WORKING WITH SUPERVISORS AND COUNTERPARTS

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Working
With
Supervisors
and Counterparts

Peace Corps
2002

Acknowledgments

The Peace Corps has worked with host country nationals since its inception. In order to build local capacity, it is necessary for our partners to be brought into all aspects of Peace Corps work. The remaining materials in *Working With Supervisors and Counterparts* support the capacity-building framework by placing an emphasis on the value and opportunities of host national participation and by giving tips and tools for training design and handbook development.

The Peace Corps would like to acknowledge the contribution made to these materials by the people in the field who shared their many post resources for working with community partners.

The Peace Corps also acknowledges the following people who contributed to the training materials: Andrew Baird, Raquel Aronhime, Laurette Bennhold-Samaan, Judee Blohm, Kate Raftery, and Paula Bilinsky for their reviews and advice; Elizabeth MacDonald for research and writing; Michael Yoka for rewrites and editing; and Marcy Garland for desktop publishing, in collaboration with Shari Howe, technical training/training management specialist, Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, Peace Corps/Washington.
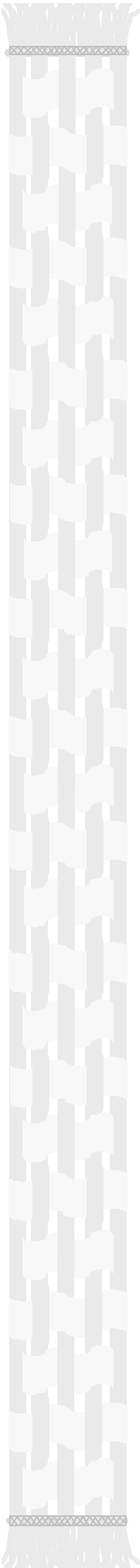
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Introduction

The Peace Corps is committed to implementing projects that promote sustainable development. The most significant way it achieves sustainable development is by building the capacity of community members to achieve the changes they feel are the most important for the quality of their lives.

The Peace Corps begins by designing a country program strategy at each post. This is based on the development needs and priorities at the local level first and then on national policies. Part of the strategy is to identify host country individuals who can serve as the voice of the people and become partners in the development process.

> " *How can persons of one world effectively plan and manage activities for people of the other without understanding them on their own terms? There is often an assumption among development professionals that a good development project sells itself. The project is seen to have viability apart from the people for whom it is intended. To be successful a project should be designed and executed with significant participation of the beneficiaries at each step of the way. Effective understanding of these people is achieved by listening to them. This understanding is the basis for the kind of communication between people and managers which underlies both the participation of the community and the success of the project.* "
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> Reprinted with permission from Lawrence Salmen, *Listen to the People, Participant-Observer Evaluation of Development Projects,* pages 3, 49-50. Oxford University Press, 1987.

Therefore Peace Corps programmers, as they design and implement specific country projects, need to be aware of the characteristics of successful participatory development. The most important characteristic of participatory development is identifying and including partners as participants in the process. As Peace Corps and host country nationals work together, an interdependent relationship is built. Ultimately, all of those involved realize that they need each other and that all will benefit from a collective and collaborative effort. Partners realize that the goals and objectives of projects are in their own best interest and that the effort will help to improve their situation or the quality of their lives. Accordingly, they expect to share in the responsibility for and decision-making activities of the project. If engaged from the start, partners can be active participants in as many phases of the project(s) as possible.

Partners support the programming team at one level and the Volunteer at another. A programming partner may be someone from a ministry, the head of a nongovernmental organization (NGO), a Supervisor of Volunteers, or a selected Volunteer Counterpart who

works with program managers. The partner is a colleague or peer of the programmer who may serve on a post project advisory board or become involved in many programming and training efforts with the programmer. On the other hand, a Volunteer's partner is someone identified as a Supervisor or Counterpart of that Volunteer. Such partners are key to capacity building at the community project level because they work in activities directly with the Volunteer. Whatever form a partner takes, the key is participation. A guiding principle of the Peace Corps' participatory philosophy is:

> " *If you are working alone,*
> *you are not doing development!* "

What does this mean for the Peace Corps and for programmers, Volunteers, their Supervisors and Counterparts? Basically, it indicates that the Peace Corps must find ways and means of bringing Supervisors and Counterparts into every aspect of development work. Valuing their participation entail ongoing opportunities to include them in all programming, training, and evaluation efforts. It is a partnership that has mutual benefits. When programmers, Volunteers, Supervisors, Counterparts, and communities as a whole work together, Peace Corps projects and each country program are enhanced.

About This Manual

This manual combines best practices for involvement of Supervisors and Counterparts in programming, training, and Volunteer activities from the three regions of the Peace Corps. The intent of the manual is to offer ideas for participatory development to supplement the already fine work being done with partners at posts. This manual will help associate Peace Corps directors (APCDs), program managers, programming and training officers (PTOs), and training staff identify, learn from, train, and support their Counterparts and Supervisors.

Note that the manual often refers to APCDs and program managers as programmers and refers to Supervisors and Counterparts as community partners.

The manual is divided into three sections:

Section 1. Working With Supervisors and Counterparts—an overview of who our community partners are and why they are valued, and a timeline of opportunities for involving them throughout the Volunteer cycle.

Section 2. Developing a Supervisor and Counterpart Workshop—the "core" components derived from field practices for a one-day Supervisor/Counterpart training, including an agenda and session plans.

Section 3. A Supervisor/Counterpart Model Handbook—a template that can be customized as a resource for particular Supervisors and Counterparts.

Importance of Working With Partners in Capacity Building

Who Are Counterparts and Supervisors?

Both Counterparts and Supervisors work closely with program managers and Volunteers. They are aware of the local environment, culture, and history, and the effect of these factors on project development. With this awareness, they provide guidance and assistance to Volunteers working with communities and stakeholders on project activities. This professional and cross-cultural guidance can help increase the long-term positive impact of the project activities in making sure that they are culturally, politically, and economically appropriate and sustainable.

Counterparts

Though there are similarities between Counterparts and Supervisors, they usually are different people in different roles. Counterparts fulfill the capacity-building aspect of the Volunteers' work. Volunteers and Counterparts share their knowledge, skills, and attitudes with each other. Counterparts come from a network of people and groups that Volunteers connect with through their jobs, community activities, or individual activities. They may be professional colleagues, members of organizations or committees, or community members. These people may or may not have official jobs or titles—it is their meaningful connection with the Volunteer that makes them viable Counterparts. Volunteers may have more than one Counterpart, and, over time, Volunteers' Counter-parts may change. This change is common and normal. Counterparts are in many ways a reflection of the communities in which Volunteers serve and of the changes that occur within these communities.

Supervisors

A Supervisor is a person in a leadership capacity in the host country organization or agency that is the primary sponsor of the Volunteer's site assignments and projects. This is the person who gives structure to the Volunteer's assignment and opportunities for feedback. The Supervisor is sometimes considered the Volunteer's "boss," as in the case of a principal at a school or the director of an NGO. The Supervisor usually comes from within the formal sponsor organization that the Volunteer has been assigned to: farmer associations, parent-teacher associations, cooperatives, chambers of commerce, community organizations, local, regional, or national non-governmental service organizations, or local, regional, or national government agencies or ministries.

The function of the Supervisor is to oversee the Volunteer's work. A Supervisor may or may not be a Counterpart for the Volunteer, depending upon the situation. Volunteers work on their reports with their Supervisors, request feedback, make requests for leaves of absence, and generally keep their Supervisors informed of their activities.

A Supervisor can have many roles, depending upon how each country post is arranged. Following are some of these roles:

Possible Supervisor Roles

☐ To provide structure, advice, and guidance for the Volunteer's placement

☐ To reinforce the link between Peace Corps projects and the Volunteer assignment

☐ To understand Peace Corps policy and procedures

☐ To introduce the Volunteer to the community and to Counterpart(s)

☐ To provide feedback on safety and security issues

☐ To assist in finding housing, if possible

☐ To provide a job framework and work activities for the Volunteer

☐ To assist the Volunteer in identifying critical Counterparts

☐ To design work plans with the Volunteer

☐ To work with the Volunteer on reports

☐ To assist the Volunteer in formalizing leaves of absence

☐ To assess job performance with the Volunteer

☐ To give the Volunteer feedback on work and cultural activities

☐ To work with the Volunteer on meeting personal and professional goals

☐ To partner with the Volunteer in developing community projects

☐ To collaborate with program managers and other program and training staff on project and training needs

☐ To provide support in emergencies

☐ To provide advice and training for the Peace Corps

In a somewhat different function, Counterparts are those people who work with Volunteers and jointly learn through experience how to do something new within the local cultural context with enough competence and confidence to transfer their learning (in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes) to others. They often carry on activities after a Volunteer has left an assignment. They may have one or many of the following roles as they work with Volunteers:

Possible Counterpart Roles

☐ To serve as a partner in development

☐ To develop and implement programs and projects with the Volunteer

☐ To contribute to the sustainability of a program or project

☐ To be a cultural informant

☐ To ensure that local needs are recognized and met

☐ To act as a resource for people and things

☐ To provide feedback on safety and security issues

☐ To exchange technical skills

☐ To share their knowledge, skills, and attitudes with others in their communities

☐ To continue to *build local capacity* after the Volunteer has left
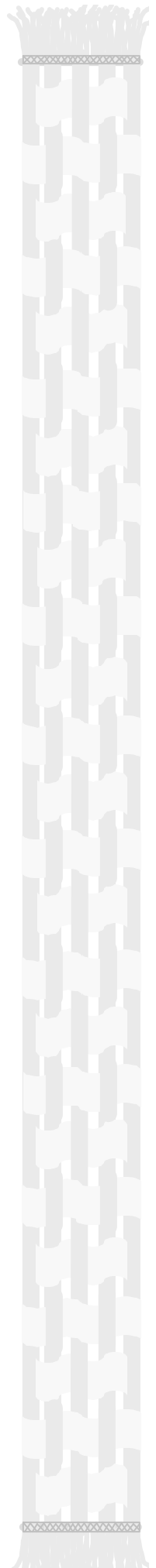
A variety of terms are used for partners in the Peace Corps, some of which are listed below.

Terms used for Counterparts

Term	Interpretation
Counterpart	Historically a commonly used, generic term for someone who works with the Volunteer
Homologue	The French word for "Counterpart." Often used in African posts
First contact, or initial contact person	Someone identified by the project manager as being the first person that the Volunteer establishes contact with. This person is responsible for introducing the Volunteer around the community and helping the Volunteer get settled. The Volunteer can choose whether or not to keep this person as a Counterpart
Community educator or mentor	Someone identified by the project manager responsible for introducing the Volunteer to the community
Community member	Someone who is likely to work with the Volunteer as a beneficiary of project activities
Community partner, community Counterpart	Someone who works with the Volunteer on community projects
Formal Counterpart	Someone who is designated by the project manager or sponsoring organization to work with the Volunteer as his/her "official" Counterpart. This person probably works for the same organization as the Volunteer and is quite familiar with the Volunteer's job responsibilities
Informal Counterpart	Someone the Volunteer identifies as a Counterpart whom he/she wants to work with. This person can come from any level of the Volunteer's activities
Advisor	Someone identified by the project manager to serve on an as-needed basis as an advisor for the Volunteer
Cultural informant or "coach"	Someone identified by the project manager responsible for introducing the Volunteer to the community and offering guidance and assistance for cross-cultural issues that arise

Note that Supervisors often act as Counterparts for Volunteers.

What Does the Term Capacity Building Mean to the Peace Corps and Its Partners?

The Peace Corps works within a human capacity-building framework where the focus of work is on the development of people, not things—assisting people to develop the capacity to improve their own lives according to their own decisions. This capacity building needs to happen at a number of different levels. Counterparts and Supervisors are instrumental in helping to ensure that sustainable development is happening at all levels of the capacity-building framework.

The Four Levels of Capacity Building

Individual members of the community, project participants

They could be the students in a classroom, farmers in a cooperative, or clients served by an NGO. Building capacities at this level is usually a major focus of the Volunteer. Much of the work Volunteers do with their Counterparts supports capacity building at an individual level as, together, they initiate community activities.

Professionals, service providers

These could be teachers in a school, leaders of an NGO, or managers of a farmers' cooperative. While each Volunteer has an identified community partner who may or may not be a service provider, there are others at the same level of leadership as Volunteers who provide services to individual members of the community. Strengthening capacities at this level helps ensure local leadership for continuing activities into the future. Capacity-building activities might include workshops, working directly with Counterparts, and possibly Supervisors, and modeling improved methods, trainings, or support in a community activity.

Communities

These include the village or neighborhood in which the Volunteer lives or the area served by the project in which the Volunteer is working. Reaching out into communities and building capacities with activities such as creating a community health committee, organizing a parent teacher association, or helping organize an Earth Day cleanup campaign broaden the base of participation and ensure continuity. Partners are very involved in this area of capacity building with programmers and Volunteers.

Organizations

The school, NGO, and farmers' cooperative where the Volunteer is placed are examples. Strengthening organizational capacities, such as developing management skills within an NGO, working with teachers to develop organizational skills and materials for a school, or helping health workers develop a record-keeping system for a clinic, helps root other activities in an ongoing, functioning, and supportive environment. Work with Supervisors and Counterparts can be key to the capacity-building efforts of organizations

Supervisor and Counterpart contributions increase the chances that capacity will be built and development will be sustainable. As these results are achieved, Volunteers feel a greater degree of satisfaction about their years of service. Further, the collaborative relationship among Volunteers, Supervisors, and Counterparts builds new skills in the Volunteers and enhances the benefits of the Peace Corps experience on a personal level.

Who mentors whom?

A male Volunteer was assigned to a secondary school in Leninogorsk, eastern Kazakhstan. Having a degree in wildlife biology, he took a secondary project at the West Altay Botanical Garden. His colleague there was a famous 65-year-old botanist Yuriy Androvich, who, from the Volunteer's words, not only gave him valuable lessons on West Altay flora but also lessons about life. The Volunteer helped the local botanist conduct biological site surveys and collect samples of local flora for classification. He helped classify and describe a new plant that Yuriy named after him.

Peace Corps/Kazakhstan

For more information on the capacity building framework refer to the *Programming and Training Booklet 1: The Basics of the Peace Corps Staff and Host Country Agency Partners* (ICE No. T0113).

What Are the Mutual Benefits of Working Together?

Project goals and objectives are driven by country and community needs. A Volunteer often acts as a change agent in his/her community, but change cannot be sustainable if it is not "owned" by the community and community partners. Including Supervisors and Counterparts in Peace Corps activities and trainings and including other programming partners in Peace Corps activities ensures that all members are engaged in the process for mutually designed benefit. The following are four categories of potential benefits to be derived from working together.

**Benefits for
Peace Corps and Host Country**

- Sustainable development through capacity building

- More productive and better adjusted Volunteer development workers

- Projects responsive to country and community needs

- Enhanced partnerships with host country

Benefits for Program Managers

- Improved site development

- Improved understanding of local and regional issues affecting a project

- Improved relationships with program managers' Counterparts

- Insight into the cross-cultural relationships between host country nationals and Volunteers

- Better networking opportunities

- Less time spent supporting Volunteers

- Better Volunteer training with host country nationals

- Enhanced evaluations of and revisions to projects

Benefits for Volunteers

- Potential for more rapid relationships with co-workers and community members

- Improved support network

- Increased communication among local contributors to a project

- Enhanced understanding of local and regional issues affecting a project

- Résumé-building opportunities

- Multicultural teamwork

- Project development and management skills

- Organizational skills development

- Networking opportunities provided through regional cluster meetings

- Local structure and feedback for assignments

- Opportunities for learning from host country nationals

- Opportunity for sustainability of work

- "Making a difference" through projects that transform communities and improve quality of life.

**Benefits for
Counterparts and Supervisors**

- Enhanced skills learned in their field of interest

- Recognized professional development

- Increased professional contact with colleagues in other parts of the country

- Increased opportunities for networking

- Enhanced understanding of local and regional issues affecting a project

- Résumé-building opportunities

- Multicultural teamwork with Volunteers and the Peace Corps

- Project development and management skills

- Organizational skills development

- Community transformation; better quality of life
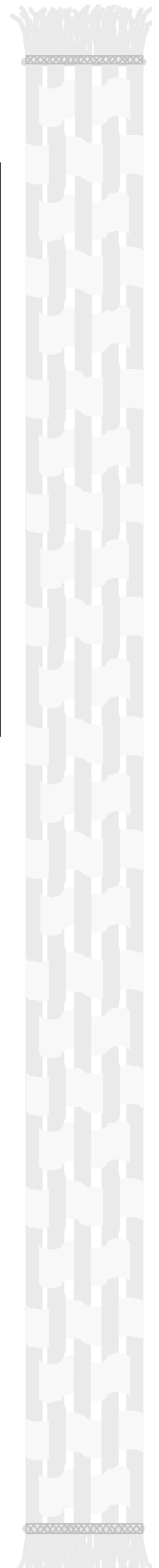
Timeline for a Two-Year Involvement

The previous section discussed the basics of what Supervisors and Counterparts are and why they are important. The following two sections provide ideas and suggestions on how to integrate Counterparts and Supervisors in all stages of the programming and training cycle — from Volunteer activity descriptions (VADs) to close of service (COS) conferences. The sections that follow illustrate regular events in the programming cycle followed by regular events in the training cycle. Each event provides an opportunity for participation, so each event is individually addressed in these sections.

The strategies and ideas contained herein have been developed and written by staff members in the field and headquarters using examples and documents from over 20 countries. They are recommended but not mandatory.

Programming

Programming timeline showing (top row): Project Plan Development/Review, Project Advisory Committee, QTRs, VADs, Welcome Packet, Site Development, PST, Site Placement, Introducing Volunteers to Communities, M&E, Volunteer Reports, Volunteer Support, Project Manager Site Visits, Sector & Regional Meetings, Project Status Reports, IPBS, Project Evaluation Opportunities, COS Conference.

Training timeline showing (bottom row): Training Advisory Committee, Safety Committee, Pre-planning of PST, Training of Trainers, PST, Trainee Site Visits, Supervisor/ Counterpart Workshop, M&E, IST, PDM Workshop, COS Conference.

Project Plan Development or Project Review

Developing the Peace Corps project in partnership with host country agencies reflects critical collaboration from the start. The development of purpose, goals, and objectives of the project plan in collaboration with Supervisors and Counterparts provides opportunities to discuss and understand more accurately the concerns and needs of stakeholders, and creates a greater commitment to the project. Here are some ideas on how to increase Counterpart and Supervisor input to the project plan.

- Discuss the project plan during site development and give all Counterparts and Supervisors a copy.

- When Volunteers work with their Counterparts or Supervisors on Volunteer progress reports or during site visits, have them respond to questions about how their work is contributing to the project's goals and objectives.

- During In-Service Trainings (ISTs), discuss overall progress toward the goals and objectives of the project.

- Hold a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting with Supervisor and Counterpart participation at least once per year as part of the Project Status Report (PSR) review process.

For more detailed information about project reviews and project plan development, see *Programming and Training Booklet 2: How to Design or Revise a Project* (ICE No. T0114).

Project Advisory Committee

Some posts set up design teams for supporting project development and implementation called Project Advisory Committees. This committee shares responsibility for the researching, designing, or revising of the project and assessing its success in order to develop, in a partnership, credible, realistic, and responsive projects and training programs. Members of this team should ideally include the program manager's Counterpart, some Volunteers' Counterparts or Supervisors, a representative from the ministry or the sponsoring organization, Volunteers and representatives from other stakeholder organizations, and so on. A PAC can also be used as an advisory body to the country director, to help the Peace Corps develop its overall programs, and to review the validity and focus of current projects and training.

What is an Advisory Committee?

It is the "voice of the people" that is used to assist organizations or programs in their own development and evaluation.

For Peace Corps programs it is the participatory voice of interested and involved host country nationals in developing, in a partnership, credible, realistic, and responsive projects and training programs.

Peace Corps/Jamaica

Quarterly Trainee Request

The Quarterly Trainee Request (QTR) is the Volunteer request process. Volunteer candidates are categorized by assignment area skill descriptions. Age, gender, skill levels, and availability all need to be considered when identifying what type of Volunteer would work best with the Counterparts and Supervisors in a project.

Counterparts and Supervisors should have input as to what types of Volunteers they think would be best for the project. Solicit their input informally during site visits or more formally during PAC meetings, ISTs, regional meetings, and training task analysis exercises.

Volunteer Assignment Description

The Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD) should present in a realistic fashion the job and the lifestyle that the Volunteer can expect to lead. It is important to describe the roles of the Supervisors and Counterparts so that Volunteers form accurate expectations of work and community life. Supervisors and Counterparts can also offer valuable assistance in developing and refining VADs in order to give realistic descriptions of Volunteer work and the typical community life Volunteers will have.

Sample VAD

Your role will be to advise your Counterparts and to assist them in accomplishing their own goals and objectives. Your job will be to share your experiences and ideas, transferring the skills and knowledge you have. You will work in close cooperation with your Slovak Counterparts; however, you may be expected to take the initiative in developing independent projects while at the same time including your colleagues in the process. Your different perspective will help you and your Slovak Counterparts develop new solutions and techniques for managing the development of the organization.

You may be frustrated by not being able to "just do it." Your role is to listen, observe, train, advise, consult, and coach. Your expertise and value lie in your ability to transfer your knowledge, to coach Counterparts and introduce them to innovative and creative approaches to problem solving; however, the real challenge will come in implementing these new ideas. And the real sense of accomplishment will come when these ideas actually become a part of your colleagues' way of thinking.

Peace Corps/Slovakia VAD,
NGO Environment Project

Welcome Packet

As with the VAD, a welcome packet is an early opportunity to introduce invitees to the importance of collaborating with the Counterpart and Supervisor. Have Counterparts write about their work with the Volunteer and include this in the welcome packet. This message can help Volunteers to start thinking about their work in terms of the capacity-building framework, and to understand the defining element of Counterpart relationships in influencing the role of the Volunteer and providing support to the Volunteer.

Also, engage community partners in the development of the sections of the welcome packet that focus on information about the country, culture, and language in order to give accurate and meaningful information to invitees.

Site Development

During site development visits you will be communicating the goals of the Peace Corps and the project to ensure that professional and personal support will be available to the new Volunteer. During these visits the host country agency could play an active role. Have a project Counterpart(s) assist you in identifying potential sites and accompany you on your site visits, when possible. The more involved project Counterparts are in the process of site development, the more accurate site development will be. Added benefits of their involvement are the increased sharing of information about the Peace Corps program and projects, and networking opportunities that are often not available.

Spending time during site development with potential Supervisors and Counterparts to educate them on the role of the Volunteer in communities and the Peace Corps' expectations of their support role will often enhance the experience of the new Volunteer from the beginning of his/her placement.

See *Programming and Training Booklet 5: How to Implement a Project* (ICE No. T0117) for more information about site development.

Site Placement

Each post handles the method and timing of site placement differently. No matter how site placements are done, Counterparts and Supervisors can assist. Below are suggestions for increasing Counterpart input into site assignment decisions.

- ✓ Consider using your Training Advisory Committee (with the training team) to review and assist in placing certain types of Volunteers.

- ✓ Invite Counterparts and Supervisors at the different sites to express their opinions and make suggestions about the type of Volunteer they think will be the most successful at their site.

- ✓ Invite the Counterpart trainers (during Pre-Service Training) to participate in the site placement decision process.

- ✓ Collect and consider the concrete feedback from Supervisors and Counterparts received following regular site visits if the site will be used again.

- ✓ Gather and consider feedback from Supervisors and Counterparts after Trainee site visits held during Pre-Service Training (PST).

Additional considerations need to include interest and personality issues (such as the amount of support and guidance the Volunteer may need, the amount of support the Counterpart and Supervisor will likely be able to provide, special interests, and so on) as well as the skill level of the Volunteer and the needs of the site.

One of the Trainees expressed a strong interest in history and anthropology. This interest was a good match for one of the sites, whose school director Supervisor also had a strong interest in history. That particular site was located near the birthplace of Genghis Khan and as yet undocumented ancient stone carvings. The Volunteer, during his service, worked with his Supervisor to organize student field trips to study and document these historic places.

Peace Corps/Mongolia

Introducing Volunteers to Communities

Community entry can be one of the most difficult obstacles a Volunteer faces. One of the most important roles that a Supervisor or Counterpart plays is that of introducing the Volunteer to his/her new community. This process begins when the Trainee first visits the community during PST and continues during the first months of Volunteer placement.

The following are ideas for community entry:

- Emphasize the challenges during PST Supervisor/Counterpart workshops that a Volunteer faces with language and culture upon initial entry into a community.

- Emphasize at workshops the importance of initial introductions and entry activities that community partners can be a part of.

- Share ideas for talking points at PST workshops when introducing Volunteers to the communities.

- Give Volunteers and Supervisors other skills for shared community entry such as opportunities to practice community entry talks during PST.

- Have Trainees and their Supervisors/Counterparts discuss community entry plans during PST workshops that include contacts with local authorities and verification of emergency contact information.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Assessment is the process of looking at what is done in a project, how it is done, and its results. M&E, like other aspects of project planning and implementation, should include Supervisors and Counterparts. Advantages of including Counterparts and Supervisors in M&E include:

➢ more relevant and better quality information

➢ results used by more stakeholders

➢ greater ownership of the project by partic ipants

➢ participants' development of M&E skills

Below are some suggestions on how to incorporate Counterpart/Supervisory capacity building and collaboration into monitoring and evaluation activities.

1. Indicators are the measures of progress that show whether the desired achievements or changes are resulting from implementation of the project plan. Meet with a representative group of Counterparts and Supervisors to develop quantitative and quailtative indicators that will show the level of success of community development efforts.

2. During all monitoring and evaluation activities, involve the Supervisors and Counterparts in the collection of information on how the project is impacting men, women, girls, and boys. In the process of completing the monitoring or evaluation instruments, Volunteers and their Counterparts will learn about the needs of different constituents and the impact their activities have on them.

3. Include information about Counterparts and Supervisors impacted by the project, being sure to sort the information by sex so that baseline data that looks at similarities and differences between men and women can be gathered.

Involving Supervisors and Counterparts in the design of monitoring and evaluation systems, for example in designing data collection instruments, will give them an opportunity to develop important project management skills.

Through monitoring and evaluation, questions are asked and information shared that can lead to enhanced Counterpart/Supervisor collaboration. Useful references on M&E are the *Programming and Training Booklet 4: How to Assess a Project* (ICE No. T0116) and *Participatory Program Evaluation* (ICE No. R0094).

Volunteer Reports

Volunteers are required to complete progress reports on their activities, and submit these reports to their Supervisors and programmers. Many posts have Volunteers develop a

preliminary action plan with their Counterpart and Supervisor during a Counterpart/ Supervisor workshop. In such cases, the progress report is a natural extension of the action plan, reporting on items that have been accomplished, are in progress, and are pending.

There are several ways to include Counterpart and Supervisor input in the Volunteer reports.

- As mentioned, have Volunteers develop an action plan in collaboration with their Counterpart and Supervisor at the beginning of their work.

- Have the Supervisor and Counterpart meet with the Volunteer periodically to review their work. Include on the Volunteer report form focused questions about progress made toward the project's goals and objectives.

- Have the Volunteer and Counterpart develop their report together.

- During the programmer's site visits, review the Volunteer reports with the Supervisor, Volunteer, and Counterpart.

- Together discuss Volunteer and Supervisor/Counterpart training and make suggestions in the report(s) on the PST and other trainings needed for enhanced performance by their team.

- Build into the report form questions that address the quality and quantity of collaboration between Volunteers and Counterparts for project and training effectiveness.

Sample Volunteer reports can be found in ***Programming and Training Booklet 4: How to Assess a Project*** (ICE No. T0116).

We revised the quarterly report form to include having Volunteers record their "capacity transfer" activities. Providing a standardized means of recording "capacity transfer" has reemphasized the central role this activity has in the project. This past year a spreadsheet was used to record activities reported by Volunteers in their quarterly reports. Summaries, reported back to the Volunteers, were well received, and proved to be a powerful stimulus. We ask Volunteers and their Counterparts to develop a site study, which they present at IST. This stresses the importance of doing a site study and reemphasizes the importance of capacity building.

Peace Corps/Guinea, PSR,
Public Health/Community Development Project

Volunteer Support

The primary responsibility for Volunteer support falls upon the program manager and program team. However, Supervisors and Counterparts can play a major role, too. Program managers who emphasize open and continuing support by Supervisors and Counterparts to Volunteers find that Volunteers require less program support as they form a sense of trust and comfort in the relationship they have with their community partners. This relationship begins during the first PST contact meeting at Supervisor/Counterpart workshops or during a Trainee site visit and continues throughout the Volunteer cycle.

It is important to recognize that Supervisors and Counterparts may not always be comfortable in this support role. The Peace Corps can provide guidance and skill building for support in the Supervisor/Counterpart workshops.

Program Manager Site Visits

Program managers should conduct site visits one or more times per year to see Volunteers at their sites, observe their work in progress, and meet with their Counterparts and Supervisors. These important visits endorse Volunteers' work and community commitment activities.

Quality site visits are planned in conjunction with the Supervisors, Counterparts, and Volunteers. Participation of everyone involved is also key during the site visit itself. Although posts may differ in their site visit method, it is important that everyone involved has a voice during these visits, that all parties feel validated and have a sense that their opinions are recognized. For excellent information on site visits, see the ***Programming and Training Booklet 5: How to Implement a Project*** (ICE No. T0117).

Sector and Regional Meetings

You may have regional or country-wide sector meetings to review Volunteer activities and progress made on project plans. Counterparts should be invited to such meetings to contribute to the discussion and to facilitate networking within and across sectors. Some posts intentionally cluster and integrate Volunteers from different projects. Invite Counterparts to these meetings to increase their understanding of how projects are going or how projects complement each other and to encourage networking across different projects. This may be the only time Volunteers' partners have to network with their peers. It is wise to build in time for training and evaluation activities as well.

Project Status Reports (and Training Status Reports)

Although monitoring and evaluation activities are ongoing parts of the project, the Project Status Reports (PSRs) and the Training Status Reports (TSRs) offer opportunities for posts to reflect on partnership collaboration and capacity building within each project and throughout the total country program. This is also a wonderful opportunity to include Supervisors and Counterparts in a participatory process of developing the PSRs/TSRs.

Hold a Project Advisory Committee meeting, in which Supervisors and Counterparts participate, to review the project and identify examples of successful capacity building from the Counterparts' perspective. You can also bring together a Training Advisory Committee (TAC) to review training and identify best practices and lessons learned from the year's training events from the Counterparts' perspective. This is an excellent time to arrange a

retreat, focus group discussions, or all-day committee meetings related to the PSR/TSR activity.

Extract input from your site visit forms, your Volunteer reports, and other documents that have extensive Supervisor and Counterpart input that feeds directly into the PSR process.

Refer to the ***Programming and Training Booklet 5: How to Implement a Project*** (ICE No. T0117) for more information on the review process.

Integrated Programming and Budget System (IPBS) Cycle

Like the PSRs and the TSRs, the annual Integrated Programming and Budget System (IPBS) review offers another opportunity for Counterpart and Supervisor input. This planning and documentation tool describes how a Peace Corps post plans for and identifies resources to implement the overall goals of the post Peace Corps program. Some posts utilize project Counterparts at the program level to review and have input into the IPBS cycle for the year. Explore ways for Counterparts and Supervisors to contribute to this process, either at a one-day meeting or through other means.

Project Evaluation

Posts often do impact studies prior to the end of a project to assess what impact the project has had over its duration. Involve Counterparts and Supervisors in designing surveys, collecting data, and getting their input and perspectives. Use your Project Advisory Committee in the process. Also a post may decide to do occasional project assessments to determine how the project is progressing. Such interventions represent excellent opportunities for involving Counterparts and Supervisors. They are also an opportunity for broader participation with community stakeholders.

See more information in the ***Programming and Training Booklet 5: How to Implement a Project*** (ICE No. T0117).

Training

A timeline diagram with two parallel tracks labeled "Programming" and "Training".

Programming track markers (top labels): Project Plan Development/Review, Project Advisory Committee, QTRs, VADs, Welcome Packet, Site Development, PST, Site Placement, Introducing Volunteers to Communities, M&E, Volunteer Reports, Volunteer Support, Project Manager Site Visits, Sector & Regional Meetings, Project Status Reports, IPBS, Project Evaluation Opportunities, COS Conference

Training track markers (bottom labels): Training Advisory Committee, Safety Committee, Pre-planning of PST, Training of Trainers, PST, Trainee Site Visits, Supervisor/Counterpart Workshop, M&E, IST, PDM Workshop, COS Conference

Training Advisory Committee

Creating a Training Advisory Committee (TAC) that includes Counterparts and Supervisors will strengthen your training. The TAC can be used to review and develop the training's competencies by looking at the Volunteers' tasks and activities in task analysis exercises, by making sure that the competencies are relevant and reflect the real needs of the project, and by assessing the impact of the training.

This committee can be involved in reviewing training reports, participating in site visits, reviewing Volunteer reports, conducting focus groups with Trainees, Volunteers, and stakeholders, and reviewing, updating, and developing Trainee competencies.

Safety Committee

Peace Corps training incorporates personal safety as one of its primary components. Counterparts and Supervisors can be key persons in assisting with Volunteer safety and security. They can become members of a safety committee or participate in a less formal way. Because Supervisors are familiar with the communities where Volunteers work, the nature of their work, and how their communities function, they can advise Volunteers on security related to housing, transportation, alcohol consumption, emergency procedures in case of theft or personal attacks, harassment, gender-related safety concerns, and so on. They can provide useful feedback on whether the Volunteer safety training has appropriate and

useful content. Their participation in safety for Volunteers can begin as early as initial PST Trainee site visits and as a point of discussion during PST Supervisor/Counterpart workshops.

Pre-planning for the Pre-Service Training

Many posts are developing more experientially based PSTs, creating environments that help Volunteers experience the reality of how they will work and live. To do this, many posts have adopted a community-based training (CBT) model. The success of all training models, especially the CBT model, depends on the integration of Counterparts. In fact, Counterpart and Supervisor input into the pre-planning activities of training is crucial.

The Counterparts provide key information and a perspective during training on the context Volunteers will work in. This participation can take the form of hosting training staff prior to the beginning of training, attending a pre-planning training retreat, assisting in the task analysis and the defining of training competencies, assisting in the selection of training sites, and so on.

Training of Trainers

The Training of Trainers (TOT) usually occurs prior to PST, although many posts now have weekly TOTs when implementing the CBT model. Other posts have mini-TOTs between CBT cycles. No matter the design, the trainers are brought together to plan for and practice skills for PST and other trainings. Many posts use Supervisors and Counterparts as an integral part of this training. They are familiar with the project, have the skills that the Trainees need to be trained in, and already have experience bridging two cultures and addressing and working with cross-cultural communication issues. Counterparts and Supervisors are excellent resources during the TOT, helping PST trainers understand the issues that will be necessary to address with the new Trainees. The TOT presents an excellent opportunity for discussing cross-cultural aspects of working with and supporting Volunteers, and in defining strategies for incorporating safety and security into other training components.

Pre-Service Training

Getting and keeping host country national trainers is a challenge for Peace Corps training. Besides serving as excellent resources in training, Counterparts and Supervisors can become excellent technical and language/cross-cultural trainers. They may be able to assist with and participate in Peace Corps trainings in a variety of ways.

Possible Counterpart Involvement in Training

☐ If available, receive Trainees and trainers when they arrive and introduce them to the training community

☐ Act as a coach and cultural informant as a training Counterpart while Trainees develop and attend model schools or do community projects

☐ Serve on training panels, attend group sessions, and give training presentations

☐ Become a language/cross-cultural or technical trainer

☐ Assist Trainees as mentors in school-based practicums or practice teaching

☐ Identify training site safety issues and cultural norms
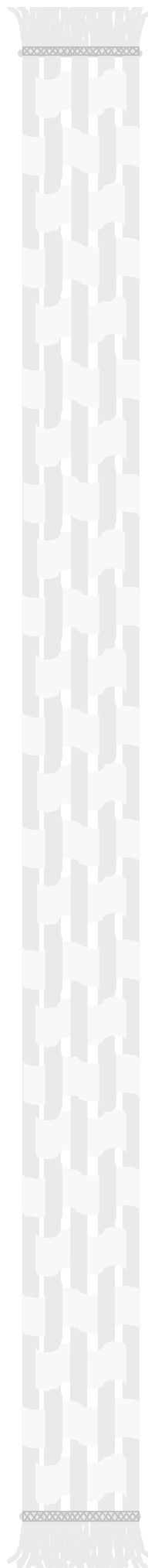
Supervisor and Counterpart Workshop

One of the most focused Supervisor and Counterpart activities is a Supervisor/Counterpart workshop. The event takes many forms at different posts, traditionally running from one to three days. Some posts hold this workshop immediately before swearing in, and have the Trainees return to post escorted by their Counterpart and Supervisor. Other posts prefer to have this workshop later when the Volunteers are more established in their sites.

The purpose of this workshop is to help Counterparts, Supervisors, and Volunteers establish positive working relationships. Workshops begin the process of building trust and confidence in one another. During these workshops, Supervisors, Volunteers, and Counterparts work together to develop an initial work plan for Volunteers, and to address issues and questions related to policy, work expectations, communication, and cross-cultural issues.

Participation of Counterparts in the PST strengthened Volunteers' relationships with communities and host agencies.

Peace Corps/Ecuador, PSR,
Rural Public Health Project

Any time Volunteers attend or participate in a PST training event, they are required to bring their Counterpart(s) along with them.

Peace Corps/Zambia, TSR

Section two of this manual, *Developing a Supervisor and Counterpart Workshop*, provides a one-day model for a workshop. The section also includes other one-, two- and three-day agendas and other selected session plans for workshops.

We schedule the Counterpart conference near the end of PST, immediately prior to the permanent site visit. That way the Trainee can travel back to site with his or her Counterpart. This also allows the program managers to monitor and control the initial meeting of the PCV and Counterpart and assist them in establishing communication regarding schedules, vacation and leave policies, resources, etc.

Peace Corps/Romania

Supervisors and Counterparts can also ably assist in the development and delivery of workshops and in the design of handbooks that their colleagues can take back to their sites. Refer to section three of this manual, *A Supervisor/Counterpart Model Handbook,* for more information on how to develop a handbook for your post.

Trainees' Site Visit

Many posts incorporate Trainee site visits during training. Site visits can serve two major purposes:

1. To have the Trainee meet with his/her future Counterpart(s) and Supervisor in the community,

2. To begin the process of community introduction

Those involved in Peace Corps programming and training need to work very closely with Supervisors and Counterparts to ensure that there is a productive first step in the Trainee's initial community engagement.

Supervisors and Counterparts can assist the Trainee with finding appropriate housing based on established housing criteria, showing the Trainee around the community, introducing the Trainee to the job site and living situation, assisting the Trainee with opportunities to meet members of the community, sharing other community resources for work and quality living, and verifying communications and transportation capacities at the site.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Training

Trainings also need to be assessed. At the end of training events like the PST, IST, and close of service workshops, trainers and programmers take time to review the effectiveness and relevance of the training process. They evaluate whether the training met its objectives.

In addition programmers need to work with training staff, Supervisors, Counterparts, and Volunteers to evaluate the impact or outcome of Peace Corps training. Some examples of how Supervisors and Counterparts can be involved are:

- During ISTs and close of service sessions with Counterparts and Volunteers, conduct a session on evaluating the impact of training. The session should address questions such as, Is the Volunteer effective? Did training give the Volunteer the skills needed for working and living at his/her site?

- During program site visits with Volunteers and their Supervisors and Counterparts discuss training effectiveness and ideas for training revision. Include training questions in the site visit form.

- Include training impact questions in the Volunteer report to be discussed by Volunteers and their Supervisors and Counterparts.

- Give training staff an opportunity to do site visits with programmers in order to discuss training impact with Supervisors and Counterparts.

- Prior to Training Status Reviews, bring together a Training Advisory Committee and/or a Program Advisory Committee that has Supervisor and Counterpart representation to review a variety of programming and training documents in order to discuss the impact and outcomes of training(s).

- Have Supervisors and Counterparts assist in the development of indicators of training success.

In-Service Training

The purpose of the IST is to increase Counterparts' and Volunteers' skills and knowledge in technical and other areas, and to provide a forum for participants to discuss issues and concerns. The content of the IST usually comes from what Volunteers and Counterparts believe they need. Programmers can solicit this input by sending out a questionnaire to Volunteers and their Counterparts, and then incorporating their input into the IST content. At times, posts have a two-year training plan and specific needs for IST training such as language acquisition or extended technical competencies.

An important aspect of IST is to support Volunteer and Counterpart collaboration by offering sessions on giving and receiving feedback; cultural implications; safety, security, and Volunteer support; reconsideration of job descriptions; and reviewing the project plan. Getting the Counterpart perspective on these topics as well as technical skills will help make the content more relevant, realistic, and sustainable.

Another important aspect of IST is the networking opportunities it offers to all participants. Be sure to build in time when people can socialize and share informally about their activities, concerns, and successes.

We place an emphasis on training assessment. We are particularly interested in the impact of training, therefore you will find training staff doing site visits with programmers after Volunteers have been in the field six months and longer.

Not only do we talk to Volunteers but we value our discussions with Supervisors and Counterparts as we continue the process of training outcome evaluation and training revisions.

Peace Corps/Kenya

Project Design and Management (PDM) Workshop

At the PDM workshop Volunteers and their Counterparts learn how to involve the community members in moving from their analysis of community projects to the planning and implementation stages in order to realize their needs. The workshop builds on the philosophy and methodologies of community participation. It takes their skills and knowledge to the next step, reinforcing the philosophy of community participation, and providing additional methodologies for involving community members in designing and implementing their own projects. PDM workshops build Counterpart project planning skills and strengthen the relationship between Volunteers and Counterparts. See the **PDM Manual** (ICE No. T0107).

Close of Service Conference

The close of service (COS) conference is another good opportunity to get feedback from Volunteers and Counterparts on the project, training, safety, security, and Volunteer support, and the sites. Have Volunteers and Counterparts help identify ways that processes and activities can be improved.

For example:

☐ Have Volunteers and Counterparts develop site information packets that can be used in future site selection processes.

☐ Prepare to receive a new Volunteer or identify ways that the contributions that the Volunteer and his/her Counterpart made can be sustained and continued.

☐ Discuss and design community exit activities, a disengagement plan, and documentation procedures.

☐ Reflect on how well training prepared Volunteers and Counterparts to work together to do development work.

☐ Make plans for "official" recognition of Counterpart and Supervisor involvement.

☐ If Counterparts do not attend the COS conference engage them in exit activities when the Volunteer returns to the community.

☐ Recognize, celebrate, and congratulate Volunteers and their Counterparts on the contributions they have made.

Evaluate How Much You Encourage Participation of Your Counterparts and Supervisors

Questions you may want to address about how you involve Supervisors and Counterparts:
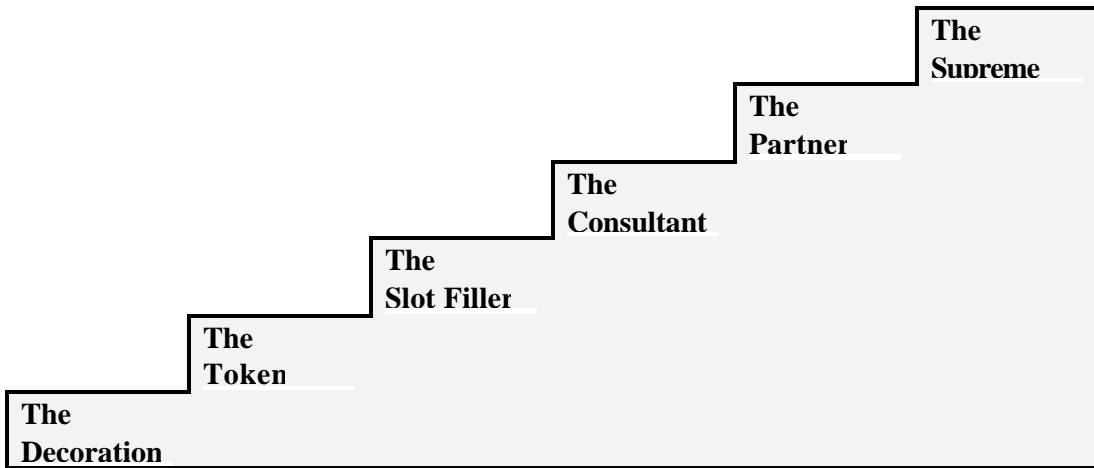
- Do Volunteers receive training on the importance of capacity-building work with their community partners, that is, the role of the Volunteer in development?

- Is Counterpart and Supervisor participation written into programming and training documents, such as the VAD, the project plan, and the technical training curriculum?

- Do Volunteers have recognized Counterparts? How are the Counterparts identified?

- Are Counterparts and Supervisors involved with Pre- or In-Service Training? If so, how?

- Are Counterparts and Supervisors members of a Program and/or Training Advisory Committee or members of a project plan review committee?

- What is the level of interest of Volunteers and Counterparts for collaboration on their community projects? In what ways are Volunteers and Counterparts working together?

- Are Counterparts and Supervisors given opportunities to receive training with Volunteers?

- What other questions might you ask yourself?

As suggested, participation of Supervisors, Counterparts, and the community in general is possible during most program and training activities. What do you think is best for your post? At what level are your partners most helpful to you?

When you look for ideas on how and when to involve your colleagues, consider the following *Steps to Participation*. The steps can assist you in identifying levels of involvement. You might ask yourself where your post Supervisor and Counterpart participation currently fits on the stairway to capacity building.

Steps to Participation

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Community Partner's Steps to Participation:

The Decoration: A few high-level officials are asked to attend a meeting once a year.
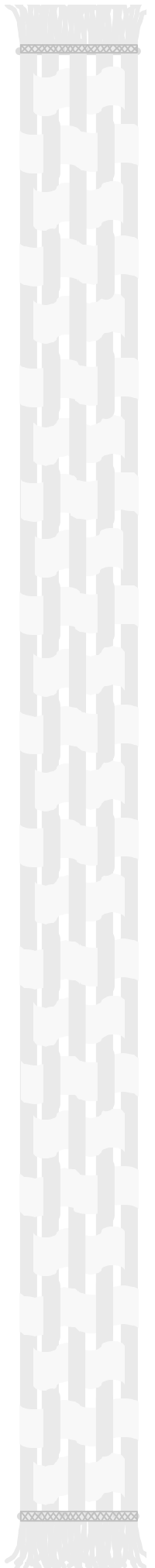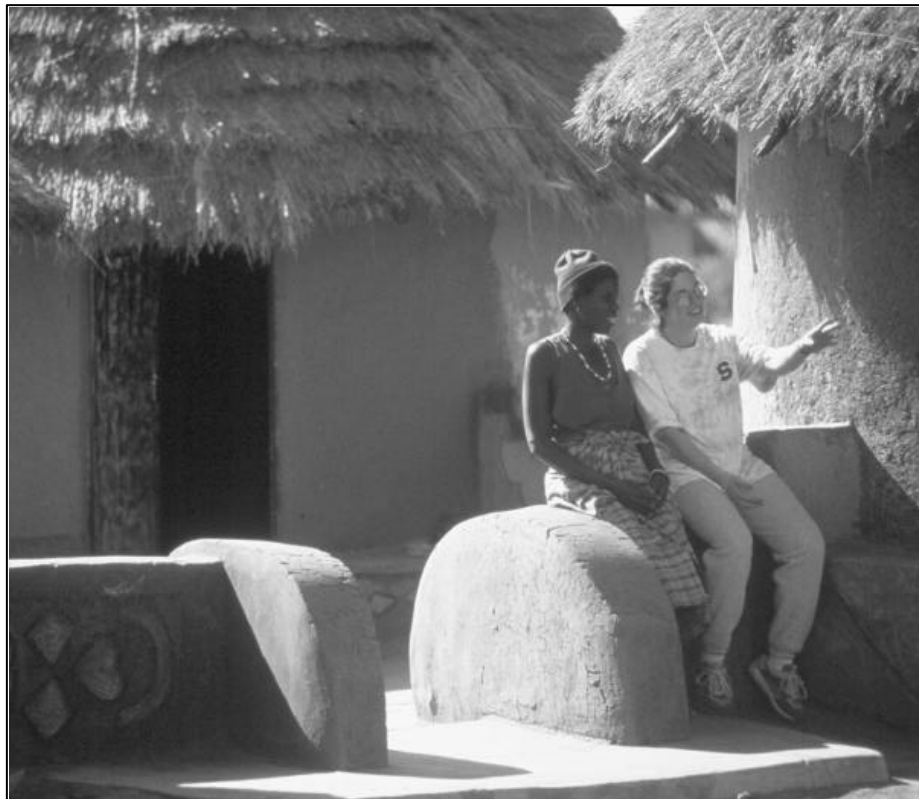
The Token: In addition, Supervisors and Counterparts are asked to attend the swearing in.

The Slot Filler: In addition, some Supervisors and Counterparts are invited to give PST panels or sessions and to attend a sector meeting once a year.

The Consultant: In addition, an advisory meeting is held with Supervisors, Counterparts, and people from the training community. Information is shared with them about training needs and suggestions are encouraged. They are invited to some ISTs.

The Partner: In addition, Supervisors and Counterparts involve the Volunteer in community activities and become their role models and coaches. They attend many trainings (including designated Supervisor/Counterpart training and ISTs) and events throughout the year. They have input into the training design and content and program goals and objectives. They become partners in all that you do. They become your best resource.

The Supreme: In addition to all of the above, the training communities and the Volunteer site's citizens have an understanding of the role of Volunteers, training and Trainees, the Peace Corps, and their own project-specific needs. They actively search out Peace Corps and Volunteer placements. They are willing to share their ideas and goals with the Volunteers, program managers, and the Peace Corps in general, and they work together toward reaching their goals.

Notes