that raise awareness of common health problems. Volunteers craft strategies to promote good health and prevent disease, and provide training on income-generating activities to improve living standards. One Volunteer project was to improve the dilapidated condition of the community's mother-and-child health clinics building. Its condition was of great concern to his community. Working with the village development committee, the Volunteer and community members were able to secure financing for the project; the village contributed 75 percent of the necessary funding. The villagers served as the carpenters and masons, and provided all the labor to collect sand and gravel.

Another Volunteer organized a workshop on home management for common health problems—colds, malaria, and diarrhea—for 19 women. At the end of the workshop, each woman was tasked with returning to her community and educating five other women.

"I want to applaud the significant contribution made by Peace Corps in The Gambia... we are proud to be part of that legacy initiated by the visionary late President John F. Kennedy."

The Honorable Fatou Lamin Faye
Secretary of State for Basic and Secondary Education
The Gambia

Georgia



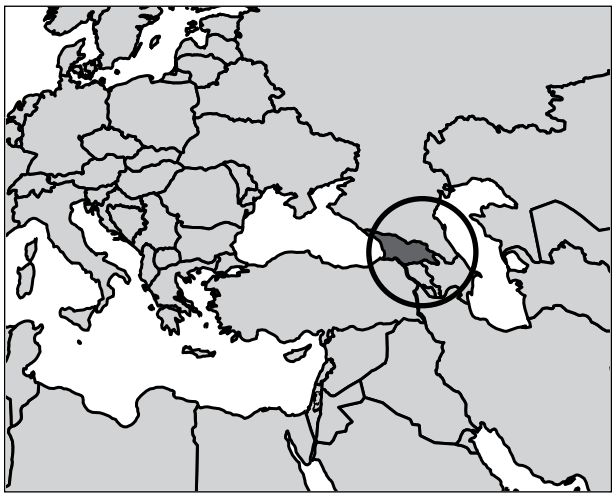
PROGRAM DATES	2001–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education

Capital	Tbilisi
Population	4 million
Annual per capita income	$1,320
GDP growth	9.3%
Foreign direct investment	$450 million
Adult illiteracy rate	<1%
Infant mortality rate	41 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 86% Measles: 78%
Access to an improved water source	82%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.1%
Religions	Georgian Orthodoxy: 65% Islam: 11% Russian Orthodoxy: 10% Armenian Apostolic Christianity: 8% Other: 6%
Official language	Georgian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	90	96
Program funds ($000)	2,127	2,165



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Republic of Georgia, with its long history and strong culture, is located between the Black Sea and Azerbaijan to its west and east, and Russia and Armenia to its north and south.

In January 2004, Mikhail Saakashvili was inaugurated as Georgia's president. Saakashvili's election followed the Rose Revolution, and heralded a new day for many Georgians. The presidential elections were held after President Shevardnadze resigned on November 23, 2003, in response to mass demonstrations protesting the results of parliamentary elections.

Also, in 2004, the Russian-leaning, self-proclaimed president of the Adjara region, Aslan Abashidze, left the region, allowing Peace Corps Volunteers to expand their presence in-country in 2005. Georgia still faces the possible loss of two autonomous regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, because of ethnic separatists, poor governance, and pro-Russian elements. These factors prevent the government from exerting effective control over all its internationally recognized territory. Due to the 1992-1993 civil war in Abkhazia, Georgia has a large internally displaced population—more than 80 percent of the population fled Abkhazia during and after this war.

Prior to independence in 1991, Georgia was economically one of the most prosperous republics of the former Soviet Union. Political turmoil after independence led to a decline in GDP of more than 70 percent between 1990 and 1994. Currently, the largest share of Georgia's GDP is produced by agriculture, followed by trade, manufacturing, and transport. The years just prior to the Rose Revolution were marked by rampant cronyism, corruption, and mismanagement. Since then, the Saakashvili government has reoriented the government and the economy toward privatization, free markets, reduced regulation and control of corruption. In a 2007 report the World Bank recognized Georgia as the world's fastest reforming economy, ranking it with countries such as France, Slovakia, and Spain.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps began operations in Georgia in 2001 with an education project. The program focuses on English language skills and new teaching methodologies and is implemented in secondary English language education, a university program, and teacher training. Volunteers also work with community members on various projects identified as priorities by their communities.

A business development program focusing on business skills in nongovernmental organizations (NGO) began in 2004. The program provides organizational support to local

NGOs, encourages accountability and transparency to target communities, and assists NGOs in using skills acquired through USAID-funded trainings.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers provide technical assistance in improving skills in business plan development, marketing, public relations, project planning, fundraising and resource identification, and networking. To date, 30 NGOs have received trainings and attended seminars conducted by Volunteers. Twenty organizations have received grants to conduct projects such as a Global Youth Service Day celebration, youth camps, trainings for disabled children and their parents, entrepreneurial skills development, and tourism development. One Volunteer planned and implemented a honey festival with the honey producers and beekeepers in his community. Community members displayed honey and beeswax products. The festival was attended by international organizations, businesses, and potential buyers. As part of the event the Volunteer and honey producers discussed problems and challenges facing the industry, future opportunities, and new technologies for honey and other bee products.

Education

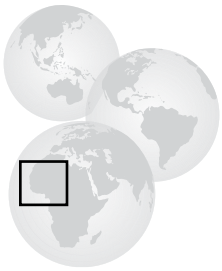
Placed in rural and urban communities throughout the country, Volunteers provide English language instruction to Georgian students and community members. Their primary activities are team teaching with Georgian teachers and initiating and implementing extracurricular activities for schools and local communities. As a result of Peace Corps activities, 63 public schools in nine regions have received assistance implementing a new national curriculum in English. Volunteers have trained more than 230 Georgian English teachers in new approaches to teaching, including interactive teaching methodologies and improved assessment and evaluation techniques. More than 25 schools opened English resource rooms and language labs, 15 schools established school and community computer centers, and almost 90 percent of the schools started after-school English clubs for students and interested community members. Volunteers arranged summer schools, Girls Leading Our World camps, and ecology camps in which more than 350 girls and boys received training in leadership, life skills, critical thinking, environmental awareness, and conflict resolution. Several Volunteers collaborated with local NGOs to start life-skills trainings for community youth groups. Volunteers also assisted public schools in building and renovation projects. In 2007, Volunteers began working in predominantly ethnic minority regions and at vocational education schools for the first time, demonstrating the Peace Corps' response to the changing needs of the Georgian people.

The Writing Olympics is a writing competition for students created in 2003 by a Volunteer serving in Georgia. It has grown into a popular annual event and has expanded into other countries in the region. Now, Volunteers in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia use the competition to encourage more than 2,000 student participants to practice English and to think creatively.

"If the people of Georgia want to know what the priorities of the Ministry of Education and Science are, they only need to look to Peace Corps/Georgia."

Kakha Lomaia
Minister of Education and Science
Georgia

Ghana



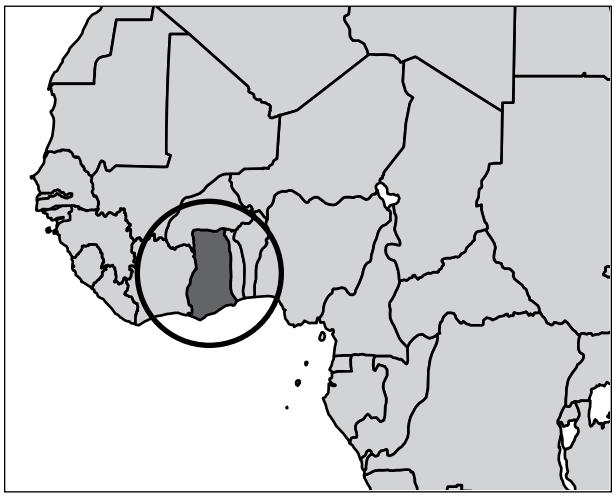
PROGRAM DATES	1961–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Accra
Population	22 million
Annual per capita income	$450
GDP growth	5.9%
Foreign direct investment	$107 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 34% Female: 50%
Infant mortality rate	68 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 44% Measles: 80%
Access to an improved water source	75%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	2.2%
Religions	Christianity: 69% Islam: 16% Indigenous beliefs: 9%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	185	180
Program funds ($000)	3,141	3,138



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Ghana celebrated 50 years of independence on March 6, 2007. The country's political environment is stable despite instability in other parts of West Africa. The government remains committed to strengthening democratic institutions, and civil society organizations are becoming active participants in framing the country's policy agenda. Parliament's prominence is growing, and the press is free and vibrant. The next presidential election will occur in December 2008.

The economic environment is generally stable; however, rolling blackouts caused by shortfalls in electrical generation capacity have negatively impacted businesses and the general population. Ghana has recently announced education reforms, and modest gains in access to primary school education are evidenced by increased enrollment. There is a deficit of teachers in mathematics, science, and computer technology, particularly in rural areas. Deterioration of the environment from deforestation and drought has also impacted social and economic demographics. Ghana's HIV/AIDS infection rate is just below three percent. Access to clean water remains a challenge, and Guinea worm is still a problem in Ghana.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Since 1961, when Ghana became the first country to welcome Peace Corps Volunteers, nearly 4,500 Volunteers have served here. The government regards Volunteers' work as a significant and positive contribution to community and national development. Many senior-level government officials and industry leaders were taught either by Volunteer teachers or had a Volunteer in their community during their youth. The Peace Corps participates in Ghana's economic recovery and in the protection and promotion of its human and natural resources. All Volunteers promote HIV/AIDS awareness. Ghana's transitional economy demonstrates an increased demand for business development opportunities. Information and communications technology (ICT) remains an expanding sector in Ghana.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers provide training in ecotourism, small business and micro-business development, financial management, marketing, product quality, and credit availability for small entrepreneurs. They work in urban and rural areas with international and local nongovernmental agencies, local governments, and private-sector associations. They orga-

nize youth clubs to build self esteem, organize income-generating projects with people living with HIV/AIDS, and teach HIV/AIDS awareness seminars to youth and adults. Volunteers are helping develop tourism destinations and products focused on the cultural and historical value of bead making and *kente* weaving (a fabric of interwoven cloth strips native to Ghana). Volunteers have also helped organize small cooperatives in which groups of women have established small commercial bakeries.

Education

Volunteers teach science, math, ICT, and visual arts to 7,600 students in public junior and senior secondary schools and in schools for the deaf. With Ghanaian teachers, Volunteers develop teaching resource manuals; establish science resource centers, laboratories, and art studios; and help identify and acquire computer and library resources for schools. They also help strengthen parent-school and school-community relationships. One group of Volunteers organized an annual national conference in which students from all 10 regions of Ghana gather for a week of workshops and youth leadership activities.

Environment

Persistent environmental issues in Ghana are deforestation, diminished soil fertility, erosion, and disappearance of naturally occurring bodies of water. Volunteers reduce environmental degradation through partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental agencies. As agroforestry managers, they facilitate the planting of almost 600,000 seedlings each year at community schools, clinics, churches, community forest reserves, and wood lots. Volunteers have developed community environmental groups in 65 communities, and they have transferred management skills for natural resource-based income-generating projects.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers promote behavior change to reduce water- and sanitation-related diseases and to create HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Volunteers help communities acquire, operate, and manage water and sanitation facilities, and they extend health knowledge to their communities through school health education. Volunteers have created HIV/AIDS awareness training for men, women, and children. Last year, Volunteers organized a four-day AIDS awareness bike-a-thon, which reached more than 10,000 residents. Additionally, half of all health Volunteers are working to eradicate the debilitating Guinea worm disease.

"We cannot thank President Kennedy enough for this programme. We should also thank successive American presidents and the people of America for sustaining it. The encounter between American youth and peoples of other nations through the Peace Corps programme can only yield positive results through mutual understanding, respect, and goodwill for the promotion of peaceful coexistence in the world."

President John Agyekum Kufuor
Ghana

Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY), Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA), Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), and Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI), meet with Volunteers during a CODEL to Ghana in August 2007

Guatemala

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

Capital	Guatemala City
Population	13 million
Annual per capita income	$2,400
GDP growth	3.2%
Foreign direct investment	$208 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 25% Female: 37%
Infant mortality rate	32 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 84% Measles: 75%
Access to an improved water source	95%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.1%
Religions	Protestantism Roman Catholicism Traditional Mayan
Official languages	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	179	189
Program funds ($000)	3,782	3,936

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Guatemala is a democratic republic with separation of powers and a centralized national administration. Since the signing of peace accords in 1996, democracy has strengthened, but many national problems remain. Guatemala's complex topography and its cultural and linguistic diversity—more than 20 indigenous languages are spoken—complicate efforts to expand education and health services. The country's unique biodiversity offers considerable potential for further development of new products, crops, and ecotourism, but environmental degradation is rampant and few protective measures are in place.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The program in Guatemala, which began in 1963, is one of the Peace Corps' oldest. Since 1963, more than 4,500 Volunteers have served in-country, and throughout the years, the Peace Corps has been a significant resource in grassroots development. More than 150 Volunteers are serving in projects related to agriculture, business development, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Many Guatemalans have agriculture-based jobs. Due to rural malnutrition and poverty, demand is high for improved agricultural methods that increase production and protect limited farm resources. Farmers also seek assistance from the Peace Corps to find new opportunities under the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Volunteers work to diversify agricultural production, better manage harvests, and promote post-harvest marketing, home-based agroprocessing, and small-animal production. Volunteers also train Guatemalans in information and communications technology.

One Volunteer worked with a coffee farmers' association to help farmers learn about organic certification, export marketing, and how to find international buyers.

Business Development

Volunteers work with youth and adults to improve the overall profitability of small businesses, and they work with women-owned businesses and in schools teaching practical skills to encourage entrepreneurial activity and teamwork.

One Volunteer worked with strawberry producers to help them gain legal status as an association and to find ways to reduce pesticide applications and residues on their crops. The association has gained access to new market opportunities,

especially in the United States, where excessive pesticide residues are closely monitored.

Volunteers also help strengthen the capacity of municipal authorities to deliver quality services, to enhance municipal planning, and to increase citizen participation. They involve community members in planning, implementing, and monitoring their own development projects. Volunteers are assigned to municipal planning offices around Guatemala, placing them on the front lines of Guatemala's decentralization process.

Environment

The rapid deterioration of Guatemala's natural resources is undermining its rich biodiversity and limiting its potential for economic development. Volunteers work in environmental conservation activities to decelerate environmental degradation in protected areas and municipal nature reserves.

One Volunteer helped a community association establish its community as an ecotourism destination. The area has many beautiful sites, including one of Central America's tallest waterfalls. The Volunteer and community members worked to develop the infrastructure to host tourists and to advertise their tourist attractions. Income generated from the ecotourism provides an alternative to logging nearby forests for wood and agricultural purposes.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The poor health of many rural families is often related to poor personal hygiene, respiratory problems resulting from indoor cooking fires, and lack of access to safe drinking water. Volunteers work with teachers and students to improve the health of rural elementary school students through education and improved school, community, and household sanitation. In addition, Volunteers introduce a variety of low-cost technologies to improve family health, including wood-saving stoves, latrines, rope pumps, solar water heaters, water-catchment systems, water tanks, and grain storage silos.

Volunteers developed inventories of both the educational resources and existing groups working in Guatemala to prevent HIV/AIDS. Volunteers in several projects use this material to give presentations and talks on HIV/AIDS to youth groups in their communities. Several Volunteers developed practical materials and methodologies on HIV/AIDS prevention, which all Volunteers can now use to train community leaders in their areas.

Youth

More than half of Guatemala's population is younger than 24, underlying the importance of involving youth in the development of the country. Volunteers work with youth through activities in life-skills development, environmental education, entrepreneurship, and the Healthy Schools program.

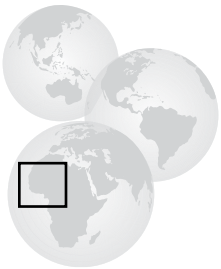
One Volunteer worked with teachers to introduce lesson plans and activities into the curriculum to provide students with important life skills. Lessons included information about living safe and healthy lifestyles and how to participate in community development, as well as activities to prepare for the job market.

"What makes exceptional Peace Corps Volunteers is the initiative they have to get involved in the community and know the local customs. Once they adapt to the culture they can lead, organize, and share their knowledge and innovations."

Omar Juarez
Park Director, Municipality of Lanquin
Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

Volunteer in Guatemala

Guinea



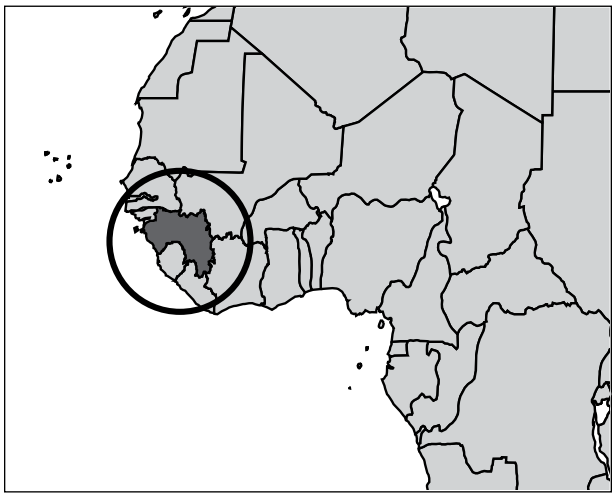
PROGRAM DATES	1962–1966 1969–1971 1985–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Conakry
Population	9 million
Annual per capita income	$420
GDP growth	3.3%
Foreign direct investment	$102 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 57% Female: 82%
Infant mortality rate	97 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 33% Measles: 69%
Access to an improved water source	50%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	3.2%
Religions	Islam: 85% Christianity: 8% Indigenous beliefs: 7%
Official language	French

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	54	108
Program funds ($000)	2,206	2,559



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Guinea gained independence in 1958 under the leadership of Sekou Touré. The current president, Lansana Conté, took over through a coup following Toure's death in 1984. The current constitution was put to popular vote at the end of 1990 and, in 1991, a multiparty system was legalized and a timetable for future elections set. In 1993, President Conté was elected in Guinea's first multiparty elections; he was reelected at the end of 2003 in an uncontested election.

Despite its mineral resources, Guinea is one of the poorest countries in the world. This tropical country's economy depends primarily on agriculture. Leading crops are rice, coffee, bananas, palm kernels, and pineapples. Rich deposits of iron ore, gold, and diamonds exist. Bauxite sales provide Guinea with more than 90 percent of export revenues; Guinea has about 30 percent of the world's known bauxite and ranks second only to Australia in production.

In January 2007 general strikes were organized, which led to civil unrest. Volunteers were evacuated to Mali and the program was temporarily suspended. Volunteers returned to post in July 2007.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Since 1962, more than 1,200 Volunteers have served in Guinea. The Peace Corps enjoys strong support from all levels of government and the people of Guinea. An increasing number of international, national, and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are collaborating with Volunteers. Schools, health centers, and rural communities continue to request Volunteers, and demand continues to exceed supply. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Though many Guineans are involved in small-scale income-generating activities, few have access to business advisory services to help them expand a simple income-generating activity into a business. Volunteers have been working in the business development sector since 2004. Their work empowers youth and small-scale entrepreneurs by strengthening business management skills. Volunteers conduct business management and entrepreneurship training, create and strengthen market linkages, and establish basic accounting systems. The project supports three major cross-sector initiatives: empowering women, working with youth, and integrating information and communications technology.

One Volunteer worked with boutique managers to create an inventory management system that accommodated multiple products and artisans. With the Volunteer's guidance and supervision, an effective system for tracking merchandise was implemented.

Education

Volunteers have worked in Guinean secondary schools since 1986. In line with the country's priorities, Peace Corps/Guinea's education sector focuses on four areas: fostering student access and performance, building teacher capacity, improving school resources, and enhancing community self-reliance. Volunteers teach English, math, chemistry, and physics. Volunteers incorporate gender-equity values into their daily teaching and give remedial instruction to girls in their schools. Many secondary projects help women cope with the educational and developmental problems they face.

One Volunteer identified that many of his community's problems were because youth did not understand the concept of personal responsibility. Consequently, the Volunteer helped community teachers create the "Academy of Excellence." This group has focused its activities on increasing student participation in the community. As a result of this organization, educational materials have been developed to help increase student participation in school and community activities.

Environment

Approximately 80 percent of Guineans derive their living from agricultural activities. Volunteers work with counterparts, water and forest technicians, and primary school teachers to raise environmental awareness and to promote sound agroforestry practices. The program boosts farm yields, enhances food security, helps with income generation, and incorporates environmental protection and restoration.

One Volunteer worked with local farmers from eight villages to introduce and harvest an improved variety of rice. Farmers were trained in new farming techniques to maximize the benefits of the new rice. The Volunteer also taught the farmers how to teach other farmers how to grow the rice.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers work as public health extension agents in rural communities, directly supporting the Ministry of Health's priority activities. These activities address diarrhea control, malaria control, reproductive health, nutrition, and vaccinations. Volunteers design educational projects for their communities and transfer skills to their Guinean counterparts. Volunteers and their counterparts also participate in an annual HIV/AIDS workshop that provides participants with tools to carry out effective HIV/AIDS education work.

One Volunteer conducted training sessions for peer educators. Providing interactive sessions on malaria, nutrition, family planning, and HIV/AIDS, the Volunteer also included training on project design and funding. After these trainings, the peer educators were able to design and implement effective health programs.

"...These Volunteers, as true ambassadors of the American people, contribute in a substantial manner to the implementation of our program of sustainable development..."

Madame Sidibé Fatoumata Kaba
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Guinea

Guyana

PROGRAM DATES	1967–1971 1995–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Georgetown
Population	751,200
Annual per capita income	$1,020
GDP growth	-2.2%
Foreign direct investment	$77 million
Adult illiteracy rate	3.5%
Infant mortality rate	48 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 93% Measles: 92%
Access to an improved water source	83%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	2.4%
Religions	Christianity: 57% Hinduism: 33% Islam: 9% Other: 1%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	51	52
Program funds ($000)	1,702	1,822

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Guyana has a population of approximately 700,000 people, largely confined to a narrow coastal strip where sugar and rice cultivation is concentrated and where the nation's capital, Georgetown, clusters at the mouth of the Demerara River. There is a great diversity of racial and ethnic groups in Guyana. People of African descent constitute 35.6 percent of the population; people of East Indian descent, 49.5 percent; and people of Portuguese, Chinese, Amerindian, or mixed descent, 15 percent. The two main political parties are divided along racial lines. This division is one of Guyana's greatest challenges.

Three major river systems, the Demerara, the Berbice, and the Essequibo, together with innumerable smaller rivers and creeks, drain this "Land of Many Waters" and link its vast forest and savannah interior to the coast. Agriculture and mining are Guyana's most important economic activities, with sugar, bauxite, rice, and gold accounting for roughly 70 percent of export earnings. As one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere, Guyana continues to face major impediments to economic growth. Significant emigration since the 1960s has caused critical shortages of teachers and healthcare workers, among other groups.

PROGRAM FOCUS

At the request of the Guyanese government, the Peace Corps returned to Guyana in 1995 after a 24-year absence. Since the initial opening of the program in 1967, more than 400 Volunteers have served in Guyana. The reentry was initiated in response to the government's desire to improve its healthcare system in rural communities and to respond to the needs of a growing youth population with limited employment and educational opportunities. Volunteers address these needs by providing health education in collaboration with relevant ministries and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). They help facilitate community involvement, train service providers, and introduce new training and teaching methodologies. Additionally, the education project incorporates an information technology component that responds to a request from the Ministry of Education and community-based organizations to enhance computer training for students, educators, and others.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers in Guyana work to raise levels of literacy and numeracy. They teach life skills, special education, environmental education, and physical education; they train teachers in curriculum development, methodologies, and instruction.

Guyana has many needs in the areas of parental education, strengthening community-school linkages, social and sensitivity issues, and counseling. Volunteers work with youth organizations and the Ministry of Education to provide at-risk youth with educational, personal, and life-skills development opportunities. This helps them to meet the challenges of adolescence and contribute positively to their communities. Through teacher-training activities, Volunteers also work with educators on participatory teaching methods and life-skills training. They provide training in computer literacy to Guyanese teachers and training in literacy, remedial reading, and information and communication technology to students. Volunteers help students with career preparation, teaching them how to develop résumés, complete applications, create personal job networks, and establish goals and plans. Several Volunteers coordinate with an international NGO to provide literacy training to the teachers at their schools.

One Volunteer organized a parenting skills program that focused on strategies to help children learn to read. The Volunteer taught parents how to use phonics to help improve reading skills and discussed methods to encourage children to practice reading. The Volunteer also used a Small Project Assistance grant to help build a computer lab and library in the community.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Guyana's general health indicators are among the lowest in the Caribbean region. The government has implemented a national health plan, and its first-order priorities are the prevention of malaria, sexually transmitted diseases, acute respiratory infections, immunizable diseases, and prenatal problems. Second-order prevention priorities are malnutrition and diarrheal disease. Volunteers work directly with health centers, NGOs, and communities to identify local and national resources, conduct community health assessments, design and implement health education, and train health-center staff and community leaders. Volunteers address Guyana's high HIV/AIDS rates in their training and outreach efforts. They provide health education sessions on HIV/AIDS prevention to youth in collaboration with NGOs. Peace Corps/Guyana has strengthened and expanded its collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Agency for International Development in addressing HIV/AIDS. Guyana is one of the focus countries in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Two Volunteers, with money from a local fund-raiser, helped their community purchase seeds and plant home vegetable gardens so that families could supplement their diets with more nutritious food. There are currently 10 home gardens in the community. Residents plan to expand the program to include local youth and to develop income-generating opportunities by selling excess vegetables.

One Volunteer transformed the record-keeping section of the regional hospital by installing a simple, user-friendly database to store records. The staff found they were able to work more effectively and efficiently.

A Volunteer worked with her school and community, the Department of Education, and the PEPFAR program to provide access to the internet in the student computer lab. Students now access career opportunities and search for HIV/AIDS-related information.

"Learning to grate coconut to make salara *and buns in my community helped me to understand how hard the women in the community worked and challenged me to take action to make their lives better."*

Guyana Volunteer
Education Sector

Honduras

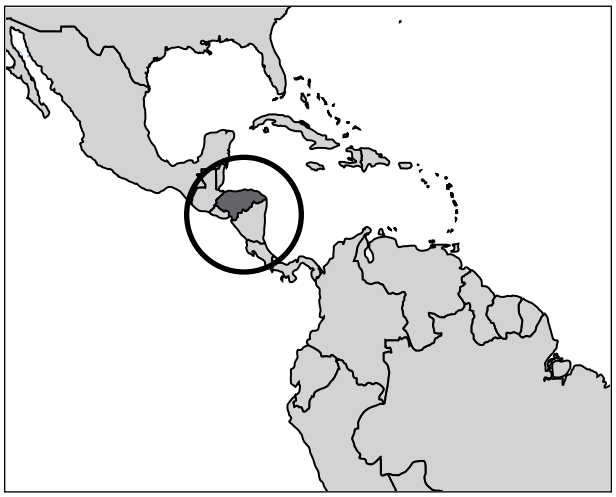
PROGRAM DATES	1963–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Tegucigalpa
Population	7 million
Annual per capita income	$1,120
GDP growth	4.0%
Foreign direct investment	$464 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 20% Female: 20%
Infant mortality rate	31 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 89% Measles: 92%
Access to an improved water source	87%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.8%
Religion	Protestantism Roman Catholicism
Official language	Spanish

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	167	166
Program funds ($000)	3,637	3,757



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, the military was the principal political force in Honduras, governing directly, influencing general policy, and controlling national security affairs. The Honduran constitution of 1982 provided a foundation for democracy, which continues to evolve. In elections considered free and fair, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales of the Liberal Party became president in 2005.

Honduras is one of the poorest and least developed countries in Latin America. Current Honduran initiatives for economic expansion include tourism—focused on the Caribbean coast, the Bay Islands, and the Mayan ruins of Copán.

PROGRAM FOCUS

During the past four decades, the Peace Corps has helped Honduras create and implement a national park system, include environmental education in its national education curriculum, reduce infant mortality through education, and construct effective water and sanitation systems. Honduras is currently the largest program in the Inter-America and Pacific region, with more than 180 Peace Corps Volunteers working in agriculture, business development, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development. More than 5,000 Volunteers have served in Honduras since 1963.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Agriculture

Excessive use of slash-and-burn agriculture and poor soil conservation techniques on the hillsides of Honduras have caused a severe loss of quality topsoil, diminishing crop yields. Lack of crop diversification, poor management skills, and few small-scale agribusiness initiatives have exacerbated this problem. Consequently, farmers have difficulty generating and managing extra sources of income or food for their families. Volunteers train farmers in sustainable production techniques to improve soil conservation and increase and diversify crops for greater food security and higher family incomes.

Six Volunteers planned and held a "Women in Agriculture Leadership Conference," which included training on gender equity, self esteem, women's rights, leadership skills, and the construction of water reservoirs. After the conference, the women trained others in their own communities. As a result, more than 40 reservoirs have been built in six different communities.

Business Development

Lack of basic business skills limits economic opportunities for many low-income Hondurans. Volunteers help the poorest communities by identifying local employment opportunities, improving business management practices, and training micro-entrepreneurs in basic business skills. Volunteers also develop information technology training programs to help business owners and Honduran government agencies become more efficient.

One Volunteer helped a group of students enter a business plan competition sponsored by a national agricultural university. The student team won third place and received a $2,500 grant for their business plan.

Environment

Honduran forest reserves and coastal areas are at risk of overexploitation. Urbanization threatens watersheds and protected areas throughout the country. Volunteers work with the National Forest Service and local nongovernmental organizations to promote environmental awareness, sound micro-watershed management practices, and ecotourism among farmers and schools in communities adjacent to protected areas.

Several Volunteers worked with their counterparts to introduce bio-digester systems in their communities. These systems use domestic animal manure and cooking waste to produce fuel that can be used in small cooking stoves by farming families. The systems reduce dependency on firewood and pollution to water sources, and prevent the incidence of respiratory disease from smoke inhalation.

Health and HIV/AIDS

In rural Honduras, the lack of knowledge about proper hygiene practices, sanitary waste disposal, and the protection of water sources cause widespread disease and malnutrition. Volunteers train communities in water-source rehabilitation, expansion, and construction; and in the construction of fuel-efficient wood-burning stoves. In 2007, Volunteers helped rehabilitate, expand, and construct potable water systems in 89 communities, benefiting close to 76,000 people.

A group of health Volunteers produced a manual to strengthen support groups that serve people living with HIV/AIDS. The manual addressed psycho-social aspects of support groups, adherence to treatment, and other topics such as healthy lifestyles and small business creation. Last year, the manual was used to train 124 people who worked with 25 support groups that benefited more than 550 people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Youth

Many Honduran youth face limited prospects of good employment, a sound financial situation, and stable family relationships. Volunteers work with youth, adults, and agencies to identify and initiate positive activities for young people to help them develop as individuals, citizens, family members, and professionals.

Increasing civic education and making youth aware of their rights and duties as Honduran citizens is very important. In conjunction with the Center for Civic Education in the United States, five Volunteers tested a pilot program called Project Citizen with high school students.

Agriculture Volunteer, Honduras at work on a bee-keeping project

"We are lacking in knowledge, and the Peace Corps Volunteers have it. Without them we would not have had the results we have had. They are professional, and we appreciate their training."

Guillermo Díaz
Mayor, Sabanagrande
Francisco Morazan, Honduras

Jamaica

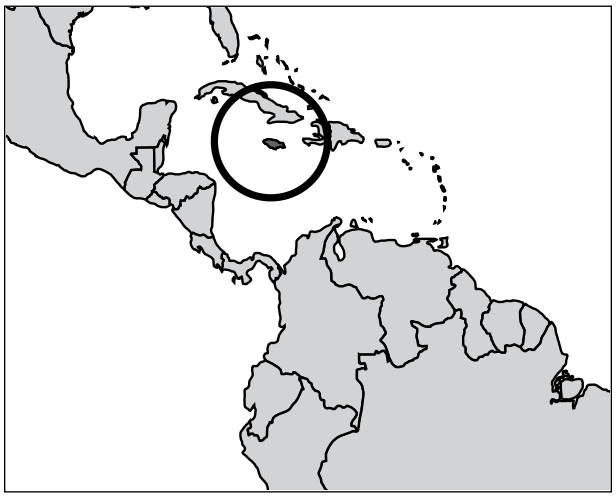
PROGRAM DATES	1962–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Capital	Kingston
Population	3 million
Annual per capita income	$3,390
GDP growth	1.8%
Foreign direct investment	$682 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 26% Female: 14%
Infant mortality rate	17 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 77% Measles: 80%
Access to an improved water source	93%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.2%
Religions	Christianity Judaism Rastafarianism
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	94	78
Program funds ($000)	2,859	2,931



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Jamaica is striving to strengthen its economy and escape its burden of debt. The government must set aside 70 percent of the annual national budget to service the national debt, and yet must continue to borrow to meet vital national needs. About 20 percent of Jamaicans live below the poverty line, and the government struggles to provide the services and education that would improve the standard of living and promote productive enterprise. Social problems are considerable; creating economic and educational opportunities for marginalized youth in urban areas is a major concern. With a serious lack of employment opportunities in Jamaica, many Jamaicans emigrate, leaving an underproductive and insufficient labor force in agriculture, and creating a "brain drain" in the health, education, and information and communication technology (ICT) sectors. Remittances from overseas (25 percent of the gross domestic product) continue to be the largest source of net foreign exchange, ahead of tourism and bauxite mining.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Jamaica is famous for its green mountain landscapes, beaches, and biological diversity, but the country faces many challenges. The country continues to grapple with underdevelopment, unemployment, and environmental degradation; marginalization of youth (especially males); a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection (1.2 percent adult prevalence); a lack of potable water; and poor sanitary practices. Enrollment rates in primary and lower-secondary schools remain high, but the enrollment rate of 17- to 19-year-olds continues its sharp decline. High levels of crime, violence, and drug trafficking, especially in inner-city communities, further deteriorate living conditions and have a negative impact on foreign investment.

The Peace Corps addresses Jamaica's development priorities through its programs in the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth development.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Environment

Volunteers are engaged in two important aspects of sustainable development: integrating environmental education themes in the formal education system through collaboration with 4-H and the School for the Environment Program; and working with community-based organizations and environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to develop eco-friendly income-generation projects, while assisting in institutional strengthening. These projects help nurture the

development of a national environment ethic and promote prudent management of the island's natural resources.

One Volunteer worked with the Office of the Parish disaster coordinator on a disaster- and hazard-mapping project. Using geographic information system technology, the Volunteer assisted in the production of maps to be used in disaster response and management. One such map charted the location of emergency responders, hospitals, and shelters. Another identified flood zones and landslide-prone areas, which can complicate disaster response.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The sanitation system in Jamaica is increasingly inadequate. Volunteers help design and install wastewater treatment facilities and implement rural water systems that supply safe, reliable water to communities. Using an integrated health promotion approach, Volunteers improve basic hygiene and the maintenance and usage of latrines. They collaborate with teachers to develop health and hygiene curricula for schools; work in rural, urban squatter, and underserved settlements to facilitate broad-based community development activities; and strengthen community-based organizations that support health projects. Through their secondary projects, Volunteers engage community groups in income-generating ICT activities, and in targeted community mobilization using sports, music, education in schools, life-skills training and other modalities to address the HIV epidemic.

As a part of a National Rural Water Program, three Volunteers are piloting four community water projects. The Volunteers provide technical expertise, organizational strengthening, and educational support. The water projects will provide 11 rural communities with potable and piped water systems, and will be owned and operated by the more than 7,000 beneficiaries.

Youth

The youth project was recently renamed "Youth as Promise" to reflect the agency's efforts to promote positive youth development. Volunteers collaborate with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Culture, and with NGOs, community groups, and community health centers to strengthen programs that build skills and self-esteem in youth. Volunteers work with their sponsoring agencies to implement reading and computer tutoring programs, youth entrepreneurship, employability programs, HIV education/prevention, and life-skills training. At the community level, Volunteers may also work together with youth workers, teachers, and parents.

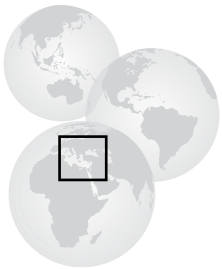
A Volunteer assigned to a small, rural school taught basic computer skills to students. The students learned word processing and research methods, and practiced reading and writing skills using educational software. The students advanced enough that the Volunteer was able to assist them in producing a school newspaper.

"The Volunteer couple assigned to my agency has taken the Red Cross to higher heights of effectiveness with their efficiency and availability. We welcome them, they are outstanding."

McArthur Collins
Chairman, Red Cross Mandeville
Jamaica

Education Volunteer and host-country counterparts, Jamaica

Jordan



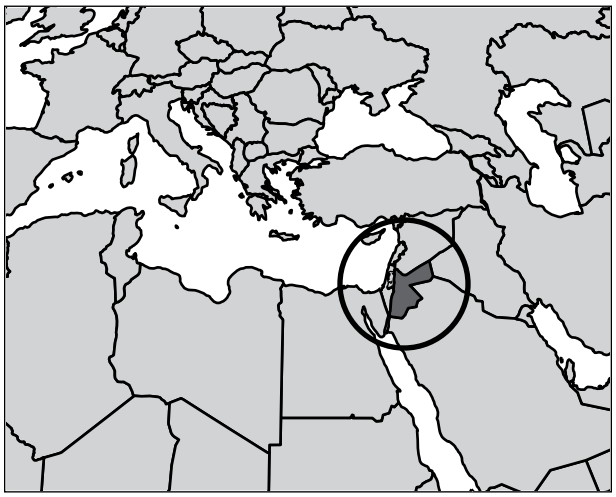
PROGRAM DATES	1997–2002 2004–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Youth

Capital	Amman
Population	5 million
Annual per capita income	$2,460
GDP growth	7.3%
Foreign direct investment	$1.532 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 5% Female: 15%
Infant mortality rate	22 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 95% Measles: 99%
Access to an improved water source	97%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.1%
Religions	Sunni Islam: 95% Christianity: 4% Other: 1%
Official language	Arabic

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	56	64
Program funds ($000)	1,782	1,846



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Jordan is a small country with limited natural resources. Agricultural production is affected by drought and the lack of arable land. Traditionally, Jordan's economy has centered on phosphates, potash, fertilizer derivatives, overseas remittances, tourism, and foreign aid. In 2001, Jordan entered into a free-trade agreement with the United States, and it has signed trade liberalization agreements with the European Union. Tourism has been intermittently affected by political tension in the region.

Due to security concerns, the Peace Corps suspended its program and withdrew its Volunteers in November 2002. In June 2003, a Peace Corps assessment team, working with the U.S. embassy and Jordanian officials, deemed the security situation stable. The program resumed in 2004.

Jordan's King Abdullah II leads his kingdom with a sustained commitment to economic and social reform. Numerous development challenges face Jordan, among them rural poverty and unemployment, and ambitious growth goals in education and primary healthcare—all areas of Peace Corps programming and collaboration.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Since 2000, Jordan has launched social and economic initiatives to raise the standard of living, develop human resources, promote rural development, and increase participation in civil society and governance. High among the king's priorities is addressing human capacity requirements through improved early childhood, primary, and secondary education, with specific emphasis on English fluency and computer literacy.

Volunteer projects focus on English education; special education, especially for the mentally challenged; and youth development. Project plans are developed with Jordanian partners, including the Ministries of Social Development and Education and the Higher Council for Youth.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers assigned to rural primary and secondary schools enable Jordanian students, educators, and community members to improve their English proficiency. This increases access to higher education and employment. Careful screening of underserved communities ensures that Volunteer contributions are focused on maximizing Volunteers as resources, as native speakers, and as models of innovative, interactive teaching methods. Volunteers consult on the design and delivery of regional teacher-training workshops,

conduct English clubs and camps for students, and teach groups such as women's clubs and youth centers.

Special education Volunteers have been particularly welcome as they serve small- to medium–sized communities, often working with charitable- or parent-founded centers. The devotion of these families and communities to their disadvantaged members sets the tone for a remarkable atmosphere of contribution and success. Volunteers are placed at rural and urban special education centers under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Development.

To encourage students and teachers to use their language skills, two Volunteers and their counterparts planned and implemented an English camp for students and teachers in their region. They also developed a guide called "Young Leaders for Our Jordan," which includes a step-by-step template to use for future English camps.

Responding to her community's desire to build a therapeutic playground, one Volunteer secured a grant for a playground so all local children would have a safe and quality area to play. The new playground motivated members of the girls' youth center in the village to volunteer to paint and beautify the playground.

Youth

Jordan's youthful population represents both its greatest asset and its most pressing challenge. More than 31 percent of Jordanians are between 15 and 29 years old; 38 percent are younger than 15. The Higher Council for Youth works closely with the Peace Corps to develop and enhance life skills for youth. The government has established a national youth strategy, which includes a focus on healthy lifestyles. Peace Corps Volunteers promote youth leadership and empowerment while centering on lifestyle and education issues.

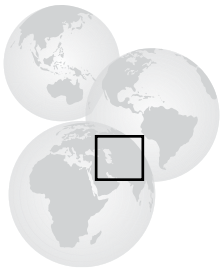
One Volunteer, who recognized the need to increase young peoples' access to information and educational resources, worked with his community to renovate a public library and community meeting room. This fully operational, self-sustainable facility now includes educational CDs and other audiovisual resources, as well as a digital library database.

"After seeing our Jordanian youth carrying out the peer educators' camp themselves, we feel the impact Peace Corps Volunteers had on our youth in Jordan."

Ahmad Nawaf
Director of Youth Affairs, Higher Council for Youth
Jordan

Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN) meets with Peace Corps Volunteers in Jordan, December 2007

Kazakhstan



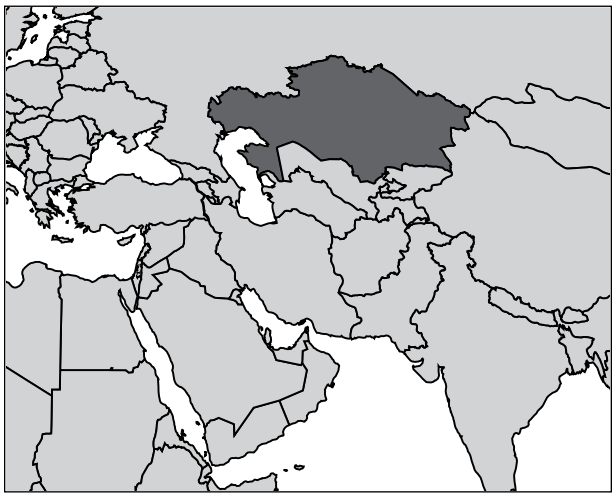
PROGRAM DATES	1993–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education

Capital	Astana
Population	15 million
Annual per capita income	$2,940
GDP growth	9.7%
Foreign direct investment	$1.975 billion
Adult illiteracy rate	2%
Infant mortality rate	63 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 82% Measles: 99%
Access to an improved water source	86%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.2%
Religions	Sunni Islam: 47% Russian Orthodoxy: 44% Other: 7% Protestantism: 2%
Official languages	Kazakh Russian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	184	185
Program funds ($000)	2,940	2,998



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This year, Kazakhstan celebrates its 16th year of independence and the 12th anniversary of its constitution. Since its independence, Kazakhstan has been a constitutional republic led by Nursultan Nazarbayev, its only president to-date. The country is proceeding along the complex path of reforming and building an open democratic society with a market economy. Driven by vast reserves of natural resources, including oil and gas, Kazakhstan has experienced strong growth in its GDP and the World Bank classifies it as a country with above-average income. Transitioning to a civil society, securing basic human rights, and distributing the economic gains across the population have proven to be a more arduous task. With little experience in citizen participation to promote local community change, Kazakhstan's fledgling civil society and nonprofit sectors are beginning to be recognized by the government as viable avenues for community development. English is seen by the government as a vehicle to economic growth in the international economy.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Not long after the country declared its independence, President Nazarbayev invited the Peace Corps to help strengthen Kazakhstan's human resource base. Since the program opened in 1993, the people and government of Kazakhstan have strongly supported the Peace Corps' role in development. Government programs are driven by President Nazarbayev's theme, "Prosperity, Security, and the Ever Growing Welfare of All Kazakhs," a program commonly called "Kazakhstan 2030." The program calls for consistently improving standards of life, health, education, and opportunities of the Kazakhs as well as improving the country's natural environment. Peace Corps Volunteer activities are closely aligned with the president's vision.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers promote the development of civil society by working with host organizations, counterparts, and community volunteers throughout Kazakhstan to improve the capacity of communities to meet their needs, particularly in HIV/AIDS, youth, environment, women, and economic development. Volunteers are placed in towns and at the grassroots level to educate, train, and assist host agency staff in leadership, business development skills, transparent accounting, grant writing, and strategic planning. Last year four Volunteers conducted a four-day business skills workshop with 20 regional participants. They covered leadership and business

topics as well as selecting and managing local volunteers and integrating these volunteers into overall programming strategies.

Another Volunteer, working with a local HIV/AIDS prevention center, designed outreach activities with staff to educate the general population about HIV/AIDS, prevention options, and links with intravenous drug use. The program included training in media outreach and designing informational brochures.

Education

One of Kazakhstan's main goals is to become one of the 50 most competitive countries within the world market economy. As English is the language of international communication, the Ministry of Education requested assistance from the Peace Corps in English language teaching, teacher training, and educational resource development, particularly in rural secondary schools. Many rural schools are understaffed with outdated and often ineffective textbooks, limited teaching resources, and teachers with limited English fluency. In addition to team teaching to address daily classroom teaching methodologies and communicative approaches, Volunteers conduct teacher-training workshops for village teachers throughout Kazakhstan to improve their English teaching skills. One Volunteer conducted a no-cost training seminar for 70 local teachers serving in village schools. In two other towns, 22 teachers from rural schools participated in a training to promote the use of information and communications technologies in the classroom and to provide training to teachers in the use of computers and the Internet.

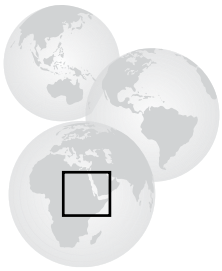
Volunteers also organize numerous community projects, including business, technology, and environmental clubs, and HIV/AIDS awareness activities.

In addition to their formal roles as teachers in academic settings or as trainers in host agencies, Volunteers enthusiastically participate in summer camps across Kazakhstan. Building on the summer camp tradition that existed in the former Soviet Union, Volunteers work with local counterparts to provide campers with enriching, invigorating camp experiences. As a result of this work, counterparts improve their English ability as well as their planning, organizational, and leadership skills. Campers participate in activities enhancing their critical thinking skills and improving their knowledge of, and respect for, the environment. More than 40 Volunteers organized and participated in camps throughout Kazakhstan last summer. One Volunteer who worked with the nongovernmental organization Society for Disabled Youth planned a series of summer camps for children with physical and mental disabilities and youth leaders.

"...The Peace Corps is a valued partner, and I welcome this chance to commend the Volunteers working in educational institutions throughout this country. I pledge my full support and the full support of my ministry and promise a strong and continuing collaborative relationship."

Zhanseit Tuimebayev
Minister of Education and Science
Kazakhstan

Kenya



PROGRAM DATES	1964–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Nairobi
Population	34 million
Annual per capita income	$540
GDP growth	5.8%
Foreign direct investment	$21 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 22% Female: 30%
Infant mortality rate	79 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 76% Measles: 69%
Access to an improved water source	57%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	6.1%
Religions	Protestantism: 40% Roman Catholicism: 30% Islam: 20% Indigenous beliefs: 10%
Official languages	English Swahili

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	147	146
Program funds ($000)	3,309	3,313

COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Kenya's founding president, Jomo Kenyatta, led the country from its independence in 1963 until his death in 1978. President Daniel Arap Moi succeeded Kenyatta, stepping down in December 2002. Mwai Kibaki assumed the presidency in 2002. On December 27, 2007, presidential and parliamentary elections were held. At the time of this publication, the election results in Kenya were being contested due to reported voting irregularities. As a result, protests and unrest have occurred. Government and opposition leaders have met in an effort to find a political solution to the election crisis. Peace Corps/Kenya has been temporarily suspended, all Volunteers have safely left the country. The Peace Corps intends to return Volunteers to Kenya when the security environment has improved.

Kenya experienced real economic growth after independence until the 1970s, but over the succeeding two decades, its economy declined. In 2006, however, Kenya's economy grew by 6.1 percent. Agriculture is the main source of employment, with approximately 60 percent of the population engaged in farming. Kenya is the world's largest exporter of tea, which, together with coffee and horticultural products, constitutes more than half of the country's merchandise exports. Tourism is also a key economic driver.

As the regional hub for trade and finance in East Africa, Kenya has been hampered by corruption and by reliance upon several primary goods whose prices have remained low. A severe drought from 1999 to 2000 compounded Kenya's problems, causing water and energy rationing and reducing agricultural output. Despite the return of strong rains in 2001, weak commodity prices, endemic corruption, and low investment limited Kenya's economic growth. In the December 2002 elections, Daniel Arap Moi's 24-year reign ended, and a new opposition government took on the economic problems facing the nation. In 2003, progress was made in rooting out corruption and encouraging donor support. Since then, the Kibaki government has been rocked by high-level graft scandals. The World Bank suspended aid for most of 2006, and the IMF delayed loans pending further action by the government on corruption. The scandals have not seemed to affect growth, with GDP growing more than five percent in 2006.

PROGRAM FOCUS

Since 1964, more than 5,000 Volunteers have helped the people and government of Kenya meet their development needs. The work of Volunteers is well-regarded by government officials at both the national and district levels, as well as by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community

members. Peace Corps/Kenya has adapted its projects over the years to fit the country's changing needs. Volunteers currently work in business development, education, and health. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Kenya also has a unique deaf education program, which includes 16 deaf education Volunteers funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

Volunteers work with Kenya's ministries of Labor and Human Resource Development to help Kenyans start enterprises and other income-generating activities, and to provide training and technical assistance. Volunteers also help establish local businesses to improve product quality and access to business support services, like financial credit. Volunteers help Kenyan entrepreneurs improve their productivity through the use of computers, as well.

One Volunteer in a small coastal town is assisting a wood-carvers cooperative to successfully export their crafts. The Volunteer provided extensive training to members on cooperative governance, quality assurance, and merchandising. He is working with other Volunteers to create a website for the cooperative, and has connected the cooperative with international fair trade organizations to enhance the marketability of their crafts and promote eco-friendly wood harvesting practices. Through the Volunteers' efforts, the cooperative has secured several large orders and is now operating a $500,000-a-year (USD) business.

Education

Volunteers teach biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics in rural secondary schools. They train teachers in these schools to expand their range of educational approaches and practices in teaching math and science subjects. Volunteers teach in primary schools for deaf children and train teachers who are instructing deaf students. They also conduct community outreach programs to educate parents and guardians about deafness and the importance of providing support for deaf children.

One Volunteer helped construct a computer lab at a school for the deaf through Peace Corps Partnership funding. The school serves 165 deaf students from all regions of Kenya and from other countries in East Africa. The lab has 20 networked computers and is ready for future Internet use. The Volunteer teaches computer classes to students and teachers, and instructs teachers how to use computer programs to develop their teaching materials. The Volunteer also uses the lab to promote HIV/AIDS awareness by helping students use the computers to design posters and presentation materials.

Health and HIV/AIDS

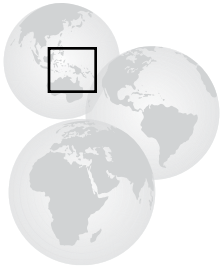
Volunteers, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, address key public health challenges through attitude and behavior change in communities. Their collective goal is to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS, waterborne diseases, and to prevent malaria. Volunteers assist communities to prioritize their health needs; work with community groups to strengthen their ability to provide home-based care for people living with AIDS and orphans; and educate health service providers on malaria prevention techniques, water-borne diseases, and nutrition. In the last fiscal year Volunteers provided HIV/AIDS prevention training to more than 27,305 youth in 134 community groups.

One Volunteer assigned to a Kenyan NGO works to promote healthy lifestyles among youth. Together with other Volunteers and NGO staff, the Volunteer designed a peer-education training manual and implemented a comprehensive in-school peer education program for primary and secondary schools. The Volunteer participated in a training program given to more than 80 peer education resource teachers and Ministry of Education officials. Additionally, the Volunteer organized and supervised a series of week-long residential camps, each of which trained approximately 50 student peer educators from 10 different schools.

"The Ministry of Health and Peace Corps Kenya have an excellent collaborative partnership... Peace Corps Volunteers assist in the development and implementation of activities that respond to needs of Kenyan communities for HIV/AIDS prevention, environmental health, hygiene promotion, and malaria control and prevention."

The Honorable Charity Kaluki Ngilu
Minister for Health
Kenya

Kiribati



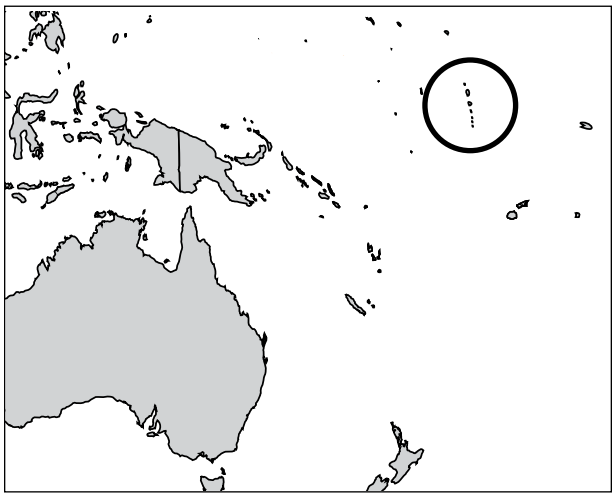
PROGRAM DATES	1973–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Tarawa
Population:	98,000
Annual per capita income	$1,170
GDP growth	(-2.0%)
Foreign direct investment	Not available
Adult illiteracy rate	Not available
Infant mortality rate	48 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 62% Measles: 56%
Access to an improved water source	62%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 53% Kiribati Protestantism: 39%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	20	39
Program funds ($000)	1,240	1,491



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Kiribati (pronounced Kir-ee-bus) is a small, isolated group of islands in the central Pacific that straddles the equator and the international dateline. The country has three island groups: the Gilbert Islands, the Line Islands, and the Phoenix Islands. It consists of 33 coral atolls scattered over more than 2 million square miles, yet its total land area is only 264 square miles. Kiribati gained independence from Britain in 1979 and is now a stable, democratic republic.

Kiribati has few natural resources and a limited economy. Its main sources of revenue are the export of dried coconut, fish and the sale of fishing rights. Agriculture is limited because of poor soil and scarce rainfall. Kiribati's poor resource base makes it difficult for the government to raise revenue for development programs, particularly in education, natural resource management, youth development, and health. Many of the country's educated and trained workers leave the country, making it a challenge to find people with the skills needed to implement successful development programs.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps began placing Volunteers in Kiribati in 1973, and Volunteers now work throughout the Gilbert Islands group. Most Volunteers work on outer islands, which lack services and educational opportunities because of their distance from the main island of Tarawa.

The Peace Corps' current program strategy supports the Kiribati government's efforts to address the key development areas of education in English, health promotion, and community development. Volunteers support the national plan to enhance the English language and classroom skills of I-Kiribati teachers. Kiribati's geography makes it difficult for the government to provide health services and education to citizens in more rural, isolated villages. Thus, Volunteers provide outreach to villages and develop awareness campaigns to inform youth and adults about important health issues. Volunteers also collaborate with individuals and groups to support community-initiated projects and activities that enhance the quality of life of village members.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers support the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports to prepare students to continue their education or to enter the workforce. They enhance teachers' professional development, improve classroom environments, and increase learning opportunities for outer island communities. Volunteers work in primary and junior secondary

schools to augment the English language and overall teaching skills of teachers. They do this by delivering in-service training workshops and by transferring teaching and lesson planning skills through co-teaching activities. Volunteers also work at the national teacher-training college teaching English, math, science, accounting, crafts/creativity, and physical education, as well as new teaching methodologies. They contribute to school administration, develop classroom materials, and coach sports teams.

One Volunteer assigned to a primary school on the remote island of Nikunau worked with counterparts to build the island's first school library and to supply it with books. Together, they arranged for community donations of time and labor to construct the library using locally available materials. They obtained book donations for the library from the United States and other sources.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers in the health and HIV/AIDS sector support the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs through activities that promote the health and well-being of outer island community members. Volunteers collaborate with a variety of government employees, including medical assistants, field nurses, island community workers, island project officers, and community development officers. They work directly with men, women, boys, and girls; with families and schools; and with women's, youth, church, and village welfare groups. Volunteers educate their communities on preventing common health problems and diseases, targeting such areas as smoking and alcohol abuse, diabetes, hypertension, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. They encourage healthy behavior, addressing issues of nutrition, exercise, clean water and sanitation, life skills, and reproductive health.

One Volunteer collaborated with the medical staff on her island of Beru to organize an island-wide HIV/AIDS awareness campaign during Global AIDS Week. The Volunteer and her partners formed a task force to coordinate all eight villages on the island to ensure island-wide coverage. Working closely with the Ministry of Health they gathered relevant resources and statistics and prepared and presented a series of comprehensive HIV/AIDS workshops to nearly 300 people.

"Volunteering with the Peace Corps in Kiribati is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The only thing that can match its uniqueness is the incredible hospitality of the people themselves."

Kiribati Volunteer
Education Sector

Children in Kiribati

Kyrgyz Republic

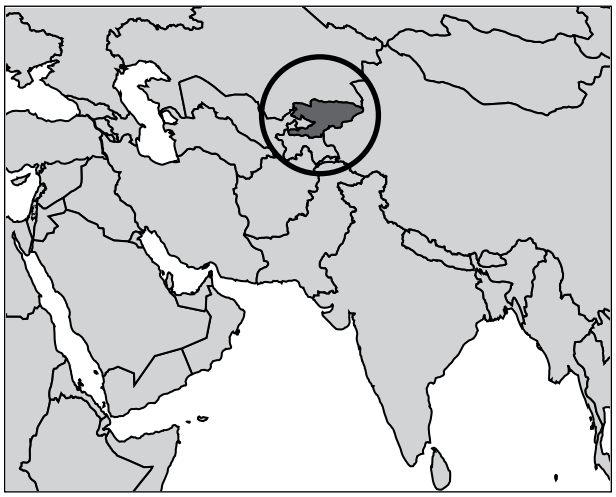
PROGRAM DATES	1993–2001 2002–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Bishkek
Population	5 million
Annual per capita income	$450
GDP growth	(-0.6%)
Foreign direct investment	$43 million
Adult illiteracy rate	1.3%
Infant mortality rate	58 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 99% Measles: 99%
Access to an improved water source	77%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.1%
Religions	Islam: 75% Russian Orthodoxy: 20% Other: 5%
Official languages	Kyrgyz Russian

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	100	110
Program funds ($000)	2,016	2,043



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Kyrgyz Republic declared its independence from the Soviet Union in August 1991. After parliamentary elections in 2005, which were widely viewed as fraudulent, the government was overthrown and a new president elected. Although the Kyrgyz Republic is viewed as one of the most democratic of the former Soviet republics, corruption continues to impede the country's development.

The collapse of the Soviet Union dealt a severe blow to the Kyrgyz economy. Between 1991 and 1995, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) shrank in half. Reforms to create a market economy that began in 1993 have started to improve the situation; however, GDP growth has averaged only five percent per year since 1996, with particular impact on the important agriculture and mining sectors. In 1998, the Kyrgyz Republic became the first central Asian republic to join the World Trade Organization, though it remains one of the poorest countries in the world.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The first Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in the Kyrgyz Republic in 1993. After a temporary suspension of the Peace Corps program following the events of September 11, 2001, the program reopened in 2002.

Since independence, the Kyrgyz Republic has demonstrated a commitment to participate fully in the global market. The government has been eager to assist in the difficult transition from a state-controlled economy to a market-based one. To promote sustainable development and poverty alleviation, a key area of focus for the Peace Corps program has been strengthening indigenous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The Kyrgyz Republic has placed a high priority on English education, and the government has requested assistance to increase English competency among secondary and university students and to improve Kyrgyz teachers' level of English competency and training.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Business Development

The business development project places Volunteers directly at the grassroots level. Volunteers help community-based NGOs become more sustainable, participatory, and effective. They help improve access to information at the local level and work with NGOs to develop effective networks and programs consistent with each organization's mission and community needs. These NGOs help communities develop sustainable rural tourism and handicraft projects, increase economic

opportunities for women, and assist small-scale farmers in marketing their goods.

One Volunteer, working with agricultural cooperatives to build organizational capacity and economic opportunities, conducted classes in management, project design, and implementation. To meet the development needs expressed by his community, the Volunteer arranged for experts on honey production and orchard management to give presentations. Additionally, the Volunteer produced a document on NGO management that the cooperatives can use for internal training.

Education

The education project helps students and English teachers improve their English language competency. Volunteers are assigned as English teachers to secondary schools in rural towns and villages and to institutes of higher education throughout the Kyrgyz Republic. Volunteers introduce communicative teaching methodologies and critical thinking skills. They also help enhance students' computer and Internet skills and develop libraries and resource centers. Volunteers have formed English clubs, helped their students participate in local debates, and worked with local English teachers to develop effective lesson plans. Improved English skills have helped both students and teachers win scholarships to study abroad.

One Volunteer helped organize a sports education summer camp with local community members. The camp provided community members an opportunity to see how to organize activities with very limited resources. The children learned a variety of games, including baseball, football, and freeze tag, and the informal environment encouraged them to practice their English in a fun way. The interaction with Volunteers also let the children learn more about Americans. The Volunteer also provided management training to community members who helped organize the event.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Health Volunteers work at the regional and grassroots level to provide basic health education, promote good sanitation and hygiene practices, and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Their activities include developing health campaigns; helping create health education materials that target adults, youth, and children; delivering campaigns to schoolchildren and community members; and helping communities take more responsibility for their own healthcare.

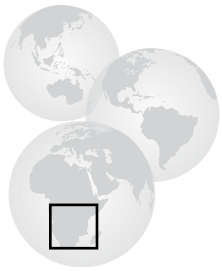
The health project increases awareness and understanding of healthy lifestyles and practices. By building the professional capacity of trained health educators, access is improved to health information, education, and community awareness-raising programs. The project also supports government and nongovernmental initiatives that promote healthier lifestyles and preventive health practices.

One health Volunteer initiated a health education project for pregnant women. Expectant mothers received information about nutrition during pregnancy and classes on how and what to cook for infants older than six months. The Volunteer also received a small grant to test community members for HIV and to pay for supplies for HIV/AIDS educational activities. She is currently developing resources for other Volunteers to use at camps, trainings, and seminars in their own communities.

"The greatest success I have had is hearing my students talking to each other in English. When I hear a student ask another student, 'Do we have homework?' it is very rewarding."

Kyrgyz Republic Volunteer
Education Sector

Lesotho



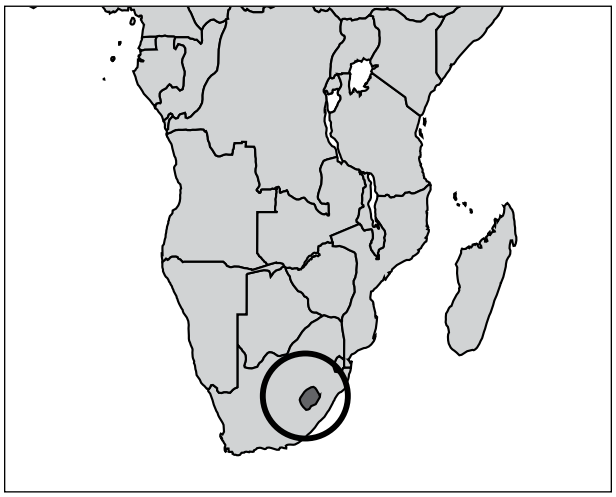
PROGRAM DATES	1967–present
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Capital	Maseru
Population	2 million
Annual per capita income	$950
GDP growth	1.2%
Foreign direct investment	$92 million
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 26% Female: 10%
Infant mortality rate	102 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 78% Measles: 70%
Access to an improved water source	79%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	28.9%
Religions	Christianity: 80% Hinduism Indigenous beliefs Islam
Official languages	English Sesotho

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	83	85
Program funds ($000)	2,497	2,540



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Lesotho became a British protectorate in 1868 after a series of territorial wars in the mid-19th century that cost the country much of its best agricultural land. It gained its independence in 1966, by which time it had been forced into a state of economic dependence on South Africa. While in the country's recent history there have been some periods of political transition, constitutional reforms have since restored stability. King Letsie III, who succeeded his father, Moshoeshoe II, remains the head of state. Parliamentary elections were held in May 2002 and February 2007. The government of Lesotho is confident that the country will remain politically stable.

Lesotho is a small, landlocked, mountainous country. Its economy is highly dependent on small-scale agriculture, livestock, remittances from miners employed in South Africa, and a rapidly growing apparel-assembly sector. Nearly half of all households live below the national poverty line. Recent poor harvests have required Lesotho to depend on food assistance and imports from South Africa. Lesotho has the world's third-highest HIV infection rate.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps was invited to work in Lesotho in 1967; since then, nearly 2,000 Volunteers have served in this southern African country. Peace Corps/Lesotho's primary program focus is on rural development. Volunteers serve in all 10 districts of the country, concentrating in the rural areas where 85 percent of the population resides. Volunteers work to strengthen the capacity of individuals to take control of their own lives by providing training in education and health and HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Education

Volunteers work as resource teachers in early childhood and primary education programs, and as secondary-education English teachers. Volunteer resource teachers work with the Ministry of Education and Training to upgrade teacher skills through teacher-training workshops, materials development, and by working one-on-one with teachers. Volunteers also work with their counterparts to integrate special education into the mainstream curriculum. Given the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the general population, Volunteers integrate HIV/AIDS age-appropriate messages into classroom sessions and after-school activities.

Volunteers provide classroom instruction in English language and literature at the secondary school level. During

fiscal year 2007, Volunteers taught English language and literature to approximately 3,600 boys and girls in 33 secondary and high schools. A group of Volunteers organized a series of debates at their schools and within their districts on HIV/AIDS-related topics. As a result, over 1,000 students improved their English vocabularies, critical thinking skills, and oral communication skills while promoting HIV/AIDS prevention messages.

One Volunteer worked with a youth group in his community to establish a youth-run library. With books donated from a nonprofit group, the youth are providing an important service to their community while learning business skills and gaining management experience.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers focus on preventing and mitigating the effects of HIV/AIDS, strengthening community-based organizations, promoting youth development and skills, and enhancing business promotion and economic development. Volunteers work at the village and district level to provide nutrition information and HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs.

Volunteers work to lessen the risk of HIV infection in youth. Volunteers train as peer educators those youth who are either in school or have completed their secondary education, but are currently unemployed. Volunteers also help local youth identify and implement small- and micro-business activities.

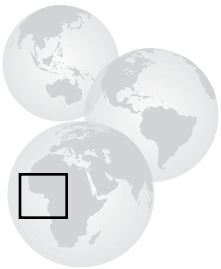
One Volunteer assisted a school youth organization in building a four-acre vegetable garden complete with irrigation and water-pumping systems. The produce from the garden has been used to improve village health and nutrition and any extra produce has been sold at a nearby market, providing extra income for the organization.

Volunteers work with local chiefs to assess the needs of orphans and vulnerable children in communities. They work with support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS to help establish sustainable income-generation activities for families affected by the pandemic and lessen the stigma of HIV/AIDS in communities. Volunteers also work with youth who are either in school or have completed their secondary education, but are currently unemployed, lessening their risk of HIV infection by training them as peer educators. These Volunteers also help local youth identify and implement small- and micro-business activities. Volunteers help organizations and groups mobilize resources and community support for needed food security and HIV/AIDS-mitigation programs. They help communities develop cultural tourism markets, such as guided horseback riding tours, and they provide technical assistance to producer groups on product diversification, quality control, and marketing.

"Throughout my primary and secondary school years I was taught English, mathematics and science by Peace Corps Volunteers. They were some of the best teachers I ever had and thanks to their teaching, I was able to go on to university and beyond."

Semano Sekatle
Minister of Public Service
Lesotho

Liberia



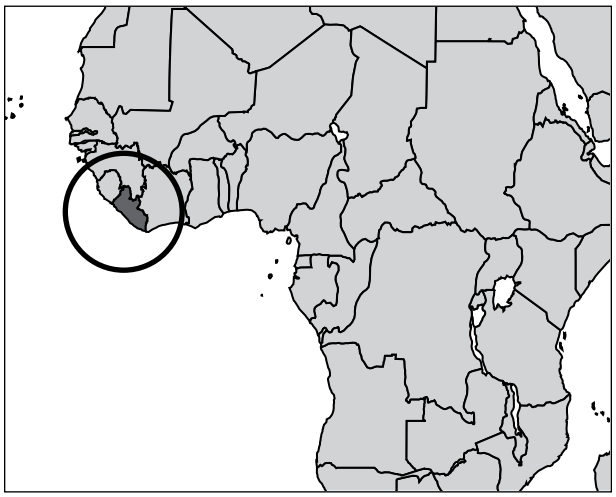
PROGRAM DATES	1962–1990 *Expected return 2008*
PROGRAM SECTORS	Education

Capital	Monrovia
Population	3.3 million
Annual per capita income	$120
GDP growth	5.3%
Foreign direct investment	$194 million
Adult illiteracy rate	80%
Infant mortality rate	157 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 87% Measles: 94%
Access to an improved water source	61%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religions	Christianity: 40% Animism: 40% Islam: 20%
Official language	English

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2008	FY 2009
Volunteers	18	18
Program funds ($000)	1,569	1,267



COUNTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Liberia, which means "land of the free," was founded in the early 1800s by officials of the American Colonization Society (ACS) as a settlement for freed slaves from the United States. The capital was originally named Christopolis but later changed to Monrovia, in honor of U.S. President James Monroe.

Between 1821 and 1847 the ACS resettled more than 10,000 African Americans and several thousand Africans from interdicted slave ships in Liberia. These settlers, who came to be called Americo-Liberians, declared independence from the ACS in 1847 and organized the Republic of Liberia.

Since its early years of existence, Liberia has faced a number of challenges stemming from tensions between Americo-Liberian settlers and indigenous Africans.

From independence in 1847, Americo-Liberian elite monopolized political power and restricted the voting rights of the indigenous population until April 12, 1980, when Samuel K. Doe, an indigenous leader, seized power in a coup.

Over time, the Doe government, made up of members of Doe's ethnic group, came to dominate political and military life which increased ethnic tensions and caused frequent hostilities.

In December 1989, a small band of rebels led by Charles Taylor entered Liberia in an effort to challenge the Doe government. From 1989 to 1996 Liberia was ensnared in a civil war that claimed the lives of more than 200,000 Liberians and displaced a million others into refugee camps in neighboring countries.

In July 1997, after years of fighting, rebel groups agreed to a special election. Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Party won by a large majority. For the next six years, the Taylor government did little to improve the lives of Liberians. Taylor's misrule led to the resumption of armed rebellion among his former adversaries. In 2003, after intense international pressure, Taylor resigned from office and was exiled to Nigeria. For the next two years a transitional government, created as part of the comprehensive peace agreement signed after Taylor's departure, governed Liberia.

In October 2005, presidential and legislative elections were held and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became Africa's first democratically elected female president. These elections were deemed the most free, fair, and peaceful in Liberia's history.

The political situation has remained stable since the 2005 elections and the government of Liberia has made positive strides aimed at political stability and economic recovery. President Sirleaf's government includes many experienced and technically competent senior officials, and consequently the public has much higher confidence in her administration than in any of its recent predecessors. Current government priorities include creating jobs, attracting investments, and providing education and other essential services for the Liberian people.

PROGRAM FOCUS

The Peace Corps originally entered Liberia in 1962, but closed the program in 1990 due to the outbreak of civil war. During the 27 years that the Peace Corps was in Liberia, over 4,400 Volunteers served in nearly every facet of Liberia's development efforts. Initially, Volunteers focused on education, but projects were expanded to include agriculture, forestry, and health.

The Peace Corps plans to reenter Liberia in the fourth quarter of FY 2008 with a team of Peace Corps Response Volunteers. Two additional teams of 18 are scheduled to follow in FY 2009.

Peace Corps Response, formerly known as the Crisis Corps, mobilizes returned Peace Corps Volunteers to provide short-term humanitarian assistance to countries worldwide. Peace Corps Response Volunteers have already served as Peace Corps Volunteers, so they come to their posts already in possession of the appropriate language, technical, and cross-cultural skills needed to make an immediate impact. Peace Corps Response Volunteers will work in the area of education. Program focuses will include teacher training, curriculum development, and classroom teaching.

Peace Corps Respose will re-enter Liberia in the summer of 2008 after a 18-year hiatus

"...the Liberian people are very thankful...They want the simple things in life; send their children to schools, have jobs, be able to give their families a square meal at the end of the day, be able to get around... We thank you for what you have done to put us on this path."

Liberian President Johnson-Sirleaf thanked President Bush during a meeting at the White House
February 2007