



# The Peace Corps

A Comprehensive Agency Assessment



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## A Comprehensive Agency Assessment

Final Report

June 2010

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Table of Contents

- I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 1
  - A. A VISION FOR THE PEACE CORPS AT FIFTY ..... 1
  - B. THE PEACE CORPS’ MISSION AND THREE GOALS ..... 2
  - C. THE AGENCY ASSESSMENT ..... 2
    - C.1. Background ..... 2
    - C.2. Assessment methodology ..... 3
    - C.3. Organization of the report ..... 3
- II. VISION ..... 5
  - A. VISION FOR THE PEACE CORPS AT FIFTY ..... 5
  - B. THE PEACE CORPS’ MISSION AND THREE GOALS ..... 6
  - C. LESSONS LEARNED: CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGY FOR THE PEACE CORPS ..... 6
    - C.1. Meaningful work ..... 7
    - C.2. Partner ..... 7
    - C.3. Niche ..... 7
    - C.4. Volunteers ..... 7
  - D. THE PEACE CORPS’ SIX POINT STRATEGY ..... 7
  - E. NEW STRATEGIES TO MAGNIFY PEACE CORPS’ PRESENCE, IMPACT AND REACH ..... 8
  - F. IMPLEMENTATION ..... 16
  - G. PLAN OF ACTION ..... 16
  - H. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION ..... 18
- III. BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY ..... 21
  - A. THE PEACE CORPS – A BRIEF HISTORY ..... 21
    - A.1. Introduction ..... 21
    - A.2. Volunteer activities by program area ..... 22
  - B. THE PEACE CORPS’ RELEVANCE IN TODAY’S WORLD ..... 25
  - C. THE IMPACT OF FUNDING ON THE AGENCY’S OPERATIONS ..... 26
  - D. THE AGENCY-WIDE ASSESSMENT ..... 28
    - D.1. Introduction ..... 28
    - D.2. Methodology ..... 28
    - D.3. The assessment team ..... 30
    - D.4. The agency assessment advisory committee ..... 32

D.5.	The independent review process .....	32
IV.	ADJUSTING VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT TO REFLECT PRIORITY UNITED STATES INTERESTS, COUNTRY NEEDS AND COMMITMENT TO SHARED GOALS, AND VOLUNTEER SKILLS.....	35
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS .....	35
A.1.	Introduction .....	35
A.2.	Overview of the decision making process.....	35
A.3.	Entry or re-entry into a country .....	36
A.4.	Allocating Volunteer and other resources among Peace Corps countries .....	38
A.5.	Country closures and suspensions in the last ten years .....	39
A.6.	Reflecting priority United States interests.....	40
A.7.	Country need versus Volunteer and other resource allocation .....	43
A.8.	Meeting country needs – measuring impact.....	45
A.9.	Conclusions .....	45
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	49
B.1.	The Office of Global Operations.....	49
B.2.	Improvements to the Integrated Planning and Budgeting System (IPBS).....	50
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	50
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	50
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of the recommendations.....	52
V.	STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT AND INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND OVERSIGHT .....	55
PART A:	STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT .....	55
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS .....	55
A.1.	The agency’s Strategic Planning Process .....	55
A.2.	Resource allocation within the agency .....	58
A.3.	Human resources management.....	61
A.4.	Consistency in management practices.....	69
B.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	71
B.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	71
B.2.	Strategy for implementation of the recommendations.....	73
PART B:	THE FIVE-YEAR RULE.....	77
A.	BACKGROUND .....	77
A.1.	Introduction .....	77
A.2.	Legislative history.....	78
A.3.	Benefits and challenges of the five-year rule .....	79

A.4.	Tools available to manage challenges of the five-year rule .....	85
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	87
B.1.	Legislation.....	87
B.2.	Agency efforts to minimize negative impacts .....	87
B.3.	Studies and assessments .....	87
B.4.	Changes to implementation of the five-year rule .....	88
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	89
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	89
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of the recommendations.....	91
PART C: STRENGTHENING EVALUATION AND OVERSIGHT .....		95
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM.....	95
A.1.	Monitoring and evaluation tools.....	95
A.2.	Offices engaged in project evaluation and oversight.....	98
A.3.	The Inspector General’s oversight .....	98
A.4.	Office of Chief Compliance Officer.....	100
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	100
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	101
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	101
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of recommendations .....	103
VI.	IMPROVING THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS TO ATTRACT A WIDE DIVERSITY OF HIGHLY AND APPROPRIATELY SKILLED VOLUNTEERS.....	105
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS .....	105
A.1.	Overview of the Volunteer delivery system.....	105
A.2.	Offices involved in the Volunteer delivery system .....	106
A.3.	Implementing a new recruitment strategy for skilled and highly skilled Volunteers	108
A.4.	Diversity recruitment.....	109
A.5.	Marketing .....	110
A.6.	Improving the application and selection process.....	111
A.7.	Recommendation for improving the application process .....	116
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	117
B.1.	Sector recruitment specialists.....	117
B.2.	Field based recruiters .....	117
B.3.	Volunteer delivery system modernization and re-design .....	117

C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	118
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	118
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of the recommendations.....	119
VII.	MEDICAL CARE OF VOLUNTEERS .....	121
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS .....	121
A.1.	Providing health care to Volunteers .....	121
A.2.	The Office of Special Services.....	121
A.3.	The Office of Medical Services.....	122
A.4.	In-Country Volunteer Health Program.....	123
A.5.	Volunteer satisfaction with the health system .....	123
A.6.	Quality of the Volunteer health system.....	126
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	127
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	129
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	129
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of recommendations .....	130
VIII.	TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF .....	131
PART A:	VOLUNTEER TRAINING.....	131
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS .....	131
A.1.	Introduction .....	131
A.2.	Types of training .....	131
A.3.	Training staff.....	134
A.4.	Core technical training across posts .....	135
A.5.	Providing for quality Volunteer learning .....	137
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	137
B.1.	Training design and evaluation .....	137
B.2.	Behavior change intervention.....	138
B.3.	Measuring training effectiveness.....	138
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	139
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	139
C.2.	Strategy for Implementation of the recommendations .....	141
PART B:	STAFF TRAINING.....	145
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS .....	145
A.1.	Structure of overseas staff .....	145



A.2.	Overseas training for country directors, program and training staff, and administrative officers.....	146
A.3.	Staff orientation and development beyond OST .....	146
A.4.	Internal Management Assessment of the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research .....	147
A.5.	Headquarters staff orientation and training .....	148
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	148
B.1.	Office of Program and Training Support.....	148
B.2.	The continuum of learning .....	149
B.3.	The Global Online Village .....	150
B.4.	Staff development .....	151
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	152
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	152
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of the recommendations.....	153
IX.	COORDINATING WITH INTERNATIONAL AND HOST COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS .....	155
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS .....	155
A.1.	Introduction .....	155
A.2.	Types of agreements.....	155
A.3.	The Peace Corps' management of agreements.....	160
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	163
B.1.	A new perspective on partnerships.....	163
B.2.	The growth task force.....	163
B.3.	The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs .....	165
B.4.	The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support.....	166
B.5.	The Office of Public Engagement .....	167
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	167
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	167
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of the recommendations.....	169
X.	LOWERING EARLY TERMINATION RATES .....	171
A.	DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS .....	171
A.1.	Types of early termination .....	171
A.2.	Measurement of attrition .....	171
A.3.	Differences among the three measures.....	172
A.4.	Trends in early termination/resignation rates .....	173

A.5.	Volunteer resignations.....	175
A.6.	Managing resignations .....	177
A.7.	Understanding what resignation rates measure .....	178
A.8.	Resignations and country director and post performance.....	179
A.9.	Resignations and Volunteer impact.....	179
A.10.	Controllable resignation rates.....	179
A.11.	Previous task force studies on reducing resignation rates .....	180
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	181
B.1.	Encouraging extensions.....	181
B.2.	Expectations management.....	181
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	182
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	182
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of the recommendations.....	183
XI.	STRENGTHENING THIRD GOAL ACTIVITIES AND REPORTING MECHANISMS .....	185
A.	DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PROCESS .....	185
A.1.	Background .....	185
A.2.	Interpreting the third goal.....	185
A.3.	Efforts to achieve the third goal .....	187
A.4.	Monitoring and reporting of current third goal mechanisms of Volunteers and returned Volunteers .....	195
A.5.	Incentives and awards .....	196
B.	RECENT CHANGES .....	197
B.1.	Significance of the third goal in the coming years .....	197
B.2.	Correspondence Match Program .....	198
B.3.	Integrated Programming and Budget System (IPBS) Process.....	198
B.4.	Plans for outreach and enhancement from the Office of Public Engagement .....	198
C.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	199
C.1.	Summary of findings and recommendations .....	199
C.2.	Strategy for implementation of the recommendations.....	201

## ACRONYM LIST

AO	Administrative Officer
APCD	Associate Peace Corps Director
APCMO	Area Peace Corps Medical Officer
CD	Country Director
CDA	Country Desk Assistant
CDU	Country Desk Unit
CHOPS	Chief of Operations
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CIO	Chief Information Officer
COS	Close of Service
CWWS	Coverdell World Wise Schools (program)
EMA	Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region
ET	Early Termination
FSN	Foreign Service National
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	General Accounting Office
GC	General Counsel
HCN	Host Country National
HDI	Human Development Index
HRM	Human Resources Management
IAP	Inter-America and Pacific region
IST	In-service Training
IPA	Intergovernmental Personnel Act
IPBS	Integrated Programming and Budget System
IG	Inspector General
IT	Information Technology
JCAHO	Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
Medevac	Medical Evacuation
MI	Master's International (program)
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Manual Section
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OACM	Office of Acquisition and Contract Management
OCFO	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OCIO	Office of Chief Information Officer
OGO	Office of Global Operations
OMS	Office of Medical Services
OPATS	Office of Programming and Training Support
OPE	Office of Public Engagement
OPSI	Office of Private Sector Initiatives
OSIRP	Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
OST	Overseas Staff Training
PCMO	Peace Corps Medical Officer

PCR	Peace Corps Response
PCRV	Peace Corps Response Volunteer
PCT	Peace Corps Trainee
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PCVHS	Peace Corps Volunteer Health System
PCVL	Peace Corps Volunteer Leader
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PSC	Personal Service Contractor
PST	Pre-Service Training
PTO	Programming and Training Officer
QTRS	Quarterly Trainee Report Summary
RPCV	Returned Peace Corps Volunteer
RRO	Regional Recruitment Office
SPA	Small Project Assistance
S&S	Safety and Security
STRAT	Strategic Recruiter
TDY	Temporary Duty
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDH	U.S. Direct Hire
VAC	Volunteer Advisory Committee
VAD	Volunteer Assignment Description
VDS	Volunteer Delivery System
VRS	Volunteer Recruitment and Selection
VS	Volunteer Support
V/T	Volunteer/Trainee

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# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A. A VISION FOR THE PEACE CORPS AT FIFTY

Fifty years ago, President Kennedy launched an innovative new program to spearhead progress in developing countries and promote friendship between the United States and the people of the world. Fifty years later, the mission and the three goals that inspired the birth of the Peace Corps are still relevant. The passion that drove the creation of the Peace Corps is still very evident in the lives of the Volunteers who serve around the world today. The Peace Corps at fifty is ready for a strong new beginning—rooted in the vibrant past of those early years, yet ready to harness twenty-first century American intellectual power, innovation and commitment to results.

The Peace Corps is still very much in demand from both its host countries and the American public. Presidents and cabinet ministers in dozens of countries credit their start to Peace Corps Volunteers who touched their lives at an early age. Peace Corps Volunteers in 77 host nations are kindling a fire in the leaders of tomorrow. The fact that requests for Volunteers still far exceed the Peace Corps' capacity to place them within its budget is a clear and convincing measure of the Peace Corps' importance to many nations and its impact around the world. Peace Corps Volunteers are America's best and most cost effective grassroots development workers, magnifying the impact of government and donor investments at the community level and ensuring that efforts funded by others are community-owned and sustained. Peace Corps Volunteers are America's best ambassadors, building relationships with strategic partner countries from the ground up in communities across the globe.

The Peace Corps' mission—to promote world peace and friendship—has three goals:

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

The assessment team asked the question, "If the Peace Corps were created today, what should it look like?" The answer:

"The Peace Corps will be a leader, in partnership with others, in the global effort to further human progress and foster understanding and respect among people."

Excitement, engagement, and effectiveness are the terms that should characterize the Peace Corps as it moves toward the future. As the agency prepares to turn fifty, the agency needs to be in a position to look less in the rear-view mirror at its rich history, but rather, look forward firmly believing its best days are yet to come.

The Peace Corps is not only still relevant—it is more important than ever in this increasingly complex twenty-first century world. The Peace Corps' leadership is ready to take the agency to a new level of engagement, with an inspiring new strategy to both revitalize the Peace Corps and achieve even greater impact in the nations it serves.

## B. THE PEACE CORPS' MISSION AND THREE GOALS

The agency's mission and three goals have historically provided the framework for defining its vision—and should continue to do so in the future. However, the three goals are not sufficient for setting the agency's future direction, articulating its role in the world, and establishing the baseline and reference points for strategic decision-making in the future. While the three goals still remain paramount, the Peace Corps needs to clearly articulate its strategies for how it will meet its three goals in a world very different from the one in 1961 when it was founded. The Peace Corps' new strategy must take into account the changing face of both the United States and the countries it serves. The twenty-first century Peace Corps is fully capable of achieving more than ever before, but needs a better roadmap to strategically guide its future.

As the world has advanced and become more sophisticated through new technologies, as new problems have arisen and old problems have revealed their complexity and intractability, the Peace Corps needs to evolve in order to better prepare and support Volunteers and their partners in addressing community needs.

Countries worldwide now have university trained leaders and national development strategies. They also have high expectations of the Americans who come to live and work in their communities. No longer can the agency send Volunteers to serve without ensuring that there is important work awaiting them and that they have received the very best training and preparation for completing their assignments.

No longer is the Peace Corps the only American volunteer organization operating internationally. Today's Volunteers have many other options for service and are aware of those options. The agency needs to recognize that it operates in a far more competitive environment and adopt a new recruiting model so that it can continue to attract the very best Volunteers.

Finally, Americans hold the Peace Corps accountable for using scarce resources in the most effective ways possible. The agency needs to maximize its impact, and doing so requires a rigorous decision-making process to optimize resource allocation, and an active monitoring and evaluation function that measures progress and strengthens management decisions.

These messages came through loud and clear in the interviews the assessment team conducted, the reports the team reviewed, and the hundreds of responses the team received from Volunteers, returned Volunteers, agency staff, host country partners, Members of Congress and their staff, and others. If the Peace Corps is to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it must develop a dynamic plan of action with clearly articulated strategies to take it into the next 50 years.

As stated at the outset, the assessment team believes this is a key moment to renew excitement for the unique experience that Peace Corps service provides, to increase engagement with the international community through creative and innovative partnerships, and to enhance the effectiveness of the Peace Corps worldwide.

## C. THE AGENCY ASSESSMENT

### C.1. Background

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-117) enacted on December 16, 2009 provided the Peace Corps with the largest year-to-year funding increase in more than a decade. It also included a



provision requiring the Director of the Peace Corps to submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations on the findings of a comprehensive assessment in the areas listed below:

1. Improving the recruitment and selection process to attract a wide diversity of highly and appropriately skilled volunteers;
2. Training and medical care for volunteers and staff;
3. Adjusting volunteer placement to reflect priority United States interests, country needs and commitment to shared goals, and volunteer skills;
4. Coordinating with international and host country development assistance organizations;
5. Lowering early termination rates;
6. Strengthening management and independent evaluation and oversight; and,
7. Any other steps needed to ensure the effective use of resources and volunteers, and to prepare for and implement an appropriate expansion of the Peace Corps.

The Director of the agency also asked the assessment team to address how the agency can best strengthen third goal activities and agency reporting mechanisms.

#### C.2. Assessment methodology

The assessment methodology is described in greater detail in chapter III of this report. A major hallmark of the agency assessment was the outreach effort utilized by the team to gather a large number of diverse opinions from all stakeholders. The observations, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this report are based on this major outreach initiative that generated strong input from multiple sources, including:

- An extensive literature review included internal documents and external documents from both supporters and critics of the agency;
- Meetings and interviews with stakeholders, including current and former Peace Corps staff, returned Peace Corps Volunteers, currently serving Volunteers, and members of Congress and congressional staff;
- Surveys on currently serving Volunteers, returned Volunteers, and newly recruited Volunteers as they prepared to travel to their posts;
- A strong outreach effort soliciting input from currently serving Volunteers and Peace Corps staff through an e-mail address created by the assessment team for this purpose;
- Strategic planning sessions with the agency's management team; and,
- Participation in agency conferences with country directors, program and training officers, and internal working groups.

The outreach effort yielded some important cross-cutting themes that in turn led to the development of the vision, the six supporting strategies, and the implementation plan presented in this report.

#### C.3. Organization of the report

The report is divided into eleven chapters that respond to the seven areas listed in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 enacted on December 16, 2009.

Each chapter of the main body of the report consists of three sections:

- Observations on the current system;
- Recent changes in the organization; and,
- A summary of findings, recommendations, and a strategy for implementation.

At the end of each chapter, the recommendations are listed and an implementation matrix is also provided which details the lead and supporting offices responsible for implementation of each recommendation, including a time line for completion.

## II. VISION

### A. VISION FOR THE PEACE CORPS AT FIFTY

Fifty years ago, President Kennedy launched an innovative new program to spearhead progress in developing countries and promote mutual understanding between the United States and the people of the world. Fifty years later, the mission and the three goals that inspired the birth of the Peace Corps are still relevant. The passion that drove the creation of the Peace Corps is still very evident in the lives of the Volunteers who serve around the world today. The Peace Corps at fifty is ready for a strong new beginning—rooted in the vibrant past of those early days, yet ready to harness twenty-first century American intellectual power, innovation and commitment to results.

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The assessment team asked the question, "If the Peace Corps were created today, what should it look like?" The answer:

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Excitement, engagement, and effectiveness are the terms that should characterize the Peace Corps as it moves into the future. As the agency prepares to turn fifty, the agency needs to position itself to be one that looks less in the rear-view mirror at its rich history, but rather, looks forward firmly believing its best days are yet to come.

The Peace Corps is not only still relevant—it is more important than ever in this increasingly complex twenty-first century world. The Peace Corps' leadership is ready to take the agency to a new level of engagement, with an inspiring new strategy to both revitalize the Peace Corps and achieve even greater impact in the nations it serves.

## B. THE PEACE CORPS' MISSION AND THREE GOALS

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As the world has advanced and become more sophisticated through new technologies, as new problems have arisen and old problems have revealed their complexity and intractability, the Peace Corps needs to evolve as well in order to better prepare and support Volunteers and their partners to address community needs.

Countries worldwide now have university trained leaders and national development strategies. They also have high expectations of the Americans who come to live and work in their communities. No longer can the agency send Volunteers to serve without ensuring that there is important work awaiting them and that they have received the very best training and preparation for completing their assignments.

No longer is the Peace Corps the only American volunteer organization operating internationally. Today's Volunteers have many other options for service and are aware of those options. The agency needs to recognize that it operates in a far more competitive environment and adopt a new recruiting model so that it can continue to attract the very best Volunteers.

Finally, Americans hold the Peace Corps accountable for using scarce resources in the most effective ways possible. The agency needs to maximize its impact, and doing so requires a rigorous decision-making process to optimize resource allocation, and an active monitoring and evaluation function that measures progress and strengthens management decisions.

These messages came through loud and clear in the interviews the assessment team conducted, the reports the team reviewed, and the hundreds of responses the team received from Volunteers, returned Volunteers, agency staff, host country partners, Members of Congress and their staff, and others. If the Peace Corps is to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it must develop a dynamic plan of action with clearly articulated strategies to take it into its next 50 years.

As stated at the outset, the assessment team believes this is a key moment to renew excitement for the unique experience that Peace Corps service provides, to increase engagement with the international community through creative and innovative partnerships, and to enhance the effectiveness of the Peace Corps worldwide.

## C. LESSONS LEARNED: CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGY FOR THE PEACE CORPS

When the assessment team asked the broader Peace Corps community for opinions on strengthening the agency, there was no shortage of passionate responses. The assessment team analyzed this rich—and abundant—feedback to determine common elements mentioned from varying perspectives and looked to

build on these elements to develop a strategy for reforming operations. The assessment report is grounded in these four critical elements, which are the key strengths and understandings learned from 49 years of the Peace Corps' operations.

#### C.1. Meaningful work

The Peace Corps' success and impact is dependent upon the agency's ability to provide capable, prepared Volunteers to meet defined host country needs (Goal 1). Goal 1 is the engine that pulls the Peace Corps train, and facilitates the achievement of Goals 2 and 3 aimed at building greater understanding between Americans and the world. Therefore, the Peace Corps' effort and resources should be targeted to improve the quality and professionalism of Volunteer work, ensuring every Volunteer has a meaningful job and is properly trained to effectively carry it out.

#### C.2. Partner

The Peace Corps is at its best when it works with and complements the efforts of others, including U.S. government partners. Foreign governments, organizations, and communities around the world place confidence in the Peace Corps when requesting a Volunteer. Volunteers are requested by host country partners and marketed by the Peace Corps' staff as individuals who come to assist their communities and promote mutual understanding. The Peace Corps' vision should reflect the importance of its role as a partner in supporting locally identified development priorities. The Peace Corps' impact is minimized and sustainability is limited, when it acts as an independent agent without strong partners.

#### C.3. Niche

The Peace Corps' operational model is unique, and it is also its major strength. Volunteers live and work in communities where other service organizations tend not to go, and they do so for extended periods of time. Volunteers learn the local language and culture and their work is driven by respect for their hosts. The relationships that Volunteers build with their partners at the national and community level are based on this unique approach. It also forms the core of the agency's effectiveness. Very few other organizations make and achieve such commitments—no other U.S. government agency comes close.

#### C.4. Volunteers

Approximately 85 percent of the agency's Volunteers are recent college graduates with little or no professional experience. While the recruitment of individuals with greater professional skills and relevant skill sets has increased in recent years, younger, less experienced Volunteers will continue to form the foundation for the Peace Corps' operations. The Peace Corps must be committed to providing these less experienced Volunteers with the skills they need to be effective, and to assigning them to communities where their skills and expertise allow them to have meaningful work and a quality volunteer experience. The Peace Corps should continue to recruit higher skilled applicants, but it should resist planning as if the majority of its applicants come already trained.

### D. THE PEACE CORPS' SIX POINT STRATEGY

Based on input to the assessment from individuals and groups in the United States and overseas, the assessment team worked with the Peace Corps' senior leadership to define a set of six key strategies to

guide the agency in the coming decade. These strategies are listed below and then described in more detail in the following section.

The following six strategies are the centerpiece of that effort:

1. Target the Peace Corps' resources and country presence across countries according to specific country selection criteria to maximize grassroots development impact and strengthen relationships with the developing world.
2. Focus on a more limited number of highly effective technical interventions that will enable the Peace Corps to demonstrate impact and achieve global excellence.
3. Embrace generalist Volunteers, recruit them recognizing the competition for their services, and provide them with training and comprehensive support for success in their project areas and community outreach activities.
4. Make Peace Corps Response an engine of innovation by piloting new programs to expand the Peace Corps' presence and technical depth and increase overseas service opportunities for talented Americans.
5. Actively engage Volunteers, returned Volunteers and the American public through strong partnerships with private sector companies, schools, civil society, returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups and government agencies to increase understanding of other cultures and generate commitment to volunteerism and community service as a way to "continue service."
6. Strengthen the Peace Corps' management and operations by using modern technology, innovative approaches and improved business processes that will enable the agency to effectively carry out this new strategic vision.

#### E. NEW STRATEGIES TO MAGNIFY PEACE CORPS' PRESENCE, IMPACT AND REACH

- 1. Target the Peace Corps resources and country presence across countries according to specific country selection criteria to maximize grassroots development impact and strengthen relationships with the developing world.**

The Peace Corps' mission and goals remain relevant and the agency continues to be one of the most cost effective U.S. foreign assistance programs, however the agency must do a better job conveying this to the American people. In particular, the Peace Corps needs to demonstrate that it is active in those countries where the Peace Corps' added value achieves the greatest impact and where the United States will benefit from strengthened relations and increased cross-cultural understanding.

The United States has many strategic priorities, and the Peace Corps is committed to advancing these priorities in the countries where it serves, as long as they are consistent with host country priorities. Whether these strategic priorities are technical in nature (food security, HIV/AIDS, education) or relate to building friendships and increased understanding, they should be consistent with the Peace Corps' mission.

As described in greater detail in chapter IV, the Peace Corps needs to apply a more coherent strategy in determining the size and distribution of its country portfolio in order to make the most strategic use of its

scarce resources. This analysis should use specific, objective country selection criteria to enable the agency to make resource allocation decisions that will maximize achievement of its three goals and advance the priorities of host country partners and the United States.

The Peace Corps must always ensure that two criteria remain paramount in its decision to place Volunteers: a country's commitment to the Peace Corps, and the assurance that the safety and security of Volunteers and staff can be maintained. Beyond that, some of the criteria that the assessment team recommends the Peace Corps use to conduct a portfolio review include:

- Countries where the Peace Corps has demonstrated its effectiveness or where it can be determined that it can be effective;
- Countries where the need for the Peace Corps' programs is greatest;
- Countries where the Peace Corps' presence compliments other U.S. investments and priorities;
- Countries demonstrating cost effective operations and strong management capacity.

In conducting this portfolio review, the Peace Corps must be ready to make the tough choice to reduce Volunteer input or even close operations in some countries. The agency must also proactively seek opportunities to enter new countries or expand programs in existing countries where it can be more effective. The process of conducting this review will be based on existing data sources and input from the agency's many stakeholders. In the end, the process will reflect the Peace Corps' best judgment of where it can strategically maximize its effectiveness and impact. The agency has already initiated the process of undertaking this portfolio review and will complete it during the fourth quarter of FY 2010. The agency has also committed to carrying out this portfolio review annually, in the fourth quarter of every fiscal year.

## **2. Focus on a more limited number of highly effective technical interventions that will enable the Peace Corps to demonstrate impact and achieve global excellence.**

A key element of this six point strategy is embracing the fact that 85 percent of the agency's Volunteers are recent college graduates with little or no professional experience. These generalists are well-educated, highly motivated, and capable of becoming effective agents of change with the right training and support. Training programs must be tailored to the needs of these less experienced Volunteers. If the Peace Corps is to be a leader in the global effort to further human progress, it must be the partner of choice for foreign governments, international organizations, and local partners. The Peace Corps will only achieve this status if it can train Volunteers to deliver highly effective technical interventions that are most critical to addressing the needs in the communities they serve.

Although the Peace Corps states that Volunteers work in six primary sectors (education, health and HIV/AIDS, agriculture, environment, youth development and business), Volunteers actually work in 211 different projects that can be grouped into fifty different technical programs. The Peace Corps cannot effectively train and support Volunteers in so many different technical programs. Furthermore, projects are currently designed by posts with uneven agency guidance, limited technical oversight, and minimal opportunity for sharing good and promising practices among posts.

The Peace Corps needs to identify a smaller set of technical interventions that maximize impact and that can be easily mastered by the Peace Corps' generalist Volunteers. Once identified, the agency needs to establish technical training programs and support involving far greater vigor and depth to ensure generalist Volunteers are soundly prepared for service. Focus down—train up.

The agency should commit to excellence in this reduced set of interventions, and orient its training, programming, and management support to that end. These technical interventions will also benefit from improved technical oversight and more rigorous knowledge management to facilitate cross-border sharing.

A more focused strategic lens will allow the Peace Corps to create partnerships with recognized technical experts from academia, civil society, government and the donor community in each priority sector to better inform Volunteer training, technical support, monitoring and evaluation. Ideally, pre-service training will be complemented with scheduled in-service training, the development of targeted tools and job aids, and regular supervision by the Peace Corps' training and technical specialists. By working closely with global leaders in the development of rigorous technical training, it may be possible for Volunteers to earn a certificate of proficiency which would certify their attainment of a standard of competence in that subject. Such a certification would strengthen Volunteer motivation and offer a career boost at the end of their service.

While the assessment team did not feel comfortable defining the set of interventions the Peace Corps should select, the team is confident that the Peace Corps has the capacity to determine those technical areas where it can be most effective. By combining agency knowledge with input and strategic thinking from the field, host countries, U.S. government, academia and civil society partners, the Peace Corps can focus the work of its Volunteers, in a way that will most effectively contribute to the national development of the host countries. To assist in the prioritization process, the assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps consider the following selection criteria in making its choices:

- Excellence: What do Peace Corps Volunteers do best?
- Demand: What do the communities and partners served want?
- Synergy: What are the strategic priorities of the host country and of the United States?
- Training: What can the Peace Corps effectively train Volunteers in to achieve a high level of success in their work?
- Impact: What are the technical areas where the agency will have the greatest impact?

As the agency targets its program focus and builds stronger technical training programs, the ability of each Volunteer to work with their community partners to address local needs beyond the Volunteer's primary assignment will continue to be a critical element of the Peace Corps' contribution. For example, a water systems Volunteer would still be assigned with a host agency partner and a host counterpart to work on water systems. However, the Volunteer will still be encouraged to also start a soccer team or develop an English club. Peace Corps staff overseas would be confident in providing partners with enthusiastic Volunteers capable of integrating and working alongside them, as well as Volunteers with applicable skills to achieve the goals of their assignments.

Instead of waiting months for meaningful work in their communities—a challenge expressed by many Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and returned Volunteers providing input for the assessment—individuals serving within a more focused agency would contribute much earlier. The Peace Corps' effectiveness and impact would increase, with the spirit of community service and community integration intact.

The process of identifying the targeted interventions and developing stronger technical training programs should move ahead immediately, and must do so with an understanding that not all current projects will continue to operate as they have in the past. The agency should proceed by identifying and rolling out selected interventions sequentially, instead of attempting to implement the full scope of the proposed focusing at this time. In each target area, the agency will also need to determine the most appropriate



training curriculum and best delivery method for that training, working with staff to scale-up that intervention prior to identifying the next.

**3. Embrace generalist Volunteers, recruit them recognizing the competition for their services, and provide them with training and comprehensive support for success in their project areas and community outreach activities.**

Despite significant agency efforts over the years to attract Volunteers with greater professional experience, generalists comprise 85 percent of the Peace Corps' Volunteer force today, and will continue to be the primary target audience for the Peace Corps' recruitment efforts. However, today's generalist applicants are very different from their predecessors. They are likely to be technologically savvy and highly focused on building a career. They have different expectations and are not as likely to wait out the agency's twelve month application process.

The Peace Corps began as a revolutionary idea. It captured the imagination of young people in the 1960s and Americans joined en masse. It was the post college experience for adventurous, committed, altruistic young people. Apart from missionary service, it was one of only a few options for people who longed to serve in international destinations.

Today's generalist applicant has many alternatives to the Peace Corps that did not exist in the past. Many options for international service in various programmatic sectors, geographic locations, and lengths of service are now available. The Peace Corps faces competition from domestic and international volunteer organizations that are successfully tapping into the market for highly motivated well-educated college graduates—traditionally the agency's focus.

The Peace Corps must be willing to consider new recruitment models, using all of the digital tools and interpersonal approaches that appeal to today's target applicant. The agency still offers a unique international volunteer experience that Americans continue to seek. The time is now to revitalize the Peace Corps' recruitment and marketing strategies to capture the imagination of today's applicants with messages that appeal to them where they are—in their homes, cars, jobs, cell phones, and computers.

Once on board, the Peace Corps must establish a new level of commitment to ensuring Volunteers will receive world-class language, cultural and technical training in preparation for meaningful work that awaits them. Applicants should look to the Peace Corps as the service option of choice, as they know that the Peace Corps' training provides real skills, valuable for their Volunteer service and throughout their professional careers. Applicants should feel confident that the Peace Corps' training is followed by an assignment to a community where their skills and expertise are needed, wanted and will allow them to make a difference. After beginning their work, they should know an ongoing training program is in place throughout their service to constantly maximize their effectiveness.

Given the importance of training to Volunteer success in the field, the assessment team recommends the Peace Corps allocate greater resources for hiring more full-time training staff at post, ensure greater counterpart participation in training events and provide ongoing investment in key training staff. The rigorous application of effective training programs simply cannot be accomplished at the appropriate level by part-time or consultant training staff.

Now is the time to offer levels of training surpassing what is currently provided, both in quality and depth, guaranteeing applicants that service in the Peace Corps will provide not only an opportunity to serve others, but skills and training necessary to make an impact and an unmatched opportunity for professional growth.

#### **4. Make Peace Corps Response an engine of innovation by piloting new programs to expand the Peace Corps’ presence and technical depth and increase overseas service opportunities for talented Americans**

Peace Corps Response<sup>1</sup>—formerly known as Crisis Corps—provides returned Peace Corps Volunteers the opportunity to serve in rewarding, short-term assignments in developing countries. To date, more than 1,100 Peace Corps Response Volunteers have served in over 40 countries in Latin America, Africa, the Pacific, Asia, and Eastern Europe and, following hurricane Katrina, 272 Peace Corps Response Volunteers were deployed in the United States. Assignments include enhancing existing agency programs, responding to natural disasters, initiating first-time programs in new Peace Corps countries, or returning to a country where there has not been a Peace Corps presence for some time.

Peace Corps Response Volunteers bring the skills and experience gained during their previous Peace Corps service to new short-term projects in places where they are needed most. Unfortunately, Peace Corps Response is still very small, and currently lacks the technological capacity to process a larger number of applications. Nevertheless, Peace Corps Response is currently able to meet host countries requests for specific skill sets on a faster turn-around time than traditional Peace Corps programs.

The assessment team recommends developing an expanded Peace Corps Response program to attract and support more experienced individuals. Breaking from the current mission of Peace Corps Response, assignments would be open to those who could meet qualification criteria, whether or not they had been Peace Corps Volunteers in the past. This program would place experienced and qualified individuals into assignments that draw on their specific skills and experience, with flexible time commitments<sup>2</sup>. Overseas posts could request a Volunteer with a specific skill set from Peace Corps Response or Peace Corps Response could notify posts of the availability of individuals with specific skills and experience.

The Peace Corps’ new strategy to expand Peace Corps Response to any American who has the requisite technical skills and professional experience to address some of the world’s most critical needs is a bold leap forward. By doing so, the agency will allow more Americans the opportunity to serve overseas with the Peace Corps and bring greater diversity and experience to the Peace Corps portfolio. Opening Peace Corps Response to all qualified Americans will enable those who are not able to commit to two years with the opportunity to serve on shorter-term assignments in a country that desperately needs their skills. It improves the chances that the Peace Corps can successfully and adequately fill requests from host countries for Volunteers with a broader and deeper set of technical skills. This will be particularly important if the Peace Corps begins to focus its traditional program on a more targeted set of technical interventions.

Response Volunteers can become mentors to the Peace Corps’ Volunteers and their host country counterparts, with assignments that complement the efforts of the traditional two-year Peace Corps Volunteer. An expanded Response program will also rapidly increase the number of Americans who feel kinship with the Peace Corps, enabling the agency to more fully achieve its three goals through broader participation. Peace Corps Response will provide targeted training for Response Volunteers, depending on

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<sup>1</sup> Peace Corps Response has its roots in an ad hoc and intermittent practice that developed in the 1970s of sending Returned Peace Corps Volunteers on short term assistance assignments, including to countries where there was no Peace Corps presence. In 1996, the process was formalized and Crisis Corps, an office at the Peace Corps dedicated to disaster relief, was established. In 2007, following a gradual change in requests for Volunteers with more technical skills in countries that were not experiencing a disaster or crisis the program was renamed “Peace Corps Response.” Peace Corps Response Volunteers are placed in short-term, high impact assignments ranging from three months to one year.

<sup>2</sup> Returned Peace Corps Volunteer’s would be able to continue serving in Peace Corps Response for shorter periods of time.

the applicant's previous overseas work experience, language capacity, technical skills and professional experience.

The Peace Corps has already begun using Response Volunteers to enter new countries or return to former host countries, particularly those that are recently post-conflict, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. This model has enabled the Peace Corps to test the waters and take the time to build up an infrastructure before committing to a full-fledged two year Volunteer program.

**5. Actively engage Volunteers, returned Volunteers and the American public through strong partnerships with private sector companies, schools, civil society, returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups, and government agencies to increase understanding of other cultures and generate commitment to volunteerism and community service as a way to “continue service.”**

The world today is dramatically different from the one in which the Peace Corps was founded. Advancements in information technology, transportation, agriculture, industry, and communication have transformed the world into a fluid global economy. The face of the country is changing. The United States has always been the land of immigrants, and that has never been more true than today. Today's citizens need to embrace the diversity that is America, and prepare to live in an increasingly interdependent world. Based on their experiences, current Volunteers and returned Peace Corps Volunteers have unique potential to actively promote global citizenship through Internet and school-based programs targeting young people to educate about countries and cultures around the world.

At the same time, although the United States remains a dominant power, the country faces numerous social challenges that drain its resources and compromise the country's national development. Current Volunteers and returned Peace Corps Volunteers know what it is like to “live” community service, and have the tools, knowledge and experience that come from this immersion. They understand that citizen action is key to addressing national priorities from the ground up. They have witnessed the power of individual and collective innovation to transform neighborhoods. There is great potential in the returned Peace Corps Volunteer community to help foster innovation and change in communities in the United States, just as they did in their host countries.

To date, however, this potential has been largely untapped by the Peace Corps, as the agency's efforts have focused more squarely its first and second goals. However, the Peace Corps' senior leadership is dedicated to bringing the world back home by more extensive partnering with private sector companies, schools, civil society, returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups and government agencies to promote global citizenship and volunteerism as a way to “continue the service” and help address pressing national challenges.

The Peace Corps can more effectively mobilize Volunteer passion and commitment with a few small steps, including reinforcing the expectation that “bringing the world back home” is a long-term commitment at every stage of the Volunteer lifecycle—recruitment, training, volunteer service, and return home. The Peace Corps should be proactive in developing a set of tools to assist Volunteers in this effort—both in pre-service training and post-service training. Now known as Completion of Service (COS) training, the assessment team believes that it should be re-positioned as “Continuation of Service” training, with concrete tools and resources to guide and support Volunteer efforts. With that in mind, the assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps pursue a third goal strategy focusing on two main initiatives.

1. Increase participation and expand the Coverdell World Wise Schools (CWWS) program and other school-based initiatives to promote global citizenship, while also engaging other non-school audiences;

The Coverdell World Wise Schools program is a strong partner in U.S. efforts to teach American school children how to be global citizens. CWWS has three primary activities: first, its classroom resources program, where CWWS develops and distributes lesson plans, educational videos, podcasts and interactive simulations of Peace Corps Volunteer activities to primary and secondary schools around the country; second, its CWWS Correspondence Match program that connects U.S. elementary and secondary school teachers with current Volunteers who share their Peace Corps experiences at least once a month through letters, emails, photos, artifacts, and/or phone calls. Lastly, the CWWS Speakers Match program connects U.S. educators with returned Peace Corps Volunteers who agree to share their Peace Corps experiences in elementary schools, high schools, and colleges in their communities. These efforts should be continued and expanded to include greater participation from serving Volunteers, wider involvement from American schools and increased utilization of social media and technology.

Beyond the CWWS program, the Peace Corps should actively seek partnership with like-minded organizations, universities, foundations, policy groups and returned Volunteer groups to expand support and commitment to global citizenship. There are many opportunities to participate more widely in the global debate about the benefits of volunteer service and the importance of global citizenship through leadership roles in conferences, workshops, professional journals, and popular media. Initiatives such as the Global Service Fellows provide opportunities for greater public discourse on this important topic. More active engagement in the public debate on the role of global citizenship will require a higher level of senior management staff commitment in the future.

2. Create partnerships to scale up returned Peace Corps Volunteer participation in activities to share their experience and support innovative community service.

Agency leadership is firmly committed to the assessment team's recommendations for the Peace Corps to begin addressing the invaluable domestic dividend of Peace Corps service through a dramatically more structured and engaging approach to third goal efforts. In addition to current agency programs, the Peace Corps is building a network of strategic partnerships with targeted domestic non-profit organizations to connect returned Peace Corps Volunteers with broader opportunities to "continue service" in ways that help address pressing national problems. Over the past nine months, the Peace Corps has entered into formal partnerships with the National Peace Corps Association, the National Association of Community Health Centers, City Year, and The Corps Network, and will continue to build relationships with many other non-profits, businesses, universities and returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups in the future. An important partner in this effort is the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation, which works with federal agencies to create tools, such as innovation funds, prizes, and other social capital market structures to drive resources towards community solutions that demonstrate success. All of these partners have strong programs where returned Peace Corps Volunteers can build upon their Volunteer experience to support community solutions to America's toughest challenges.

These efforts must be expanded and more widely promoted. If the Peace Corps is to prioritize third goal activities, it must raise their profile within the agency and increase the proportion of funding directed to their implementation. It must also pursue innovative new approaches, such as establishing a Peace Corps Intern program allowing some of the agency's top Volunteer talent from overseas to complete a year-long paid internship in the United States with key development partners as well as private and public sector organizations who would benefit from the unique perspective brought to their organization by a recently returned Peace Corps Volunteer.

The National Peace Corps Association has suggested additional innovative ideas to encourage returned Peace Corps Volunteers to participate more actively when they return home, and these should be given

strong consideration. They include a proposal to encourage newly returned Volunteers to plan, conduct and report on third goal activities over an additional period of time following their return home, with a modest financial incentive for doing so. Another idea is to create a small grants program to expand innovative third goal activities using new technologies to reach new audiences. The Peace Corps' funds for this purpose would be leveraged by a match from the National Peace Corps Association.

**6. Strengthen the Peace Corps' management and operations by using modern technology, innovative approaches and improved business processes that will enable the agency to effectively carry out this new strategic vision.**

The strategy described above is exciting and proactive, but its implementation will require continued advancements in innovation and improved management practices. As a government agency, the Peace Corps has significantly less bureaucracy than most. But it has suffered from years of budget cuts, as have many agencies, that have whittled away funding for key functions such as Volunteer training and staff development, and limited its ability to modernize its systems and processes, particularly in the area of information technology.

Several areas for substantive work were noted by the assessment team, including the need for a serious look at the human resources necessary at headquarters and (especially) the field to follow through with the rigorous training program and Volunteers support measures described in this strategy. This is an excellent time to focus on strengthening full-time training capacity at the field level, supplementing that with a new cadre of highly skilled technical advisors at the headquarters and/or regional levels to support the Peace Corps' move to support a more rigorous technical agenda.

The Obama Administration has prioritized innovation and Open Government, and the Peace Corps is eager to adapt and modernize its systems so that it can provide a much higher level of efficiency, transparency and quality in its operations. The Volunteer Delivery System, currently in development, will streamline the application process for new recruits, improving the timeliness and quality of the recruitment process, and hopefully reducing dramatically the number of applicants lost to drop-out. The Peace Corps is embarking on a new electronic medical records initiative in order to improve the quality of Volunteer health care and streamline the management of Volunteer health services.

In recent years, the Peace Corps has much more proactively sought to improve monitoring and evaluation practices, and has conducted a series of country impact studies that provide some valuable results to strengthen country programs and disseminate best practices more widely. The Peace Corps is committed to improving its capacity in this area, and has provided strong leadership in the Office of Strategic Information and Planning who work closely with monitoring and evaluation staff at the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support to improve monitoring and evaluation practices. An improved monitoring and evaluation system would not only strengthen the quality of training and technical support to Volunteers, but it will also lead to better communication of results to all stakeholders. The Peace Corps will need to assess both the human resource and technology requirements of strengthening its monitoring and evaluation capacity to collect, analyze, use and disseminate data for more effective decision-making. The Peace Corps also needs to drastically strengthen its knowledge management capacity using an integrated, systematic approach to identifying, acquiring, storing, disseminating, using, and sharing the Peace Corps' knowledge.

## F. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the new vision and the supporting strategy will not come without challenges to the agency and its current program model. Commitment from the agency's leadership as well as regular and consistent communication through all levels of the Peace Corps' operations will be essential. In addition to the inherent challenges associated with making substantive change to any organization, there will be tangible implications in regards to resources, staff, systems and operations. Many of these challenges will require fresh approaches and a spirit of innovation. The assessment team believes the challenges can be overcome, and many provide opportunities for further revitalizing and strengthening the Peace Corps.

The agency must also be prepared to address changes in staffing necessary to support this new strategic vision. New positions will be created; some positions will evolve, and staff training needs will be increased. These new challenges that also present opportunities, including the opportunity for retraining and reinvigorating overseas and domestic staff.

In an agency that sees frequent turnover at all levels because of the Five Year Rule and political appointments, the Peace Corps faces a particular challenge to the successful implementation of this strategy. However, the assessment team believes that the Peace Corps is capable of making such a change so that strategic, evidence-based decisions become standard operating procedure regardless of future leadership transitions.

The implementation of this strategy will require strong leadership. The Peace Corps is at a turning point, and action taken now will have a tremendous impact well into the future. With the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary fast approaching, the Peace Corps must take a quantum leap in strategy and resolve to be ready for the next fifty years, which, if the agency stays the course, holds the promise to be even better than the first half century.

## G. PLAN OF ACTION

The Peace Corps' leadership plans to establish a team to oversee the implementation of the vision and six key strategies presented in this assessment. Led by a project manager, the implementation team will work under the supervision of the Office of the Director, and in close collaboration with the rest of the agency's management. While this team will develop the implementation plan, the assessment team believes the cornerstones of the plan must include the following thirteen points:

1. Establish a plan to address the impacts on overseas operations in a collaborative manner with the Peace Corps' staff in the field:
  - Communicate changes to current operations and impacts on staff;
  - Determine changes to current projects and country programs;
  - Determine new country programs and interventions to be pursued;
  - Establish a training program for host country staff whose role with the Peace Corps will change; and,
  - Deliver regular communication and establish open and ongoing dialogue with the field.
2. Examine why the agency operates where it operates with the Volunteer levels assigned to each country and geographic placements of Volunteers within each country. Develop a strategic approach to country assignments, Volunteer allocations, and Volunteer placements within individual countries.

This approach should be based on criteria that consider grassroots development needs, interventions in which the Peace Corps would have the greatest development impact, opportunities for strengthened relations between the United States and the host country, Volunteer health and safety, and the likelihood of Volunteers achieving the agency's three goals.

3. Determine specific technical interventions through a collaborative process that uses field knowledge, headquarters perspective, and input from leading development organizations and partners. Identify and roll out each intervention sequentially.
4. Assess the adequacy of the Peace Corps' current management structure and business model and make appropriate adjustments to ensure resources are dedicated for the successful implementation of the vision and its supporting strategies.
5. Develop a dynamic and broad communications strategy that uses technology and social media to support the agency's new strategic vision. The communications strategy should utilize the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peace Corps as an opportunity to deliver the agency's new strategic vision to the public, agency staff, partners, host governments, Volunteers, potential Volunteers, Congress, and the greater Peace Corps community.
6. Redesign and enhance Peace Corps Response to implement its new role as defined in this assessment.
7. Develop a strong communications strategy for Peace Corps Response, highlighting its new innovative approaches and significant changes.
8. Develop a recruiting strategy and a new recruiting model for the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Response to implement the plan.
9. Establish a standardized core technical training program in the specific technical interventions identified, and determine the most effective method for such training.
10. Establish and strengthen partnerships overseas and in the United States to support the implementation of the plan.
11. Develop a more streamlined and effective monitoring and evaluation system to evaluate the success of the implementation plan.
12. Aggressively ramp up school, private sector, civil society, and government agency engagement to achieve third goal of the Peace Corps, while committing agency resources and energy to third goal programs with measurable impact.
13. Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the agency by acknowledging the Peace Corps' history, but focusing most of its efforts on enthusiastically confirming why the best years of the Peace Corps are yet to come.

## H. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Over the course of the assessment team's extensive outreach efforts to solicit input for this comprehensive assessment, no single topic was mentioned with greater frequency than the need for the Peace Corps to identify and articulate a powerful strategic vision to guide the agency in the coming years. As the Peace Corps prepares to turn 50, current and former Volunteers and staff members, advocates, critics, and members of Congress believe the agency needs to reflect on the lessons it has learned in the past 49 years and needs to restructure for a world dramatically different than the one in which it was formed in 1961 to ensure the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peace Corps is substantially more forward-looking than reflective.

The assessment team makes two overarching recommendations:

**Recommendation II-1:** The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps adopt the proposed vision and the six supporting strategies necessary to implement this vision.

**Recommendation II-2:** The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps immediately establish a team to oversee the implementation of the proposed vision and its six pronged strategy and develop an implementation plan with timeline and deliverables to ensure successful adoption of the plan. Specifically, the assessment team recommends:

- 1) Targeting the Peace Corps' resources and country presence across countries according to specific country selection criteria to maximize grassroots development impact and strengthen relationships with the developing world (See chapter IV);
- 2) Focusing on a more limited number of highly effective technical interventions that will enable the Peace Corps to demonstrate impact and achieve global excellence;
- 3) Embracing generalist Volunteers, recruiting them recognizing the competition for their services, and providing them with training and comprehensive support for success in their project areas and community outreach activities (See chapters VI and VIII);
- 4) Making Peace Corps Response an engine of innovation by piloting new programs to expand the Peace Corps' presence and technical depth and increase overseas service opportunities for talented Americans (See chapter VI);
- 5) Actively engaging Volunteers, returned Volunteers and the American public through strong partnerships with private sector companies, schools, civil society, returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups and government agencies to increase understanding of other cultures and generate commitment to volunteerism and community service as a way to "continue service" (See chapter XI); and,
- 6) Strengthening the Peace Corps' management and operations by using modern technology, innovative approaches and improved business processes that will enable the agency to effectively carry out this new strategic vision (See chapter V).

The time has come for the Peace Corps to not only embrace its rich history, but also clearly define and powerfully articulate why its best years are yet to come: why Americans should be excited to serve; why the Peace Corps is one of the U.S. government's most strategic investments; and why countries, non-governmental organizations and communities around the world should pursue partnership with the Peace Corps. With President Obama's call to service, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the strong development background of the current Director and his staff, the Peace Corps' is ready to implement a powerful set of new strategies to magnify the Peace Corps' presence, impact and reach.



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(s)	TIMING
<p>II-1 The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps adopt the proposed vision and the six supporting strategies necessary to implement this vision.</p>	<p>Office of the Director</p>		<p>Begin Immediately</p>
<p>II-2 The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps immediately establish a team to oversee the implementation of the proposed vision and its six pronged strategy and develop an implementation plan with timeline and deliverables to ensure successful adoption of the plan. Specifically, the assessment team recommends:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Targeting the Peace Corps’ resources and country presence across countries according to specific country selection criteria;</li> <li>2) Focusing on a more limited number of highly effective technical interventions;</li> <li>3) Embracing generalist Volunteers, recruiting them recognizing the competition for their services, and providing them with training and comprehensive support for success;</li> <li>4) Making Peace Corps Response an engine of innovation by piloting new programs to expand the Peace Corps’ presence and technical depth;</li> <li>5) Actively engaging Volunteers, returned Volunteers and the American public through strong partnerships to increase understanding of other cultures and generate commitment to volunteerism and community service as a way to “continue service”; and,</li> <li>6) Strengthening the Peace Corps’ management and operations by using technology, innovative approaches, and improved business processes.</li> </ol>	<p>Office of the Director</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations; Office of the Chief Financial Officer; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Office of the Director; Office of Communications; Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning; Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support</p>	<p>Begin Immediately</p>

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### III. BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

#### A. THE PEACE CORPS – A BRIEF HISTORY

##### A.1. Introduction

Since 1960, when then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries, nearly 200,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 countries around the world. They've been teachers and mentors to countless children. They've helped farmers grow crops, worked with small businesses to market products, and shown women how to care for their babies. More recently, they've helped teachers and students develop computer skills and educated entire communities about the threat of HIV/AIDS.

While times have changed since the Peace Corps' founding in 1961<sup>3</sup>, the agency's mission—to promote world peace and friendship—has not. The three core goals of the Peace Corps are as relevant today as they were 49 years ago:

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

The Peace Corps accomplishes its mission and core goals by sharing the United States' most precious resource—its people. Volunteers live and work in other cultures and make a significant impact on local communities at the grassroots level in the six main program areas that they work in. The close interaction between Peace Corps Volunteers and local host communities allows the Peace Corps to establish an admirable record of service that is recognized around the world. For nearly 50 years, Peace Corps Volunteers have helped build the path to progress through cooperation with people who want a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities.

Throughout its history, the Peace Corps has adapted and responded to the issues of the times. In an ever-changing world, Peace Corps Volunteers meet new challenges with innovation, creativity, determination, and compassion. Those qualities have allowed—and continue to allow—the Peace Corps to achieve its mission, whether by responding to recurring droughts and deteriorating conditions in Africa in the 1980s or assisting the peoples of the former Soviet Union in their transition to market-oriented democracies or, more recently, through Volunteer programs around the world that provide hope and meaningful assistance to people with HIV/AIDS.

Today the Peace Corps operates in seventy-seven countries that are grouped into three regions: Africa (Africa Region); Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia (EMA Region); and Inter-America and Pacific (IAP Region). As shown in Figure II-1, by the end of FY 2010, the Peace Corps expects to have a minimum of 7,800 Volunteers serving in these countries<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The Peace Corps was initially established by President John F. Kennedy pursuant to Executive Order 10924 on March 1, 1961. The Peace Corps Act (Public Law 87-293) was enacted on September 22, 1961.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendices III-1 and III-2 for relevant Volunteer statistics and Appendix III - 3 for a description of program activities carried out in these regions.

Figure III- 1  
Projected Volunteer Levels on September 30, 2010

Regions	Projected Volunteer Levels on September 30, 2010
Africa	2,620
Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia	2,616
Inter-America and Pacific	2,564
Regional Total	7,800
Peace Corps Response Volunteers	50
United Nations Volunteers	1
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>7,851</b>

A.2. Volunteer activities by program area

Peace Corps Volunteers work in six primary areas:

- Agriculture
- Business development
- Education
- Environment
- Health and HIV/AIDS
- Youth development

A.2.a Agriculture

The Peace Corps' agriculture projects are designed to promote environmentally sustainable farming practices. Along with Volunteers working in the environment sector, many agriculture Volunteers help farmers focus on long-term productivity by teaching them to maintain and improve soils and to manage water. They demonstrate the importance of working with local, natural inputs to control pests and erosion. Increasingly, Volunteers and their partners are promoting approaches to farming that are both sustainable and organic. Volunteers are also helping their host country communities mitigate the adverse effects of the global food security crisis. Volunteers systematically include women and youth in their agriculture-extension activities.

A.2.b Business development

The business development sector includes four subsectors: community, municipal, business, and organizational development. Volunteers with a variety of business education and professional experiences are assigned to projects that focus on business, organizational, and communication skills in local government offices, nonprofit agencies, and for-profit businesses. Recently, the focus of work in this sector has shifted from business consulting to more community economic development, emphasizing income generation. In response to the needs of a global economy, the number of business Volunteers

continues to grow as efforts intensify to assist underserved communities and to expand opportunities for women and youth.

#### A.2.c Education

Education remains the Peace Corps' largest program sector. Education projects include team-teaching courses in math, science, health, environment, and civics or skills-based courses in English<sup>5</sup> and literacy. Education Volunteers strengthen local capacity by training and mentoring teachers in K-12 schools, colleges, and universities. Based on the needs of host communities, Volunteers support programs for vulnerable, marginalized or other special-needs children. They create after-school programs, clubs, and camps for boys and girls to promote HIV/AIDS prevention and life skills. Education Volunteers also train teachers to expand learning opportunities through information and communications technology.

Volunteers are also making significant contributions to girls' education and gender awareness. Around the world, Volunteers promote activities that help expand educational opportunities for females in both formal and informal settings. For example, Volunteers conduct summer leadership camps for girls, support community awareness of girls' achievements and potential, encourage their participation in the classroom, establish safe environments for after-school study, and organize career fairs for women. Similarly, Volunteers are working with boys and men to explore gender roles, expectations, and opportunities in a rapidly changing world.

#### A.2.d Environment

Volunteers working on environmental projects help strengthen a community's ability to sustainably use natural resources. They work primarily at the grassroots level, focusing on human needs and sustainable alternatives. Environmental Volunteers, for example, identify and train local leaders so they can teach other farmers how to work in environmentally friendly ways to improve the productivity of their fields and gardens in sustainable ways. Volunteers also promote environmental clubs and eco-camps. At some posts, schools and communities are connected as parents and youth work together to identify joint projects, such as bottle recycling or community cleanup days.

#### A.2.e Health and HIV/AIDS

Health program Volunteers work to promote preventive health education and practices with an emphasis on overall health and well-being. The scope of these projects includes hygiene and sanitation; water systems development and enhancement; nutrition and food security; maternal and child health; reproductive health; communicable diseases; chronic illnesses; and healthy lifestyle and exercise decision making. Volunteers and their counterparts address these issues in a variety of ways, including formal classroom instruction from kindergarten to the university level and community-based activities that use radio, television, puppet shows, murals, etc.; educational and training materials development and distribution; training and technical support for health care providers, peer educators, teachers, and non-formal community health volunteers; and sessions using murals, theater, radio, television, and puppet shows.

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<sup>5</sup> The fastest growing education program in the Peace Corps is English language training (Teaching English as a Foreign Language – TEFL).

Many Volunteers focus on HIV/AIDS prevention and care exclusively or as part of a comprehensive community health project. Life skills training continues to be at the center of much of Volunteers' HIV/AIDS prevention work, particularly when targeting youth. Increasingly, Volunteers are assigned to HIV/AIDS-related NGOs and assist in increasing the technical, managerial, and administrative capacities of such groups.

Volunteers are uniquely suited to work in HIV/AIDS prevention because they live and work in local communities and can present information in culturally sensitive ways. The Peace Corps is collaborating with the U.S. Department of State's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator to support the U.S. government's commitment to worldwide HIV/AIDS care, prevention, and treatment through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). In 2009, Volunteers' HIV/AIDS activities assisted more than 1,000,000 individuals, over 42,000 HIV/AIDS service providers, and nearly 3,100 organizations<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Text Messaging for Health Education**

Health Education Response (HER), software developed by two Peace Corps Volunteers has revolutionized health education in Namibia. HER utilizes software designed to provide health information through mobile phone-based text messaging, permitting the program to operate throughout the country.

The HER program distributes health information through pre-written content on major topics and also forwards user questions to a pool of Peace Corps Volunteers prepared to field a wide array of health-related inquiries, including topics related to HIV/AIDS and birth control. The program debuted in February of 2009, and by June 2009, the system was exchanging over 2,300 text messages with more than 300 unique clients per month. The system has been successful because it permits people to ask questions they would not ask directly, and provides excellent information in a non-threatening way.

Many Volunteers work to mitigate the devastating impact that malaria has on many communities, particularly young children. Volunteers fill a needed niche in carrying out grassroots community-based education and salient health education activities focused on malaria control. Health sector Volunteers, working alongside their counterparts, focus on malaria control through improving knowledge and behavior related to malaria transmission, underscoring the importance of intermittent presumptive treatment for prenatal care, and facilitating the distribution and utilization of insecticide treated nets.

In water, sanitation, and hygiene, Volunteers help local people build, manage, and sustain their own water supply and sanitation infrastructure. Volunteers also promote hygienic behaviors, such as hand washing with soap, that reduce the incidence of diarrhea and pneumonia.

#### **A.2.f Youth development**

Since the inception of the Peace Corps in 1961, Volunteers have had great success working with youth. Young people in a community are often the Volunteers' first language coaches and cultural interpreters. In turn, young people value the opportunity to learn from Peace Corps Volunteers. In many of the countries in which the Peace Corps works, nearly 50 percent of the population is under the age of 25. Volunteers in the youth sector are guided by three key principles: promoting positive youth development, facilitating a greater level of youth participation, and approaching community development from an asset-based point of view. Volunteers and their partners integrate these approaches into stand-alone youth development projects and into projects that cross all program sectors. The Peace Corps' approach to youth development supports effective, sustainable work with young people, their families, and their communities. Projects also aim to build the capacity of youth-serving organizations and of the host country professionals who work with young people. Critical issues affecting youth throughout the world include successfully making the

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix III- 4; Volunteers working in HIV/AIDS prevention by country.

transition from school to work, developing relevant skills to prepare them for family life, and becoming engaged and active citizens in their communities.

Volunteers are uniquely positioned to provide learning opportunities to girls and boys at the grassroots level. Volunteers also serve a valuable role in reaching special populations, such as children orphaned due to HIV/AIDS, street children, and other vulnerable young people. Volunteers work with their counterparts to improve employment skills of disenfranchised and out-of-school young men and women, and provide support to youth to help them avoid drugs and prostitution. Many Volunteers serve as mentors for young people and as counterparts in youth service organizations.

## B. THE PEACE CORPS' RELEVANCE IN TODAY'S WORLD

The Peace Corps is meeting the needs of millions of people who are among the poorest segments of the world's population by providing assistance to host governments and partners in the creation of grassroots initiatives. It is precisely this grassroots focus that makes the Peace Corps unique and extremely relevant. No other program funded by the United States government directly influences the lives of so many of the world's poor the way that the Peace Corps does, through the hard work and dedication of its Volunteers. The Peace Corps makes it possible for millions of the world's disenfranchised to see the United States in a positive light—up close and personal. Equally as important, the agency manages to do this in more than seventy countries on a personal level in a very cost effective manner.

Most of the work carried out by Volunteers focuses directly on achieving the agency's first goal: "To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women." However, it is through his or her work in Goal 1 activities, that Volunteers accomplish Goal 2, "To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served" while still in service; and Goal 3, "To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans", upon completion of service.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has remarked on several occasions that the United States seeks a safer, more prosperous, more democratic world and that development and democracy are two of the three broad areas that are equal in importance in achieving this. The Peace Corps contributes directly to the United States' efforts in development and democracy, and it does this in a unique way—through people-to-people exchanges aimed at segments of the world's populations that are otherwise ignored. This is the vision that President Kennedy first articulated fifty years ago, and it is even more relevant today.

A literature review on the history of the Peace Corps was useful in helping the assessment team understand the successes as well as the failures during the last five decades. The assessment team also made a special point of identifying, reading and analyzing current articles and blogs that were critical of the Peace Corps. This literature review helped the assessment team focus on key areas of concern, but also led the team to two important conclusions:

- While the Peace Corps has made mistakes over the years, the agency is constantly learning from the past and looking for ways to improve its operations. The ultimate goal is to increase both the impact and the cost effectiveness of its programs.
- The Peace Corps' most ardent critics and proponents all agree on one important area – that the Peace Corps needs to focus on quality growth as it moves forward. The assessment team also echoes that sentiment, as does the Director of the agency and staff at all levels.

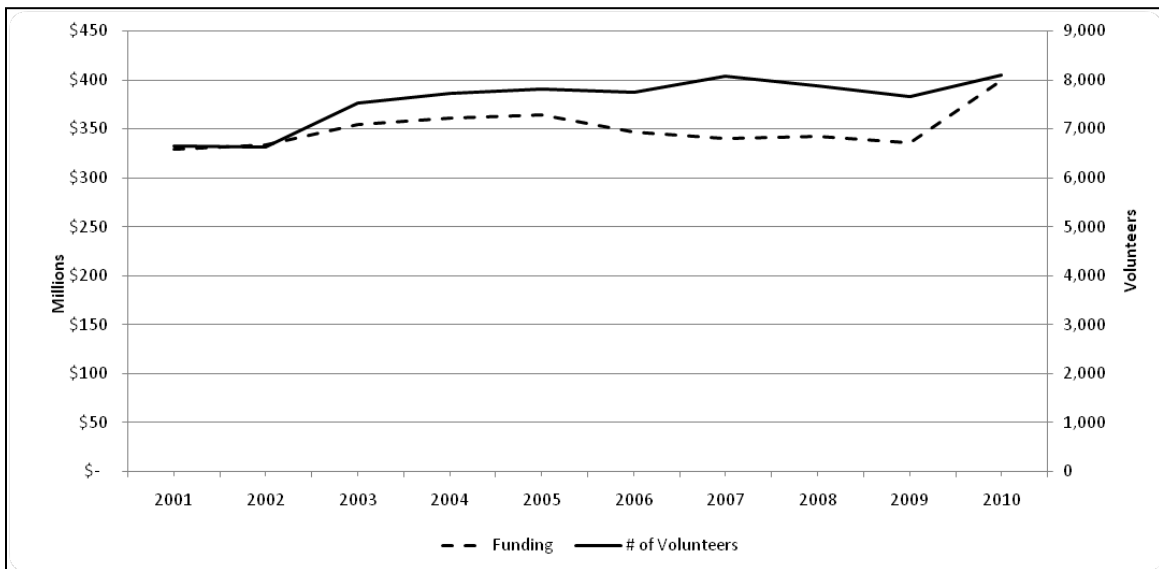
The assessment team believes that the agency can continue to increase its effectiveness as it concentrates its efforts in a greatly reduced number of intervention areas while at the same time providing Volunteers with increased levels of training that will allow them to be more effective. By focusing on quality, the agency will be able to increase the impact of its programs.

C. THE IMPACT OF FUNDING ON THE AGENCY’S OPERATIONS

Figure III-2 below, shows the number of Volunteers at the end of each fiscal year as well as annual funding levels for the Peace Corps adjusted for inflation. After adjusting for inflation, it is interesting to note that funding for the agency increased at a real annual rate of 2.2% from FY 2001 through FY 2010. The inflation adjusted annual growth rate in funding for the agency from FY 2001 through FY 2009 was only 0.3%.

The agency was encouraged to grow in the early part of the decade and did receive adequate funding to support growth in FY 2002 through FY 2005. However, in FY 2005 the agency’s budget reached a plateau and then began to decline every year through FY 2009<sup>7</sup>. Unfortunately, while funding was decreasing, from FY 2005 to FY 2007 the agency increased the number of Volunteers in the field, reaching 8,079 Volunteers in service on September 30, 2007. Supporting this increase in Volunteers during a period of declining budgets could only be accomplished by making funding cuts in other areas, many of which directly affected the quality of the Peace Corps’ operations. Funding constraints during those years resulted in reductions in Volunteer training, in-country support staff, headquarters support for the field, and even resulted in an announcement by agency headquarters discouraging third-year extensions for successful Volunteers. Funding constraints also led to reduced investments in necessary equipment and systems in the field and in headquarters, including important investments in technology and in improving the agency’s Volunteer recruiting and selection process.

Figure III – 2  
Total Peace Corps Funding and Volunteer Levels  
(Funding levels shown in 2010 dollars)



<sup>7</sup> FY appropriations were adjusted to reflect current 2010 dollars using the Consumer Price Index.



Figure III-2 illustrates the context of the challenges the agency has faced in the last ten years.

- Although funding began to decrease in 2006, the agency, which had been planning for steady growth, did not reduce Volunteer levels immediately. It was another two years before the agency began reducing Volunteer levels.
- Funding decreases at a time when the agency maintained and even grew Volunteer levels led to significant strains on the organization that resulted in cost-cutting measures that directly affected Volunteers and their ability to perform their service (reductions in training times, post staffing levels, travel budgets, etc.).
- The increase in funding for FY 2010 brings funding to a level which is consistent with the current level of Volunteers. The FY 2010 budget has already resulted in significant investments required to strengthen and prepare the agency for growth in FY 2011 and beyond after years of operating with reduced budgets. These investments, plus additional investments in 2011 will pave the way for significant, quality growth in future years as long as funding keeps pace with growth targets.

As Figure III-2 shows, the funding gap began in FY 2003 when increases in Volunteer placements outpaced increases in annual appropriations, and the gap became critical from FY 2006 through FY 2009 as annual appropriations in real terms declined.

One of the challenges faced by the agency concerning the allocation of resources is that while funding for the agency is determined annually, most of the agency's operations are medium and long term in nature. For example, while Volunteers serve for twenty-seven months, the process of recruiting, and placing Volunteers increases the overall Volunteer cycle to more than three years. The time it takes from the decision to enter a new country until the time a new program can be established and is fully functional is also a multiyear process. Furthermore, the large investment that goes into establishing a new program in a country can only be justified if the agency plans to stay in that country for at least ten years. For reasons other than the safety and security of Volunteers, closing down a program in a country is a multiyear process.

Unfortunately, funding levels have not been consistent in the past. The reality is that the agency has experienced growth spurts that are then followed by funding reductions that have severely damaged operations. In the past decade, Peace Corps staff and Volunteers have received guidance to grow in one year that was then reversed the next year due to a decline in appropriations. As was the case in FY 2006 through FY 2009, this prompted the discouragement of third-year tours by Volunteers and a reduction in training and staff support for all Volunteers. This in turn cut short the aspirations of many service-oriented Americans and has possibly harmed relations with host countries.

## D. THE AGENCY-WIDE ASSESSMENT

### D.1. Introduction

During his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Peace Corps Director spoke of his intention to carry out an agency-wide assessment of the Peace Corps as a means of strengthening, reforming, and growing the agency. The Director felt that with increased resources and a desire to strengthen operations and grow, the agency-wide assessment would serve as a valuable tool for the agency to better articulate a strategic vision for the Peace Corps for the next ten years.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-117) enacted on December 16, 2009 provided the Peace Corps with the largest year-to-year funding increase in more than a decade. It also included a provision requiring the Director of the Peace Corps to submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations on the findings of a comprehensive assessment as well as recommendations in seven specific areas:

1. Improving the recruitment and selection process to attract a wide diversity of highly and appropriately skilled volunteers;
2. Training and medical care for volunteers and staff;
3. Adjusting Volunteer placement to reflect priority United States interests, country needs and commitment to shared goals, and volunteer skills;
4. Coordinating with international and host country development assistance organizations;
5. Lowering early termination rates;
6. Strengthening management and independent evaluation and oversight; and,
7. Any other steps needed to ensure the effective use of resources and Volunteers, and to prepare for and implement an appropriate expansion of the Peace Corps.

The Director also asked the assessment team to address how the agency can best strengthen third goal activities and agency reporting mechanisms.

### D.2. Methodology

The agency assessment was carried out over the five months from January through May of 2010. The methodology used by the team in gathering and analyzing data, reviewing findings, developing recommendations, and drafting and reviewing this document is discussed below.

#### D.2.a Review of written documents

Team members spent the first few weeks reading and analyzing background documents, including previous studies on the assessment topics, Volunteer and returned Volunteer surveys and comments, articles and editorials, Internet blogs and other information sources internal and external to the agency. Team members also sought out and analyzed documents that criticized or suggested changes in the way the agency conducts its operations to ensure that they received as many points of view as possible. All of the major documents consulted are shown in Appendix III-5.

#### D.2.b Internal and external interview, discussion and presentation meetings

Members of the assessment team conducted more than 100 meetings and interviews to gather information and different points of view on the topics covered in the assessment. The bulk of these meetings were

conducted with current and former Peace Corps staff, returned Peace Corps Volunteers, and currently serving Volunteers. Additional meetings were held with members of Congress to better understand specific concerns and issues related to the Peace Corps. Almost all of these meetings were in person, however, some telephone interviews were conducted when face-to-face meetings were not possible.

#### D.2.c Surveys and other outreach tools

To broaden the assessment team's outreach efforts, a number of other tools were used by the team to solicit input. For example, to gather up-to-date information on the Volunteer recruiting, selection, and placement process, the assessment team designed and administered a survey. This survey was administered to more than 300 new trainees in the United States at their pre-departure orientation.

The assessment team relied heavily on the Annual Volunteer Surveys<sup>8</sup> that are conducted by the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP). The most recent of these surveys was conducted in 2009. OSIRP staff also prepared an analysis of survey results from 2006, 2008, and 2009 that was useful in analyzing trends in response to specific questions. OSIRP staff members were able to run additional analysis on the survey results as requested.

The team also used the National Peace Corps Association survey conducted in October of 2009 on its members. Approximately 4,500 current and returned Volunteers responded to this survey. The association was able to provide additional information on this survey when requested that was very useful in analyzing some of the areas covered in the assessment.

The assessment team conducted an extensive outreach effort with currently serving Volunteers, the Peace Corps' staff members serving overseas, and with the broader returned Peace Corps Volunteer community. Early on in the assessment process, and at the request of the assessment team, the Director of the agency sent out a communication to all country directors explaining the reasons behind the agency assessment and soliciting input from them and their staff. An e-mail address was created for this purpose ([agencyassessment@peacecorps.gov](mailto:agencyassessment@peacecorps.gov)), and 31 overseas posts provided input through this mechanism. A similar process was used to reach out to current Peace Corps Volunteers. In this case, country directors were asked to forward a memorandum from the assessment team to their respective Volunteer Advisory Committees soliciting input on the assessment topics. The assessment team received input from 24 Volunteer Advisory Committees. Finally, the assessment team used a similar procedure to reach out to the larger returned Peace Corps Volunteer community. The assessment team randomly asked for input from thirty of the 132 Peace Corps affinity groups throughout the United States and received input from fourteen.

#### D.2.d Country director and program training officer conferences

The three regions held five-day country director conferences during the first quarter of FY 2010. This was followed by the first worldwide program training officer conference in more than a decade in which all posts sent a program training officer to Washington, D.C. during the second quarter of FY 2010 for a one week conference. At each of these conferences, the participants analyzed the issues that most affect the agency's ability to achieve quality growth and made specific recommendations to achieve this goal. Recommendations from the three conferences were provided to the assessment team. Assessment team

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<sup>8</sup> The Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) collects feedback from all Volunteers on topics such as in-country support, training, and the impact of their work. Questions are designed to elicit useful Volunteer feedback that acknowledges what is going well and provides constructive suggestions for improvement. The AVS contains 67 core questions for all Volunteers, with additional experience-appropriate questions depending on the Volunteer's time in-country.

members also participated in the program and training officer conference and explored specific issues related to the assessment.

#### D.2.e Working group meetings

The assessment team relied on working group meetings as a way to keep all members apprised of the activities carried out by individuals on the team. In these meetings, assessment team members also discussed and refined all of the major topic areas, as well as the conclusions and recommendations presented in this report. These working group meetings were held throughout the study period and at times included members from the agency assessment advisory committee<sup>9</sup> or other individuals who were relevant to the topic being discussed. These working group meetings—similar to a peer review process in other applications—were particularly useful in reviewing draft chapters of the assessment.

#### D.2.f The growth task force

The growth task force was created by the Director during the first quarter of FY 2010. This group was asked to identify innovative strategies to facilitate the agency's goal for quality growth. The growth task force also analyzed existing policies to determine possible constraints to growth. Twelve task force subgroups were formed to research and develop recommendations in key areas, including Volunteer recruitment and placement, training, medical care and partnerships. This task force met weekly for three months and presented their findings to the Director in April 2010. Assessment team members participated in task force subgroups and found these meetings to be a useful forum for exploring new ideas.

#### D.2.g Planning sessions with key agency managers

At different points throughout the assessment, the assessment team coordinated planning sessions with key agency managers and members of the agency assessment advisory committee. These sessions were especially valuable in discussing, developing, and validating some key points and recommendations made by the assessment team. These planning sessions also helped to generate support for key recommendations made by the team, insuring their prompt implementation.

#### D.2.h Final review of the agency assessment report

Once the assessment team had completed and reviewed a draft of the report, the draft was circulated to all members of the agency assessment advisory committee for review and comment. This generated additional input and validated the findings and recommendations of the report.

### D.3. The assessment team

Shortly after the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act in December 2009, the Director of the agency appointed the members of the assessment team. The assessment team consisted of five full-time members in addition to the team coordinator. As requested by the Director, two of the assessment team members were external specialists brought in to provide additional points of view. Assessment team members were:

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<sup>9</sup> An advisory committee was created to provide direction and guidance in the design and implementation of the assessment and the review of the final report (see section D.4).

Maryann Minutillo: Ms. Minutillo served as the coordinator for the assessment team and is also senior advisor in the Office of the Director of the Peace Corps. In this capacity she chairs the policy review board and directs the Peace Corps' Internal Management Assessment program aimed at strengthening the Peace Corps' operations worldwide. Prior to this position, Ms. Minutillo was chief of operations and acting regional director for the Inter-America & Pacific region. Before joining the headquarters staff, Ms. Minutillo served as country director for the Peace Corps in Bolivia.

In addition to her work with the Peace Corps, Ms. Minutillo has an extensive background in public service and international development. She did volunteer work in Guatemala in a community-based infant nutrition project, and she was a faculty member in the College of Health Sciences in the Kingdom of Bahrain where she co-chaired a project to extend primary health care services to small villages. Her international work also includes extensive experience in teaching and training teachers of English as a second language in levels from kindergarten to university. During her six-year tenure at the Department of State as Director of the Family Liaison Office, she championed educational services for children with learning disabilities and support and training for foreign service families.

Megan Blackburn: Ms. Blackburn has worked for the Peace Corps since December 2007. She is a program analyst in the Office of Overseas Executive Selection and Support focusing on the recruitment and selection of country directors. Prior to coming to the Peace Corps, Ms. Blackburn worked as a policy analyst at the HELP Commission—a Congressional commission—researching U.S. foreign assistance programs and helping compile its final report. Her first job was working for Senator Chuck Hagel as a personal assistant. She has interned at the Chilean American Chamber of Commerce in Santiago and at the United States Agency for International Development (I).

Ms. Blackburn holds an M.A. from the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University and a B.A. from Colby College.

Ken Goodson: Ken Goodson has more than 13 years of experience with the Peace Corps. Mr. Goodson first served with the agency as a Volunteer in Bolivia. He then served as a Volunteer coordinator and later as a technical trainer in Bolivia before becoming associate country director in Belize where he led two projects and assisted the redesign of the Peace Corps' training in that country. Mr. Goodson then returned to the Andes to work as part of the two-person startup team tasked to re-establish the Peace Corps' program in Peru, where he developed and initiated all of Peace Corps Peru's initial programs and trained staff to take over the projects he initiated. This was followed by a move to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, as country director. Following the tour in Mongolia, Mr. Goodson moved to Romania to serve as country director.

Before his time with the Peace Corps, Mr. Goodson served as field manager for an environmental group in Alaska. He holds a B.A. in public policy from Duke University.

Jean Lujan: Jean Lujan is an attorney, recently retired from the Department of Justice. She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in southern Chile from 1965-1967. A graduate of the University of Michigan, she returned to Ann Arbor for a semester before moving to coastal Maine. In 1970, she moved to Washington, D.C., where she taught English as a second language to adults from Latin America. She attended law school at Catholic University and joined the Department of Justice in 1975. She spent approximately 18 years in different offices at the Department of Justice related to immigration, specializing in refugee and asylum issues. She took two leaves of absence from the Department of Justice to work for the Peace Corps, first as co-country director in Costa Rica (1980-1983), and most recently as country director for Panama (2002-2005).

In addition to her government service, Ms. Lujan has experience in the private sector. From 1987 to 1998, she owned and managed Heller's bakery in the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood of Washington, D.C., and Avignon Freres restaurant in Adams Morgan.

Diana Schmidt: Dr. Diana Schmidt and her husband became Peace Corps Volunteers in 2000 and served in Ukraine. After completing her service, Dr. Schmidt became the deputy director and program and training officer in Ukraine. Then in 2004, she became country director in Macedonia. She was country director in Ukraine in 2006 and served there until 2010 when she returned to the Peace Corps' headquarters as a roving country director.

Prior to the Peace Corps, Dr. Schmidt co-founded an ophthalmic pharmaceutical company, Ista Pharmaceuticals, in 1991. As vice president of development and its chief operating officer, she traveled the world setting up clinical trials and managing subsidiaries. Dr. Schmidt worked in various senior management positions with Allergan Pharmaceuticals for ten years before Ista. Earlier in her career, Dr. Schmidt was a professor and department head at Pepperdine University in California, and she taught at various University of California campuses.

Dr. Schmidt holds a B.A. in psychology from the University of California, Berkeley; Master's degrees in psychology from California State University in San Francisco and business administration from Pepperdine University; and a PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Carlos Torres: Mr. Torres is the founder and former president of I Corporation, a company specializing in international consulting, focusing primarily on issues relating to economic development. Mr. Torres has more than thirty years of international business experience. He has primarily worked in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union. His areas of expertise are in international business development, strategic planning, trade and investment, and micro-banking.

Mr. Torres holds a BA in finance from Babson College and a M.S.M in international business from the Hult International Business School (formerly the Arthur D. Little Management Education Institute).

#### D.4. The agency assessment advisory committee

An advisory committee provided direction and guidance in the design and implementation of the assessment and the review of the final report. The advisory committee was chaired by the Director of the agency and included the following members:

Esther Benjamin, associate director for the Office Global Operations  
Suzie Carroll, deputy director of the Office of Congressional Relations  
Elisa Montoya, White House liaison and senior advisor to the Director  
Stacy Rhodes, chief of staff  
Kathy Rulon, senior adviser to the Chief of Staff  
Carl Sosebee, General Counsel  
Cathryn Thorup, director of the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning

#### D.5. The independent review process

In response to the request by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 joint report to involve external specialists in the review process, the Director also created an independent panel to review the work of the

assessment team. The Director chose two individuals to provide independent comments and critiques aimed at strengthening the agency-wide assessment:

Ambassador James Joseph: Ambassador Joseph was the former United States Ambassador to South Africa and currently is the Professor of Leadership & Ethics at Duke University and University of Cape Town. He is also the chairman of the board of the Louisiana Recovery Foundation.

William Lane: Mr. Lane is the vice president of government affairs for Caterpillar Corp. and is a former member of the HELP Commission—Commission on Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People Around the Globe—a presidential committee examining the effectiveness of U.S. foreign aid. The commission report was released in December 2007.

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#### **IV. ADJUSTING VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT TO REFLECT PRIORITY UNITED STATES INTERESTS, COUNTRY NEEDS AND COMMITMENT TO SHARED GOALS, AND VOLUNTEER SKILLS**

##### **A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS**

###### **A.1. Introduction**

The Peace Corps' statutory mission "to promote world peace and friendship" is, by definition, global in breadth. As a result, the Peace Corps' policy has been to respond favorably to all reasonable requests for assistance from interested countries, provided that funding is available and that basic safety and programmatic conditions are met. On the other hand, the agency over the years has received requests for assistance from more countries than it could hope to satisfy given available resources. As a result, the Peace Corps has always faced the dilemma of how best to utilize its scarce resources to maximize the achievement of its three goals.

Achievement of the Peace Corps' mission and three goals is meant to guide decisions on where the agency establishes a presence, the number of Volunteers in each country, and the capacity in which Volunteers serve (Volunteer Placement). However, when the assessment team began to research how the agency makes decisions on Volunteer placement, it found little in the way of written procedures. Documentation regarding past decisions was also lacking.

This does not imply that a rational decision making process does not exist. In interviews with management and staff, assessment team members found that there has always been a process for making rational decisions regarding Volunteer placement. Unfortunately, the process has not been well documented, which has made it difficult for the agency to readily answer questions about what countries it serves and with what level of resources. This has frustrated both critics and supporters of the Peace Corps. Consequently, the first step in analyzing the decision making process about Volunteer placement was to understand it and document it.

The assessment team found evidence that the agency takes great care to ensure that its programs reflect the development priorities of the countries in which Volunteers serve, complement the priorities of the United States and leverage the traditional strengths of the Peace Corps. The United States has many strategic priorities that perhaps are most congruent with the Peace Corps' priorities in the development arena. Interventions in HIV/AIDS, food security, safe water, climate change, basic education, and women's empowerment are all of strategic interest to the United States and are also compatible with the Peace Corps core expertise.

###### **A.2. Overview of the decision making process**

In analyzing the decision-making process on country selection, Volunteer placement and resource allocation among countries, the assessment team looked at three related issues:

- The decision to enter or re-enter a country;
- Decisions regarding the allocation of Volunteers and other resources among existing Peace Corps countries; and,
- The decision to depart from a country.

In all cases, three essential conditions must always be met:<sup>10</sup>

- Country commitment to the Peace Corps – does or will the country support the Peace Corps in a way that will make the agency’s presence in that country a success?
- Safety and Security – does an acceptable, safe, and secure environment exist for Volunteers and staff?
- Resources – does the Peace Corps have a reasonable expectation that it will have the financial resources available to successfully support its program in that country?

Agency staff members look at other variables to determine the anticipated or actual level of success of a program in each country.<sup>11</sup> These criteria are examined when the Peace Corps is invited into a particular country and on an ongoing basis once the Peace Corps is operating in a country. They include, but are not limited to:

- The country’s development objectives and their compatibility with the Peace Corps’ core areas of expertise (education, health and HIV/AIDS, business development, environment, agriculture, and youth development);
- The presence and viability of Volunteer projects;
- The cost effectiveness of programs and post management; and,
- The congruence with priority United States interests.

The sections that follow provide a detailed description of the decision-making process that drives country selection, Volunteer placement and resource allocation. In subsequent sections, the assessment team has also documented how the agency ensures that it is responsive to United States interests and makes specific recommendations to improve the overall decision-making process.

### A.3. Entry or re-entry into a country

#### A.3.a The decision to conduct a country assessment

The process to determine which countries will be considered for new agency programs (or the re-establishment of a program) starts with an official letter of request from the country. When the Peace Corps receives a letter of invitation, the Office of the Director requests a preliminary review to determine if the next step—a formal country assessment—should be conducted. At this stage, the Peace Corps’ staff members make a very early determination of the proposed program’s viability, prior to committing the resources needed to carry out a country assessment. The preliminary review is based on a quick analysis of the three essential conditions (the country’s level of interest, safety and security and availability of financial resources), along with additional criteria, such as the compatibility between the requesting country’s development objectives and the Peace Corps’ core areas of expertise.

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix IV-1 provides additional information on these three essential conditions.

<sup>11</sup> The Peace Corps uses a variety of monitoring and evaluation tools to assess the success of a program beyond those discussed in this section. These tools are discussed in detail in chapter V part C, “Strengthening Management and Independent Evaluation and Oversight.”

### A.3.b Formalizing the decision to conduct a country assessment

The review process described above is always carried out, but it is not formally documented. The decision whether to carry out a country assessment needs to be documented in a formal memorandum approved by the Director. In making a recommendation, the memorandum should present a summary of the preliminary review and discuss any special or extenuating circumstances. If the decision is positive, the memorandum should also recommend staff members to carry out the assessment, their roles on the country assessment team, and a proposed timeline.

Once the decision has been made to carry out an assessment, funding for the assessment needs to be secured. Under the current process, this is accomplished through a Request for Agency Resources, which must be approved by the Office of the Director.

### A.3.c The country assessment

The Director decides whether to conduct a country assessment and approves the team of senior managers who will travel to conduct the assessment. The Peace Corps uses a comprehensive assessment guide<sup>12</sup> that details the process. The assessment guide describes the process as follows:

“Before deciding to enter or re-enter a country, it is the practice of the Peace Corps to conduct an assessment of the social, political, and security conditions in the country in order to determine the feasibility of establishing a Peace Corps program.”

A brief description of the new country assessment process is provided in Appendix IV-2.

### A.3.d Recent country assessments and review of pending requests

In the past four years, the Peace Corps has carried out ten country assessments. Nine of these have resulted in positive recommendations, and of these, the Peace Corps has established programs in eight countries (Ethiopia, Guinea, Rwanda, Liberia, Kenya, Madagascar, Indonesia and Sierra Leone). The Peace Corps has signed a country agreement with the ninth country—Colombia—and is currently in the process of establishing a program in that country. The country assessment team made a negative recommendation concerning the tenth country due to cost considerations.

The Peace Corps has letters of request or letters of inquiry on file since 2002 from 27 countries where it has not established a program. The assessment team found adequate records regarding the status of recent country assessments and pending country requests and letters of inquiries. The assessment team also was told that the regional directors carry out periodic informal reviews of the countries that have pending requests or letters of inquiry to determine if there should be any follow-up, however, there was no documentation of these reviews. As discussed in section A.10 of this chapter, the assessment team recommends that the agency review existing country requests within the framework of a broader process that considers new country entries, departures from countries, and the reallocation of resources among Peace Corps countries.

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<sup>12</sup> Peace Corps: New Country Assessment Guide, March 2007

#### A.3.e Decision to enter or re-enter a country

The country assessment report provides the Director with a recommendation on whether to establish a program in a country. The final decision is made by the Director after reviewing the country assessment, discussing the findings with the country assessment team and the Office of Global Operations, and verifying that the Peace Corps has the resources to support such a program. At that point, the Director can request additional information prior to making the decision, or can proceed to make a decision.

The assessment team found little documentation in the agency's files formalizing recent decisions regarding the establishment of programs upon completion of a country assessment. In the future, these decisions need to be documented in a memorandum signed by the Director.

#### A.3.f Establishing a program in a country

As with the New Country Assessment Guide, the Peace Corps also has a very detailed manual that establishes clear guidance on establishing an office in a country.<sup>13</sup> Under normal conditions, the Peace Corps can establish an initial program within four to six months after the formal decision has been made to go forward and a budget has been secured. The most recent decisions to open a program in a country have been Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Colombia.

##### **From Assessment to the Establishment of a Program – Liberia**

- The country assessment was completed in the third quarter of FY 2007. The assessment concluded that the Peace Corps should launch a program in Liberia with Peace Corps Response Volunteers in a first phase.
- A budget for the program was prepared and approved in the fourth quarter of FY 2007.
- The Peace Corps began to staff the program in Liberia in the second quarter of FY 2008.
- The country director arrived at post in the third quarter of FY 2008.
- The first Peace Corps Response Volunteers arrived in-country in the first quarter of FY 2009.
- The first Peace Corps Volunteers will arrive in-country in the fourth quarter of FY 2010.

#### A.4. Allocating Volunteer and other resources among Peace Corps countries

##### A.4.a Introduction

The allocation of Volunteer and other resources among the countries where the Peace Corps has a presence is driven by a multilevel decision process as well. As in the case of a new country entry, the decision to increase, decrease, or maintain the size of an existing program is driven by the following question: Does the country, and the specific program in that country, contribute significantly to the achievement of the Peace Corps' mission and three goals? The process also begins with a management review of the three primary conditions: host country commitment, safety and security of Volunteers and staff, and the availability of funding within the agency. How these questions are answered, however, varies significantly from the decision process described in the new country entry section, primarily because of the experience that already exists in managing a program in that country.

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<sup>13</sup> Peace Corps: New Country Entry Guide, March 2007

#### A.4.b The Integrated Planning and Budgeting System

The Integrated Planning and Budgeting System (IPBS) is the Peace Corps' primary program and resource management planning mechanism. It is the principal tool used to allocate resources across the entire agency. A more detailed discussion of the IPBS process is provided in chapter V of this report, "Strengthening Management and Independent Evaluation and Oversight."

The IPBS process provides a great deal of latitude to country directors and their staff, allowing them to propose how they best can utilize resources and Volunteers. Posts' staff members are the agency's main point of contact with Volunteers and their programs, as well as with the host country counterparts. As a result, they are the most effective resource available to the agency to carry out the planning and budgeting process in each country.

The review process in Washington, D.C. adds a regional perspective to the process, and the new Office of Global Operations strengthens the global perspective. Headquarters staff has access to a broad range of tools and information that can be used to measure the performance of a country program and that assists in making decisions on country plans and budget requests. These include formal and informal tools such as the quarterly reports prepared for headquarters by the posts, independent inspector general audits on posts, impact studies, and the Annual Volunteer Surveys carried out by Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning, Project Status Reports, country level surveys, the Volunteer Reporting Tool, country management's meetings with staff, the Volunteer advisory committees, and project counterparts.<sup>14</sup> This information strengthens the process and helps ensure that increasing levels of resources are channeled towards the most productive countries and programs.

After reviewing the IPBS process for posts, the assessment team found that the overall process could be improved if it were implemented on a much more interactive basis. For example, after submitting the country strategic plan in their IPBS submissions at the end of the second quarter of the fiscal year, some country directors stated that they received little immediate feedback. Furthermore, when final guidance was provided to posts several months later—which can translate into significant changes in the country program for the next fiscal year—the original country strategic plan is not modified. The assessment team also found some differences among the three regions in the methodology used to analyze the individual country IPBS submissions.

#### A.5. Country closures and suspensions in the last ten years

In the last ten years, the Peace Corps has closed or suspended operations in 23 countries. A list of the countries and the dates that they were closed or suspended is provided in Appendix IV-3.

Of the 23 program closures or suspensions listed in the appendix, seventeen were due to serious concerns regarding the safety and security of Volunteers. The security and safety of Volunteers is of the utmost importance to the agency, and safety and security are constantly monitored and evaluated by the agency's Office of Safety and Security.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> A more detailed discussion of these management and reporting tools is included in chapter V "Strengthening Management and Independent Evaluation and Oversight."

<sup>15</sup> The Office of Safety and Security was established in March 2003 to foster improved communication, coordination, oversight, and accountability for all Peace Corps safety and security efforts. The office is responsible for Volunteer safety and overseas security; information and personnel security; and emergency preparedness, plans, training, and exercises. The office also monitors crime statistics to identify trends and highlight potential safety risks to Volunteers.

In addition, the Peace Corps closed operations in six countries after finding that initial objectives for opening a program in these countries had been accomplished and that the country no longer required the types of skills that the Peace Corps could offer. Most of these countries had also begun receiving large levels of assistance from the European Union, further reducing the demand for the Peace Corps' programs.

Poland, Slovakia, and the Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—were among the countries where the Peace Corps' programs closed down after a decade of significant progress during a critical period. All had shown significant progress in their levels of prosperity and, consequently, the decision was made to shift agency resources elsewhere. In all of these countries, the Peace Corps left behind a legacy of service, community development, and cross-cultural exchange in line with the agency's mission and objectives.

#### A.6. Reflecting priority United States interests

The Peace Corps relies on three major sources of information for input on priority United States interests—The White House, Congress, and the Department of State. All three entities influence the countries in which the agency has a presence and how resources are allocated among countries.

##### A.6.a Relationship and interaction with the White House

As set forth in the Peace Corps Act, the Director of the Peace Corps reports to the President of the United States. Senior staff within the agency are appointed by the executive branch. The agency also has an appointed White House liaison, who was the first political appointee within the agency and who began shortly after the inauguration of the President in 2009. The liaison works closely with Presidential Personnel and other White House offices to coordinate and advance the Peace Corps agenda.

Senior management appointees at the agency work closely with offices in the White House to better serve the American public. These include, but are not limited to, Cabinet Affairs, Presidential Personnel, the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of the First Lady, the Office of the Vice President, the Office of Congressional Affairs, and the Office of Social Innovation within the Domestic Policy Council. The Peace Corps also participates in a variety of administration task forces, such as the White House Task Force on Women and Girls.

##### A.6.b Relationship and interaction with Congress

The Peace Corps provides frequent updates to Congress regarding ongoing agency initiatives. The agency regularly consults with authorizing and appropriating committees and other congressional stakeholders on issues related to the Peace Corps' operations, including the opening, closing, and expansion of the Peace Corps' programs. In the Senate, the Peace Corps falls under the jurisdiction of the Senate Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs as well as the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, the Peace Corps, and Narcotics Affairs. In the House of Representatives, the House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs and the House Foreign Affairs Committee have jurisdiction over the Peace Corps.

The Office of Congressional Relations at the Peace Corps coordinates activities related to all legislative issues and interests and serves as the official liaison between the Director of the Peace Corps and members of Congress and congressional staff. Consultations with Congress occur on an ongoing basis through meetings between the Director and Members of Congress, as well as meetings between the Peace Corps' staff and congressional staff. Additionally, the Peace Corps regularly receives congressional inquiries

related to specific constituent issues and operational issues. The Office of Congressional Relations coordinates the Peace Corps' response to these inquiries in a timely manner. Through the inquiry and response process, agency administrators gain an understanding of the views of Congress. The information gleaned from regular interaction with congressional stakeholders is factored into the agency's decisions at the highest levels.

The Peace Corps is fortunate to have strong support from returned Peace Corps Volunteers in all facets of American life. There are currently six returned Peace Corps Volunteer Members of Congress. They include Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT), Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA), Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI), Rep. Steve Driehaus (D-OH), and Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA). Through ongoing communication between Congress and the Peace Corps, congressional counsel plays an important role in ensuring that the Peace Corps' operations reflect current global realities, are consistent with U.S. priorities, and remain true to the Peace Corps' mission and three goals.

#### A.6.c Relationship and interaction with the Department of State

The relationship between the Peace Corps and the Department of State was initially defined in the Peace Corps Act,<sup>16</sup> as well as in subsequent cables to the chiefs of missions from the Secretary of State in almost every administration since 1961.

These cables clarify the independent nature of the agency along with the need for coordination and support. Appendices IV- 4 and 5 contain copies of two examples. The first of these cables was sent in March 1963 by then-Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and the most recent example of these cables was sent by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in February 2009.

An excerpt from the cable sent by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in February 2009 (REF: 07 State 78240) clarifies the relationship:

“3. Relationship between the U.S. Mission and Peace Corps Staff:”

“B. The President's Letter of Instruction and other relevant laws and regulations (including your delegated duties under the Diplomatic Security Act) outline your authority over and responsibility for all Executive Branch employees, including Peace Corps staff. As Secretary of State, I am responsible for the 'continuous supervision and general direction' of the Peace Corps programs to ensure they are effectively integrated both at home and abroad, and 'the foreign policy of the United States is best served thereby.' Like my predecessors, I ask that you join me in exercising these authorities so as to provide the Peace Corps with as much autonomy and flexibility in its day-to-day operations as possible, so long as this does not conflict with U.S. objectives and policies. As Secretary Rusk stated in 1961, 'The Peace Corps is not an instrument of foreign policy because to make it so would rob it of its contribution to foreign policy.'”

The Peace Corps maintains on-going dialogue with the Department of State and has done so since its inception. The Peace Corps' country directors form part of the U.S. Embassy's country team and have ready access to the Chief of Mission and embassy staff. Embassy personnel coordinate with the Peace Corps' staff on many fronts, including safety and security and health issues. When conducting a new country assessment or when reviewing ongoing operations, the Peace Corps' staff members rely heavily on the U.S. embassy in gathering information.

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<sup>16</sup> 1.0 Peace Corps Act, Public Law 87-293 (September 22,1961 – as amended) Title 22 United States Code

**Ambassador Mark H. Gitenstein**  
**Comments on the Peace Corps in Romania**

“One of the greatest strengths of the Peace Corps is its ability to complement U.S. interests overseas without compromising its independence. Through strong collaboration and regular communication with the Peace Corps country director and his/her staff, the work of the Peace Corps goes a long way to strengthening our bilateral relations and enhancing the USG portfolio abroad.”

“A more direct advocacy of U.S. policy interests could jeopardize the Peace Corps’ significant contribution by undermining its credibility and independence in-country. So, the Peace Corps, by its very nature, operates very differently from the U.S. mission. Embassies work with contacts and colleagues primarily in the capital city. Volunteers work with people in villages and small towns whom would otherwise not interact with an American, let alone the United States government. The positive impression Volunteers generally make as a result of their work and service efforts, dramatically enhances our ability to build friendships and partnerships abroad.”

“In November 2009 I had the opportunity to participate as key note speaker in a Model United Nations Conference organized by a Peace Corps Volunteer and his school. Over 200 high school students from 125 schools across Romania participated in the event. Name one other organization capable of providing this type of opportunity with this country’s future citizens and leaders? The Peace Corps allows us to have a greatly enhanced public profile and to take the concept of public diplomacy to a higher and much needed level abroad.”

“However, to be a successful complement to U.S. interests overseas, the Peace Corps needs to ensure that Volunteers are first and foremost engaged with meaningful opportunities for work and that their accomplishments in the agency’s first goal are always leading the effort and justifying their presence in-country. Having a PC program greatly enhances the friendship between the U.S. and other nations but that would and could not be possible if Volunteers were not properly assigned within strong projects and programs. The Peace Corps’ contribution is contingent upon such strong programming.”

The Peace Corps’ management in Washington, D.C., also is in frequent contact with personnel from the Department of State. The Director of the agency meets with Chiefs of Missions when traveling abroad and meets with them when they travel to Washington, D.C., and a meeting is requested. These meetings may focus on existing programs, although the purpose of these meeting often is to explore establishing a program in a new country.

A.6.d Responding to priority United States interests

Input from the White House, Congress, and the State Department provide the basis upon which the Peace Corps works to be responsive to priority United States interests. These inputs form one of the key criteria used by the agency and are reflected in the agency’s strategic plan and annual operating plan and budget.

Examples that demonstrate the agency’s responsiveness to priority United States interests can be found in every decade of the Peace Corps’ history. For example, in the 1980s, Peace Corps Volunteers worked with counterparts in many African countries to overcome the challenges of recurring drought and famine, rapidly increasing populations, and deteriorating economies. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the Peace Corps mobilized quickly to launch programs throughout the former Soviet Union. Between 1989 and 2005, the Peace Corps established programs in twelve of the fourteen newly independent states. In total, the Peace Corps established programs in twenty post-Soviet states.

In the 1990s, the agency began to expand rapidly in the area of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Today the Peace Corps is a key partner in national responses to HIV/AIDS around the world. The unique



role of the Peace Corps has enabled Volunteers to mobilize isolated communities and difficult to reach populations not served by other organizations. In 2009, Volunteers' HIV/AIDS activities assisted more than 1,000,000 individuals, more than 42,000 HIV/AIDS service providers, and nearly 3,100 organizations.

More recently, the agency has responded by establishing or expanding programs in predominately Muslim countries. Today, nearly 25 percent of all Peace Corps Volunteers serve in more than a third of all the countries considered to be predominately Muslim.<sup>17</sup> This remains a top priority for the agency and the Director continues to explore the possibility of establishing additional programs in predominately Muslim countries in the next few years.<sup>18</sup>

The most recent example of the Peace Corps' responsiveness to priority United States interests is the rapid response that the agency was able to mobilize in response to the devastating earthquake in Haiti earlier this year.

The assessment team's review concluded that the agency's management actively receives information on priority United States interests through well-established procedures from key sources in the government. Furthermore, the assessment team verified that this information is actively used in making Volunteer and other resource allocation decisions. As discussed in the sections above, this has resulted in decisions that consistently have been shown to be complementary to United States priority interests over the years. The agency's record in this area demonstrates that the Peace Corps has responded in a timely manner with relevant programs.

**Responding to Priority United States Interests  
Haiti Earthquake Relief Response by the Peace Corps**

The Peace Corps was able to respond immediately to the call to participate in the U.S. government's relief effort for Haiti by:

- Providing four Creole-speaking staff members on thirty day assignments to serve as translators and to assist in other relief efforts.
- Mobilizing Volunteers in the Dominican Republic immediately after the earthquake to assist in a hospital for refugees in Jimani and to assist in organizing and loading relief supplies for shipment across the border.

Within two weeks of the earthquake, the agency was exploring new assignments for Peace Corps Response personnel with the American Refugee Committee as well as with international NGOs. All potential partners were interested in the Peace Corps' ability to field Haitian Creole-speaking returned Volunteers to work as translators and assist in other areas.

A.7. Country need versus Volunteer and other resource allocation

A.7.a Introduction

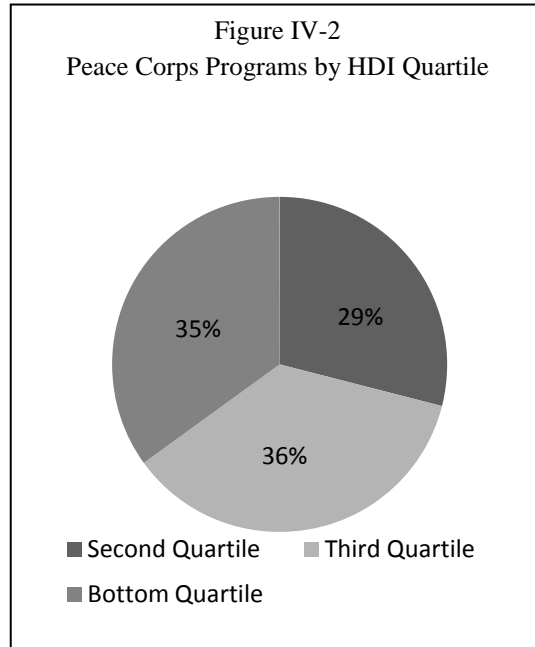
The Peace Corp reviews a country's level of development in determining whether it should enter into or maintain operations in a country. The Peace Corps' first goal, "Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women," demands that there be a strong need for the types of

<sup>17</sup> A predominately Muslim country is defined by the Peace Corps as a country with a population that is at least 40% Muslim.

<sup>18</sup> Peace Corps' ability to expand into any new country is dependent on a written expression of interest from a senior host government representative, as well as a positive country assessment and the availability of funds as explained in section A.2 of this chapter.

skills that Volunteers offer. The needs that match Volunteer skills are most in demand in less developed countries that cannot acquire the resources or alternatives that Peace Corps Volunteers can provide.

To test the degree to which the Peace Corps' resources are channeled towards countries that have the greatest needs, the assessment team ranked the countries where the agency maintains programs against the 2009 Human Development Index (HDI) developed by the United Nations Development Programme.<sup>19</sup> The analysis revealed that approximately 70 percent of the agency's programs are in countries that fall in the bottom half of the HDI rankings (See Figure IV – 2). Only 29 percent of the agency's posts fall in the second quartile, and even in those posts, the majority of Volunteers are in underserved areas. None of the countries where the Peace Corps is present ranked in the top quartile. This distribution is consistent with the nature of the work that the agency undertakes.



#### A.7.b Review of the results of the HDI distribution

As discussed in section A.5 of this chapter, the agency has closed operations in 23 countries in the last ten years, seventeen of which were for safety and security reasons. The remaining six countries were closed after determining that the initial objectives of the Peace Corps' mission in those countries had been accomplished. Of these six, four currently fall in the first quartile of the HDI distribution—Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and the Slovak Republic. Latvia and Russia are in the second quartile. While the development status of these countries was not the only reason for closing the programs—the agency faced budget reductions at the time—their relatively high ranking on the HDI vis-à-vis other countries where the agency maintains programs was an important criteria in the decision to graduate these countries.

The assessment team recommends formally incorporating the HDI as a criteria in deciding country selection, Volunteer placement, and resource allocation among countries. At the same time, the assessment team cautions against using the index as a hard rule to qualify or disqualify a country. The exception to this would be countries that fall in the highest quartile of the HDI—the agency should not be present in these countries. For those Peace Corps countries that are ranked in the upper half of the second quartile, the agency needs to articulate a clear rationale to be in that country. For example, the agency could justify a program in a relatively high HDI country if the program focuses on a sector of interest (e.g. environment, HIV/AIDS). The agency might also justify a program in a relatively high HDI country if the program focuses on selected underserved regions needs within those regions. Other programs could be explored in relatively high HDI countries if there is a significant level of cost-sharing with the host country or if the host country is interested in creating its own volunteer program to serve alongside Peace Corps Volunteers.

The assessment team analyzed programs in those Peace Corps countries that scored the highest on the HDI and found compelling reasons for maintaining programs in those countries. However, the team did not feel

<sup>19</sup> The Human Development Index developed by the United Nations Development Programme was first introduced in 1990. It serves as a measure of development by combining indicators of life expectancy, educational attainment and income in one index. For purposes of this analysis, the assessment team used the 182 countries included in the Index and broke them out into quartiles.

that the agency's documentation in these situations communicated its rationale adequately. The Peace Corps needs to do a better job of articulating why it continues to allocate resources in countries that rank relatively high on the HDI.

The agency reviews its programs in every country and allocates resources across programs, countries and regions as part of the annual IPBS process introduced in section A.3 of this chapter, which is discussed in greater detail in chapter V. Utilizing the Integrated Planning and Budgeting System (IPBS) process, the agency has closed programs, particularly when the agency faced resource constraints. However, the assessment team found that the agency does not have a periodic formal review process to verify that its programs in high HDI countries are meeting the needs of an underserved population and verify that those needs will not be met if the Peace Corps were to terminate its programs in that country. The assessment team feels that Office of Global Operations should perform such a review annually and document the results. Recommendations on how this review would be carried out are discussed in section C of this chapter

#### A.8. Meeting country needs – measuring impact

The Peace Corps has been working on tools to measure program impact since it began periodically to survey active Volunteers in 1973. The most of important of these is the Annual Volunteer Survey that asks specific questions about work toward Goals 1 and 2. To complement the Volunteer surveys, the Peace Corps under the direction of the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning launched a series of studies to measure the impact of Volunteer activities with regard to the Peace Corps' first two goals. As described in further detail in chapter V, the country-level studies evaluate the impact of Volunteers on the host country nationals with whom they live and work, as well as the organizations with which they are assigned to cooperate. The studies focus on Volunteers' efforts to transfer needed skills to host country counterparts (Goal 1) and to promote a better understanding of Americans among host country nationals (Goal 2).

The impact studies, introduced in 2008, provide the agency's management with an independent assessment of the Peace Corps' programs by host country counterparts and beneficiaries. In just a short time, the impact studies have become an important tool that enhances the decision process used to allocate Volunteer and other resources among countries. These studies, carried out by independent, host-country nationals, are also relatively inexpensive to conduct.

The Volunteer surveys, input from country directors and regional managers, and the impact studies described above provide the agency with important feedback that can be used to monitor and evaluate program impact and adjust programs accordingly.

#### A.9. Conclusions

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the agency's statutory mission "to promote world peace and friendship" is, by definition, global in breadth. As a result, the Peace Corps' policy has been to respond favorably to all reasonable requests for assistance from interested countries, provided that funding is available and that basic safety and programmatic conditions are met. However, due to limits on funding, the number of countries requesting assistance has been greater than the number of countries that the agency has been able to assist.

In analyzing funding options for expanding into new countries, the agency has been reluctant to look at reducing or even closing programs in existing countries. This may be because the agency's mission

supports a broad global presence. This may also be because a decision to reduce operations or close a country does not free up resources immediately. It takes several years to reduce the size of a post given that Volunteers are at post for 27 months. It can take up to five years to totally withdraw from a country.

The assessment team also observed that most decisions on new country entries, country closures, and resource allocation among existing countries are made in a series of independent decisions. For example, the agency makes a decision on whether to establish a program in each country upon completion of the country assessment. This decision is made independent of decisions on other possible country entries or future country assessments, and is made independent of decisions that affect resource allocation among existing countries.

The assessment team believes that the decision process on country selection, Volunteer placement, and resource allocation among existing countries would be greatly enhanced by an analysis of all possible options concurrently. This portfolio review, which should be conducted annually prior to the start of the annual planning and budgeting cycle, would provide the agency's decision makers with a comprehensive view of all possible options regarding potential new country entries, country closures, and existing countries and would lead to better resource allocation decisions.

The proposed portfolio review analysis would greatly enhance the current IPBS process. As noted in section A.4 of this chapter, one of the greatest strengths of the IPBS process is that it provides a great deal of latitude to country directors and their staff to propose options for their posts. Posts' staff members are the agency's main point of contact with Volunteers and host country counterparts and as a result are best positioned to make recommendations on the programs in their respective countries. By carrying out the analysis prior to the start of the annual IPBS process, the Office of the Director could provide the regions and individual posts with clearer guidance on how to prepare their respective IPBS submissions. This additional guidance would provide country directors with a greater level of guidance than is currently provided, injecting a greater level of strategic thinking into the overall IPBS process.

The assessment team recommends that the agency carry out the annual portfolio review utilizing specific criteria. These criteria would include a country's ranking on the Human Development Index and a measure of programmatic impact as described in sections A.7 and A.8 of this chapter. The Office of Global Operations has already begun to gather the information required to undertake the first review. A description of each of the criteria, as well as the source for the information and responsible office is provided in the matrix following the recommendations below.

Recommendation IV-1: The assessment team recommends that the agency modify the existing process used in analyzing what services it provides to countries and at what levels. The agency needs to make decisions on potential new country entries, possible country departures, as well as the level of resources allocated among all countries in one integral process. This analysis should take place annually and should be prepared for the Office of the Director by the Office of Global Operations with the support of the regions and Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning. Specifically, the analysis should review:

- 1a New entry opportunities in countries where an assessment has been carried out, as well as for countries that have expressed an interest in the Peace Corps and where an assessment would need to be updated, or where an assessment would need to be carried out. The review would need to provide a preliminary recommendation on possible new country entries for the current and next fiscal years, as well as on country assessments to be carried out in the next six to twelve months.
- 1b Programs in existing countries where the agency is not achieving the desired impact. The review also should make a preliminary recommendation on possible actions to rectify the problem, including reorganizing, reducing or terminating the program in that country.
- 1c Programs in existing countries that fall in the top half of the second quartile of the HDI to verify the relevance of the programs in those countries and make preliminary recommendations regarding the future of the agency's programs in that country. Possible recommendations might include re-focusing the program on underserved communities, or leaving the country to free up resources for countries in the third and fourth quartiles of the HDI.
- 1d Programs in existing high-performing posts, making preliminary recommendations on the expansion of programs in those countries.

The criteria to be used in carrying out the annual analysis would include existing criteria, as well as the addition of two new criteria: a measure of need or development status, which would be HDI; and a measure of impact, which would be quantified primarily through the agency's impact studies, the Annual Volunteer Survey, and Project Status Reports.

Recommendation IV-2: The assessment team recommends that the agency add two new criteria to those currently used in the country review process described in IV-1: HDI and Impact.

Finally, as pointed out in the earlier sections of this chapter, the agency has not been consistent in documenting the decisions made about new country entries, program closures, or how resources are allocated among countries. The assessment team also recommends that the overall resource allocation process needs to be articulated, documented, and divulged more openly.

Recommendation IV-3: The assessment team recommends that the agency clearly document and better communicate the overall country selection and resource allocation process described in recommendations IV-1 and IV-2 above. Additionally, the agency needs to improve the documentation of individual decisions made as part of the overall process (e.g. decisions to carry out country assessments, enter into a new country, country closures, etc.).

CRITERIA – ANNUAL PORTFOLIO REVIEW

CRITERIA	INFORMATION SOURCE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE
Country's commitment to the Peace Corps' program	Quarterly host country contribution submission	EMA, Africa, IAP regions
	Country director input	EMA, Africa, IAP regions
	Annual Volunteer Survey – specific questions	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning
	Regional director input	Global Operations EMA, Africa, IAP regions
	Host government (ambassador to the U.S. and foreign ministry)	Director's Office Global Operations
Safety, security, and medical care of the Volunteer	Annual report on violent crime	Office of Safety and Security
	Annual Volunteer Survey – specific questions	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning
	Country Health Resources Survey and specific country rating	Office of Medical Services
	Country director input	EMA, Africa, IAP regions
	Regional Director input	Global Operations EMA, Africa, IAP regions
Impact (Goals 1 and 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countries where the Peace Corps has demonstrated effectiveness</li> <li>• Countries where there is a need to build stronger relationships</li> </ul>	Impact Studies	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning
	Annual Volunteer Survey – specific questions	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning
	Project Status Reports	The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support
	Country director input	EMA, Africa, IAP regions
	Regional Director input	Global Operations EMA, Africa, IAP regions
Post Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countries where post management insures cost effective program implementation</li> </ul>	IPBS submission	EMA, Africa, IAP regions
	Internal Management Assessments	Country directors; EMA, Africa, IAP regions; Global Operations
	Post Audits	Office of the Inspector General
	Country director input	EMA, Africa, IAP regions
	Regional Director input	Global Operations EMA, Africa, IAP regions
	Annual Volunteer Survey – specific questions	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning

CRITERIA – ANNUAL PORTFOLIO REVIEW (CONTINUED)

CRITERIA	INFORMATION SOURCE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE
<p>Strategic Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countries where the Peace Corps' mandate compliments other U.S. development investments</li> <li>• Countries critical to ensuring global peace and security where the Peace Corps can effectively carry out its mission of World Peace</li> </ul>	<p>Input from the White House, Congress and the Department of State</p>	<p>The Director's Office Global Operations</p>
<p>Cost Effectiveness</p>	<p>Total cost per Volunteer by post</p>	<p>Office of the Chief Financial Officer</p>
<p>Country Need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranking on the Human Development Index</li> </ul>	<p>Ranking of posts on the Human Development Index by quartile;</p>	<p>Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited number of active donors present</li> </ul>	<p>Country director input</p>	<p>EMA, Africa, IAP regions</p>

B. RECENT CHANGES

In the last twelve months, the agency has made some important changes in the overall resource allocation process. The most important of these revolve around the creation of the Office of Global Operations and improvements that are currently being made to the agency's Integrated Planning and Budget System.

B.1. The Office of Global Operations

In October 2009, the Office of Global Operations was established to provide overarching strategic support and management to several aspects of the agency's direct Volunteer operations. This new office aims to encourage efficiencies by streamlining agency operations, disseminating best practices across the regions, providing an organized and cohesive voice to agency leadership, and by coordinating the activities of all overseas operations.

The Office of Global Operations provides leadership, staffing, and resources to foster alignment, manage development, coordinate initiatives, and track the progress and the impact of the Peace Corps' overseas operations. In addition to the Peace Corps' three geographic regions (Africa; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia; and Inter-America and the Pacific), the Office of Global Operations also includes the Office of Overseas Program and Training Support, the Office of AIDS Relief, and Peace Corps Response.

The assessment team believes that the creation of this office, charged with overseeing the departments that are directly responsible for the placement of Volunteers and the programming and training support that these Volunteers require, will further strengthen decisions on Volunteer and other resource allocation.

## B.2. Improvements to the Integrated Planning and Budgeting System (IPBS)

The Peace Corps has embarked on a project to implement new budgeting software for the agency that improves the overall budgeting process. The agency has purchased the software rights to Hyperion Planning, a leading budget planning and analytics software application recently acquired by Oracle. This system will be integrated with the Peace Corps' current financial management system, which will also automate part of the budgeting process that in the past was handled manually. The system is expected to roll out in July 2010.

The agency has also refined the Integrated Planning and Budgeting System (IPBS) process for FY 2011 planning. Because posts received guidance almost six weeks earlier than in previous years, posts had additional preparation time. The Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning also held a workshop with members of all the regional country desk units about information that can provide context for the IPBS submission development. This workshop demonstrated ways in which Volunteer survey data, early termination data, and other information can be used to guide planning and development of future IPBS submissions by posts.

## C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

The assessment team believes that the resource allocation process used by the Peace Corps to decide which countries it serves, and at what levels, can be significantly improved. Specifically, the current process:

- Is not well documented, not transparent, and difficult to justify;
- Is carried out through a series of discrete decisions as issues surface and opportunities arise rather than as one integral process; and,
- Can be strengthened by analyzing potential new country entries and potential country closures in one process and by introducing additional selection criteria in the decision process.

Recommendation IV-1: The assessment team recommends that the agency modify the existing process used in analyzing what services it provides to countries and at what levels. The agency needs to make decisions on potential new country entries, possible country departures, as well as the level of resources allocated among all countries in one integral process. This analysis should take place annually and should be prepared for the Director's office by the Office of Global Operations with the support of the regions and Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning. Specifically, the analysis should review:

- 1a New entry opportunities in countries where an assessment has been carried out, as well as for countries that have expressed an interest in the Peace Corps and where an assessment would need to be updated, or where an assessment would need to be carried out. The review would need to provide a preliminary recommendation on possible new country entries for the current and next fiscal years, as well as on country assessments to be carried out in the next six to twelve months.
- 1b Programs in existing countries where the agency is not achieving the desired impact. The review also should make a preliminary recommendation on possible actions to rectify the problem, including reorganizing, reducing or terminating the program in that country.



- 1c Programs in existing countries that fall in the top half of the second quartile of the HDI to verify the relevance of the programs in those countries and make preliminary recommendations regarding the future of the agency's programs in that country. Possible recommendations might include re-focusing the program on underserved communities, or leaving the country to free up resources for countries in the third and fourth quartiles of the HDI.
- 1d Programs in existing high-performing posts, making preliminary recommendations on the expansion of programs in those countries.

The revised country review process described above will provide the Director of the agency with the global perspective required to make rational resource allocation decisions among countries and regions. The process will also result in greater guidance to the different units within the agency during the annual IPBS process, strengthening resource allocation decisions across the entire agency.

Recommendation IV-2: The assessment team recommends that the agency add two new criteria to those currently used in the country review process described in IV-1: HDI and Impact.

Recommendation IV-3: The assessment team recommends that the agency clearly document and better communicate the overall country selection and resource allocation process described in recommendations IV-1 and IV-2 above. Additionally, the agency needs to improve the documentation of individual decisions made as part of the overall process (e.g. decisions to carry out country assessments, enter into a new country, country closures, etc.).

C.2. Strategy for implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(S)	TIMING
<p>IV-1a, b, c, d The agency needs to modify the existing process used in analyzing what countries it serves in and at what levels, so that decisions on potential new country entries, possible country departures as well as the level of resources allocated among all countries are made in one integral process.</p>	<p>Office of the Director</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations; Office of the Chief Financial Officer; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Office of the Director; Office of Communications; Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning; Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support</p>	<p>An initial portfolio analysis should begin in Quarter 4 FY 2010 and should be conducted annually during the first quarter of each fiscal year prior to the beginning of the IPBS cycle.</p>
<p>IV-2 The assessment team recommends that the agency add two new criteria to the ones currently used in the country review process. These are HDI and Impact.</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations;</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning</p>	<p>Criteria would be incorporated into the portfolio analysis immediately.</p>

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

<p>IV-3 The assessment team recommends that the agency clearly document and better communicate the overall country selection and resource allocation process. Additionally, the agency needs to improve the documentation of individual decisions made as part of the overall process (e.g. decisions to carry out country assessments, enter into a new country, country closures, etc.).</p>	<p>Office of the Director</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations; Office of the Chief Financial Officer; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>
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## V. STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT AND INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND OVERSIGHT

### PART A: STRENGTHENING MANAGEMENT

#### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS

##### A.1. The agency's Strategic Planning Process

##### A.1.a Description of the strategic planning process

In 2007, the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP) was created and charged with enhancing the agency's strategic planning and reporting, evaluation and measurement, and data governance efforts. Beginning in 2008, OSIRP led the agency-wide effort to develop the strategic plan for fiscal years (FY) 2009 to 2014 and led the way on the FY 2009 to FY 2011 performance plan<sup>20</sup> that positions the Peace Corps for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The FY 2009-FY 2014 strategic planning process began with the development of the Peace Corps' logic model that presents the relationships among the invested resources, the activities that take place (outputs), and the benefits or changes that result (outcomes and/or impact). A logic model helps an organization ensure its strategies and tactics are aligned with its goals by illustrating how an organization's activities and processes are linked to its output and outcomes, or results and impact. The Peace Corps' logic model provides an agency-level view of the agency's operations and their intended results. It does not include every activity, process, or function but instead represents what the organization as a whole is trying to achieve. In this depiction, each function is able to identify where it fits in contributing to the outputs and outcomes of the organization.

In developing the FY 2009-FY 2014 strategic plan and the FY 2009-FY 2011 performance plan, the agency made an inclusive effort, involving over one hundred staff members at headquarters and at post. The process also included some external consultation. All posts and offices were instructed to align their operational plans and budgets to ensure compatibility with the strategic and operational performance goals presented in the strategic plan.

The five strategic goals presented in the strategic plan are very broad:

1. Enhance the capacity of host country individuals, organizations, and communities to meet their skill needs;
2. Promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of host country individuals, organizations, and communities served by Volunteers;
3. Foster outreach to Americans through agency programs that assist Volunteers and returned Peace Corps Volunteers to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans;
4. Provide Volunteers, who represent the diversity of Americans, to meet the evolving technical needs of host countries; and,

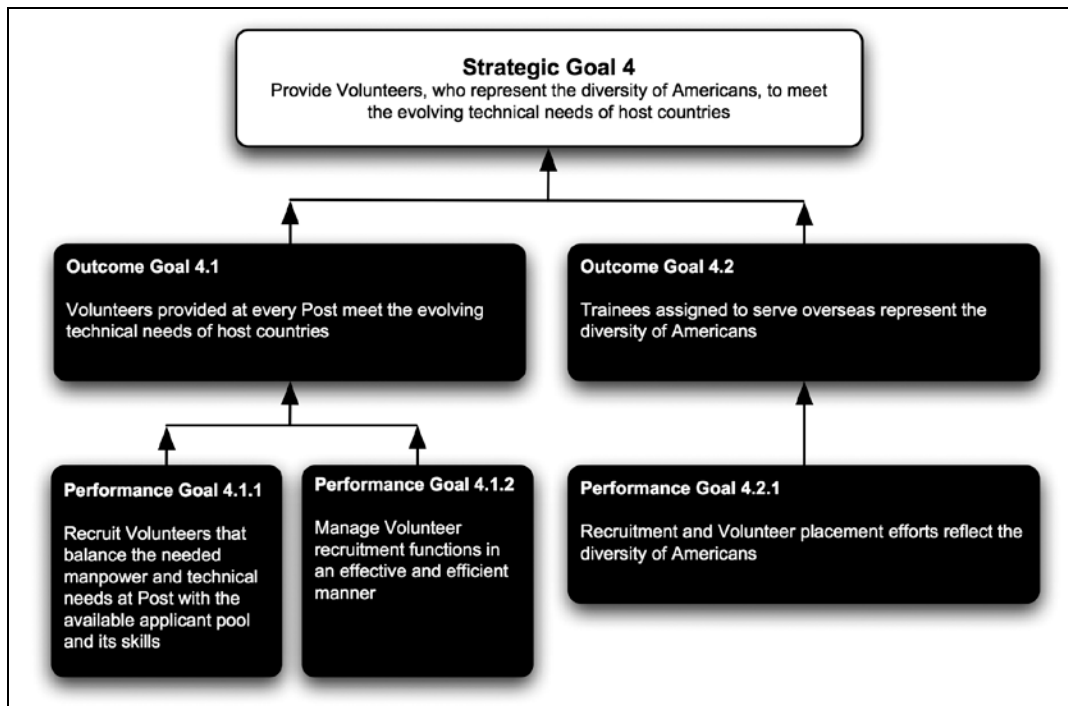
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<sup>20</sup> The three-year performance plan is required under the Government Performance and Results Act, P.L. 103-62 (1993). The three-year plan details the strategies and tactics for accomplishing strategic goals and specifies a method for verification and validation.

5. Implement the Peace Corps' mission in an effective and efficient manner through the provision of high quality Volunteer support with optimal health care, safety and security support, and effective management of resources.

Each strategic goal shows the related outcome and performance goals<sup>21</sup>, followed by the specific activities that will be implemented to accomplish the goals. All of the goals link back to the agency's focus on achieving its three core goals and carrying out the Peace Corps' mission. Specific annual indicators for each of the performance goals are specified in the performance plan, which forms part of the strategic plan. (See figure V-1 for an example of a strategic goal and related outcome and performance goals, and see figure V-2 for an example of specific indicators for a performance goal.)

Figure V-1  
Strategic Goal 4 and Related Outcome and Performance Goals



OSIRP monitors the implementation of the strategic and performance plans at the end of each quarter. Upon completion of the first quarter of the fiscal year, for example, OSIRP staff members solicit inputs from all of the operating units with responsibility for specific performance indicators on each of the performance goals to make sure that performance goals are understood and to identify any problem areas early in the year. OSIRP staff members compile information on each of the performance goals and lead the midyear review of agency progress against performance goals. A similar review is conducted at the end of the third quarter. Upon completion of the fiscal year, OSIRP staff members and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer prepare the Performance and Accountability Report for the year as required by the Office of Management and Budget. This report reviews the fiscal year's operations, as well as analyzes the actual strategic outcome and performance goals and indicators.

<sup>21</sup>As defined by the Office of Management and Budget, a strategic goal is as a statement of aim or purpose and is used to group multiple program outcome goals. Outcome goals describe the intended result of carrying out a program or activity. A performance goal is defined as a target level of performance over time expressed as a tangible, measurable objective, against which actual achievement can be compared.

Figure V-2

Performance Goal 4.2.1: Recruitment and Volunteer placement efforts reflect the diversity of Americans

Agency Level Performance Indicators			
Number of midcareer and age 50 and older applicants:			
	<u>Targets</u>		
FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	
1,500	1,700	1,900	
Number of applicants of diverse ethnicities:			
	<u>Targets</u>		
FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	
2,100	2,200	2,300	

In November 2009, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer finalized the Performance and Accountability Report for FY 2009 that presents the performance goals and indicators for the FY 2009 performance plan against actual reports. The report did indicate problems in a few areas, including the percentage of posts and headquarters offices with documented personnel practices that include staff development, performance management, and awards and recognition policies and the percentage of posts that provide an annual progress report to host country agency sponsors and partners.

A.1.b Assessment team observations on the strategic planning process

In the view of the assessment team, the efforts of the Peace Corps to establish an agency-wide strategic plan for FY 2009-FY 2014 as well as the FY 2009-FY 2011 performance plan, represent significant progress. While work can and should be done to ensure the plan is reflective of agency priorities and the realities of the Peace Corps’ operations in the field, the development of a “playbook” by which all agency efforts can be grounded and targeted is essential. However, in speaking with numerous agency staff, both overseas and in the United States, the assessment team found that many Peace Corps employees were not fully aware of the strategic plan, the performance plan, or their intended use. If the document is to reach its intended purpose, it will be important to address this disconnect.

Furthermore, chapter II of this report presents the new vision and strategy for the Peace Corps, that if formally approved by the agency, will require an update of the current six year plan to incorporate the key strategies necessary to implement the agency’s new strategic vision.

OSIRP should take the lead in realigning the Peace Corps’ Strategic Plan to provide the platform on which to build the agency’s new strategic vision. The resulting plan should then be given to every person who works for the Peace Corps. The agency’s performance plan must then inform all management decisions, including allocation of resources and performance appraisals. The progress on the plan should also be widely communicated.

**Recommendation V-1:** The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps update the current six year strategic plan to incorporate the vision and key strategies necessary to implement the proposed vision, strategy, and recommendations presented in this assessment report. Once completed, the agency should ensure the updated strategic and performance plans are disseminated widely, both inside and outside of the agency, and the agency should ensure their purpose is fully understood by agency staff.

A.2. Resource allocation within the agency

A.2.a Description of the current process – review of the FY 2010-FY 2012 planning and budgeting process

The Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) is the Peace Corps' primary program and resource management planning mechanism and is consistent with the planning process defined by the Government Performance and Results Act. It uses a rolling three-year planning cycle, which is updated annually, and it includes an assessment of the previous year's plans and projects. The IPBS is a multilevel strategic planning process that requires each Peace Corps office and sub-office to set goals and establish measurable objectives and specific tasks with related timelines. These plans are based on projected levels of funding. However, they are adjusted if projections are not realized through actual appropriations. The overall process creates a recurring cycle of planning, budgeting, execution, and reporting.

The IPBS is the principal mechanism used to allocate resources across the entire agency. To understand how the IPBS is used by the agency, the assessment team analyzed the IPBS process at the overseas post-level for the FY 2010-FY 2012 planning and budgeting process.<sup>22</sup> It is an iterative process that is directed from headquarters and that receives substantial input from all of the offices and sub-offices at headquarters, as well as from the posts. The IPBS is a multistep process that requires each Peace Corps office and sub-office to set goals and establish measurable objectives and specific tasks with related timelines. These goals and objectives reflect the strategies, as well as the outcome and performance goals, articulated in the six year strategy.

A.2.b Review of the FY 2011-FY 2013 planning and budgeting process

During FY 2009, it became apparent to the agency's management that budget allocations for FY 2010 and beyond would most probably be made at a higher level than had been anticipated at the beginning of the year. Headquarters staff began preparing for this possibility in late 2009 with all posts. As a result, the agency was able to get an early start on planning and budgeting FY 2011-FY 2013. Beginning in late FY 2009, headquarters staff began working with country directors to develop different growth scenarios, either through the expansion of existing programs or the launching of new programs. This process resulted in each post providing estimates of the number of new Volunteers they could effectively use under different funding scenarios. These estimates on Volunteer inputs were used to classify the countries as High-, Medium-, Low-, or No-growth posts.

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<sup>22</sup> A more comprehensive analysis of the Integrated Planning and Budget System is provided in Appendix V-1.



Figure V-3  
Summary of the Planning and Budgeting Cycle for Posts

	Posts Submit Three Year Strategic Plan	Review of Country Plans and Preparation of Summary Strategic Plans for FY 2011 - 2013	Posts Submit Revised 2011 Operating Plan / Budget	Preparation of Final Agency-wide operating budgets and submission to OMB for FY 2012		
February	April	June	August	October	December	
	Mid Year Review of FY 2010 Plan	Feedback to Posts on Trainee Input and Budget Guidance for FY 2012				

A change from the previous year's IPBS process was that country directors were instructed in the second quarter of FY 2010 to present Requests for Agency Resources to cover the investments that were required in FY 2010 to prepare for growth in FY 2011. These requests defined additional resource needs not included in their current fiscal year budgets. The requests were reviewed in April 2010 by the Director's office, and many were approved once the final FY 2010 appropriation was made in that same month. As country directors began to prepare their Post Strategic Plans FY 2011-FY 2013, they were again instructed to include any additional requests for FY 2010 resources to support post expansion projects in their plans.

The agency refined the IPBS process for the FY 2011 planning process, tying funding decisions more closely to the IPBS. In previous years, posts were reluctant to plan for first quarter activities because of the likelihood that the agency would be operating under a continuing resolution. This year, the guidance included budget numbers for the remainder of this fiscal year and for the next fiscal year. Posts were given the opportunity to make funding requests for this fiscal year and for the first quarter of FY 2011. Posts received guidance almost six weeks earlier than in previous years, allowing for additional preparation time.

OSIRP also held a workshop with members of all the regional country desk units on the topic of available data and information that can provide context for the IPBS submission development. This workshop demonstrated ways in which Volunteer survey data, early termination data, and other information can be used to guide the planning and development of future IPBS submissions by posts. OSIRP prepared country specific charts that compared performance over time and compared countries within a region. OSIRP also created country and region specific charts on the strategic plan indicators for post use.

The three regions also experimented with ways to improve the analysis of strategic plans and funding requests from posts and the feedback that is provided to posts by headquarters. One of the regions developed a system that integrates all of the analyses of each country's IPBS, so that they can be viewed and compared more easily than in previous years. It also allows for inclusion of post indicators of performance and specific guidance to the desk officer analyzing the individual submissions, resulting in an improved and more consistent analysis of the IPBS submissions.

### A.2.c Overall Review of the Process

Over the past few years, the agency has made many reforms to its financial operations. Sophisticated new tools for financial management are available, internal controls have been strengthened, and there is little opportunity for posts to stray from the process. After reviewing the IPBS cycle, the assessment team agreed that the IPBS is an excellent tool for resource and management planning. The following aspects of the IPBS are particularly valuable:

- The IPBS process provides a great deal of latitude to country directors and their staff members to propose how they best can utilize resources and Volunteers. Posts' staff members are the agency's main point of contact with Volunteers, their programs, and host country counterparts. As a result, they are the most effective resource available to the agency to carry out the planning and budgeting process in each country.
- IPBS provides posts with an opportunity to step back and review the roles they play in host country development plans, to develop and refine their strategies, and to identify program strengths and weaknesses. The IPBS provides a similar opportunity for headquarters staff members to review their role in supporting the overall Peace Corps program.
- Headquarters staff members have access to a broad range of tools and information that can be used to measure the performance of country programs to assist in making decisions on country plans and budget requests. These include formal and informal tools, such as the quarterly reports prepared by the posts, impact studies, the Annual Volunteer Surveys, and Project Status Reports<sup>23</sup>. This information could strengthen the process and ensure that resources are channeled toward the most productive countries and programs.

However, despite the oft-quoted mantra that program drives the budget, the reality is that it is the reverse. The agency urgently needs to reform the analysis and approval process so that the program drives the budget. The most pressing need is for an agreed upon framework for evaluating and prioritizing requests for resources. The Peace Corps' Strategic Plan is reflected in the individual post and office submissions, but there does not appear to be an agency-wide framework or a consistent standard for evaluating and prioritizing requests for resources. Because of the timing constraints, decision makers tend to overemphasize funding requests and pay insufficient attention to the strategic plans underlying them. Accordingly, the resource decisions are not as fully informed as they should be.

The Peace Corps has a fragmented resource approval process. For example, there is a senior staff resource review and approval path for information technology solutions, but there is not one for Requests for Agency Resources. Although the approved IT solutions are converted to individual resource requests and presented to the Director as one complete list, at no point does the senior staff have an opportunity to review all resource requests collectively, prioritize them, and make a fully staffed recommendation to the Director. A more transparent, coherent process should be established.

The assessment team believes that the implementation of recommendations IV-1 and IV-2 discussed in the previous chapter would be an important first step in creating that framework for evaluating and prioritizing requests for resources.

The budget process could also be improved if it were implemented on a much more interactive basis. For example, after submitting the strategic plan at the end of the second quarter of the fiscal year, some country directors received little feedback on their submissions until they received their trainee (new Volunteer)

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<sup>23</sup> A complete discussion on management tools utilized by the agency is provided in Part C of this chapter.

input figures, and they did not receive budget guidance for the following year until three months after submitting the strategic plan. Furthermore, if trainee inputs and budget guidance provided to the posts translate into significant changes in the program for the next fiscal year, the original IPBS submission is not modified to reflect the new reality. This should be changed.

Recommendation V-2: The team recommends that the IPBS process should provide a greater level of feedback and interaction with post staff during the review and approval process at headquarters. Once the final plans and budgets are approved, posts should then modify their original submissions to reflect the new reality.

Guidance provided to posts to prepare their submissions is not standard among the regions nor is the same methodology utilized to analyze and prioritize the individual country IPBS submissions. The lack of a clearly articulated worldwide standard of Volunteer support, upon which requests for staff and other resources are based, diminishes the agency’s ability to make informed budget decisions. With the recent creation of the Office of Global Operations, it is anticipated that consistent methodology and guidance for all overseas posts will be provided in the future. A more transparent decision-making process should result. To further that objective, the agency should make the final plans available for staff throughout the organization to view, and the Director should communicate how the program drives the budget.

Recommendation V-3: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps provide consistent guidance and use consistent methodology for the analysis and prioritization of budget submissions. The Peace Corps should post final IPBS plans on the Intranet so they are readily accessible to agency staff throughout the organization.

A.3. Human resources management

A.3.a Overview

As of March 31, 2010, the Peace Corps employed 2,732 individuals as shown in Figure V-4.

Figure V-4  
Current Peace Corps Staffing

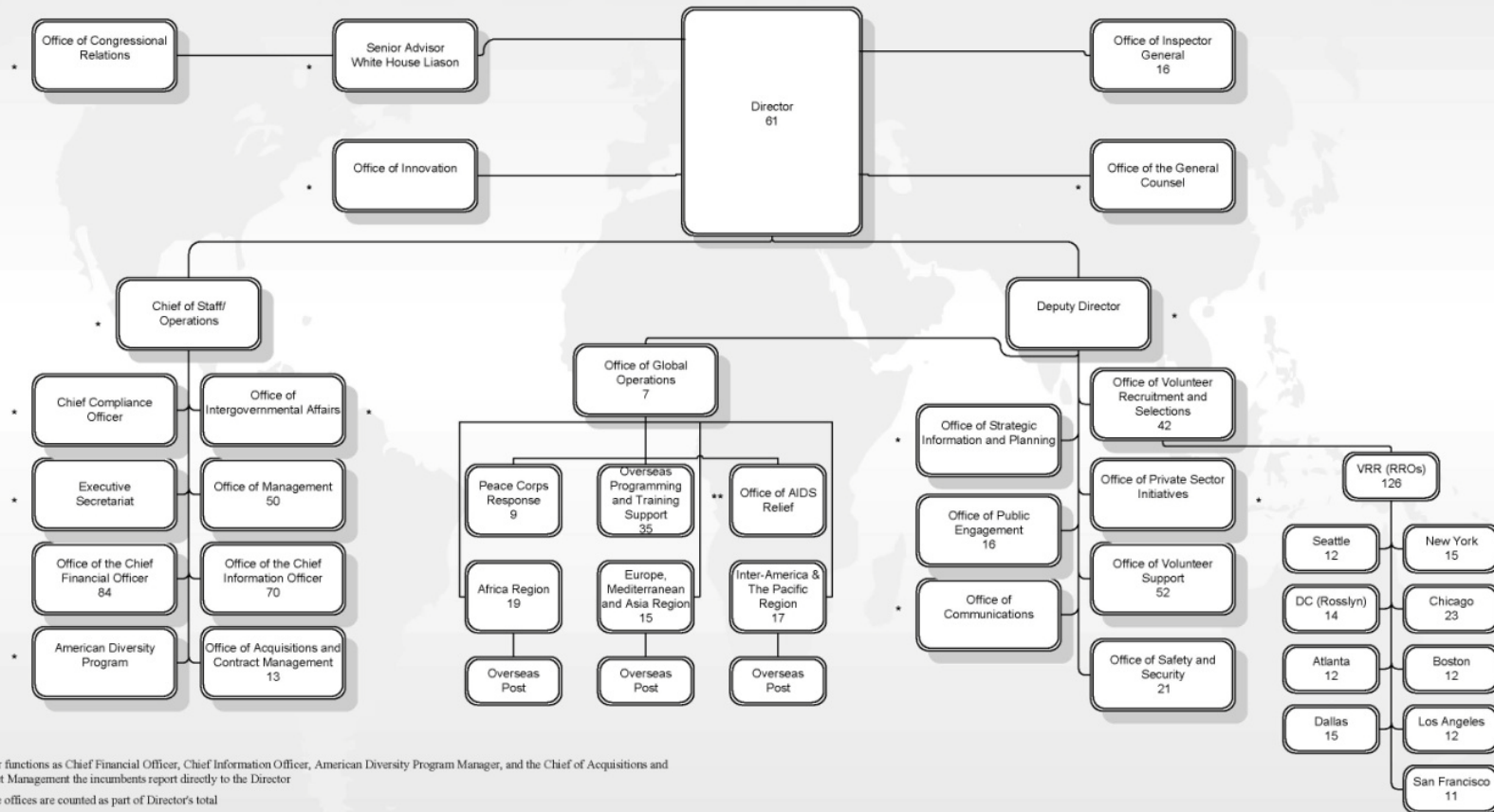
<u>Domestic Staff</u>		<u>Overseas Staff</u>	
Headquarters:	536	U.S. Direct Hires:	201
Regional Recruitment Offices:	123	Foreign Service Nationals:	220
		Personal Services Contractors:	<u>1,615</u>
Subtotals	<u>659</u>		2,036
TOTAL: 2,695			

Domestic Personnel

Operations in the United States are staffed by U.S. direct hires, located in Washington, D.C., and in nine regional recruitment offices in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C. The staff structure at headquarters, including the staffing levels for each headquarters office, is outlined in Figure V-5.

Figure V-5

# Peace Corps Organizational Chart



In their functions as Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Officer, American Diversity Program Manager, and the Chief of Acquisitions and Contract Management the incumbents report directly to the Director

\*These offices are counted as part of Director's total

\*\*Employees of Office of Aids Relief appear as employees of office of Global Operations

These numbers do not include 55 experts, intermittent and full-time.

### Overseas Personnel

To run operations in 77 countries, the Peace Corps employs approximately 415 full-time employees and 1,615 personal service contractors. Of the 415 full-time employees, 195 are U.S. direct hires, and 220 are foreign service nationals (FSN). All country directors and the majority of programming and training officers and administrative officers are U.S. direct hires.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, there are twenty U.S. direct hire associate Peace Corps directors, sometimes called program managers.

The country director is responsible for operations of an overseas post. The programming and training officer (PTO) is responsible for managing, advising, and developing staff members responsible for programming and training activities at post. There is a programming and training officer in all posts of the Europe, Mediterranean and Asia (EMA) region, and all but one post of the Inter-America/Pacific (IAP) region has a programming and training officer.<sup>25</sup> By contrast, the Africa region employs an alternative model, staffing four sub-regional offices with a programming and training consultant who supports a group of posts within a sub-region. In addition to consultant support, twelve posts in the Africa Region have their own programming and training officer. The administrative officer (AO) ensures the effective management of country operations concerning finances, property, and administrative support. There is an administrative officer at every Peace Corps post. The associate Peace Corps director (APCD) is responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Peace Corps' projects in-country. Associate directors also serve as the direct supervisors of Volunteers.

Approximately 80 percent (1,615) of staff members overseas are long-term personal service contractors. The Peace Corps' personal service contractors fill all overseas positions with the exception of country director; programming and training officer; and administrative officer, who is either a U.S. direct hire or foreign service national. While the vast majority of the Peace Corps' personal service contractors are host country nationals, there are posts that have contracted with U.S. citizens and third-country nationals as personal service contractors for associate director and medical officer positions. In addition to the 1,650 long-term personal service contractors, another 1,500 personal service contractors work for the agency on short term contracts, typically as members of the training staff who are responsible for designing and implementing pre-service training.

Full-time personal service contractors are typically provided a one-year base contract with four one-year option periods. Following this five year period, a new contract is offered, a common practice that means the majority of the Peace Corps' personal service contractors in reality serve as permanent staff.

#### A.3.b Description of staffing patterns and human resource allocations

The allocation of human resources follows historical patterns of staffing, as well as perceived needs of domestic offices and overseas posts. A relatively standard staffing pattern of an overseas post has been in place for many years. Over the last several years, new types of required positions have emerged, such as safety and security coordinator, information technology specialist, and training manager. There are guidelines regarding the number of USDH personnel at post and in-country at any given time as well as requirements regarding the number of FSN staff per post as approved by the embassy.

Recent trends in staffing overseas have also included a move towards the allocation of Program and Training Officers (PTOs). The agency is currently considering the position of Deputy Country Director for posts hosting a large number of Volunteers.

In regards to domestic operations, the majority of offices are currently requesting additional staff positions to accommodate the growth of Volunteer numbers.

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<sup>24</sup> The Africa Region has recently hired a foreign service national program training officer, and the IAP Region has eleven foreign service national administrative officers.

<sup>25</sup> With the exception of Samoa.

### A.3.c Observations on staffing patterns and human resource allocations

Before making any decisions regarding staff levels, there is a need for a better accounting of the business functions of the office or post and the operational activities required to support each function. This need is intensified in an agency that has a high rate of turnover of USDH staff, due in part to the five year rule discussed below.

Currently there is little consensus as to the ideal staffing pattern of an overseas post. Consistent job titles in overseas operations are also lacking. For example, APCD, Program Manager, Sector Manager and Regional Manager are all titles to describe the staff person responsible for identifying site placements for Volunteers and managing Volunteers in those placements. Recently, an effort has been undertaken to provide such analysis for the administrative functions of an overseas post, an effort receiving widespread support.

With respect to the programming and training functions at post, there is less support for a similar undertaking. The job of providing volunteer support is viewed as more of an art than a science and the decisions regarding staffing are seen as those best left to each post. However, in order to provide consistency in the Peace Corps experience across 77 countries, criteria are needed to ensure the overseas post staff is appropriate in profile and sufficient in number to provide the optimum level of Volunteer support. To establish such criteria, there is a need for agreement on what constitutes the basic level of support that Volunteers can expect when serving in the Peace Corps—in training, in project supervision, in administrative matters, in health care, safety and emergency response. On the basis of that understanding, agency leadership can decide whether the current organizational structure at post is the most effective and whether the number of staff is adequate. Decisions would be informed by analysis and a consistent, agency-wide set of Volunteer support expectations. Supervisors could better select staff and give the staff the tools and training they need to perform their work.

Of particular note to those who contributed to this assessment, especially Volunteers and overseas staff, the ratio of Volunteers to APCD/Program Manager is fundamental to ensuring excellence in volunteer support. An optimum APCD/Volunteer ratio should be identified that guarantees a level of Volunteer support world-wide, with flexibility provided for post specific conditions.

These concepts are not new. In 2007, an Internal Management Assessment (IMA) was completed of Regional Management<sup>26</sup>. The IMA recommended the Peace Corps undertake an analysis of staffing levels and structures at overseas posts and within the regions, with an eye for developing agency-wide standards. The report recognized that “the resistance against standards may be rooted in concern over who would set the standards rather than the standards themselves.” In the view of the assessment team, the 2007 analysis by the IMA team and their subsequent recommendations for addressing them were thorough, comprehensive, and practical. A review of this document would provide a strong first step for agency leadership.

Within the Peace Corps’ headquarters and regional recruitment offices, there is a similar need for analysis of the business practices, followed by an analysis of staffing needs. As new offices have been created, i.e., Office of Global Operations, Office of Public Engagement, and Office of Innovation, there is confusion and lack of clarity regarding each office’s business practices and staffing needs. It also is essential to assess what are the staffing needs to perform the tasks required to implement the new strategy set out in this report. New activities will be undertaken, new responsibilities assigned. Just as financial resources will have to be redirected, human resources will also need to be deployed differently to achieve the Peace Corps’ vision.

**Recommendation V-4:** The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps conduct an agency-wide analysis of the business functions of overseas posts’ staffing patterns based on the operational activities required to support each function.

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<sup>26</sup> “Regional Management: Getting to Ideal”, Peace Corps IMA, September 2007.

**Recommendation V-5:** The assessment team recommends that the agency develop worldwide standards of excellence for volunteer support to inform staffing decisions.

#### A.3.d Management of Personnel

Domestic Peace Corps staff members and U.S. direct hire staff members working overseas are subject to the personnel policies and guidelines defined by the Peace Corps Manual. The agency's human capital management plan, strategy, and goals are directed solely to these staff members. While the Peace Corps' Office of Human Resource Management provides support to the domestic direct hire workforce, responsibilities for personnel management support for U.S. direct hires overseas are shared with a staffing analyst in each of the agency's three regions. According to current and former overseas U.S. direct hires who contributed to the agency assessment, there is sometimes confusion about the responsibilities of the Office of Human Resource Management at headquarters and the responsibilities of staffing analysts in each region.

Foreign service nationals are career host country national employees of the U.S. government. Foreign service national employees of the Peace Corps are covered by the policies and regulations set out in the Foreign Service Manual and are subject to the local compensation plan of each embassy. The local compensation plan sets a salary scale for foreign service nationals and determines the appropriate benefits for employees.

Benefits for personal service contractors are intended to mirror the benefits provided to foreign service nationals in each U.S. embassy's local compensation plan. With respect to compensation for personal service contractors, the Peace Corps Manual encourages the use of local market surveys as well as salary history to make basic compensation decisions for personal service contractors. The Peace Corps' policy also states that the local compensation plan may be also used to determine what is "fair and reasonable" compensation, and it is relied on by most posts.<sup>27</sup> Clarification and enforcement of this standard agency-wide compensation plan would go a long way towards reducing what is potentially a two-tiered compensation system for host country nationals. Moreover, because foreign service nationals are employees and subject to the embassy personnel rules<sup>28</sup> and may be eligible for permanent resident status in the United States after lengthy service, they are also seen as having greater job security and greater status than personal service contractors.

Furthermore, based on the provision in the Peace Corps Act that no contractor shall be deemed an employee for any purpose, the Peace Corps Manual restricts the authority of PSCs to tasks that are "not inherently governmental." This restriction most directly affects overseas operations concerning supervision, procurement and cash-handling. For example, a personal service contractor who works as a program manager is not permitted to supervise and direct the activities of his/her program assistants. Given the restrictions on the authority of personal service contractors, these duties currently must reside with programming and training officers, administrative officers, or country directors, who are either U.S. direct hires or foreign service nationals. Presently, the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development have greater leeway than the Peace Corps with regards to authorities exercised by personal services contractors.

#### A.3.e Assessment team observations on the management of personnel

The management of domestic staff operates under a single system, a factor contributing to greater clarity and consistency in implementation. However, with U.S. direct hires operating overseas, a clear distinction between the roles of the office of Human Resource Management and the regional staffing analysts appears to pose a challenge. The assessment team encourages the Peace Corps to address this challenge by providing consistency in the staffing analyst position description and in communication with overseas U.S. direct hires regarding their roles.

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<sup>27</sup> Peace Corps Manual Section 743.10.3.

<sup>28</sup> 8 U.S.C.S1101(a)(27)

U.S. direct hires overseas make up approximately 10 percent of the agency's overseas personnel and fall within the agency's human resource management system. Foreign service nationals account for approximately 10 percent of overseas staff as well, however, they fall under the human resource management system of the U.S. Department of State. Personal service contractors, who make up the majority of the agency's overseas personnel base (80 percent), are managed with limited consistency by the individual posts using the policies provided by sections 743 and 744 of the Peace Corps Manual. As a result, overseas supervisors administer two separate personnel systems for host country national staff (foreign service nationals and personal service contractors). The system applicable to foreign service nationals is generally viewed as more transparent, fairer and consistent. Documentation of overseas staff development, performance management, and awards and recognition policies is also inconsistent. Such documentation is a performance indicator from the agency's Strategic Plan FY 2009-FY 2014,<sup>29</sup> with an FY 2009 target that 70 percent of overseas posts would perform such documentation, but in FY 2009 only 56 percent performed this documentation.

The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps move to create a single category of host country national staff. The category should include job titles and should set standards for position descriptions, pay grades, and award opportunities under a system similar to that which applies to the U.S. direct hire workforce. The Peace Corps should examine current authorities, and if deemed necessary, analyze proposals to provide its personal service contractors with the ability to perform such functions of supervision, procurement, and cash handling when deemed necessary for overseas operations. Once such authority has been determined, the agency should consider moving through attrition to make all host country national staff personal service contractors and should solidify agency-wide guidelines and policies to manage the personal service contractors in a more coherent and consistent manner. Such policies and guidance should be informed by field experience, should be flexible to adjust to local laws, and should be capable of providing the Peace Corps' personal service contractors with recognition that they are integral to the agency's success. The Peace Corps may also consider other approaches to standardizing host country national staffing.

**Recommendation V-6:** The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps explore options to create a single category of host country national staff. As a first step, the Peace Corps should:

- 6a Perform an analysis of existing authorities given to personal services contractors under existing, and if necessary, proposed legislation; and,
- 6b Solidify agency-wide guidelines and policies to manage personal service contractors in a more coherent and consistent manner with standard job titles, position descriptions, pay grades, and award opportunities.

Current and former overseas staff who contributed to the assessment, as well as current and former regional staff at headquarters, raised concerns regarding challenges in the management of overseas operations as a result of unrealistic spans of control. Currently, a single regional director and chief of operations support 20 to 28 posts. The management team does an admirable job and benefits from the support of country desk officers and country desk assistants who are responsible for interacting with and supporting overseas posts in a smaller number. However, it is not currently possible for regional management to provide enough support and oversight to ensure the optimum levels of advocacy and accountability desired by the field and regional management.

**Recommendation V-7:** The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps conduct an analysis of staffing patterns in the headquarters offices of the three regions based on operational activities and tasks to ensure optimal levels of advocacy and accountability for overseas posts.

Finally, the Peace Corps does not provide post-service employment assistance to any U.S. direct hire overseas staff members, which may contribute to staff turnover and retention challenges. Efforts should be made to facilitate end of service transition for overseas staff.

<sup>29</sup> Peace Corps Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2009-2014 and Performance Plan for fiscal years 2009-2011: Indicator 5.2.2.b.



<p><u>Recommendation V-8:</u> The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps facilitate the end of service transitions of overseas staff, expanding the activities of the Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support to include post-Peace Corps transition support.</p>
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#### A.3.f Hiring of overseas U.S. direct hire staff

##### Country directors

The position of country director is key to achieving excellence overseas. Absent a dynamic country director who understands the job and is willing to devote to it the energy it demands, a high functioning post is difficult to attain.

The Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support oversees the process of country director recruitment and selection. Through a rolling application process, the selection process begins with a lengthy online application, followed by a telephone interview, and finally a day of five sequential interviews: one with a representative of the three regions, one with a former country director, and the last with a panel of returned Peace Corps Volunteers working at the Peace Corps. Candidates who are successful in these three steps have a final interview with the Director and members of the agency's senior staff. Applicants are eliminated at each stage of the process as the agency narrows the list of candidates. Travel to the Peace Corps' headquarters for interviews is at the expense of the applicant.

Selected applicants are then matched by senior management with anticipated or actual country director vacancies. Historically candidates were discouraged from expressing a country preference, a policy that has recently been changed. Final selections are made to coincide with scheduled training programs for country directors.

##### Other U.S. direct hire staff hiring

U.S. direct hire programming and training officers, administrative officers, and associate Peace Corps directors are selected by the regional directors at headquarters, usually with input from the country director. Applicants apply for positions anywhere in the world, with the exception of associate director positions, which are country specific. Other than the government-wide hiring process spelled out by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, there is no standardized process. The level of participation in the selection process by the country director varies from region to region. The recruiting and selection process for foreign service nationals filling these positions is managed by individual posts. Recently, the Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support has initiated some recruitment for these positions.

#### A.3.g Observations on the overseas staff recruiting and selection process

In 1985, the Peace Corps Act was amended to ensure against any political test or qualification for any appointment to an overseas position including country director positions. Human Resources Management, through the Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support, is responsible for managing the selection of country directors and has implemented a number of improvements, including several recommendations made by a 2006 taskforce on re-engineering the country director recruitment, selection, and support process.

The assessment team supports the agency's recent efforts to identify and attract a diverse group of strong country director candidates. Similar efforts should be made to recruit other U.S. direct hire candidates for overseas positions and to prepare current high-performing staff to qualify to serve as programming and training officers, administrative officers, associate Peace Corps directors, and country directors. The assessment team encourages the Peace Corps to give authority for final selection of U.S. direct hire programming and training officers, administrative officers, and associate directors to the country director.

**Recommendation V-9:** The assessment team recommends that the agency standardize the selection process for the overseas U.S. direct hire positions of PTO, AO, and APCD and assign management of the recruitment and selection process to the Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support.

#### A.3.h Description of the current performance appraisal and award system

The agency uses three different performance appraisal and award systems: one for U.S. direct hire staff members, one for foreign service national staff members overseas, and one for personal service contractors. For all U.S. direct hire staff members, the agency currently employs two categories to describe performance: “meet or exceed” and “does not meet.” As such, U.S. direct hire employees of the Peace Corps operate on a pass/fail system of performance evaluation. In addition to an annual written appraisal for U.S. direct hire staff, a verbal midyear appraisal is expected. The performance evaluation period begins February 1 and ends January 31.

For foreign service national staff members overseas, the U.S. direct hire supervisor completes an annual performance appraisal and midyear interview using State Department forms and guidance delivered from the management section of each overseas embassy. Personal service contractors are expected to receive annual performance appraisals and midyear interviews by their U.S. direct hire supervisors at post.

The Peace Corps has an award system common to U.S. government agencies that is incorporated in the Peace Corps Manual (MS 662). It applies only to U.S. direct hire and foreign service national employees. In the case of foreign service national employees, approval from the embassy is required before the Peace Corps post may recognize an employee with a cash award. Offices are encouraged to budget for awards out of funds resulting from lapses in the budget and are discouraged from specifically budgeting for awards.

An effort is currently underway led by the Office of Management to revise the award system, amending Manual Section 662 to make the process more open, transparent, and public. In addition to cash awards, supervisors have other methods for recognizing outstanding performance such as providing certificates of appreciation and time off.

With respect to 80% of overseas staff who are personal service contractors, the Peace Corps country director has the authority to make a cash award at any point during the year. There is no requirement that outstanding performance by a personal service contractor be rewarded. Cash awards to personal service contractors overseas must either be included in the post’s annual budgets or the post must re-program funds within the existing budget. A contract amendment is required to make a cash award to a personal service contractor.

#### A.3.i Observations on the Performance Appraisal and Award System

The 2009 Peace Corps Annual Employee Viewpoint Survey provides some insight into the challenges the agency faces in creating a results oriented performance culture. For example, only:

- 46.9 percent of the employees surveyed responded positively to the statement: Promotions in my work unit are based on merit;
- 40.4 percent responded positively to the statement: In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve;
- 23.3 percent responded positively to the statement: Pay raises depend on how well employees perform their duties;
- 44.9 percent responded positively to the statement: Awards in my work unit depend on how well employees perform their jobs; and,
- 50.1 percent responded positively to the statement: Creativity and innovation are rewarded.

As has been noted earlier, the jurisdiction of Human Resource Management extends only to U.S. direct hire employees—approximately one-third of the Peace Corps’ staff members worldwide. If the agency is to achieve

the excellence it envisions, the issues identified in this survey need to be addressed with a sense of urgency, and solutions should apply to all agency staff—U.S. direct hires, foreign service nationals, and personal service contractors.

With respect to the performance appraisal system, the evaluation period should be changed to correspond to the fiscal year in order to report progress on the agency's goals contained in the strategic plan. Additionally, the pass/fail appraisal system may not be adequate to communicate the level at which the employee is expected to function or to inform decisions to extend an employee's service. The assessment team suggests a more descriptive rating system be adopted.

**Recommendation V-10:** The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps evaluate whether the current appraisal system is optimal.

More can be done in regards to defining performance expectations, especially in regards to operations overseas. The 2007 Internal Management Assessment of Regional Management indicated that communications of expectations by regional management for country director performance were deficient in specificity and clarity as well as consistency<sup>30</sup>. Specific performance goals and measurement tools should be agreed upon. Previously mentioned management tools are available to assist in appraising performance, such as the Annual Volunteer Survey, visits of headquarters staff to a post, and audits from the Office of Inspector General. In the view of the assessment team, these are valuable tools for agency leadership. However the assessment team suggests the Peace Corps take additional steps, such as measuring progress towards the goals identified in Integrated Planning and Budget System submissions to inform performance evaluation.

To foster a results-oriented performance culture, the Peace Corps would benefit greatly from rewarding outstanding performance by its employees. With respect to the current award system for U.S. direct hire employees, improvements have been recommended by the Office of Management working group and should be adopted. For host country national staff, a standard award system should also be created for personal service contractors in all posts. While foreign service nationals remain within the U.S. State Department award system, the development of awards for host country national personal service contractors would go a long way in helping to create a more equitable working environment at the Peace Corps' posts. The criteria and process for determining the awards should be transparent, and the recognition for excellence should be made publicly.

**Recommendation V-11:** The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps adopt a new performance award model and create a uniform award system that includes personal service contractors.

#### A.4. Consistency in management practices

The assessment team identified the lack of consistency in management practices as an overarching observation of the report. There are numerous examples of variances in the management practices of the Peace Corps overseas posts and the regional offices that manage overseas posts. For example, among the overseas posts, there are differences in job titles, job assignments, expectations for levels of volunteer support, pay grades for the same jobs, and staff award practices. Among the three regions, there are differences in the organization of the desk units, in the review process for budgets, and in the duties assigned to staff members with the same job titles. Headquarters offices providing support to regions are required to negotiate individually with each region on requests that cross regions, e.g., overseas staff training, project review analysis.

Inconsistencies in management practices can translate into inconsistent quality of the Volunteer experience and result in a negative impact on the Volunteer's work. These differences in quality can be observed in the results of the 2009 Annual Volunteer Survey. For example, 50 percent of Volunteers in Jordan rated their pre-service

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<sup>30</sup> "Regional Management Getting to Ideal", Peace Corps IMA, September 2007.

technical training as ineffective. However, 93 percent of Volunteers in Cambodia rated their pre-service technical training as adequate to effective.

The assessment team also observed that there are few standards or requirements for:

- Insuring that expectations are documented, other than in performance appraisals, private conversations, or Integrated Planning and Budget System documents;
- Maintaining accessible records of prior performance to illuminate decisions about new tours; and,
- Keeping a central file of key information about a specific post history.

The differences in overseas management practices are attributed to culture, politics, and geography. With respect to regional management, the explanation is similar—even though one region may manage countries as dissimilar as Vanuatu and Paraguay or Morocco and Romania. Given the geographic, political, and cultural differences among the overseas posts, a cookie cutter approach to management would not be effective. Nevertheless, certain management policies and practices are common to a fundamentally sound and efficiently run operation.

The agency has identified numerous best practices to improve management that it then disseminates to the field. With the creation of the Office of Global Operations, the agency took a significant step toward ensuring more consistent management at overseas posts and in the regions. The assessment team recommends that the agency determine which practices are necessary for the management of a fundamentally sound, efficiently run post and region and then implement them. Several characteristics of an ideal post and an ideal region were identified in the 2007 Internal Management Assessment of Regional Management (Appendix V-2).

**Best Practice**  
**Panama’s Regional Leader Program**

In 2003, the Peace Corps in Panama transformed a lackluster Volunteer coordinator program into a vibrant Peace Corps regional leader program that has improved site development, widened the net of Volunteer support, and strengthened local host-country agency partnerships. The regional leader program was established in response to the realization that regional leaders could play an important role in supporting Volunteers and the programming and training staff. Field tested regional leaders, skilled in the local language and aware of the dynamics of life in the provinces, were placed in or near provincial capitals, rather than with program managers in the capital city. After only three years, Panama was recognized by the Inspector General as a high-performing post, in part due to the role of the regional leaders. Today, eight regional leaders still support the work of Volunteers and staff alike. They do so by serving as role models, mentors, and coaches for the new Volunteers.

The country programs and the regional operations should improve over time—not be subject to reversals and setbacks because of lack of information about the learning that has already taken place. The agency needs to implement procedures for knowledge sharing to ensure a smooth transition between leaders. It needs to continue its efforts to collect and manage the data on the Peace Corps’ activities, including post specific history.

Historically in the Peace Corps, the passing along of information and experience has depended heavily on oral tradition and a network of personal contacts. With the creation of Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning the Peace Corps now has an office responsible for maintaining historical records, and the office has made significant progress in collecting and managing agency data. The agency should continue its efforts to collect and share data on the Peace Corps’ activities, including post specific history.

**Recommendation V-12:** The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps work with the regions and overseas staff to determine the best practices for post and regional operations and move to implement them across posts and regions.

## B. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### B.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

The Peace Corps is a unique government agency with a unique management system. This system provides the agency with many benefits, as well as with some significant challenges. Based on input from those who contributed to this study, the assessment team has identified several opportunities for strengthening the management of the Peace Corps and for mitigating the negative impacts of the management challenges the agency faces.

The assessment team makes twelve recommendations:

Recommendation V-1: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps update the current six year strategic plan to incorporate the vision and key strategies necessary to implement the proposed vision, strategy, and recommendations presented in this assessment report. Once completed, the agency should ensure the updated strategic and performance plans are disseminated widely, both inside and outside of the agency, and the agency should ensure their purpose is fully understood by agency staff.

Recommendation V-2: The team recommends that the IPBS process should provide a greater level of feedback and interaction with post staff during the review and approval process at headquarters. Once the final plans and budgets are approved, posts should then modify their original submissions to reflect the new reality.

Recommendation V-3: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps provide consistent guidance and use consistent methodology for the analysis and prioritization of budget submissions. The Peace Corps should post final IPBS plans on the intranet so they are readily accessible to agency staff throughout the organization.

Recommendation V-4: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps conduct an agency-wide analysis of the business functions of overseas posts' staffing patterns based on the operational activities required to support each function.

Recommendation V-5: The assessment team recommends that the agency develop worldwide standards of excellence for volunteer support to inform staffing decisions.

Recommendation V-6: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps explore options to create a single category of host country national staff. As a first step, the Peace Corps should:

- 6a Perform an analysis of existing authorities given to personal services contractors under existing, and if necessary, proposed legislation; and,
- 6b Solidify agency-wide guidelines and policies to manage personal service contractors in a more coherent and consistent manner with standard job titles, position descriptions, pay grades, and award opportunities.

Recommendation V-7: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps conduct an analysis of staffing patterns in the headquarters offices of the three regions based on operational activities and tasks to ensure optimal levels of advocacy and accountability for overseas posts.

Recommendation V-8: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps facilitate the end of service transitions of overseas staff, expanding the activities of the Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support to include post-Peace Corps transition support.

Recommendation V-9: The assessment team recommends that the agency standardize the selection process for the overseas U.S. direct hire positions of PTO, AO, and APCD and assign management of the recruitment and selection process to the Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support.

Recommendation V-10: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps evaluate whether the current appraisal system is optimal.

Recommendation V-11: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps adopt a new performance award model and create a uniform award system that includes personal service contractors.

Recommendation V-12: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps work with the regions and overseas staff to determine the best practices for post and regional operations and move to implement them across posts and regions.

B.2. Strategy for implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(s)	TIMING
V-1: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps update the current six year strategic plan to incorporate the vision and key strategies necessary to implement the proposed vision, strategy, and recommendations presented in this assessment report. Once completed, the agency should ensure the updated strategic and performance plans are disseminated widely, both inside and outside of the agency, and the agency should ensure their purpose is fully understood by agency staff.	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning	Agency-wide	In FY 2011
V-2: The team recommends that the IPBS process should provide a greater level of feedback and interaction with post staff during the review and approval process at headquarters. Once the final plans and budgets are approved, posts should then modify their original submissions to reflect the new reality.	Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region	Office of Global Operations; Posts	During the IPBS process. In Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 of FY 2011 and annually thereafter.
V-3: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps provide consistent guidance and use consistent methodology for the analysis and prioritization of budget submissions. The Peace Corps should post final IPBS plans on the intranet so they are readily accessible to agency staff throughout the organization.	Office of the Director	Office of the Chief Information Officer; Agency-wide	In Quarter 3 FY 2011

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

<p>V-4: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps conduct an agency-wide analysis of the business functions of overseas posts' staffing patterns based on the operational activities required to support each function.</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Global Operations; Office of Management;</p>	<p>Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts</p>	<p>Begin analysis in Quarter 1 FY 2011. To be completed by the end of Quarter 3 FY 2011</p>
<p>V-5: The assessment team recommends that the agency develop worldwide standards of excellence for volunteer support to inform staffing decisions.</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Global Operations</p>	<p>Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Overseas Programming and Training Support; Office of Management; Office of Volunteer Support</p>	<p>In Quarter 2 FY 2011</p>
<p>V-6: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps explore options to create a single category of host country national staff. As a first step, the Peace Corps should: a) Perform an analysis of existing authorities given to personal services contractors under existing, and if necessary, proposed legislation; and, b) Solidify agency-wide guidelines and policies to manage personal service contractors in a more coherent and consistent manner with standard job titles, position descriptions, pay grades, and award opportunities.</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations; Office of Management;</p>	<p>Office of General Counsel; Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts</p>	<p>a) In Quarter 4 2010 b) To be completed in FY 2012</p>



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

V-7: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps conduct an analysis of staffing patterns in the headquarters offices of three regions based on operational activities and tasks to ensure optimal levels of advocacy and accountability for overseas posts.	Office of Global Operations	Office of Management; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	Begin analysis in Quarter 4 FY 2010. To be completed by the end of Quarter 1 FY 2011
V-8: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps facilitate the end of service transitions of overseas staff, expanding the activities of the Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support to include post-Peace Corps transition support.	Office of Management – (Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support)	Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	In FY 2011
V-9: The assessment team recommends that the agency standardize the selection process for the overseas U.S. direct hire positions of PTO, AO, and APCD and assign management of the recruitment and selection process to the Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support.	Office of Management – (Office of Overseas Recruitment, Selection and Support)	Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	Begin implementation in Quarter 1 FY 2011
V-10: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps evaluate whether the current appraisal system is optimal.	Office of Management – (Human Resources Management)		In FY 2011
V-11: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps adopt a new performance award model and create a uniform award system that includes personal service contractors.	Office of Management	Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management	In FY 2011

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

<p>V-12: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps work with the regions and overseas staff to determine the best practices for post and regional operations and move to implement them across posts and regions.</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations</p>	<p>Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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## **PART B: THE FIVE-YEAR RULE**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

#### **A.1. Introduction**

The Peace Corps was formed to be a different kind of government agency, one that reflected the shifts and changes that were occurring throughout the world, one that was not bound by traditional government policies, procedures, and bureaucracies. The management structure was created to prevent stagnation and entrenched bureaucracy and was originally crafted by President Kennedy's task force that formed the Peace Corps, led by Sargent Shriver with "the best people we could find from the professional worlds, universities and great foundations, from corporation and unions, from private agencies and the Civil Service."<sup>31</sup>

Senator Harris Wofford captured the spirit of the Peace Corps' uniqueness within the U.S. government, stating:

"...the Peace Corps was permitted to go its own way, to experiment and to find itself, to grow up with a freedom probably unique in the history of bureaucracies. It has even been described as the anti-bureaucratic bureaucracy, an organization for those who do not want to be organization men, an agency of programmed diversity, programmed uncertainty, sufficient unpredictability just going to the threshold of chaos but not quite reaching it."<sup>32</sup>

As Volunteers were limited to a two-year assignment, the founders of the Peace Corps intended to design a new kind of management system that was dynamic and reactive to the needs of the countries served. The hallmarks of the organization were to be innovation and creativity, not just in the Volunteer population, but also in how the Peace Corps was to be led and managed. One of the keys in laying the foundation for this management system was the decision to enact into law term limits for all U.S. Peace Corps employees, also known as direct hires. The terms of appointment for employees were to be thirty-month blocks and limited to a maximum of five years, making the Peace Corps an "Excepted Service Agency." There were to be no exemptions and no exceptions, resulting in a Peace Corps that would always be evolving and innovating, avoiding the inherent problems of stagnation so often associated with government agencies.<sup>33</sup>

A March 5, 1965 memo to the Special Assistant to the President, Bill D. Moyers, from the Peace Corps' Director Shriver, entitled, "How to Keep the Punch in the Peace Corps", highlights the two main justifications for the limited appointments:

"First, if the Peace Corps is to continue to succeed, its staff must maintain rapport with a constituency in the United States which is wholly unlike that of any other Government agency. That constituency is its Volunteers and potential Volunteers. That constituency is young. Its ideas and ideals are rapidly changing. The Peace Corps staff must understand and be able to respond to the changing ideas and ideals of successive generations."

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<sup>31</sup> The Peace Corps is Born, 1960-1962, History of National Service, <http://www.peacecorpsonline.org>

<sup>32</sup> Wofford, Harris. The Future of the Peace Corps. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 365, The Peace Corps. (May 1966), pp. 129-146.

<sup>33</sup> Bull, Bill. Managing Change in a Change Agency: An Analysis of the Peace Corps. July 16, 2007.

“Second, overseas the Peace Corps goes about its business in a way that no other United States Government agency does. Peace Corps/Washington has a critical need for people who can translate the values and the methods of the Peace Corps’ overseas audience into Washington decision making. The Peace Corps’ main source of such person is its former overseas staff and Volunteers. To make sure that at all times there are places for significant numbers of former overseas staff and Volunteers in Peace Corps/Washington, a Peace Corps with a stable total level of Washington employment cannot get clogged up with career employees.”<sup>34</sup>

The intent of the rule was to help the agency remain responsive to young Americans and ensure there were always positions at headquarters for returned Volunteers and overseas staff members with the fresh knowledge and understanding of field conditions. It also was envisioned that the rule would ensure the Peace Corps was constantly infused with new life and energy—“the Peace Corps will always have room for new talent”—and that as many Americans as possible would be provided the opportunity to contribute toward the Peace Corps effort.<sup>35</sup> The rule would reduce the distinction between Volunteers and staff, making the Peace Corps a more closely-knit and effective organization where people worked for the agency who were “in search of a challenge and not just a job.”<sup>36</sup>

Over the years since its inception, justification of the five-year rule has also extended to include the agency’s desire to provide opportunities for U.S. direct hires at headquarters to apply the skills and knowledge gained of the Peace Corps to overseas operations.

#### A.2. Legislative history

In the beginning of the Peace Corps, there was no five-year rule. With respect to U.S. Peace Corps personnel, the original Section 7 of the 1961 the Peace Corps Act provided for permanent Civil Service employment in the United States, not to exceed 275 persons, with a limited number exempted from certain limits of the Act. The Act authorized the use of Foreign Service personnel rules concerning the Peace Corps’ employees serving abroad.<sup>37</sup>

In 1965, because of the vision established by the agency’s founders, the approach defined in Section 7 of the Peace Corps Act was transformed into a unified system that relied upon the authority of the Foreign Service Act of 1946 for the appointment of all of the agency’s personnel. The most significant feature of the personnel system developed in 1965, was its establishment of a five year limit on the duration of appointments (the “five-year rule”), subject to a possible one-year extension in unlimited number, but only under special circumstances (the “sixth year”). This limit was reinforced by a related statutory prohibition against reappointment until the expiration of a period of not less than the duration of a former Peace Corps employee’s previous service (the “in and out rule”).<sup>38</sup>

A 1981 statute made it an independent agency of the Executive Branch, as well as provided for an infusion of additional career appointees, the majority of which remained subject to the five-year rule, with

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<sup>34</sup> “How to Keep the Punch in the Peace Corps”, Memorandum to Mr. Bill D. Moyers, Special Assistant to the President, from Sargent Shriver, Director of the Peace Corps. March 5, 1965.

<sup>35</sup> “How to Keep the Punch in the Peace Corps”, Memorandum to Mr. Bill D. Moyers, Special Assistant to the President, from Sargent Shriver, Director of the Peace Corps. March 5, 1965.

<sup>36</sup> “How to Keep the Punch in the Peace Corps”, Memorandum to Mr. Bill D. Moyers, Special Assistant to the President, from Sargent Shriver, Director of the Peace Corps. March 5, 1965.

<sup>37</sup> Public Law 87-293, section 7, 75 Stat. 616 (September 22, 1961). The former Classification Act is now codified as chapter 51 of title 5, United States code, 5 U.S.C. 5101-5115.

<sup>38</sup> Public Law 89-134, 79 Stat. 549 (August 24, 1965).

possibilities for a sixth year.<sup>39</sup> A limited number of the Peace Corps' employees were not subject to the five-year rule and remained with the agency on unlimited appointments.<sup>40</sup>

In 1985, legislation further relaxed the five-year rule by permitting one additional appointment of up to thirty months (the "third tour"), subject to certain limitations as to the purpose of appointments beyond five years:

- To permit individuals who have served at least 2 ½ years abroad to serve in the United States;
- To permit individuals who have served at least 2 ½ years in the United States to serve abroad;
- To permit individuals who have served at least 2 ½ years in a recruitment, selection, or training activity to serve in an activity other than the one to which they have most recently been assigned; and,
- To promote the continuity of functions in administering the Peace Corps.<sup>41</sup>

The 1985 legislation created a ceiling that limited the maximum number of third-tour appointments to 15 percent of the agency's U.S. direct hire personnel. The legislation also confirmed the existing authority of the Peace Corps Director "under special circumstances" to extend any Foreign Service appointment up to an additional year, thus making possible the employment of U.S. citizens in the Peace Corps for up to 8.5 years.<sup>42</sup>

After 1985, the legislative basis for the Peace Corps personnel system remained essentially unchanged. Then in 2003, Congress granted authority to the Peace Corps Director to exempt from the time limitations of Section 7 of the Peace Corps Act, any U.S. citizen employees, "whose appointment or assignment, such as the regional safety and security officers and employees with the Office of Inspector General, involves the safety of Peace Corps Volunteers ...."<sup>43</sup> That authority was repeated and made expressly permanent by legislation enacted in 2004.<sup>44</sup>

Both the language of the new statutory exemption for safety related positions and its legislative history suggest that Congress intended to grant the Director broad discretion as to the identification of appropriate positions and the extent of exemption that should be granted. At the same time, Congress gave no indication that this legislation, focused specifically on positions related to the safety of Volunteers, was intended to authorize a general abandonment of the five-year rule, which is a basic tenet of the Peace Corps personnel system and applies to virtually all other U.S. direct hire employees.<sup>45</sup>

### A.3. Benefits and challenges of the five-year rule

Few topics draw as many strong and diverse opinions within the agency and the greater Peace Corps community as the five-year rule. Supporters site its historical role in the founding of the Peace Corps and speak to numerous benefits gained through fresh energy and perspectives. Critics question whether the historical intention of the five-year rule in 1965 is applicable for managing a larger, more complicated

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<sup>39</sup> Public Law 97-113, Section 601, Title VI, (December 29, 1981).

<sup>40</sup> These were employees who worked at Peace Corps during the years the Peace Corps was under the umbrella of the federal agency, ACTION.

<sup>41</sup> International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, Public Law 99-83, section 1103, 00 Stat. 272 (August 8, 1985).

<sup>42</sup> International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, Public Law 99-83, section 1103, 00 Stat. 272 (August 8, 1985).

<sup>43</sup> Consolidated Appropriations Resolution 2003, note 5, *supra*.

<sup>44</sup> Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2004, note 5, *supra*.

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum for the Director, "Five-year rule Exemptions for Positions Involving Safety", dated April 2, 2003 by General Counsel Tyler Posey.

organization 49 years later and whether its negative consequences outweigh its perceived benefits. The assessment team found there was no consensus among those who contributed to the assessment in regards to the five-year rule.

The assessment team found numerous studies and assessments of the five-year rule have been conducted and would encourage the agency to review these assessments prior to launching new studies. Studies by current and former Peace Corps employees Bill Bull and Charna Lefton were particularly insightful and merit review. A September 22, 2004, report by Dr. William Bacchus and Dr. James Michel entitled, “Analysis of the Peace Corps Workforce and Employment Related Authorities and Regulations,” warrants particular consideration. This analysis, contracted by the Peace Corps, was conducted by two individuals with extensive experience with U.S. government foreign assistance operations, but neither of whom had worked for the agency nor were impacted personally by the implications of the five-year rule, which adds valued objectivity in comparison with other studies, assessments, and analyses that have been undertaken.<sup>46</sup>

### A.3.a Perceived Benefits

According to prior assessments and studies of the rule, as well as input from current and former Peace Corps staff and Volunteers who contributed to this assessment, perceived benefits of the five-year rule include:

- More individuals can apply for and work in the Peace Corps, including Volunteers from the field who have a current perspective on issues and challenges that enhance agency effectiveness. Of the 860 positions with the Peace Corps today for U.S. employees, 659 positions support operations in the United States (536 at Headquarters and 123 in regional recruitment offices) and 201 are overseas. Of the 860 positions, 56.6 percent are currently filled by returned Volunteers. Below is a more detailed breakdown of the agency’s current use of returned Volunteers, indicating agency practice does indeed allow for returned Volunteers to contribute to agency operations.

Figure V-6

Domestic Positions for U.S. Direct Hires (at Headquarters and Regional Recruiting Offices)	Returned Volunteers Serving in those Positions	Field Positions for U.S. Direct Hires	Returned Volunteers Serving in those Positions
659	320 or 48.6%	201	167 or 83.1%

- There is an un-bureaucratic, energized, “can do” organizational culture in which employees are committed to making the most of their employment tenure with the Peace Corps. Working for the Peace Corps is a unique opportunity that is made all the more special by the limited time frame. Every day counts. Employees are committed to doing the best they can for the agency during their five years, knowing they have a limited time to make their contribution. The Peace Corps today is characterized by a capable and dedicated work force, which is solid evidence of this organizational culture. In the most recent Employee Viewpoint Survey, 99.7 percent of employees state they are “willing to put in the extra effort to get a job done.”<sup>47</sup> In the view of a former country director,

<sup>46</sup> Analysis of the Peace Corps Workforce and Employment Related Authorities and Regulations. Contract No. PC-04-8-061. Dr. William I. Bacchus and Dr. James Michel, September 22, 2004 (see Appendix V-3).

<sup>47</sup> 2009 Peace Corps Annual Employee Viewpoint Survey

Chief of Staff, and Deputy Director of the agency, “the five-year rule is the single biggest asset that Peace Corps has” and the reason for “Peace Corps’ unique organizational spirit.”<sup>48</sup>

- The Peace Corps’ employees are less tied to ownership of ideas and initiatives, allowing them to be the Peace Corps’ ideas, instead of belonging to any one individual or group of individuals.
- Less effective American employees cannot work at the Peace Corps indefinitely.
- Re-engineering and restructuring efforts tend to be easier to accomplish than at other government agencies. It is relatively simple to launch new initiatives and projects, since new employees are less entrenched in particular procedures or vested in projects that are no longer viable.
- The Peace Corps is unlike any other U.S. government agency in its spirit of innovation and openness to new ideas. Given that approximately 85 percent of the Peace Corps’ employees have never been with another U.S. government agency, the risk aversion commonly attributed to government operations, is far less at the Peace Corps.
- If new workforce skills are needed, the Peace Corps can recruit and fill positions accordingly. High turnover resulting from the five-year rule creates opportunities to bring employees with different skill sets into the agency, and there is active interest in working for the Peace Corps. The overall number of applications consistently and dramatically outnumbers available positions.

Figure V-7

FISCAL YEAR	Applicant Count (Unique*)	Applicant Count (All Grades**)	Number of Selections
FY 2008	8,291	12,228	257
FY 2009	17,165	23,495	238
FY 2010 (10/1/09 to 4/20/10)	10,866	14,694	155 as of April 8, 2010

\* Unique – Applicant counted once regardless of number of vacancies and grades applied for.

\*\* All Grades – Applicant counted once for each vacancy and grade applied for.

- There are fewer long-term employee relations problems. Both supervisors and employees are willing to forge satisfactory working relationships, realizing the short-term nature of their relationship.
- While the agency has both entry-level and management-level positions, there are fewer mid-level positions within the Peace Corps. As a result, developing a career path with the Peace Corps naturally requires employees to leave the agency before returning to pursue a higher level of responsibility. Many employees do return and bring valuable new skills and fresh outside perspective with them.
- Overseas, the frequent transition of U.S. employees promotes opportunities for leadership among host country staff members in succession management, a reality consistent with the Peace Corps’ mission as an agency.

<sup>48</sup> Jody Olsen, April 22, 2010

- The five-year rule facilitates the Peace Corps’ status as an independent agency of the U.S. government.

### A.3.b Perceived Challenges

According to prior assessments and studies of the rule, as well as input from current and former Peace Corps staff and Volunteers who contributed to this assessment, perceived challenges of the five-year rule include:

- There is a lack of institutional memory to support decision-making, strategic planning, and operations. This lack of institutional memory exists on all organizational levels, from secretaries to associate directors, making work at the Peace Corps what one programming and training officer recently called, “The Toughest Job You’ll Ever Re-Invent.”<sup>49</sup> Combined with the turnover associated with having political appointments in the agency, the vast majority of which are in decision making positions, this lack of continuity and strategic thinking in operations is further heightened.

This lack of institutional memory is highlighted when analyzing the years of Peace Corps experience of current agency staff, where only country directors on average have been with the agency for more than three years.

Figure V-8  
Average Years of Service for Current Agency Staff  
(As of April 14, 2010)<sup>50</sup>

Average years of service for all current agency staff:	2.67
Average years of service for current overseas staff:	2.65
Country directors:	3.18
Administrative officers:	2.47
Programming and training officers / associate directors:	2.24
Average years of service for current domestic staff:	2.67

- While the agency benefits greatly from having the perspective of former Volunteers and overseas staff at Headquarters, as well as fresh energy and ideas, not all positions necessitate such perspective when compared to the value of capacity, continuity, business function, and institutional memory. For example, the country desk officer positions in each of the regions and the recruiter positions in regional recruitment offices benefit from the perspective and enthusiasm of returned Volunteers. However, key business functions performed by medical professionals, contract specialists, and human resources staff for example, may not equally necessitate such field perspective and currently suffer from frequent staff turnover and lack of continuity in a core business function of the Peace Corps (See Figure V-9 below).

<sup>49</sup> March 2010 Programming and Training Officer Conference, Washington, D.C.

<sup>50</sup> From the Office of Human Resource Management, Peace Corps Washington



Figure V-9  
Peace Corps Turnover Rates by Office per Calendar Year (CY)

OFFICE	2010 (as of 04/18/10)	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	Average
DIRECTOR	1.45%	31.25%	25.00%	23.66%	31.46%	31.40%	28.55%
IG	5.56%	15.00%	34.78%	32.00%	32.26%	13.64%	25.54%
CIO	1.39%	23.81%	24.36%	22.97%	25.88%	22.97%	24.00%
S&S	0.00%	13.04%	13.04%	4.76%	4.35%	20.69%	11.18%
OACM	17.65%	16.67%	26.32%	25.00%	7.14%	25.00%	20.03%
PCR	0.00%	54.55%	25.00%	44.44%	50.00%	25.00%	39.80%
MANAGEMENT	8.06%	19.18%	36.47%	31.40%	31.82%	27.03%	29.18%
CFO	4.26%	10.00%	28.43%	14.71%	25.00%	25.00%	20.63%
VRS	3.91%	22.55%	27.59%	28.68%	21.83%	25.21%	25.17%
VS	8.57%	10.53%	21.92%	16.25%	21.95%	21.79%	18.49%
OPATS	2.38%	24.53%	33.33%	23.08%	22.67%	20.00%	24.72%
AFR Region	6.73%	20.00%	15.20%	21.64%	16.26%	16.39%	17.90%
EMA Region	3.80%	23.66%	13.25%	17.65%	31.68%	24.24%	22.10%
IAP Region	5.75%	13.19%	20.83%	18.28%	18.75%	19.57%	18.12%
TOTAL AGENCY	4.64%	19.96%	24.59%	22.87%	24.05%	23.26%	22.95%

The challenge associated with turnover is heightened in cases where the position is one in limited supply within the job market, requires specialized professionals, or both. While it is accurate to say the Peace Corps receives a large number of applicants for vacancies, those applications are not evenly distributed across the agency. Human resource management, highlighted as an area in need of strengthening by many current and former employees, receives only a small number of qualified applicants to run a key operational business function. The same holds true for the Office of Acquisition and Contract Management. By contrast, the Peace Corps reports receiving a high number of applications for all overseas positions, as well as for information technology jobs, country desk officer positions, and administrative assistant assignments stateside.<sup>51</sup>

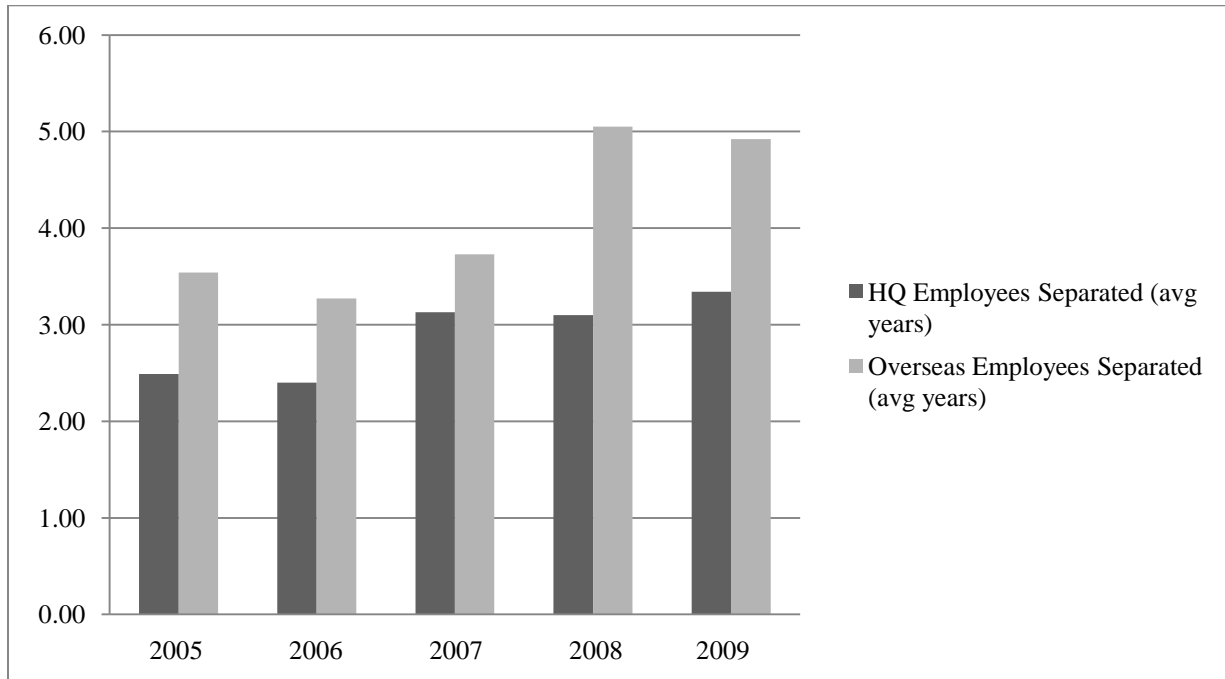
- Worthwhile projects or programs may suffer when key personnel supporting or managing them leave. The current lack of handover notes, overlaps, or other transition management approaches, further exacerbates this challenge.
- Managers and supervisors have limited to no options to retain the highest performers and to pursue what they perceive to be the best interest of operations of their units or overseas posts.
- At times, personnel turbulence caused by the five-year rule creates a frenetic, reactive, work environment instead of a more stable one. This is particularly evident in smaller units of headquarters or in overseas operations where all U.S. staff at a post may turnover within a matter of weeks or months. For example, turnover in the Peace Corps Response office, which only recently had more than ten staff members, averaged 39.8 percent a year from 2005 to 2009.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, poor management by the Peace Corps of staff transitions, as a result of the five-year rule, causes frequent and often lengthy gaps between employees, slowing operations significantly.

<sup>51</sup> From the Office of Management, Peace Corps Washington

<sup>52</sup> From the Office of Human Resource Management, Peace Corps Washington

- While employees may work at the Peace Corps for five years, the vast majority don't typically stay for five. Either at the end of their first appointment, many start looking for jobs, applying for schools, and preparing their next steps. Long before their anniversary dates, many top performers leave the organization. This claim is statistically proven, especially among domestic staff members, who have consistently served less time as compared to those deployed overseas (as shown in figure V-X below).

Figure V-10  
Average Length of Service at Time of Separation from the Peace Corps



- Some well-qualified applicants are deterred from applying for or accepting positions on the agency due to the limited nature of the appointment. Individuals early in their career may not find an opportunity for professional growth within five years. Key overseas positions may be unattractive for talented, midcareer applicants who may have children or other family commitments.<sup>53</sup> In speaking with more than 25 prospective employees about employment with the Peace Corps during the 2010 Devex International Development Career Fair in Washington, D.C., many potential candidates expressed concerns about term limitations when considering employment with the Peace Corps.<sup>54</sup>
- Managers, employees, and the agency's Human Resources Office spend an inordinate amount of time on the selection, orientation, and processing of new employees, time that could be better spent on other responsibilities. Given the five-year period is subdivided into two, thirty-month blocks, the work load in administering the five-year rule is further increased. This workload may be unnecessary given that the number of employees seeking a second tour who do not receive one is miniscule.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> According to March 31, 2010, statistics from Peace Corps' Human Resources Office, the average age for Peace Corps staff overseas is 46.4, compared to 42 at Headquarters and 36 in regional recruitment offices.

<sup>54</sup> Devex International Development Career Fair, Washington, D.C., March 12, 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Peace Corps Human Resources Office

- Supervisors are challenged to manage work units with constantly changing staff members, and employees must adapt to frequently changing leadership and their priorities.
- The “in and out rule” results in some of the Peace Corps’ more proven and talented staff members having to stay away from the agency for an excessively long period of time.
- Positive contributions of the five-year rule toward the Peace Corps’ operations overseas are often offset by the host country national staff of the agency, who can serve with the Peace Corps indefinitely and who rarely undergo a thorough performance evaluation process as a part of the Foreign Service management system.
- Poor management of staff transitions as a result of the five-year rule causes frequent, and often lengthy gaps between employees, resulting in a lack of continuity and consistency in operations. Such gaps are also a tool used by the agency to save resources during times when budgets are tight.
- Overseas, the frequent transition of U.S. employees results in some host country staff being reluctant to undertake new efforts or initiatives, instead preferring to wait out the American employee.
- The Peace Corps’ commitment to providing training to a constant flow of new employees joining the agency, potentially requires a financial investment higher than what the agency would invest if it were not restricted by the five-year rule.<sup>56</sup>

A.4. Tools available to manage challenges of the five-year rule

While the agency has a series of tools to help manage challenges of the five-year rule, the assessment team found that such tools were utilized inconsistently.

A.4.a Sixth years and third tours

In the case of sixth years and third tours, the assessment team found there is room for greater utilization by the agency. As shown in figure V-11 below, while all staff are eligible to serve a sixth year, in the last five years, the percentage of staff serving a sixth year has never exceeded 6 percent. The percentage of staff serving a third tour reached a high of 12 percent in 2008, although the ceiling is 15 percent.

Figure V-11  
Percentage of Staff Serving a Sixth Year or a Third Tour

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 (As of March)
Percentage of Staff Serving a Sixth Year (unlimited possibility)	3%	3%	2%	6%	4%	4%
Percentage of Staff Serving a Third Tour (out of a possible 15%)	7%	8%	10%	12%	11%	10%

<sup>56</sup> The Office of Inspector General plans to study this point in greater detail during FY 2010

#### A.4.b Experts and consultants

The original Section 13 of the Peace Corps Act established the President’s ability to contract experts and consultants outside of the limitations of permanent Civil Service employment,<sup>57</sup> a function that was delegated to the Director of the Peace Corps in 1963.<sup>58</sup> This authority has remained unchanged since.

The assessment team found the use of experts is increasing. (See Figure V-12 below.) However, experts and consultants are unable to serve in a supervisory or direct management capacity, a limitation diminishing their ability to directly address operational concerns. Additionally, the majority of the Peace Corps’ current experts and consultants serve on an intermittent appointment, making them part-time or limited-time employees. However, this is not required. The Peace Corps’ experts and consultants can be appointed full time and their appointments (twelve months) can be renewed indefinitely. In addition, retired federal employees can be appointed as experts and consultants at the Peace Corps without having to forfeit their retirement pay, a considerable incentive.<sup>59</sup>

Figure V-12  
Number of Expert Consultants

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 As of April
# of Expert Consultants	21	29	34	32	40	55

#### A.4.c Details and assignments from other organizations

Section 14 established the Peace Corps’ ability to both assign and receive personnel from other U.S. government agencies on “detail,” providing the Peace Corps a mechanism by which an employee could work for the agency with the assurance of having a job to return to upon completion of their term limit. The arrangement also served as a way for Peace Corps to consider receiving talent from other government agencies.<sup>60</sup> These authorities have remained unchanged.

The revised Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) mobility program, effective May 29, 1997, allows federal agencies to receive staff on details or assignments from a broader network of organizations. IPA employees can come to the Peace Corps on assignments of up to four years from state and local governments, Indian tribal governments, institutions of higher education, and other organizations that are:

- A nonprofit organization that is certified as offering, as one of its principal functions, professional advisory, research, educational, or development services, or related services, to governments or universities concerned with public management as certified;
- An association of state or local public officials;
- A national, regional, statewide, area-wide, or metropolitan organization representing member state or local governments; or,
- A federally-funded research and development center.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Public Law 87-293, section 13, 78 Stat. 2512 (September 22, 1961). The former Classification Act is now codified as chapter 51 of title 5, United States code, 5 U.S.C. 5101-5115.

<sup>58</sup> Sec. 6(a) of Public Law 88-200 (77 Stat. 360). 1963.

<sup>59</sup> Office of the General Counsel, Peace Corps Washington.

<sup>60</sup> Public Law 87-293, section 14, 78 Stat. 2513 (September 22, 1961). The former Classification Act is now codified as chapter 51 of title 5, United States code, 5 U.S.C. 5101-5115.

<sup>61</sup> Law. 5 USC sections 3371 through 3375. Regulations. 5 CFR Part 334

Unlike experts and consultants, employees on detail to the Peace Corps can perform any of the duties of a federal employee, including supervision, and can be assigned to a regular Peace Corps position, including overseas. As IPA assignments are made under the authority of the IPA, not the Peace Corps Act, they are not subject to the five-year and “in and out” rules. Thus, an employee who has left the Peace Corps can come back to the Peace Corps as an IPA employee without regard to the “in and out rule.” (See Appendix V-4).<sup>62</sup>

The agency does not typically use its authority to send and receive employees through details from other government agencies or through the far more expansive network defined by the revised Intergovernmental Personal Act mobility program. The Office of Human Resource Management was only aware of three such employees as of April 14, 2010. None came through IPA assignments. The reasons are not clear for the agency’s decision not to utilize these authorities.

## B. RECENT CHANGES

### B.1. Legislation

There have been no legislative changes in regards to Section 7 of the Peace Corps Act since 2004.

### B.2. Agency efforts to minimize negative impacts

In December of 2006, Marie Wheat, former Chief of Staff and then Expert Consultant in the Director’s Office, provided regional directors with a set of documents that had been developed to facilitate the debriefing of country directors as they completed their tours to ensure a smooth transition in overseas leadership. These documents included:

- A country director exit report, designed to “provide departing country directors the opportunity to give feedback which may assist the Peace Corps in the future management of the agency, the region and specifically their country programs” that were to be “reviewed by the Director, Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff and Regional Director;”
- A template for handover notes for country directors finishing tours;
- Guidance regarding the “Country Director End of Tour HQ Consultation,” a pilot program from 2006 in which the Peace Corps “began the practice of flying country directors to Washington, D.C. as they are ending their Peace Corps service for the purpose of an exit interview” and to “provide country directors a sense of completion of their valued service to the agency;” and,
- A list of key questions to be utilized for conducting exit interviews with departing country directors.

These documents and practices have not been adopted across the agency.

### B.3. Studies and assessments

In the first quarter of FY 2010, the Director of the agency established an agency-wide growth task force to identify strategies to facilitate the agency’s goal of quality growth. A subgroup of that task force concentrated on administration, including the five-year rule. Over two months, the administration subgroup—including staff from headquarters and overseas—consulted with posts, reviewed documents,

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<sup>62</sup> Office of General Counsel, Peace Corps Washington

and attended the worldwide programming and training officer conference. The task force generated three recommendations related to the five-year rule, all of which were consistent with views expressed at the recent country director and programming and training officer conferences, as well as through input provided to the agency assessment team through our outreach efforts. One of the recommendations was within the current authority of the Peace Corps and two require changes in statutory authority. Those recommendations were:

- Offer new hires a sixty-month appointment instead of a thirty-month appointment;
- Look at identifying positions where the agency has a hard time finding and retaining qualified applicants and seek the same exemption for those positions as has been given to Safety and Security positions. These positions include human resource specialists, contracting specialists, and screening nurses;
- Seek legislative changes to allow a percentage of U.S. direct hire employees to become eligible for a fourth tour.<sup>63</sup>

The Peace Corps' Office of the Inspector General is planning an assessment of the five-year rule during 2010 to determine the financial implications of agency term limitations.<sup>64</sup> It should be noted that staff in the Office of Inspector General have positions that are currently interpreted as falling under the five-year rule. However, those staff members have a single sixty-month term instead of two separate thirty-month terms.

In the second quarter of FY 2010, a poll of 398 employees in the Peace Corps labor union asked members to prioritize ten management issues facing agency employees. Based on input from 101 respondents, eliminating or modifying the five-year rule is the top priority.

#### B.4. Changes to implementation of the five-year rule

On January 20, 2010, the Chief of Staff issued a memorandum for all agency staff to provide guidance about "Requesting Third Tours or One Year Extensions." As a result of this guidance, extensions beyond five years can now be requested at the four-year point. Prior to this change, such extensions could only be submitted six months before the five-year period ends, creating challenges for high-performing employees who wished to continue with the Peace Corps but often found other opportunities prior to receiving confirmation from the agency. The change also served employees who hoped to remain with the agency but learned that their extension would not be supported until a minimum of six months prior to their end of tour.

In addition to being more employee friendly, the assessment team believes the Chief of Staff's guidance helps provide clarity about the decision making process, a concern expressed by some current and former staff members contributing to the assessment.

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<sup>63</sup> Growth Task Force, Management Working Group, Peace Corps, 2010

<sup>64</sup> FY 2010 Peace Corps Office of the Inspector General Annual Plan

## C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

The assessment team found both support and criticism of the five year rule to have many valid considerations. After 49 years, including 45 years with the five-year rule, the agency's unique personnel system, with a principal reliance on a core U.S. direct hire staff serving under limited appointments, has been instrumental in helping the agency complete the two justifications for which it was originally designed: remaining responsive to young Americans serving as Volunteers or potential Volunteers and ensuring there were always positions at headquarters for returning Volunteers and overseas staff.

However, in reviewing the five-year rule, the assessment team asked, "Would I run my business this way?" The answer was a unanimous, "No." In the view of the assessment team, the current implementation of the five-year rule restricts the Peace Corps from reaching optimal operational potential. Specifically, the assessment team believes the five-year rule restricts the Peace Corps' need for:

- Better management of key business functions, specifically in areas where it has difficulty finding qualified applicants and retaining qualified applicants in areas such as human resources, contract management, and screening nurses;
- Institutional memory concerning its strategic vision and the implementation thereof; and,
- Seasoned hands to assist in managing challenges, establishing new country programs, and successfully implementing the proposed strengthening and growth of the agency.

In the opinion of the assessment team, the steady increased use of experts clearly demonstrates the desire and need of those in leadership and management positions of the agency to retain the services of prepared staff to help ensure quality operations.

Legislative changes aside, the assessment team believes improved administration of the five year rule can allow the Peace Corps to better leverage the strengths of term limitations and to minimize the negative impacts associated with the rule. There are changes that can and should be made to increase the effectiveness of the agency, to provide employees a longer employment horizon, to better manage employee transitions, and to free up supervisors and the human resources department at the Peace Corps to focus on more important issues than managing the paper load associated with administering the five-year rule. While these changes will require stronger performance management throughout the agency, the assessment team felt this could be achieved with strong leadership, starting at the top of the agency.

The assessment team makes nine recommendations: five within the current legislative framework and four requiring changes to statutory authority. In the view of the assessment team, these changes both maintain the spirit of the five-year rule, while mitigating the negative impacts associated with its implementation.

#### C.1.a Recommendations for change within the confines of the current legislation

**Recommendation V-13:** The assessment team recommends altering the agency practice of allocating tours in thirty-month blocks. Instead the agency should begin making sixty-month appointments, including an increase in the probationary period from six months to one year.

Recommendation V-14: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps give consideration to staff members serving core business functions where the Peace Corps has a difficult time attracting and retaining qualified applicants. The team recommends the Peace Corps use the special authority granted in 1985 for sixth-year tours and begin offering the sixth year upon successful completion of the one-year probationary period. Positions in the Office of Human Resource Management, the Office of Acquisition and Contract Management, and the Office of Medical Services are recommended for such status.

Recommendation V-15: The assessment team recommends the agency consider greater utilization of its authority for sixth years and third tour extensions, targeting positions filled by specialized professionals, positions with a limited number of applicants, and those with particularly high turnover.

Recommendation V-16: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps consider greater utilization of its authority for experts, consultants, interagency details, and Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments to provide continuity with key operational functions at headquarters that need specialized professionals and to support operations overseas requiring seasoned Peace Corps professionals.

Recommendation V-17: The assessment team recommends improving transition management by implementing the use of previously designed handover notes and exit reports for country director transitions, developing templates for handover notes for other overseas and domestic positions, and providing overlap for staff serving in positions of critical function.

#### C.1.b Recommendations for changes to the current legislation

The assessment team recommends that the Director also consider the following changes to the current legislation:

Recommendation V-18: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps pursue legislation to establish a “4<sup>th</sup> Tour.” The team recommends a “4<sup>th</sup> Tour” to permit 5% of U.S. employees to assist with key operational functions at headquarters necessitating specialized professionals and/or to support operations overseas requiring seasoned Peace Corps professionals with management authority. 4<sup>th</sup> tours should be reserved for individuals with extensive Peace Corps management experience in both headquarters and the field, or by high performing specialized professionals in positions with a limited number of applicants and/or with particularly high turnover. Employees in a 4<sup>th</sup> tour should be provided 30 month appointments.

Recommendation V-19: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps pursue legislation to place a limit on the “time in, time out” clause of the five-year rule to establish a “five years out” maximum.

Recommendation V-20: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps pursue legislation to allow employees moving from positions stateside to positions overseas, and vice versa, a one-time opportunity to have their five-year clock reset.

Recommendation V-21: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps pursue legislation to increase the percentage of employees eligible for a third tour from 15 to 30 percent, utilizing the current criteria of the Peace Corps Act and targeting positions filled by specialized professionals, positions with a limited number of applicants, and those with particularly high turnover.



C.2. Strategy for implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
V-13: The assessment team recommends altering the agency practice of allocating tours in thirty-month blocks. Instead the agency should begin making sixty-month appointments, including an increase in the probationary period from six months to one year.	Office of Management – (Office of Human Resources)	Office of Human Resources Management	In Quarter 4 FY 2010
V-14: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps give consideration to staff members serving core business functions where the Peace Corps has a difficult time attracting and retaining qualified applicants. The team recommends the Peace Corps use the special authority granted in 1985 for sixth-year tours and begin offering the sixth year upon successful completion of the one-year probationary period. Positions in the Office of Human Resource Management, the Office of Acquisition and Contract Management, and the Office of Medical Services are recommended for such status.	Office of Management – (Office of Human Resources)	Office of Volunteer Support – (Office of Medical Services); Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management;	In FY 2011
V-15: The assessment team recommends the agency consider greater utilization of its authority for sixth years and third tour extensions, targeting positions filled by specialized professionals, positions with a limited number of applicants, and those with particularly high turnover.	Office of the Director; Office of Management – (Office of Human Resources)	Agency-wide	In FY 2011

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
<p>V-16: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps consider greater utilization of its authority for experts, consultants, interagency details, and Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments to provide continuity with key operational functions at headquarters that need specialized professionals and to support operations overseas requiring seasoned Peace Corps professionals.</p>	<p>Office of Management – (Office of Human Resources); Office of Intergovernmental Affairs</p>	<p>Office of the General Counsel; Agency-wide</p>	<p>In FY 2011</p>
<p>V-17: The assessment team recommends improving transition management by implementing the use of previously designed handover notes and exit reports for country director transitions, developing templates for handover notes for other overseas and domestic positions, and providing overlap for staff serving in positions of critical function.</p>	<p>Office of Management – (Office of Human Resources); Office of the Director</p>	<p>Office of the General Counsel; Agency-wide</p>	<p>In Quarter 4 FY 2011</p>

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
<p>V-18: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps consider pursuing legislation to establish a “4<sup>th</sup> Tour.” The team recommends a “4<sup>th</sup> Tour” permit 5% of American employees to assist with key operational functions at headquarters necessitating specialized professionals and/or to support operations overseas requiring seasoned Peace Corps professionals with management authority. 4<sup>th</sup> tours should be reserved for individuals with extensive Peace Corps management experience in both headquarters and the field, or by high performing specialized professionals in positions with a limited number of applicants and/or with particularly high turnover. Employees in a 4<sup>th</sup> tour should be provided 30 month renewable appointments, not to exceed 60 months.</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Congressional Relations</p>	<p>Office of Management; Office of the General Counsel</p>	<p>In FY 2011</p>
<p>V-19: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps consider pursuing legislation to place a limit on the “time in, time out” clause of the five-year rule to establish a “five years out” maximum.</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Congressional Relations</p>	<p>Office of Management; Office of the General Counsel</p>	<p>In FY 2011</p>
<p>V-20: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps consider pursuing legislation to allow employees moving from positions stateside to positions overseas, and vice versa, a one-time opportunity to have their five-year clock reset.</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Congressional Relations</p>	<p>Office of Management; Office of the General Counsel</p>	<p>In FY 2011</p>

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
<p>V-21: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps consider pursuing legislation to increase the percentage of employees eligible for a third tour from 15 to 30 percent, utilizing the current criteria of the Peace Corps Act and targeting positions filled by specialized professionals, positions with a limited number of applicants, and those with particularly high turnover.</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Congressional Relations</p>	<p>Office of Management; Office of the General Counsel</p>	<p>In FY 2011</p>

## **PART C: STRENGTHENING EVALUATION AND OVERSIGHT**

### **A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM**

#### **A.1. Monitoring and evaluation tools**

The Peace Corps uses four primary tools to monitor and evaluate progress toward the agency's goals throughout the world. The first is the Volunteer Reporting Tool, an electronic data management system used by nearly all Peace Corps posts starting in FY 2009. The tool allows posts to periodically collect detailed qualitative and quantitative data from all Volunteers on activities that relate to the three goals of the Peace Corps. Each Volunteer connects their activities, and the outcomes of these activities, to the objectives in the sector-specific projects at their post. By collecting data at the grassroots Volunteer-activity level, the tool allows posts to evaluate how their goals are being met over time. The flexibility of the tool allows each post to adjust the data they collect to the country strategy and project goals at their post and to changes in projects.

The second monitoring tool used by the Peace Corps is the Project Status Report developed for each of the Peace Corps' approximately 220 projects. The data from the Volunteer Reporting Tool serve as input to the report. The report<sup>65</sup> measures the progress of projects toward meeting their goals. Annually, each post submits a report for each of its projects to the three regional offices and the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) at headquarters. The report contains data on that year's progress toward each objective in the project plan, as well as data on other programmatic elements of the plan, such as the total participants reached by the Peace Corps activities that year. The Project Status Report is used at the post-level to monitor and evaluate the progress of projects and to make changes to project plans when needed. Project plans are designed and implemented in collaboration with host country partners, and the Project Status Report provides the data and analysis needed for the Peace Corps and local partners to discuss and evaluate progress toward mutual development goals.

The Annual Volunteer Survey, coordinated by the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) is a third monitoring tool used by the Peace Corps to assess Volunteers' impressions of their service. The Annual Volunteer Survey assesses agency progress toward its goals and identifies challenges by drawing upon the experiences of currently serving Volunteers. The Survey is administered to all Volunteers, and asks questions on training, work assignments, living conditions, support from local Peace Corps staff, medical care, and safety and security. Volunteers are also asked to describe the degree to which their technical and language training prepared them to do their work, the extent to which their assignment built local capacity and achieved the three goals of the Peace Corps. Results of the survey are used by headquarters and posts to evaluate and improve the Peace Corps' programs.

The Annual Volunteer Survey, which was biennial prior to 2009, also provides helpful information to management on a wide range of subjects, including Volunteer satisfaction with assignments, Volunteer expectations versus reality, and Volunteer input on the future of the Peace Corps' operations in their country of service. In addition to the worldwide results, country-specific results are also available for use by staff at posts and at headquarters and regional recruiting offices. The survey may be used for multiple purposes, including identifying trends and best practices, planning office and post priorities, and appraising performance.

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<sup>65</sup> Current Peace Corps projects fall into the following areas: agriculture and environment, business development, community development, education, health and HIV/AIDS, information technology, and youth outreach.

The fourth tool is Results Based Field Evaluation (Impact Studies). Under the direction of the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning OSIRP, the agency has undertaken a series of country level studies to evaluate the impact of Volunteers on the host country nationals with whom they live and work, as well as the organizations with which they are assigned to cooperate. The studies began at three posts during FY 2008 and continued in FY 2009 and FY 2010 at nine posts. These studies collect information from host country counterparts, beneficiaries, host families and stakeholders to help inform Peace Corps on the impact of the Peace Corps' work primarily focusing on goal one and goal two activities.

The process of carrying out an impact study begins with a joint decision between OSIRP and the region's management in Headquarters on the country and the program in that country to be evaluated. OSIRP secures the funding for the study, provides overall methodological consistency, and guides staff through the process of implementing the post specific research. Specifically, OSIRP staff members take the lead in:

- Developing the scope of work to contract the local firm that will carry out the work in-country (in conjunction with post staff);
- Supervision in the development of the questionnaire, the random selection of sites to visited, and the selection of the respondents to be interviewed at each site (in conjunction with post staff);
- Supervision of the data entry and analysis of the report; and,
- Reviews and augments the country report prepared by the local firm, providing a standardized reporting structure and the ability to compare reports across posts.

These evaluations of the Peace Corps' first two goals are taking place across many cultures and in three main program sectors: business development, education, and health and HIV/AIDS. They are conducted by third-party research teams, under OSIRP's direction. They use a multi-method approach to gather information and include outreach to counterparts, host families, community members, host ministries, and other partner organizations. They assure greater objectivity than the data compiled by the Peace Corps' staff as they are conducted by host country nationals not associated with the Peace Corps. Country directors and programming and training officers have welcomed these studies for the helpful third-party data they provide.

The management and analysis of the first two tools, the Volunteer Reporting Tool and the Project Status Report is managed by OPATS. As explained in Part A of chapter VIII, OPATS' primary mission is to engage in field staff capacity building and to support overseas programming and training of Volunteers and staff. Using these two tools, OPATS collects and analyzes data that is specific to Volunteer and project activities to measure project performance and collect information on "best practices". It is important to note that these two tools serve as monitoring tools and are not designed to measure impact. OPATS uses this information to develop Volunteer and staff training and better support Volunteers and staff in the field.

The management and analysis of the Annual Volunteer Surveys and the Impact Studies are managed by OSIRP. OSIRP reports directly to the Office of the Director, and performs three key agency-level functions:

- Performance planning and reporting;
- Evaluation and measurement; and,
- Data management

Both the Annual Volunteer Surveys and the Impact Studies fall under OSIRP's evaluation and measurement functions, and helps the agency to meet reporting requirements and better articulate the impact of the work of the Peace Corps. While these two tools capture some information on Volunteer activities and projects, their purpose is much broader than that, and the information collected from these two tools is used across the agency to objectively measure the agency's performance and improve overall agency operations.

In addition to these four primary project monitoring and evaluation tools, the agency has developed management tools to monitor performance. The Administrative Management Control Survey is a tool provided to country directors and designated staff to conduct periodic self-appraisals of administrative, financial, training, and program management practices at post. It provides a snapshot of risk levels at post to help identify management areas in need of improvement and gives headquarter offices the information they need to improve their support to posts. It needs to be continually updated with data from other sources, such as volunteer surveys and Inspector General audit reports, and post managers should be trained and required to use it. It is a tool that offers great potential for monitoring management but is underutilized.

In 2005, the agency worked to provide direct management support to individual posts through the creation of the Office of the Director's Internal Management Assessment program, which was tasked with conducting Internal Management Assessments. The program is based on the concepts of collaborative interaction and a peer approach. Internal Management Assessments bring a team of experienced, Peace Corps-savvy people to review operations and develop suggestions for strengthened performance. They can be conducted both overseas and domestically. A management assessment could help country directors, post staff members, and Volunteers address specific challenges; strengthen the post operations; streamline or improve administrative functions; review the relevance or quality of programs and training; improve Volunteer performance, standards, and satisfaction; or address other issues. At headquarters, the Internal Management Assessment team could review the operations of an individual management unit, or a specific operational function of that unit, to determine relevancy, improve systems, or re-design the unit for maximum performance.

In keeping with the collaborative nature of the visit, the team discusses their observations with a country director or headquarters staff throughout the visit. Before leaving an overseas post, the team presents a draft of their findings and recommendations to the country director and senior staff. Upon return to headquarters from an overseas post, the team reports informally to the regional director and to the Internal Management Assessment project coordinator on the findings and proposed recommendations. They then send a draft report to the country director, regional director, and project coordinator for comments and input. The final electronic version of the report is printed and distributed to the post and to the agency and regional directors. The same process is used with domestic Internal Management Assessments.

Internal Management Assessments have been well-received and present a model for assisting the agency to make the changes needed to implement the new strategic plan for Peace Corps.

Finally, the Peace Corps also draws on the research findings of a wide range of external sources: NGOs, other U.S. government agencies, donor agencies, and, to a lesser extent, academia. The Peace Corps is regularly involved with researchers on development, international volunteerism and service learning. In addition, a number of the Peace Corps' staff are members of a variety of professional evaluation associations and participate in InterAction's Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Group. The Peace Corps' technical specialists synthesize these research findings for application at the Peace Corps' country

posts. The Peace Corps also benefits from the countless number of Ph.D. dissertations, M.A. theses, and academic studies on various aspects of the Peace Corps' work.

#### A.2. Offices engaged in project evaluation and oversight

The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) conducts applied research through on-site Volunteer project reviews and the analysis of Project Status Reports. The research focuses on continuous learning through application, assessment, and redirection—learning by doing. It is inherent in all of the Peace Corps' programming, training, and evaluation and is done at the field-level by individual Volunteers and at the project level by the Peace Corps' field staff members. The lack of independent evaluators in the process has diminished its credibility, as has the prevalence of soft indicators as opposed to quantifiable results. Increasingly, this work is done in conjunction with host country partners, contributing to the value and credibility of the results.

Most of the agency's institutional learning is derived from this type of research. This material has been consolidated into manuals and guides over the years. Many of these documents are well-recognized among practitioners and contain key findings on various aspects of grassroots development. Many of the documents, however, merit additional testing to verify and update their findings.

There is growing emphasis on outcome indicators and the development of more sophisticated outcome assessment tools than those traditionally used by the Peace Corps. With the creation of the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP) in 2007, the agency now has the capacity to conduct impact evaluations of the Peace Corps' sector projects. Experienced staff is now in place and working closely with all offices to enhance existing data collection efforts and develop new means to collect the data necessary to inform evaluation efforts and demonstrate the impact of the Peace Corps. OSIRP is responsible for data content and for ensuring the consistency, reliability, and validity of the data provided by the agency to the public. Additional agency surveys are fielded by OSIRP, including the survey of the experiences of 50+ Volunteers and the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Survey and focus groups.

#### A.3. The Inspector General's oversight

Through passage of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (IG Act), Congress established an Office of the Inspector General in large federal agencies with the mission to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and to promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency in government. In 1988, Congress extended the law to most other federal agencies, including the Peace Corps. In February 1989, the Peace Corps established its Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

The IG Act, as amended, establishes the Office of the Inspector General as an independent entity within the Peace Corps. The inspector general reports directly to and is under the general supervision of the Peace Corps Director. In addition, the inspector general reports directly to Congress, keeping it fully and currently informed concerning the programs and operations of the Peace Corps. The OIG is organized into three functional units: Audit, Evaluation, and Investigation and is authorized by law to review all programs and operations of the Peace Corps.

Independent audits by the OIG provide independent oversight of the Peace Corps' functional activities, such as contract compliance and financial and program operations, to ensure accountability and to recommend improved levels of economy and efficiency. In their on-site visits, OIG staff members encourage post self-evaluations, identify problem areas, and recommend corrective actions. They conduct inspections focused on administrative compliance with rules and regulations. In addition, they review the



safety and security of Volunteers and staff. More broadly, OIG staff members identify common problems and trends from post to post and offer guidance for quality improvements agency-wide.

The Audit Unit focuses primarily on the agency's programs, financial and administrative operations, and personnel who support the Peace Corps' mission and its Volunteers serving around the world. With a team of four auditors, the unit conducts audits of the agency's field activities at overseas posts and the agency's administrative support functions at headquarters and domestic recruiting offices. For some highly technical audits, OIG contracts with independent auditing firms and engages individual experts. Audit staff members also perform additional related activities in support of the overall agency, including providing technical assistance to the Peace Corps' managers on issues related to financial and administrative policies, procedures, and effective internal controls. The Audit Unit also conducts training sessions to strengthen the level of competence of overseas administrative staff.

The Evaluation Unit analyzes the management and program operations of the Peace Corps at both overseas posts and domestic offices. The four OIG evaluators identify best practices and recommend program improvements and the means to comply with the Peace Corps' policies. Evaluations are conducted under the direction and guidance of the assistant inspector general for evaluations and in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections published by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

The Office of the Inspector General explains that it approaches program evaluations from the perspective that the mission of the overseas post is to develop projects that address goal one of the Peace Corps: to meet the country's need for trained manpower. This means that Volunteers arrive at their sites understanding what they are expected to do, are met by people—counterparts, colleagues, local officials—who are expecting them and have the same understanding of what they are expected to do, arrive with the skills they need to do what is expected of them, and find a local context conducive to doing their work. Their experiences as Volunteers should give them a reasonable opportunity to feel productive and to complete their service with a sense of satisfaction about what they have accomplished. The experiences they have in accomplishing their work should show results in the form of goal two and motivate them to carry out goal three. The Office of the Inspector General has conducted numerous program evaluations and in January 2007 issued a report entitled, "Peace Corps, A Case Study of Effective Peace Corps Programs—A Blueprint for Success," that is utilized in management training.

Some overseas staff contributing to the assessment expressed concerns about the OIG's program evaluations overseas, citing the lack of overseas, grassroots development expertise, or the Peace Corps' experience of the evaluators, as well as a perceived tendency of evaluators to formulate conclusions of posts programmatic operations based exclusively on interviews with an often limited number of Volunteers. This concern appears to have decreased as the OIG is increasingly focused on completing program evaluations by measuring posts against agency or post-specific guidelines and policies and through an objective process with post management. Additionally, the assessment team found that OIG's Evaluation Unit is increasingly seen by overseas staff as a possible tool in strengthening overseas operations.

The Investigation Unit assists the Peace Corps in maintaining integrity in its programs and operations by investigating allegations of fraud, waste, abuse, and employee misconduct. Matters investigated include grant, contract, and procurement fraud; violations of law and agency policies committed by the Peace Corps' personnel, contractors, and vendors; and Federal Employees' Compensation Act claimants. The unit's investigations have resulted in criminal prosecutions, civil monetary penalties, sanctions, and

personnel actions, including verbal counseling, suspensions, and termination from service in the Peace Corps.

The Office of the Inspector General recently issued a report on the audit of the Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management's Process for Soliciting, Awarding, and Administering Contracts. The report on the audit of the Office of the Chief Information Officer Budget Formulation and Management, which was issued in a preliminary form in late FY 2009, will be finalized and issued in FY 2010. The Program Audit of the Peace Corps' Volunteer Safety and Security Operations, begun in FY 2009, will be completed in FY 2010. The Office of the Inspector General also has plans for an audit of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer Budget Formulation and Management in the third and fourth quarter of FY 2010, as well as an audit of a regional recruiting office (location to be determined).

It should be noted that the OIG is increasingly using a more systematic approach to addressing challenges in the management of the Peace Corps. For example, instead of conducting reviews of contract management at a series of overseas posts, the OIG instead began with an audit of the headquarters office responsible. The assessment team strongly supports this approach.

It should be noted the OIG can only recommend corrective actions, but does not have the authority to enforce such recommendations. This authority lies with the Chief Compliance Officer.

#### A.4. Office of Chief Compliance Officer

The Chief Compliance Officer is a member of the Director's senior staff. Among the responsibilities of the office is to collect, track, and monitor reports that require compliance and follow-up, including Inspector General audits and program evaluations. The position has been vacant since January 2009. The job vacancy has been posted. The ongoing lack of a Compliance Officer is a significant obstacle to performance enhancement of the Peace Corps.

## B. RECENT CHANGES

With the creation of the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP) in 2007, the agency now has an entity specifically charged with enhancing the agency's strategic planning and reporting, evaluation and measurement, and data governance efforts. Impact studies offer objective impact data. OSIRP has experienced, qualified staff with the capacity to provide the data managers needed to manage effectively. The creation of the office represents a major step forward in gathering, analyzing, and disseminating the data the agency needs to make decisions. OSIRP has successfully compiled data in formats that are useful to posts and headquarter offices, and it has conducted training sessions for staff members, including those in-country desk units, on how to understand and use the data it has collected. OSIRP also plays a critical role in providing documented accountability to OMB, Congress, and the public at large.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

The Peace Corps' methods for measuring recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers has significantly improved over the past several years, but determining the Peace Corps' demonstrated impact has remained elusive. The agency has seen major improvements in its project monitoring and evaluation processes since the creation of the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP). The challenge for the agency is to coordinate and integrate the work of OSIRP—and the data it collects—with the decision-making processes in posts and headquarters offices. The Peace Corps needs to standardize the use of the data to inform management decisions. With the creation of the Office of Global Operations it is anticipated that there will be more consistent use of the data provided by OSIRP and the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS).

Recommendation V-22: The assessment team recommends using the monitoring and evaluation tools currently in place and highlighted in the report to more effectively make management and strategic decisions.

Recommendation V-23: The assessment recommends the Peace Corps require posts to complete the administrative management control survey (AMCS) prior to completing the IPBS process.

In the view of the assessment team and overseas agency staff contributing to the assessment, the impact study program developed by OSIRP provides a promising tool to evaluate agency impact. The assessment team recommends that the impact study program should be dramatically expanded so that the agency can expand its access to objective third party information regarding performance of programs. By focusing the Peace Corps' project areas to a limited number of specific technical interventions, the agency can more easily replicate the studies and measure impact worldwide. The assessment team further suggests the agency share this data with Congress to better articulate the impact of the Peace Corps and highlight the return the American taxpayer is receiving on their investment in the agency.

Recommendation V-24: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps dramatically expand the impact study program with the target of carrying out a greater number of impact studies across posts.

The Office of the Director's Internal Management Assessment program assists posts and headquarters offices to make changes needed to strengthen operations, and presents an opportunity for greater monitoring and oversight. The peer nature of the program makes it a valuable tool that is appropriate for expansion. The Internal Management Assessment program could be used as the agency works to implement the new strategic plan highlighted in this assessment. However, a process for tracking the implementation of the recommendations made by the Internal Management Assessments is needed.

To maximize the effect of the Internal Management Assessments, the senior leadership of the Peace Corps should assign responsibility for the implementation of their recommendations and make the implementation of the recommendations a priority.

Recommendation V-25: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps expand the internal management assessment program and increase its use. Furthermore, the team recommends the Peace Corps ensure internal management assessment recommendations are adopted or that documentation is provided as to why recommendations were not implemented.

Finally, the Project Status Report process is generally considered by post to be a valuable undertaking at the local level. It serves as an opportunity to review the year's activities, take stock of what happened and why, and celebrate project successes. It serves as a snapshot headquarters can use when referring to specific post operations. However, based on input from current and former overseas staff contributing to the assessment, OPATS review and feedback on Project Status Report submissions is viewed as not providing operational value to the field. Specifically, feedback is often very limited, generally vague, and slow in coming. The program and training review process is far more energy intensive for a post than its value can justify. The 2008 Internal Management Assessment on the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (the former name of the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support) recommended that the current OPATS review process of post Project Status Reports be discontinued. It is anticipated, however, that, once the agency is working in the greatly reduced number of projects targeted to specific interventions, it will be necessary to review the Project Status Report process and make modifications to standardize the data. Progress on the project goals will need to be evaluated by posts and headquarters on a regular schedule, using the data obtained from impact studies and Project Status Reports.

C.2. Strategy for implementation of recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(S)	TIMING
V-22: The assessment team recommends using the monitoring and evaluation tools currently in place and highlighted in the report to more effectively make management and strategic decisions.	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning;	Agency-wide	Immediate and ongoing
V-23: The assessment recommends the Peace Corps require posts to complete the administrative management control survey (AMCS) prior to completing the IPBS process.	Office of Global Operations; Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning	Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	In Quarter 2 FY 2011 and annually thereafter
V-24: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps dramatically expand the impact study program with the target of carrying out a greater number of impact studies across posts.	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	Begin increasing the number of impact studies conducted in FY 2011.
V-25: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps expand the internal management assessment program and increase its use. Furthermore, the team recommends the Peace Corps ensure internal management assessment recommendations are adopted or that documentation is provided as to why recommendations were not implemented.	Office of the Director	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	Immediate and ongoing

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## **VI. IMPROVING THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS TO ATTRACT A WIDE DIVERSITY OF HIGHLY AND APPROPRIATELY SKILLED VOLUNTEERS**

### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS

#### A.1. Overview of the Volunteer delivery system

The Peace Corps is unique in that instead of providing overseas communities with money, the Peace Corps provides communities with hands-on support. The first step in ensuring Volunteers' success is to recruit, select, and place the right individuals in job assignments, communities, and countries where their skills and experience are the most needed. Within the Peace Corps, the process of recruiting, selecting, and placing Volunteers is known as the Volunteer delivery system – an ongoing cycle that begins when a post requests a Volunteer and ends when an appropriately skilled and suitable trainee arrives in-country.

The Volunteer delivery system begins at post when overseas staff members develop projects and determine the needed number and desired skill set of Volunteers via the Quarterly Trainee Review Summary submitted fifteen months prior the arrival of Volunteers in-country.<sup>66</sup> Currently trainees are requested using an assignment area classification system that categorizes applicants into 26 technical areas of expertise based on demonstrated experience and academic credentials (see Figure VI-1 below).

#### Sample Assignment Area Description

##### **124 Water and Sanitation Extension**

Demonstrated ability in planning, organizing, or leadership within the past 4 years and  
A. 1 year work experience in construction, masonry, carpentry or plumbing, or

B. BA/BS any discipline with expressed interest in hygiene education/sanitation and an interest in hands-on skilled work as demonstrated by 3 months or more relevant work or volunteer experience in one of the following: mechanical repairs, construction, carpentry, set design, Habitat for Humanity, home repair and remodeling, etc.

#### A.1.a Recruitment

Recruiters conduct campaigns on college campuses and in communities across the United States to raise awareness about the Peace Corps and to generate applications. Regional recruitment offices structure recruitment campaigns based on data from the previous year's request for Volunteers. Once an application is submitted, it is assigned to a recruiter based on the geographic location of the applicant. The Volunteer delivery system is not automated and relies primarily on paper files. Electronic applications are printed, and a paper file is generated that is used throughout the selection process. After an initial application review, candidates who meet the basic qualifications are interviewed by a recruiter over the phone, using web-conferencing technology, or in-person.

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<sup>66</sup> Peace Corps Volunteers serve for 27 months. The first three months of service are spent in training, during which time an individual is known as a trainee. Trainees become Volunteers when they swear-in to complete the remainder of their service. Therefore, posts request trainees and not Volunteers.

During the interview, a recruiter explores an applicant's suitability for Peace Corps service using a standard set of question to assess:

- productive competence;
- social sensitivity;
- emotional maturity; and,
- motivation and commitment to Peace Corps service.

After the interview, some candidates are counseled to gain more experience or are rejected. Qualified and suitable applicants are nominated (recommended) for a general work assignment area, a geographic region of the world, and an approximate departure date. For example, an applicant would be nominated for a youth development assignment in a francophone, sub-Saharan African country that would start in June 2011. After nomination, the paper file and all of the notes and supporting documentation are mailed to the Placement Unit in Washington, D.C.

#### A.1.b Medical clearance

A nomination triggers the medical history review process. The medical review is conducted by nurses in the Pre-Service Unit to ensure that the Peace Corps can support the Volunteer for 27 months without unreasonable disruptions because of health problems. Based on an applicant's responses to medical questions—a set of questions submitted with the initial application—a customized medical kit is generated and mailed to the applicant. The medical kit outlines the requirements for physical, dental, and eye exams. At the minimum, the medical evaluation includes a visit to a physician and lab work, a visit to a dentist and X-rays, and the completion of a comprehensive medical history. Most of the costs incurred during this process are at the expense of the applicant. See Section A.6.e of this chapter for additional information on the costs associated with the medical clearance process.

After the evaluation, applicants are either medically qualified for service, medically qualified with restrictions on where they can serve, deferred until a health condition has been resolved and deemed stable for a period of time, or disqualified. Once an applicant is medically qualified for Peace Corps service, with or without restrictions, the Placement Unit begins reviewing the application.

#### A.1.c Selection and placement

Applications are reviewed to ensure that all legal requirements are met, and a final skills and suitability assessment is done by a placement officer. The assessment involves a final paper review. Occasionally, a placement officer will counsel candidates to seek additional experience to become more competitive or will reject them if they are not competitive. Candidates who are deemed qualified are mailed an invitation to serve. The applicant has ten days from the date they receive the mailed invitation kit to accept or decline. Invitations are typically issued two to three months prior to departure, although they can be issued as early as six months or as late as six weeks prior to departure.

### A.2. Offices involved in the Volunteer delivery system

The Volunteer delivery system is a complex process that spans numerous offices and delivers qualified and motivated Volunteers in support of the Peace Corps' programs overseas. The Peace Corps' staff members involved in the selection process do a remarkable job processing large numbers of applications and placing Volunteers overseas, especially given that the process is largely paper driven and is not fully automated.



In addition to the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, a number of offices share responsibility for either processing applications or supporting aspects of the selection process.

#### A.2.a The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection is the primary office responsible for processing applications through the system. The office recruits, selects, and places qualified U.S. citizens to meet the need for Peace Corps Volunteers overseas. The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection is organized into two sub-offices—the Office of Recruitment and the Office of Volunteer Placement and Staging—each with different functional responsibilities.

#### A.2.b The Office of Recruitment

##### Regional recruitment offices

There are nine regional recruitment offices in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, and Rosslyn, Virginia. They are often the first point of contact for individuals interested in Peace Corps service and have primary responsibility for planning regional recruitment campaigns that attract qualified individuals. The initial applicant screening assessment also takes place in these regional recruitment offices.

##### Recruitment Support Unit

The unit's mission is to support the regional recruitment offices and to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of Volunteer recruitment and nomination by providing program analysis, monitoring, and recruiter training.

##### Diversity Recruitment and National Outreach

The unit supports the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection in its efforts to attract, recruit, and retain a diverse cadre of Volunteers. The unit supports the regional recruitment offices' efforts to educate and inform the public about the benefits of service in the Peace Corps.

##### Master's International Program

This unit partners with graduate schools to meet the increasing demand overseas for Peace Corps Volunteers with high levels of education and technical expertise.

#### A.2.c The Office of Volunteer Placement and Staging

The Office of Volunteer Placement and Staging is made up of two units described below.

##### Placement Unit

The unit collects trainee requests from the Peace Corps' posts overseas and conveys those requests to the regional recruitment offices. The unit works to supply Volunteers to meet the demands of posts. In addition, the unit conducts the final application review to determine applicant eligibility based on legal guidelines and then makes the final matching and selection decision.

##### Staging Unit

This unit schedules and manages the pre-departure orientation known as staging for trainees in the United States.

#### A.2.d Other offices that support the Volunteer delivery system

##### The Pre-Service Unit in the Office of Medical Services

The Pre-Service Unit in the Office of Medical Services has a direct role in processing applications in the Volunteer delivery system. The unit is responsible for reviewing every applicant's medical history and for issuing medical clearances.

##### Overseas Peace Corps posts

Posts throughout the three geographic regions and the Office of Global Operations drive the entire Volunteer delivery system by requesting Volunteers.

##### The Office of Communications

The Office of Communications supports the selection process by developing recruitment marketing campaigns, materials, updating the website, and using social media—including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube—to educate the public about the Peace Corps.

#### A.3. Implementing a new recruitment strategy for skilled and highly skilled Volunteers

The strategic vision presented in chapter II will have an immense impact on recruitment. The Peace Corps will target efforts and resources to the majority of applicants—young professionals with limited work experience—by leveraging their strengths to maximize their impact, while using highly skilled Volunteers to complement post programming. There will be two different Volunteer models, one for Volunteers with general skills and another for highly skilled Volunteers. Consequently, the agency will need two different marketing, recruitment, and placement strategies to attract and retain qualified applicants.

##### A.3.a Generalist volunteers

Throughout the history of the Peace Corps, the agency has been highly successful at taking young professionals, providing them with language, cross-cultural, and technical training, and placing them in underserved communities. These flexible, energetic, well-rounded generalists are often identified by overseas staff as being well suited to fulfilling the unique mission and the three goals of the Peace Corps. The new strategic vision proposes investing more resources in Volunteer training to ensure that Volunteers have the skills needed to be effective in assignments and countries where their level of expertise is appropriate and where they can have a quality experience and a demonstrated impact.

To recruit the best Volunteers, overseas programming staff should define the personal attributes and desired non-technical skills that Volunteers need to perform each targeted intervention. These will be standardized, although posts will still be able to request Volunteers with additional skills that are necessary to perform assignments in a particular country. This will inform the new recruitment strategy, because once the Peace Corps identifies the personal attributes and non-technical skills necessary for a Volunteer, regional recruitment offices can target recruitment efforts to finding these individuals.

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection will focus on recruiting and selecting generalist Volunteers who are young professionals and recent college graduates with limited work experience. The agency will need a new recruitment strategy to target generalist Volunteers. An important component of this recruitment strategy will be an integrated diversity recruitment strategy. Diversity recruitment is discussed in Section A.4.

### A.3.b Skilled volunteers

Although the Peace Corps is primarily comprised of Volunteers with limited professional experience, skilled Volunteers are also in demand at overseas posts. Skilled Volunteers have significant professional work experience and technical expertise. These skilled Volunteers are often more mature and bring a unique and desired technical skill set that enhances and complements the work of generalist Volunteers at posts. The Peace Corps can be more effective in leveraging the skills and experience that technically skilled Volunteers have by being more creative in designing their projects, by being more flexible about the length of service, and by recruiting and placing them through Peace Corps Response. See chapter II.

Skilled Volunteers have different expectations and needs that need to be addressed during the application and selection process. As part of the review of the Volunteer Delivery System conducted in 1999, the review team noted:

“Virtually all the organizations that the review team visited actively recruit and search for hard-to-fill positions. They in turn spend a lot of time, effort, and money searching and recruiting these individuals – and they treat them differently in the application and selection process.”<sup>67</sup>

Often these applicants have greater personal and professional commitments that affect their ability to remain flexible during the application process. The Peace Corps needs to be able to provide them with information regarding what type of job they will be performing and the departure date farther in advance than would be the case with generalist Volunteers.

Posts will develop project descriptions that will be used to write a job announcement that would contain information regarding the nature of the work, necessary skills, an application deadline, and an exact departure date that would be posted on the website. Peace Corps Response will work with posts to select the most qualified and suitable individuals to be Peace Corps Response Volunteers.

### A.4. Diversity recruitment

The Peace Corps recruits Volunteers who reflect the gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, racial, and socio-economic make-up of the people of the United States. The second goal of the Peace Corps—“to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of peoples served”—is best achieved by a diverse cadre of Volunteers who have a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. In FY 2009, 74 percent of all Volunteers identified themselves as Caucasian, 16 percent identified themselves as Hispanic, Asian, African-American, mixed ethnicity, or Native American, and additional 10 percent of people chose not to identify their ethnicity.

Diversity recruitment is a priority of the Peace Corps, and the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection is identifying a number of activities that will have a positive impact on diversity recruiting. The office is considering providing incentives for recruiters to visit more Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges; participating at professional conferences with a diversity focus; and increasing marketing outreach to diverse groups. The Peace Corps is also hiring an additional diversity recruitment specialist who will be based at the headquarters office and who will work with the diversity liaison recruiters at each of the regional recruitment offices to develop tools, resources, and training for recruiters. Staff members at the regional recruitment offices noted that the Peace Corps does not have brand recognition in many racially diverse communities and said that to generate applications from diverse populations in the long run, the Peace Corps needs to raise its visibility in these communities through a marketing campaign.

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<sup>67</sup> Review of the Volunteer Delivery System Final Report, Office of the Director. September 1999. p. 11

Currently, recruiters are also asked to recruit highly skilled applicants, applicants who are 50 years old and older, as well as applicants with general skills. Recruiting these individuals requires different marketing and advertising approaches. In effect, the Peace Corps recruits every interested American, which means that resources, time, and energy are dispersed. By focusing on recruiting young Americans with limited work experience, specific personal attributes, and non-technical skills, recruiters can spend more time and resources on diversity recruiting within this defined group. In other words, if the Peace Corps clearly articulates and defines the attributes and skills required to be a Volunteer, the agency can identify where to recruit those Volunteers and can focus more resources on recruiting a diverse cadre of applicants.

Because regional recruitment offices and recruiters' performances are primarily based on how many applicants are nominated or recommended to move forward in the process, recruitment efforts are primarily directed at colleges and universities that have historically produced a high number of Volunteers. This creates an incentive to repeatedly invest time, energy, and resources at colleges and universities and within departments, clubs, etc. where the Peace Corps has already established a relationship. Spending time at schools that produce fewer Volunteers is viewed unfavorably by recruiters. The Peace Corps needs to more effectively balance time spent at high- and low-producing schools.

To be effective at schools that have not traditionally produced many Volunteers—including many Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges—recruiters will need to do more than visit the school once or twice a year. Recruiters have to spend a significant amount of time cultivating relationships with administration and faculty, explain what the Peace Corps is and what it does, and demonstrate that the agency is an involved partner.

Using Strategic Recruiters (STRATS) could be an effective recruiting resource at low-producing colleges and universities. The Peace Corps uses STRATS primarily at colleges and universities that have historically produced a high number of Volunteer applications and Volunteers. The Peace Corps contracts with colleges and universities to hire a part-time Returned Peace Corps Volunteer student on campus. The STRATS plan recruitment events and recommend applicants to move forward to the next step. STRATS are supposed to nominate at least thirty applicants, twenty of whom are supposed to be skilled applicants. The Peace Corps should eliminate the nomination quotas for skilled applicants, and STRATS should focus on raising awareness and on generating applications from diverse candidates. Currently there is one contract in place at a Hispanic Serving Institution, with plans to place three to four STRATS at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges. The Peace Corps should increase the number of STRATS at select colleges and universities that have not traditionally yielded high numbers of applications.

In addition to directing regional recruitment offices to focus time and energy on building relationships with schools and organizational groups that have not traditionally yielded high numbers of applications, the Peace Corps needs to reform the application and selection process. Earlier reports on the Volunteer delivery system have suggested that the cost of the medical clearance process and the length of time it takes to process applications impacts socioeconomic diversity. These ideas are discussed more in section A.6.e.

#### A.5. Marketing

The assessment team recommends that the Office of Communications use the new recruitment strategies to develop a marketing plan to attract Peace Corps Volunteers and Peace Corps Response Volunteers. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peace Corps is a unique opportunity to build upon the legacy of the Peace Corps and make an emotional appeal to the public.

To do this, the Office of Communications will need resources to raise the visibility of the Peace Corps and to convey the relevance of the agency today. The Peace Corps can accomplish this through free and paid media, including public service announcements and print, television, and radio advertisements. Recruiters will continue to host public events, including general information meetings for prospective applicants and should target large national and local events that are attended by potential applicants with the personal attributes and skills that the Peace Corps has identified. These events should be aimed at increasing the visibility of the Peace Corps. In 2009, the Peace Corps began using social media, including You Tube, Flickr, Twitter, and Facebook. As of June 2010, nearly 34,000 people had become fans of the Peace Corps on Facebook. The Peace Corps also should be sending email messages on a variety of Peace Corps related topics to prospective and current applicants on a regular basis.

**Recommendation VI-1:** The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection develop a new recruitment strategy that has an integrated diversity recruitment component. The new recruitment strategy should focus on recruiting individuals with limited work experience but who have the personal attributes and non-technical skills necessary to be successful Peace Corps Volunteers.

**Recommendation VI-2:** The assessment team recommends that Peace Corps Response develop a new recruitment strategy for Peace Corps Response Volunteers that focuses on recruiting individuals with professional experience to complement the efforts of Peace Corps Volunteers. The Peace Corps Response recruitment strategy also needs to have an integrated diversity recruitment component.

**Recommendation VI-3:** The assessment team recommends that the Office of Communications develop a new marketing plan based on the two recruitment strategies.

#### A.6. Improving the application and selection process

The application and selection process needs to be improved to continue to attract and retain the most qualified applicants throughout the process. The staff involved in processing applications does an excellent job overcoming the limitations of the operating systems, and every year thousands of qualified Volunteers are placed in the field because of their efforts. However, the process needs to be improved to be more competitive, reduce processing time, improve communication, provide greater transparency about trainee selection and placement, and reduce the cost of the medical expenses related to applying to the Peace Corps. Improving the application and selection process is critical to ensuring that the Peace Corps continues to provide countries with exceptional Volunteers who are energetic, excited, and committed to fulfilling the three goals of the Peace Corps in communities around the world. The Volunteer delivery system modernization and re-design, which is discussed in section B.3. is intended to address these issues.

One of the sources of input for this section was a survey designed by the assessment team in collaboration with the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning. The survey was given to nine groups of Volunteers who departed March 3-31, 2010, and 324 individuals responded to the survey.<sup>68</sup>

Additional sources of information for this report include a number of reports examining the Volunteer delivery system, including a 1989 Peace Corps Organizational Study conducted by Booz, Allen & Hamilton, Inc.; a 1995 Cross-Organizational Review of the Volunteer Delivery System by the Office of the Inspector General at the Peace Corps; a 1999 internal Review of the Volunteer Delivery System; and a 2003 Evaluation of the Volunteer Delivery System also conducted by the Office of the Inspector General. Although there have been numerous improvements since 1989, the older reports contain insight that remains relevant today. Another source of valuable input came

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<sup>68</sup> A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix VI-1, and survey results are provided in Appendix VI-2.

from the people that process the Peace Corps' applications, including staff members of the regional recruitment offices, the Pre-Service Medical Screening Unit, and the Placement Unit.

#### A.6.a Ensuring a competitive selection process

The Peace Corps depends on energetic, talented individuals who are committed to service overseas. To ensure that quality Volunteers are being selected, the Peace Corps must continue to ensure that the selection process is competitive and that only the most qualified applicants are invited to serve in the Peace Corps. Currently, applicants are not evaluated and rated according to defined, objective assessment criteria. Applicants that meet the minimum qualifications move forward at each stage because the system is essentially pass/fail.

While recruiters and placement officers noted that they have rejected applicants who did not meet minimum qualifications, they felt less comfortable rejecting applicants who just barely met minimum requirements. Instead of rejecting applicants, recruiters and placement officers often counsel such applicants to withdraw and gain more experience. Applicants are selected based on the discretion of a single recruiter and placement officer. The 1999 Review of the Volunteer Delivery System echoed this sentiment and went on to mention that part of the reason for subjective selections is the "lack of consistent, objective assessment criteria" and the "lack of real guidelines for 'de-selecting' applicants."<sup>69</sup> The Volunteer delivery modernization and re-design is focused on addressing this issue.

The Peace Corps needs to develop more rigorous criteria for selecting and de-selecting applicants, and applicants should be rated during the initial assessment and interview conducted by recruiters. Recruiters should receive standardized training on how to evaluate applicants according to established criteria. Placement officers should always receive thorough evaluations that require virtually no additional assessment. Placement officers could use the ratings to invite exceptional applicants to serve in the Peace Corps, not those that just meet the minimum qualifications.

The application process affects competition in another way. Each regional recruitment office is allocated a number of slots when nominating a training group for a particular program. Most regional recruitment offices discuss which applicants to nominate, especially for areas where there is an abundance of applicants who meet the qualifications for that assignment area. However, regional recruitment offices and recruiters have a limited view of the entire applicant pool and have no way of comparing the applicants they nominate to applicants being nominated by other regional recruitment offices. After nomination, applicants move to the medical clearance phase, and barring any medical restrictions or processing delays, placement officers evaluate applicants before inviting them to become Peace Corps trainees in the programs to which they were originally nominated.

To ensure a competitive process, applicants should be evaluated and rated according to a set of defined criteria. This would make it easier to compare applicants, which is the ideal way to select the most qualified applicant.

#### A.6.b Length of time

The time that it takes the Peace Corps to process an application (from time of submission to entering on duty) is lengthy. In 2009, the median length of time it took to process an application was twelve months, a one month increase from the median processing times in 2008, 2007, and 2006. For the applicants at the nine pre-departure orientations in March, the average application processing time was 15.5 months. There are numerous, valid reasons why the processing time increased recently, including a surge in applications in 2009, fewer available Volunteer slots available in FY 2009, allowing staff positions to go unfilled because of budget cuts, and an increase number of applications from those 50 and older, who often have more complicated medical histories that take longer to process.

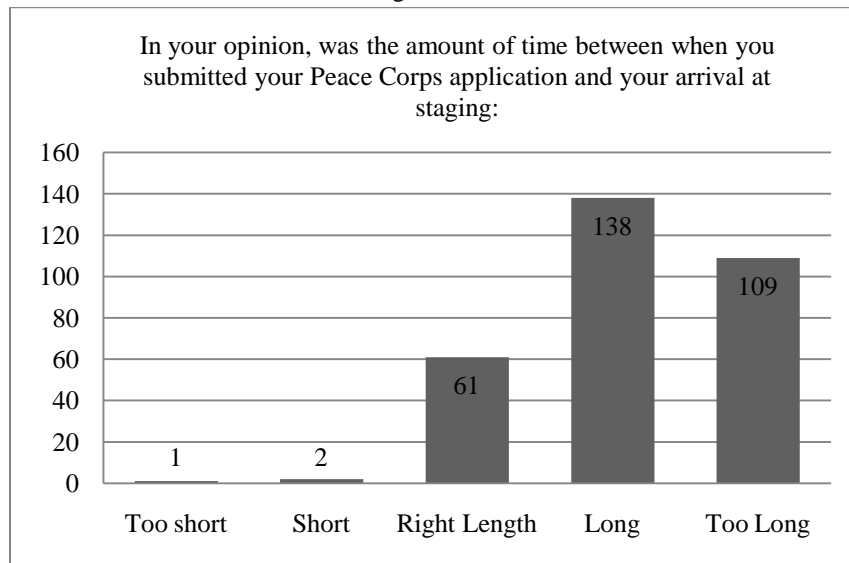
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<sup>69</sup> Review of the Volunteer Delivery System Final Report, Office of the Director. September 1999. p. 15

One of the agency’s performance indicators is applicant processing time (from application to invitation). The indicator only measures the processing time that the agency has determined is within the control of the Peace Corps—from the time the agency is actively processing the application and not including time spent waiting on information from the applicant. The indicator does not include the time during which applicants have received their medical kits but have yet to return them to the Peace Corps and the time from when an individual is invited to serve in the Peace Corps and when they enter on duty. In FY 2009, the Peace Corps did not meet its performance indicator, and instead of processing applications in 100 days, the Peace Corps processed applications in 123 days. By the end of FY 2011, the agency wants to reduce the application processing time to 80 days.

The nine groups of applicants who completed the March 2010 survey indicated that they thought that the application process was lengthy. Seventy-nine percent of all respondents indicated that the process was long or too long, although 77 percent responded that the Peace Corps provided them with an accurate description of the length of the process.

Figure VI-2



The Peace Corps needs to reduce the amount of time it takes to process an application to retain applicants during the application process. In FY 2009, the Peace Corps processed 15,386 applicants of which 3,694 people entered the Peace Corps. The majority of those applicants withdrew (either actively or passively by failing to respond to requests for additional information). In 1995, a telephone survey of applicants who withdrew during the application process found that, “Reducing the length of the application process is the Peace Corps’ intervention most likely to have the biggest impact on the dropout rate.”<sup>70</sup> An earlier report speculated that the length of the application process is problematic for some applicants because they need to have the financial resources to wait during the application process.<sup>71</sup> Recruiters also reported that the length of the application process was a reason why people did not apply to the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps should commit to processing all applications within a certain number of months and then should be held accountable for meeting that commitment. The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer

<sup>70</sup> Follow up Study of Nominees Who Drop Out of the Volunteer Delivery System, Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis. March 1995. p.18.

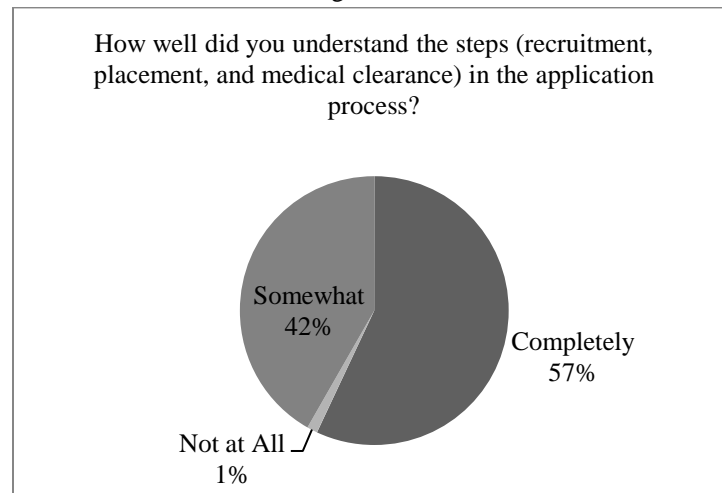
<sup>71</sup> Cross-Organizational Review of the Volunteer Delivery System. Office of the Inspector General. July 1995. p. 26

Recruitment and Selection, in collaboration with the Pre-Service Screening Medical Unit, determine the best way to reduce applicant processing time while maintaining the integrity of the process.

#### A.6.c Communication

The length of the application process is exacerbated by the lack of information shared with applicants during the process. Reducing the amount of time that it takes the Peace Corps to process an application in conjunction with more meaningful and more frequent contact will also help retain applicants. The majority of trainees who responded to the March 2010 survey marked that they “completely” understood the steps (recruitment, placement, and medical) in the application process, but a substantial number (42 percent) indicated that they only “somewhat” understood the steps.

Figure VI-3



The lack of understanding about the application process is likely because applicants do not understand how their applications progress through the system. The Peace Corps website does a great job explaining the steps and recruiters reiterate the steps during the interview, but applicants can become frustrated if they feel that the Peace Corps is not providing information that affects their individual status.

The 2003 evaluation of the Volunteer delivery system conducted by the Office of the Inspector General and the 1999 internal review on the same topic echoed the importance of meaningful communication throughout the process. The 1999 internal review of the Volunteer delivery system observed that, “Lack of communication, limited sharing of information, and not knowing what to expect from the Peace Corps about timing issues leads applicants to question the Peace Corps’ interest in their application” and “Volunteers and Trainees [sic] felt they were kept in the dark about the process and their progression through the system.”<sup>72</sup>

The most frequently cited suggestion on how to improve the recruitment process mentioned in the March 2010 survey centered on better and more frequent communication. One survey respondent said, “Just a few updates on really what is going on would have been much appreciated for me. There were times where I went 5-6 months without contact and I just felt a little left in the woods.” Another respondent suggested that the agency make “more contact with applicant during process, kept wondering if still in the process.” The Peace Corps needs to communicate with applicants at least once a month during the application and selection process.

<sup>72</sup> Review of the Volunteer Delivery System Final Report, Office of the Director. September 1999. p.23.



#### A.6.d Transparency

When candidates submit their application, they are essentially applying to serve anywhere the Peace Corps operates, in any assignment, departing at an undetermined future date. It is not until an applicant comes in for an interview that a recruiter begins a dialog about the assignment an applicant qualifies for and it is not until nomination that a candidate learns specifics about their assignment area, region, and approximate departure date. The Peace Corps needs to be able to provide more information prior to application so that applicants can make informed decisions about whether service in the Peace Corps is right for them. The Peace Corps should consider listing all of the countries, programs, and approximate departure dates in its recruitment materials.

On the application, applicants can indicate a regional preference, rank their top three assignment areas, and indicate when they are available to depart. During the interview a recruiter will stress that the Peace Corps has an obligation to fill all of the requests for Volunteers and that it is not always possible to honor an applicant's preferences. Although applicants are repeatedly told that not all of their preferences can be accommodated, some applicants indicated on the survey that they did not understand why they were placed in a particular country, especially if they expressed a preference. Applicants should always be told why their preferences were or were not taken into account and why their skills are the best match for a particular country and assignment. The Peace Corps needs to be more transparent about how an individual is nominated and placed in a country and assignment area at both the recruitment and placement levels.

Decisions about where to nominate and place Volunteers should be arrived at mutually by applicants and the Peace Corps. Overseas staff reported that when trainees who are not happy about their placement arrive in-country, a significant amount of energy is spent on recalibrating their expectations. Although engaging applicants in the placement process will not result in all of them being happy with their placement, it will help them understand the rationale for the placement. The Peace Corps needs to continue to convey that it will consider an applicant's preferences but that the agency's primary commitment is to meet host country needs.

#### A.6.e Cost of medical

The Peace Corps does not pay the full cost incurred by an applicant for the physical, dental, and vision examinations that are required as part of the application process. The Peace Corps will share a portion of the costs associated with the exams, lab work, and x-rays that are necessary, however the agency will not cover costs associated with visits to specialist physicians. Figure VI-4 below shows the maximum cost sharing amounts by sex and age for physical exams. The costs sharing amounts for dental and vision exams are the same for all.

Figure VI-4  
Medical and Dental Cost Sharing Amounts

Females younger than 40	\$165
Females 40 and older	\$290
Males younger than 50	\$125
Males 50 and older	\$175
Dental for all	\$60
Vision for all	\$12

According to a 2008 evaluation of the medical clearance process conducted by the Office of the Inspector General, the Office of Medical Services did not know when the last time the reimbursement rates had been adjusted and there

was no procedure for evaluating the cost sharing maximums on a periodic basis.<sup>73</sup> A third party contractor tracks applicant claims, and in FY 2009, the firm reported that 10,987 claims were submitted for a total of \$2.7 million in charges. The average claim submitted was \$246.55; the average reimbursement was \$55.22, although applicants can receive more than one reimbursement. By comparison, in FY 2006, applicants submitted 11,501 claims for roughly \$2.5 million in charges. The average reimbursement was \$63.14.

To get a more realistic idea of medical costs associated with the medical clearance process for individuals who enter the Peace Corps, the March 2010 survey asked departing Volunteers whether they had health insurance, whether their expenses were covered by their insurance, and to estimate their out-of-pocket expenses. Of 314 people who answered, 260 reported that they had health insurance. However, the majority said that their expenses were only partially covered by their insurance. The respondents were asked to estimate the expenses that were not covered by insurance, and the estimates ranged up to \$13,000. The median out-of-pocket expense was \$300, and the average was \$722. It is important to note that 15 percent of those surveyed were 50 years old and older, and this may have skewed the survey results because 50+ applicants tend to have higher expenses related to the medical clearance process. (In FY 2009, only 6.9 percent of all Volunteers were 50+.)

The costs associated with the medical screening process may prevent applicants from applying and the Peace Corps needs to share a greater portion of the costs incurred by applicants. The Peace Corps should conduct a study to determine costs incurred by applicants during the selection process and should develop a cost-sharing plan that reduces the financial cost of applying.

The Peace Corps is going to pilot a new way of conducting pre-service medical screening that relies on a network of providers that are trained by the Peace Corps to conduct the pre-service medical physical exam. While the intention of the pilot is to reduce the amount of time it takes an applicant to clear medical and to provide a more accurate measure of the health of the applicant, it will also relieve some of the financial burden incurred by applicants. The pilot will not include the dental, vision, or any specialist exams, and applicants may still incur additional costs. The assessment team believes that the pilot is an important step in reducing the cost associated with the medical clearance process.

#### A.7. Recommendation for improving the application process

The application and selection process needs to be improved to attract and retain the most qualified applicants. The Peace Corps needs to consider whether the improvements to the current recruitment model would make the process more competitive, reduce application processing time, improve communication, provide greater transparency regarding trainee selection and placement, and reduce an applicant's medical expenses or whether the agency needs to adopt a new recruitment model.

**Recommendation VI-4:** The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps analyze alternative recruitment models and consider selecting another model or making significant changes to the existing model. The agency should conduct an analysis of other recruitment models and make recommendations about how to make the process more competitive, reduce the time that it takes the Peace Corps to process an application, improve communication during the application process, provide greater transparency about how trainees are selected and placed in an assignment area, and reduce medical expenses related to applying to the Peace Corps.

<sup>73</sup> Final Program Evaluation Report Peace Corps' Medical Clearance System. Office of the Inspector General. March 2008. p. 34.

## B. RECENT CHANGES

### B.1. Sector recruitment specialists

Because of openings throughout the year for applicants with specific skills in the Education, Environment, and Agriculture sectors, the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection has intensified its efforts to recruit and attract more highly skilled candidates. Five sector recruitment specialists have been hired as sub-contractors and work closely with the director of the Office of Recruitment. They are knowledge experts tasked with building a pipeline of highly skilled prospects by developing strong institutional, organizational, and association relationships. These specialists work out of their homes and cover defined territories across the United States where skilled populations in agriculture, environment, and education exist. Their primary focus is to provide outreach and marketing expertise in identifying untapped relationships and partnerships (e.g., professional/trade associations, unions, NGOs, non-profits, and federal agencies). The agency should review the work of the sector recruitment specialists, and, if the work is successful, it could form the basis for the Peace Corps Response recruitment strategy of highly skilled Volunteers.

### B.2. Field based recruiters

To maintain the continuity of recruitment activities after the Minneapolis and Denver regional recruitment offices were closed and consolidated, the Minneapolis office merged with the Chicago office and the Denver office merged with the Dallas office. To continue to have a presence in Minneapolis and Denver, the agency used field-based recruiters in a pilot. In January 2009, three experienced recruiters began working as field-based recruiters, two in Colorado and one in Minnesota. The assumption was that recruiters who were based closer to their recruitment base would spend less time traveling, would be able to attend more recruitment events, would do more in-person interviews, and would be able to nominate more people to move to the next stage in the application process. Additional field-based recruiters are being added in fiscal years 2010 and 2011. The initial pilot was too small to evaluate, but initial findings are that field-based recruiters are more productive and have higher nomination rates. There should be more conclusive evidence at the end of FY 2011.

### B.3. Volunteer delivery system modernization and re-design

For many years, the Peace Corps has recognized that the technology systems and programs used to move applicants through the recruitment and selection process need to be improved. To position the agency for future growth, the Peace Corps is investing in modernizing and redesigning the Volunteer delivery system and has solicited bids from contractors for commercial off-the-shelf software that will integrate all formal and informal Volunteer-related business processes now residing on disconnected databases across organizational divisions and business systems. The Peace Corps will select a vendor in July 2010 and hopes to roll out the system in the spring of 2011. The modernization and redesign will enable the Peace Corps to more effectively and efficiently manage the entire Volunteer lifecycle, from recruitment through completion of Volunteer service to becoming a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer. The redesigned system also will include a separate electronic health records system that will manage pre-service medical screening records, in-service health support, and post-service medical processing.

The new system will not simply automate the old system; it will reform and integrate business processes. One key function of the new system will be an applicant matching system that will collect information from applicants-including technical skills, soft skills, and basic medical criteria- and produce the best possible matches based on country, project, and assignment requirements from overseas posts.

The new system will eliminate redundant manual data entry, increasing efficiency and productivity as many of the clerical functions performed by recruiters, pre-service screening nurses, and placement officers will be automated.

Increased efficiency will result in more applications being processed in the same amount of time, but it will only nominally shorten the application process. The application process will only be significantly shortened if the agency changes how it processes applications. There will be a more consistent look and feel to the recruitment and selection process, better enabling the Peace Corps to coordinate messages to prospective Volunteers throughout the selection process. Customer service functions will be improved, because the new system will allow the Peace Corps to send automated messages to large numbers of individuals. In addition, the system will allow the Peace Corps to better analyze and use data to better address workflow problems and bottlenecks.

## C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

The application and selection process needs to be improved to attract and retain the most qualified applicants and to ensure that the Peace Corps continues to provide countries with exceptional Volunteers who are energetic, excited, and committed to fulfilling the three goals of the Peace Corps in communities around the world. The Peace Corps will need to articulate the two new recruitment strategies for generalist and skilled Volunteers in accordance with the new strategic vision. From those recruitment strategies, the agency needs to develop a new marketing strategy. The agency also needs to evaluate whether the current recruitment model is sufficient to meet applicants' expectations and the needs of overseas posts and whether these needs can be addressed by improvements to the current system. Attracting and retaining exceptional applicants is a critical first step to ensuring the success of Peace Corps Volunteers.

The assessment team makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation VI-1: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection develop a new recruitment strategy that has an integrated diversity recruitment component. The new recruitment strategy should focus on recruiting individuals with limited work experience but who have the personal attributes and non-technical skills necessary to be successful Peace Corps Volunteers.

Recommendation VI-2: The assessment team recommends that Peace Corps Response develop a new recruitment strategy for Peace Corps Response Volunteers that focuses on recruiting individuals with professional experience to complement the efforts of Peace Corps Volunteers. The Peace Corps Response recruitment strategy also needs to have an integrated diversity recruitment component.

Recommendation VI-3: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Communications develop a new marketing plan based on the two recruitment strategies.

Recommendation VI-4: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps analyze alternative recruitment models and consider selecting another model or making significant changes to the existing model. The agency should conduct an analysis of other recruitment models and make recommendations about how to make the process more competitive, reduce the time that it takes the Peace Corps to process an application, improve communication during the application process, provide greater transparency about how trainees are selected and placed in an assignment area, and reduce medical expenses related to applying to the Peace Corps.

C.2. Strategy for implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(S)	TIMING
VI-1: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection develop a new recruitment strategy that has an integrated diversity recruitment component. The new recruitment strategy should focus on recruiting individuals with limited work experience but who have the personal attributes and non-technical skills necessary to be successful Peace Corps Volunteers.	Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection	Office of Global Operations; Posts	In Quarter 2 FY 2011
VI-2: The assessment team recommends that Peace Corps Response develop a new recruitment strategy for Peace Corps Response Volunteers that focuses on recruiting individuals with professional experience to complement the efforts of Peace Corps Volunteers. The Peace Corps Response recruitment strategy also needs to have an integrated diversity recruitment component.	Peace Corps Response	Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; Office of Global Operations; Posts	Begin pilot in Quarter 3 of FY 2011
VI-3: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Communications develop a new marketing plan based on the two recruitment strategies.	Office of Communications	Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS); Peace Corps Response	Two months after the Peace Corps and Peace Corps Response Volunteer recruitment strategies are written.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(s)	TIMING
<p>VI-4: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps analyze alternative recruitment models and consider selecting another model or making significant changes to the existing model. The agency should conduct an analysis of other recruitment models and make recommendations about how to make the process more competitive, reduce the time that it takes the Peace Corps to process an application, improve communication during the application process, provide greater transparency about how trainees are selected and placed in an assignment area, and reduce medical expenses related to applying to the Peace Corps.</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection</p>	<p>Office of Volunteer Support – (Pre-Service Screening Unit);</p>	<p>An analysis of different application and selection models and a decision memo recommending changes to the existing model or a new model should be given to the Director’s Office in Quarter 3 of 2011. The Peace Corps should begin implementing the new model or changes to the existing model in Quarter 4 of 2011.</p>

## VII. MEDICAL CARE OF VOLUNTEERS

### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS

#### A.1. Providing health care to Volunteers

Under Section 2504(e) of the Peace Corps Act, the Peace Corps is required to provide health care to Volunteers during their service as the agency deems “necessary and appropriate.” Additionally, the Peace Corps’ Manual Section 262.5 states that Volunteers and trainees (V/Ts) will be provided with all necessary and appropriate medical care during the course of their service.

The Volunteer health system is organized under the Office of Volunteer Support (VS) with the mission of “providing quality medical and mental health services and support to the Peace Corps community through the Offices of Special Services (OSS) and Medical Services (OMS).”

According to the Peace Corps Manual:

“The Office of Special Services provides mental health evaluations and treatment to V/Ts in the field and in Washington, including medevac’d V/Ts. OSS also provides consultation to the medical staff in-country concerning V/Ts who are experiencing some type of adjustment difficulties, and serves as a liaison to V/Ts and their families regarding health and welfare inquiries, family emergencies, political unrest, and natural disasters. The office supports the regions and posts in matters of crisis management and Volunteer safety and provides emergency responses to a post overseas when a critical incident has occurred. The office also consults with the posts to develop strategies to help lessen the adjustment problems that V/Ts may experience overseas.”

“The Office of Medical Services provides pre-service medical screening, in-service health care, and post-service medical benefits to V/Ts, and is the liaison with the Department of Labor’s Federal Employees’ Compensation Act program on behalf of employees and returned V/Ts. OMS also provides training for Peace Corps Medical Officers and other Peace Corps staff. The office supports its services, regions, and posts, through systematic quality improvement and epidemiology studies.”

#### A.2. The Office of Special Services

The Office of Special Services is staffed by an administrative assistant, four special services officers and an expert consultant. During 2009, the special services officers consulted with approximately 200 Volunteers by telephone, assisting them with adjustment and behavioral challenges, as well as providing emergency response support to posts dealing with critical incidents and evacuations. Additionally, the Office of Special Services participated in overseas new staff training and continuing education for Peace Corps medical officers, as well as providing consultation services to posts and country directors.

During 2010, mental health will be the primary topic for continuing medical education of Peace Corps medical officers. Six conferences are scheduled in which the Office of Special Services will provide training for overseas medical providers. In addition, Office of Special Services staff will be traveling to

several posts to conduct mental health site assessments, including patient chart reviews, to assess the quality of mental health services provided by the post, as well as an evaluation of referral sources (if any) used by the post.

### A.3. The Office of Medical Services

Technical Guidelines issued by the Office of Medical Services cover post health unit administration, Volunteer training and support, and monitoring and evaluation, as well as providing guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of conditions.

The Office of Medical Services is organized into nine functional units, five of which provide direct support to posts and currently-serving Volunteers.

#### A.3.a In-Service Unit:

The core functions of the In-Service Unit are to consult with Peace Corps medical officers, authorize medical evacuation, provide case management for Volunteers medically evacuated to the United States and Volunteers on medical hold, provide 24-hour medical duty officer coverage, and participate in Peace Corps medical officer performance evaluations.

#### A.3.b Program and Training Unit:

This unit is responsible for Peace Corps medical officer training, preparing pre-service training materials for Volunteers, and coordinating the hiring process for Peace Corps medical officers.

#### A.3.c Clinical Programs Unit

The Clinical Programs Unit provides clinical oversight and management of the Volunteer health system by providing guidance, direction, and support to Peace Corps medical officers and country directors. It also assists with new country assessments and provides medical consultations to other units.

#### A.3.d Quality Improvement Unit

This unit develops health system policies, monitors the effectiveness of health care, and provides information and analysis on health conditions and programs. The unit also prepares and updates the Technical Guidelines.

#### A.3.e Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit

The core functions of this unit are to provide oversight to surveillance of health conditions among Volunteers, to conduct studies to analyze health conditions and identify risk factors, and to assist in the design of prevention strategies.

Other units reach a determination on medical clearance of applicants, manage all health benefits for returned Volunteers, develop and support the information systems infrastructure, and manage Volunteer health records.



#### A.4. In-Country Volunteer Health Program

According to Office of Medical Services Technical Guideline 110, the core functions of the In-country Volunteer Health Program are to:

- Support Volunteers in assuming responsibility for their own health;
- Promote the health of Volunteers and prevent disease;
- Provide health services to Volunteers overseas in as safe, efficient, and timely a manner as possible within the particular host-country environment; and,
- Provide medical evacuation (medevac) to Volunteers who require medical care beyond the care available in-country.

Technical Guideline 110 also states that:

“The provision of health care services to Volunteers should conform to U.S. medical standards and norms within the limitations imposed by local conditions.”

A serving Volunteer receives health care through a health care program implemented in-country by Peace Corps medical officers under the management and supervision of the country director and with professional guidance and oversight from the Office of Medical Services at the Peace Corps’ headquarters.

The Peace Corps’ medical officers are personal services contractors, selected by the country director with concurrence of the Office of Medical Services. The Peace Corps currently employs the services of 128 medical officers in 69 countries. At this time, about 15 percent are Americans, while 85 percent are host country nationals or third-country nationals. Of all Peace Corps medical officers, 58 percent are licensed physicians, 12 percent are licensed physician-assistants and nurse practitioners, and 30 percent are registered nurses. The Peace Corps’ medical officers are responsible for administration of the post health program, prevention and health education of Volunteers, clinical care, mental health support and counseling, and quality improvement. The Peace Corps’ medical officers are required to operate according to the Technical Guidelines issued by the Office of Medical Services.

Each post has at least one medical officer, with the number of Peace Corps medical officers at post determined by the country and regional directors. Volunteers receive their health care primarily through the medical officer at post and through local health care providers in each country as necessary. Except in the case of an emergency, prior authorization from a Peace Corps medical officer is required for all medical and dental care not directly provided by the Peace Corps medical officer. When the health care needs of a Volunteer cannot be met in-country, the Volunteer may be medically evacuated to the United States or to a regional medical evacuation site.

Area Peace Corps Medical Officers are assigned to the Africa Region to provide clinical and programmatic support to the in-country Volunteer health programs. Area Peace Corps medical officers are based in a host country and are responsible for providing assistance to the Volunteer health program in each country of their sub-regional area.

#### A.5. Volunteer satisfaction with the health system

As part of the Peace Corps’ Performance Plan for Fiscal Years 2009-2014, Strategic Goal 5 indicates that the Peace Corps will:

“Implement the Peace Corps mission in an effective and efficient manner through the provision of high quality Volunteer support with optimal health care, safety and security support, and effective management of resources.”

Performance Goal 5.1.2 establishes the level to which the agency needs to provide quality medical and mental health services to trainees and Volunteers. The performance indicators are:

- Percentage of Peace Corps Volunteers reporting their satisfaction with health care received from Peace Corps medical officers as adequate or better. The target was set at 90 percent annually for FY 2009 to FY 2011.
- Percentage of Volunteers reporting the emotional support they received from the Peace Corps’ staff as adequate or better. The target was 70 percent in FY 2009, rising to 80 percent in FY 2011.
- Percentage of Peace Corps Volunteers reporting adequate or better support in coping with stress from issues such as food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, and other stressors in their community. The target was 60 percent in FY 2009, rising to 70 percent in FY 2011.

The Peace Corps measures Volunteers’ satisfaction with the health care they receive as part of the Annual Volunteer Survey. In the 2009 survey, a core set of questions was asked of all Volunteers, including 29 questions asking Volunteers for their comments. For the first time, Volunteers were asked questions relevant to their time in-country. Four questions asked Volunteers to indicate their satisfaction with their health care, both physical and emotional.

Figure VII-1

How satisfied are you with the health care you receive in-country?						
Year	Not at all	Minimally	Adequately	Considerably	Exceptionally	N/A
2002	1%	4%	13%	40%	37%	4%
2004	2%	11%	21%	29%	37%	
2006	1%	6%	20%	32%	40%	
2008	1%	7%	20%	33%	39%	
2009	1%	6%	21%	31%	40%	2%

Satisfaction with health care services has remained almost constant since 1976, with approximately 66 to 77 percent of Volunteers indicating considerable or exceptional satisfaction, and, except for in 2004, approximately 5 to 8 percent indicating minimal or no satisfaction. Satisfaction levels vary by country. In 2009, the “very satisfied” rate (indicating they were very satisfied with the health care they received) ranged from 31 percent to 97 percent; the median “very satisfied” rate was 75.5 percent. The percentage of Volunteers indicating they were “not satisfied” with their health care ranged from zero to 32 percent, with a median of 4.5 percent.

Volunteers also were asked about their perception of the support they received when dealing with mental health issues and stress.

Figure VII-2

How satisfied are you with the time and resources allocated to mental health/adjustment issues?						
Year	Not at all	Minimally	Adequately	Considerably	Exceptionally	N/A
2009	5%	15%	31%	30%	19%	0%

In 2009, Volunteers indicated they were less satisfied with the support they received when dealing with mental health issues than with their health care in general. Only 49 percent rated their level of support as considerable or exceptional, while 20 percent felt it was less than adequate.

Figure VII-3

What level of PC support have you received to help cope with stress from issues such as HIV/AIDS, food insecurity, etc. in your community? (Includes Volunteers who indicated no need for support)						
Year	Not at all	Minimally	Adequately	Considerably	Exceptionally	N/A
2009	2%	12%	22%	12%	6%	45%

Figure VII-4

What level of PC support have you received to help cope with stress from issues such as HIV/AIDS, food insecurity, etc. in your community? (Excludes Volunteers with no need for support)						
Year	Not at all	Minimally	Adequately	Considerably	Exceptionally	N/A
2009	4%	22%	39%	22%	12%	1%

Volunteers rate their level of support in dealing with stress lower than the support they receive for “health care.” Twenty-six percent of those who asked for help to cope with stress felt that the help they received was not adequate, while 34% believed it to be considerable or exceptional.

Feedback to the agency assessment team from country directors, other overseas staff members, and serving Volunteers indicates that Volunteer and staff members have mental and emotional health concerns and that they currently perceive a lack of adequate support for those issues. A number of posts responding to our request for suggestions have indicated that a regional emotional health consultant would help Volunteers deal with the stresses associated with service.

A focus group of senior staff at the Peace Corps met recently to consider Volunteer mental health needs. The conclusion of this group was that requests for mental health services could increase substantially due to an increase in adjustment disorders among Volunteers entering the Peace Corps. The Office of Volunteer Support has responded that they will monitor requests closely and may consider additional staff as FY11 progresses.

Recommendation VII-1: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Support develop an action plan to increase support offered to Volunteers dealing with mental health and stress concerns. The Office of Volunteer Support should consider establishing a regional mental health officer structure, similar to the current regional safety and security officer structure, to provide direct care for Volunteers and to provide oversight and training for Peace Corps medical officers and other post staff members.

A.6. Quality of the Volunteer health system

In 1991, the U.S. General Accounting Office conducted a review of the Volunteer health system. One of the objectives of the review was to determine if the agency's policies and procedures ensured that Volunteers received a level of health care comparable to what they would receive in the United States. Results of the General Accounting Office's review indicated that:

“Although most Volunteers and former Volunteers contacted by GAO were satisfied with the quality of health care provided by the Peace Corps, GAO's review disclosed that the Peace Corps' health care system did not ensure that Volunteers received a standard of care that closely approximated the level of care available in the United States.”

The Peace Corps' management generally agreed that the agency's system was inadequate for ensuring comparable care and began to correct many of the problems. The General Accounting Office review resulted in the passage of Public Law 102-565 requiring three external reviews of the system and reports back to Congress.

The first review was completed by McMannis Associates and University Research Corporation in January 1994. Their findings led to the development of a set of accreditation standards for the Peace Corps health system by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. In 1994 and 1997, the commission conducted surveys evaluating those standards, and both times the commission reported that the Peace Corps had made significant improvements and structural changes leading to improved care and services to Volunteers. The reports concluded that the Peace Corps had met the commission's standards, and the 1997 review concluded the congressionally required external reviews.

In 2001, the Peace Corps, in its desire to continue to improve the system of care for Volunteers, contracted with Pugh Ettinger McCarthy Associates, LLC, to conduct another external review of the Volunteer health system. This review had two objectives: (1) validate compliance with the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations' standards and (2) identify opportunities for improvement. The final report concluded that:

- Significant improvement in the operation of the Volunteer health system had been achieved;
- Employees and contractors displayed high levels of concern for the welfare and health of Volunteers;
- The Peace Corps does an excellent job of meeting the challenge in providing primary care and responds appropriately to crises;
- When a gap exists in the provision of United States equivalent care, it is in dealing with serious but non-life threatening illnesses and injuries that are beyond the capabilities of the Peace Corps medical officers;

- Volunteers expressed good to high satisfaction with the care provided by the Peace Corps medical officers, however, Volunteers were less satisfied with the care they received from local medical providers;
- Older Volunteers and those who have conditions that need to be accommodated (such as food allergies, asthma, or previous mental health issues), create new challenges for the health system;
- The organizational structure of the health system is not optimal for ensuring quality; and,
- Not all Peace Corps medical officers operate at the same level of expertise and experience, and many lack training to support the mental health of Volunteers.

A set of thirteen recommendations was developed “in the spirit of further improvement.” These recommendations included:

- Create a more effective Peace Corps medical officer organizational structure with tighter linkage to the Office of Medical Services;
- Improve the Office of Medical Services field review process;
- The Office of Medical Services should develop assessment criteria to guide Peace Corps medical officers in evaluating local resources;
- Improve pre-service health training, transparency, and the setting of expectations for Volunteers;
- Explore establishing additional medical evacuation centers to serve remote areas; and,
- Provide additional training and support for Peace Corps medical officers in the area of mental health support and counseling.

After the publication of the Pugh report, a number of changes were made in the Volunteer health system. Pre-service training was improved with the addition of session outlines, videos, and other support from headquarters, and the Peace Corps began establishing additional medical evacuation centers, resulting in new centers in Bangkok, South Africa, and Panama. The Peace Corps medical officer evaluation process was strengthened and the Office of Medical Services assumed greater involvement in Peace Corps medical officer hiring and Volunteer care.

## B. RECENT CHANGES

The new leadership of the Office of Volunteer Support began work in August 2009 and immediately started to assess both business practices and the Peace Corps’ ability to adequately support Volunteers. As a result, the Office of Volunteer Support developed a number of recommendations and proposed actions to “transform the Peace Corps Volunteer Health System (PCVHS) into an accredited health care organization in which a culture of continual quality improvement and data analysis drives all processes.” The Office of Volunteer Support concluded that:

“In order for Peace Corps to support growth, there must be adequate organizational infrastructure in place to support the safety and health, both physical and mental of Volunteers. Volunteers are in general satisfied with the health care they receive while in service, but there are many instances in which performance could be improved.”

The Office of Volunteer Support, with the support of the Director of the Peace Corps, proposes to:

- Establish a mechanism to monitor, measure, and improve the quality of care delivered through the Volunteer health system;

- Establish a Peace Corps medical officer credentialing and recredentialing unit to assess and ensure the initial and ongoing qualifications of health care providers;
- Develop, in collaboration with the Office of Global Operations, a plan to realign clinical quality and accountability at posts;
- Implement a “scope of practice” directive to ensure that clinical care is provided only by caregivers who are practicing within an appropriate scope given their professional credentials;
- Implement an expanded regional medical officer structure to provide more direct oversight of Peace Corps medical officers and encourage a mentoring model; and,
- Ensure that adequate professional resources are available to accommodate both current and expected growth.

Some of the recommendations above are currently being put into place, while others are still in the development stage. For example, the site assessment process has been significantly enhanced to incorporate additional direct observation of clinical care and documentation. A new assessment tool is the use of tracer methodology, which is used to assess and evaluate the Peace Corps’ compliance with standards and systems of providing care and services by tracing the experiences of patients during their care encounters. Additionally, the assessor will visit and evaluate high-volume consultants used by the posts and will evaluate Peace Corps medical officers. A detailed protocol has been written, so that all assessments are conducted in an identical manner and so that all items are covered. Site assessments are ongoing and are planned for all Africa region posts and a number of posts in the other two regions.

Recently, the Peace Corps Director held a series of conference calls with country directors worldwide. In these calls, he generally outlined the changes planned for improving quality and oversight of medical services provided to Volunteers. Shortly after that call, a memorandum was sent to all country directors outlining the most recent changes to the processes for Peace Corps medical officer recruitment, management, and accountability. The Director indicated that all changes be implemented immediately. These changes include the following:

- Medical contractors will be hired by and report to the Office of Volunteer Support but will work closely with, and under the direction of, country directors;
- The Office of Volunteer Support will be responsible for screening and hiring medical contractors with the advice of country directors;
- The Office of Volunteer Support will implement a more rigorous screening process, including an evaluation of credentials and a test of the candidate’s clinical knowledge;
- Medical contractors will be contracted for three years, and, prior to contract renewal, they will be re-credentialed and re-evaluated;
- Country directors should report any concerns they have about the performance of a medical contractor to the Office of Volunteer Support; and,
- Medical contractors are expected to keep country directors fully updated on medical, safety, or security issues as they arise.

The Office of Volunteer Support is working to develop policies and procedures to implement additional aspects of their recommendations, including establishment of a credentialing unit, implementing a scope of practice directive, and expanding the regional Peace Corps medical officer structure.

Recommendation VII-2: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Services continue to pursue improvements to the quality of health care for Volunteers.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

Under the leadership of the associate director of the Office of Volunteer Support, the Peace Corps has developed a comprehensive plan to improve the health care of serving Volunteers. The proposed actions are congruent with a variety of recommendations made by earlier assessments and, when realized, will significantly improve the quality of care that Volunteers receive.

The following recommendations are made by the assessment team:

Recommendation VII-1: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Support develop an action plan to increase support offered to Volunteers dealing with mental health and stress concerns. The Office of Volunteer Support should consider establishing a regional mental health officer structure, similar to the current regional safety and security officer structure, to provide direct care for Volunteers and to provide oversight and training for Peace Corps medical officers and other post staff members.

Recommendation VII-2: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Services continue to pursue improvements to the quality of health care for Volunteers.

C.2. Strategy for implementation of recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
VII-1: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Support develop an action plan to increase support offered to Volunteers dealing with mental health and stress concerns. The Office of Volunteer Support should consider establishing a regional mental health officer structure, similar to the current regional safety and security officer structure, to provide direct care for Volunteers and to provide oversight and training for Peace Corps medical officers and other post staff members.	Office of Volunteer Support	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	In FY 2011
VII-2: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Volunteer Services continue to pursue improvements to the quality of health care for Volunteers.	Office of Volunteer Support	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	Ongoing



## VIII. TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

### PART A: VOLUNTEER TRAINING

#### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS

##### A.1. Introduction

For Volunteers to be successful, no matter how skilled they are when entering the Peace Corps, they need training. Volunteer training is a continuous process that lasts 27 months, beginning with pre-departure training, moving on to pre-service training (PST), continuing with a variety of in-service events and conferences, and ending with a Close of Service Conference.

Two organizations at headquarters have responsibility for supporting Volunteer training. The Field Assistance Division of the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS), and the regions. OPATS works with regions and posts to design, implement and evaluate training systems and activities. OPATS staff members collaborate with post staff to train Volunteers in new developments in community integration, cultural sensitivity, capacity building and technical assistance in health, education, environment, small enterprise development, and youth development.

Additionally, each region has a program and training advisor, or chief of programming, who works with OPATS and the posts to design training events, help posts monitor the outcomes of training and serve as advisors to posts.

At this time, the roles, responsibility and authority of OPATS and the regions have not been clearly defined. There is sometimes confusion and a lack of coordination between the two groups. Their mission and relationship to one another as well as their task, need to be clarified.

Recommendation VIII-1: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps' leadership clarify both the mission and the responsibilities of the office of Overseas Programming and Training Support and the regions in supporting Volunteer training.
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Staff members at post most often conduct the actual training. Some posts have a full time training staff supplemented by part time staff when training events are underway while others use part time staff almost exclusively. Post staff members provide language training, cross cultural, safety and security, health training, and job-related training for both Volunteers and sometimes their host country colleagues.

##### A.2. Types of training

###### A.2.a Pre-departure training

All Volunteers meet in a group in the United States for a brief pre-departure orientation (staging). In the past, this event was three days long and covered a variety of topics, including safety and security, expectations, and basic information. Currently, the staging event is about half a day long with the expectation that training will be done in-country.

The amount of training that occurs before the Volunteer arrives at staging depends on the post. Some posts send a “welcome book” with basic information, while others send both the welcome book and an extensive set of informative materials, including language instruction and compact disks with country and program specific information.

#### **Pre-Departure Training**

##### **Peace Corps Ukraine’s Pre-Departure Training on Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

Peace Corps Ukraine provides pre-departure technical (job related) training with their education methodology modules. These computer-based modules allow Volunteers (invitees) who have been invited to serve in Ukraine to start studying teaching English as a foreign language methodology before they arrive in-country. A randomized test at the end of the modules allows invitees to test their learning multiple times. Peace Corps Ukraine requires all invitees to take the test and send it to staff members who use the information as a way to individualize technical training for each Volunteer.

The process also allows post to give an in-depth primer to invitees before they arrive and demonstrates the intense and professional nature of the assignment. It has led to better-prepared invitees and more individually tailored technical training during pre-service training.

#### **A.2.b Pre-service training (PST)**

Upon arriving in-country, the Volunteer is actually a trainee and participates in pre-service training (PST) that lasts from ten to twelve weeks, depending on the country. The most common model of PST is the community-based model in which five to ten trainees live with host families in small villages or towns. A few posts still use a center-based model in which trainees come to a single location each day for training. In both models, each day is filled with language, safety and security, health, cross-cultural, and technical training. Trainees spend their time studying the language of the country, engaging in activities designed to improve job-related skills such as, teaching; working on community projects; and practicing in the community the lessons learned in classroom settings. The training attempts to integrate the components and build on the experiences the trainees have in their everyday lives. At the end of PST, the trainee is sworn in as a Volunteer and then leaves the training community to live for two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Currently, the Peace Corps uses a number of different models for PST. Some posts run PST for ten to twelve weeks. Others split it up into two or three phases with time between the phases for Volunteers to live in their host communities before coming back for additional training.

#### **A.2.c In-service training (IST)**

Periodically during the two years of service, Volunteers can participate in training events both with and without their host country colleagues. Training is offered at a central location or sub-regionally within a country. Most posts offer, at a minimum, in-service training near the third month of service and again at the twelfth month and the 21<sup>st</sup> month. Topics vary from continued language training to additional technical training. Common topics are project design and management, HIV/AIDS education and prevention, and English education skills, such as working with young learners or classroom management. A number of posts are using Volunteer initiated technical refreshers and workshops as a way of capitalizing on the skills of current Volunteers. This allows Volunteers to organize workshops at dates and places convenient to them and their host country colleagues and responds to the training needs expressed by Volunteers.

There is increasing recognition that the majority of learning happens outside of the structured class-room setting and that self-directed learning is an important complement to in-service training events. In the last ten years there has been an increasing shift away from traditional models of formal, single-event training based on what trainers think is important to an approach that encompasses ongoing informal learning driven by learner needs on the job.

**Peace Corps Belize**  
**An Example of Self Directed Learning**

Peace Corps Belize encourages Volunteers to continue self-directed learning and to develop their views on international development—the why and how of doing it—through a Volunteer and staff reading list that is a collection of books that have contributed to the recommenders’ perspectives on their own development philosophy. This list is managed through an online system, SharePoint, that allows Volunteers to pass the books among themselves without checking them in and out of the office. The reading list compliments a series of discussions aimed at helping Volunteers deepen their perspectives and understanding dynamics they experience in their work and communities.

**Peace Corps Mongolia**  
**An Example of the Impact of Pre-service Training, In-service Training, and Self Directed Learning**

After years of Soviet influence, the only foreign language spoken with broad consistency in Mongolia today is Russian language. However the push to learn English is very strong in this former Soviet satellite and the Peace Corps has become the partner of choice of the Mongolian Ministry of Education and numerous educational institutions looking to introduce English language skills and provide students with a foreign perspective. During a 2007 meeting between the Peace Corps’ Director and Mongolian President Nambaryn Enkhbayar, the president formally requested the Peace Corps increase the number of Volunteers in Mongolia from its level of 105, to a level of 333, an amount equivalent to one Volunteer being placed in each county.

While the Peace Corps’ technical skills transfer effectiveness in Mongolia is clear, the success of Volunteers to learn Mongolian culture and best represent the United States is equally powerful. Volunteer service in Mongolia comes with a ‘sink or swim’ reality in terms of learning the local language. Outside of Ulaanbaatar, very few individuals speak any English, let alone conversational English. As such, service in this central Asian nation requires Volunteers to become proficient in a language considered to be one of the most challenging in the world to acquire.

Peace Corps Volunteers have both embraced and excelled at meeting this challenge; a fact that has produced a level of recognition around the country. It is now common for Mongolian media to conduct interviews in Mongolian language with Volunteers during Peace Corps training events. The 2006 Swearing In Ceremony of the Group 17 Volunteer training class, featuring speeches, dance and poetry recital by Volunteers was attended by President Enkhbayar and covered on national television. If a foreigner speaks good Mongolian when they get into a taxi in Ulaanbaatar, drivers often do not ask them where they need to go...they take them directly to the Peace Corps office.

This excellence in cross cultural appreciation featured a highlight in 2005 when two Peace Corps Volunteers became the first in the history of the program to test fluent in Mongolian language. One of the two Volunteers, George Economides, reached a level of recognition for his language skills that caused groups of Mongolians to approach him on the street to hear him speak their language. In the summer of 2005, President George Bush announced his November 21, 2005 visit to Mongolia. As the Embassy planned for the historic visit, the Ambassador approached Peace Corps to see if Mr. Economides would be willing to translate the meeting between the two presidents, a true endorsement of what Volunteers in the Mongolia program accomplish.

Following three years of Volunteer service, Mr. Economides went on to work in training positions for the Peace Corps Mongolia program, encouraging new Volunteers to pursue excellence in goals 2 and 3 of the agency. He currently serves as the Administrative Officer for Peace Corps Mongolia.

#### A.2.d Close of Service Conference

Approximately three months before their service ends, Peace Corps Volunteers attend a Close of Service Conference with their cohort that lasts two to four days. Normally, this conference is time to wrap up Volunteer service with reflection on accomplishments and is time to plan not only the final months of service but re-entry into life after the Peace Corps. It is a time of looking back and looking ahead, a time of celebration and reflection.

#### A.3. Training staff

Each post is required to submit a training status report in October of each year. The Office of Overseas Programming and Training (OPATS) reviews the reports and summarizes key data into an analysis of how posts are analyzing, designing, implementing, and evaluating training events.

Posts in all three regions (63 percent of Africa posts, 50 percent of IAP posts and 38 percent of EMA posts) reported significant training staff limitations and turnover as one of the greatest challenges to designing and delivering successful training. This contributes to why Volunteers rated technical training the lowest of the five training areas on the 2009 Annual Volunteer Survey.

In preparation for quality growth, the Director of the agency established an agency-wide growth task force during the first quarter of FY 2010. A subgroup of that task force concentrated on Volunteer training. For two months, the training subgroup, composed of training staff from OPATS and the regions consulted with posts, reviewed documents, and attended the worldwide programming and training officer conference. Their recommendations were consistent with those expressed at the country director conferences and centered on four main areas: improvement of technical training, institution of a year round training staff at each post, improved training for post training staff, and additional training days for Volunteers.

In their analysis of Volunteer training, the growth task force indicated that the majority of posts do not have year-round key training staff. Thus, significant resources are spent on repeatedly recruiting and training new part-time staff at each post when a training event such as PST is scheduled. When the training event is over, many of the part-time staff members find more permanent jobs and are not available for the next PST, requiring post to recruit and train new staff. Not only are resources needlessly spent, Volunteers are then trained by inexperienced staff.

If a minimum number of full-time training staff members were hired and trained at each post, they would be able to design, deliver, and evaluate Volunteer training during the entire 27-month continuum. They could provide additional targeted training, perhaps sub-regionally, to Volunteers and their host country colleagues. Additionally, training staff members are the key people to reinforce newly learned knowledge and skills through ongoing Volunteer support and coaching. Finally, full-time training staff members could assist posts with site visits and site development, so that posts can make Volunteer training more relevant, as well as provide additional staff to engage in these critical activities.

The growth task force recommended a phased approach to increasing the number of full time training staff at posts. The strategy includes:

- An analysis to determine minimum and optimum full-time training staffing for posts;
- An analysis of consistent job titles and scopes of work;

- Agency support for posts in developing a process for the recruitment, training, and retention of year-round training staff;
- An analysis of the impact of more year-round training staff; and,
- A decision as to next steps.

Recommendation VIII-2: The assessment team recommends hiring and training key full-time training staff members at posts.

Posts also report, in their training status reports, challenges in implementing quality training because of their inability to hire, train and retain language and technical trainers for PST. At the majority of posts, new training staff members are given a short (often one week or less) training for trainers workshop before PST begins. Due to budget restrictions in the past few years, posts have had to reduce the training given to their newly hired and often inexperienced training staff. The growth task force recommends, and the assessment team agrees, that three to four weeks of training would provide more in-depth knowledge and skill building. The growth task force points out the steps the Peace Corps needs to take to build capacity of language and technical training staff members:

- Develop training of trainers modules;
- Train post staff to deliver these modules; and,
- Roll out longer and more effective workshops for trainers.

Recommendation VIII-3: The assessment team recommends building the capacity of training staff by developing appropriate Training of Trainer workshops for training staff.

#### A.4. Core technical training across posts

The agency requested input on the Peace Corps’ operations from overseas staff at recent country director conferences and at the worldwide programming and training officer conference held in March 2010. Volunteer training was the focus of a number of recommendations from both country directors and programming and training officers.

Both groups said that technical training, while improved in the past five years, is still not meeting expectations of post staff and Volunteers. They developed a set of recommendations that included increasing funding for more training days, additional funding for training host country counterparts with Volunteers, developing basic standardized technical training modules for various projects, and instituting year-round training staff at each post.

In 2009, the Annual Volunteer Survey for the first time asked Volunteers a tailored set of questions relevant to their time in-country. Volunteers in-country for 18 months or less were asked “How effective was your pre-service training (PST) in preparing you to...” Responses were tabulated for 2,972 Volunteers in the form of “not effective,” “poor,” “adequate,” “effective,” “very effective,” and “NA/No training.”

Appendix VIII-1 shows the global results for the Volunteers in-country for 18 months or less who answered the questions about PST. In general, safety and security training, cross cultural training, dealing with adjustment issues, and health training were rated the highest, with only 3 percent to 7 percent of Volunteers rating these items as not effective or poor. However, 25 percent of Volunteers felt their training

in working with counterparts and community partners and their job-related technical training was not effective or poor.

When all Volunteers were asked to rate their in-service training, 16 percent of 4,079 Volunteers felt their technical training was poor or not effective, and 17 percent felt their training in working with counterparts and colleagues was poor or not effective.

A number of factors can account for this relatively poor showing. Survey results partially are related to the amount of technical training posts provide to Volunteers, as well as the quality of the training. The amount of technical training has decreased in the past ten years, and now a significant number of posts currently report a lack of time to do adequate technical training. This decrease in time can be attributed to two factors. As safety and security concerns have increased, the amount of time devoted to safety and security has increased, eating into the amount of time available for technical training. Also, as budgets have been cut, training time in general has decreased.

A second issue is that the quality of technical training at some posts is less than adequate. One reason is this is that many posts do not have full-time key training staff, so materials are not updated on a regular basis and, as noted above, inexperienced training staff are less effective than those who have experience and substantial training.

Another reason quality is lacking in some areas is due to the number of technical areas in which a post may need to train Volunteers. Currently the Peace Corps has fifty distinct projects that are divided into six sectors in the three regions. For example, the thirteen projects in the health sector include community health, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS education and prevention, and child health. The fifteen distinct projects in the environment and agriculture sectors range from environmental management to aquaculture and from green agriculture to urban agriculture. Six projects dominate the small enterprise development sector, while eleven projects are carried out in the education sector. The youth development sector has five projects.

Since each post is responsible for developing the content of their technical training, the wide scope of the projects and the variation in skill levels and preparation of training staff members can lead to inconsistent quality of technical training for Volunteers.

According to the growth task force:

“All aspects of training can be supported by providing up to date, standardized, quality materials—manuals, guides, session plans, accompanying audiovisuals, etc. that allow for cultural and contextual adaptation and save the staff time, energy and money from having to design their own from scratch.”

The growth task force recommended that teaching English as a foreign language training be standardized first and that other priority areas follow. The task force recommended developing a tool kit, including a curriculum for covering the basic methodologies and approaches, sample session designs and guidelines for practice teaching, suggested topics for in-service training, and guidance for site visits and observation of Volunteer classes. All field staff would receive the materials in a series of workshops.

The growth task force recommended developing standardized technical training in core areas with the collaboration of experienced field staff. Field staff worldwide would then learn to do the training. Other

approaches to delivering standardized training have been advocated including contracting with an organization in the United States to provide core technical training to all Volunteers in a sector before they arrive at post or contracting with sub-regional training centers outside of the United States to provide standardized technical training with additional training provided at post.

Recommendation VIII-4: The assessment team recommends standardizing core technical training materials for targeted intervention areas while giving posts the option of adding country specific information to the core material. Since different methods of delivering standardized technical training to Volunteers have different cost and staffing implications, the assessment team recommends testing two or all three of the proposed methods of delivering training—at post, sub-regionally, and in the United States.

#### A.5. Providing for quality Volunteer learning

Due to tight budgets in the past few years, training days often have been cut to meet budget restrictions. Most posts cut PST from historical levels of twelve weeks to nine to ten weeks and have cut in-service training as well. Also, as safety and health concerns have increased over the years, training time has been diverted to these areas at the expense of language, technical, and cross-cultural training.

According to the growth task force, a global Peace Corps survey found that 38 percent of posts felt they needed one additional week of PST to deliver quality training while 6 percent felt they needed at least two to three additional weeks. Similarly, 43 percent of posts indicated they needed four to six additional in-service training days and 14 percent needed ten additional days. The growth task force recommends the Peace Corps:

- Analyze training needs to justify additional training time;
- Provide budget support for increased training time when indicated; and,
- Evaluate the effects of increasing training time

Feedback from Volunteers and post staff members also indicates a need for increasing the number of training days, and the country directors and programming and training officers agreed and made similar recommendations at their conferences.

Recommendation VIII-5: The assessment team recommends that the agency refrain from cutting training as a method of meeting budget reductions.

### B. RECENT CHANGES

#### B.1. Training design and evaluation

Over the past few years, OPATS and regional training staff members have worked hard to standardize the training methods across posts (as distinct from the content of training which is not standardized). The Peace Corps introduced a model for training design and evaluation, based on best practices in instructional design, that is now in use across all regions and at all posts, with varying levels of sophistication. The underlying training design and evaluation include the following principals:

- Collaboration is essential to training design and evaluation;

- The project plan is the basis for training and determines the content of training;
- Criteria for success are clear and there is a system for measuring attainment of learning;
- Proper methods are used to train to each learning objective;
- Assessments and evaluation are conducted in a fair and participatory manner;
- The process for training design and evaluation is iterative; and,
- Training content is sequenced along the 27-month continuum.

The training design and evaluation system consists of a set of activities including needs assessment, development of competencies and learning objectives, as well as a plan for training and evaluation.

Based on training status reports turned in to headquarters, 97 percent of posts are using project plans to identify learning needs, 86 percent have developed competencies and 75 percent submitted learning objectives. While 92 percent of posts report having sequenced the content of their training continuum based on learning objectives, 64 percent report having lesson plans for their learning objectives.

### B.2. Behavior change intervention

While the Peace Corps has traditionally concentrated its technical training on content (i.e. how to do a needs assessment, how to write a marketing plan, how to teach English using the communicative method, etc.), recently, the agency has increased efforts in helping Volunteers learn methods to change behavior in a positive direction.

Behavior Change Intervention is a strategy that uses behavioral, communication, social marketing theory, and research to provide a systematic framework to influence individual behaviors. Key elements include identifying and segmenting target audiences, involving these audiences in developing materials and key messages, and using multiple communication channels to transfer those messages.

The goal is to bring about a “tipping point,” where the behavior change being promoted becomes a “social epidemic” that spreads quickly to a larger population. Based on the book, “The Tipping Point,” by Malcolm Gladwell, Behavior Change Intervention postulates that change usually comes about because of the influence of a few select messengers who convince early adapters who then influence others. The key is to find the few key early messengers, a “sticky” message and ways to help people put into practice their new knowledge and behavior. These techniques not only sell potato chips and jeans, but also promote positive social behaviors.

Using the above principles, the agency has developed a course in behavior change intervention for Volunteers and is rolling it out in a series of “train the trainer” workshops.

### B.3. Measuring training effectiveness

The Peace Corps uses Kirkpatrick’s Evaluation Model<sup>74</sup> to assess training effectiveness. In this model, there are four levels of measurement:

- Level 1: Reaction: Did the participants like the training?
- Level 2: Learning: Did the participants learn the skills?
- Level 3: Behavior: Did the participants use the skills?

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<sup>74</sup> Kirkpatrick, D. L. (1994). *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*. San Francisco, California: Berrett-Koehler.



- Level 4: Results: Did the participants make a difference because of what they learned?

Historically, the Peace Corps has relied on Level 1 to evaluate training. This level is measured by the Annual Volunteer Survey and post surveys at the midpoint or end of training. In the past few years, the agency has been training posts to use Level 2 and even Level 3 in evaluating training effectiveness. The Peace Corps gauges Level 2 through tests, assessments, and interviews before and after training. Posts can measure Level 3 when they observe Volunteers at their work sites or interview Volunteers' counterparts or colleagues. Level 4 is the most difficult to determine, but the Peace Corps is making gains in using this form of evaluation. In the Peace Corps, Level 4 evaluation may include an assessment of students' test scores, an increase in the number of women attending a prenatal clinic, or an increase in the number of community projects due to the work of participants who attended a project design and management workshop. Impact studies organized and led by the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning will provide Level 4 information. To learn more about impact studies, see chapter IV A.8.

In the past few years, posts have reported on the extent to which they evaluate learning at the four Kirkpatrick levels. Posts have reported the following:

- Level 1 (Did the participants like the training?): 72 percent report always evaluating whether participants like the training.
- Level 2 (Did the participants learn the knowledge, skills, and attitudes?): Only 59 percent of posts report always assessing whether learning took place, although another 34 percent of posts report often assessing at Level 2.
- Level 3 (Do participants use the knowledge, skills, and attitudes on the job?): Twenty-six posts (41 percent) report often evaluating to Level 3, and 24 posts (38 percent) report only sometimes evaluating to Level 3.
- Level 4 (Does the Volunteer make a difference due to learning?): This level is the least often evaluated, with 30 percent of posts reporting sometimes evaluating it and 17 percent reporting never evaluating to Level 4.

## C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

One of the cornerstones of Volunteers' effectiveness is the training they receive before they begin their service and during their two years of service. During the past few years, the agency has made significant advances in standardizing training (training design and evaluation) and, with the behavior change intervention model, is forging new territory in helping Volunteers be more effective at their jobs.

While the Peace Corps has, historically, done an excellent job of training mostly young professional or generalist Volunteers in language, safety, health, cross-cultural, and job-related (technical) skills, the past few years' worth of budget cuts hurt the ability of posts to hire, train, and retain training staff and thus to provide crucial training for Volunteers. Additionally, the sheer number of projects and because each post develops its own training content contribute to a need for improved technical training for Volunteers.

When the Peace Corps focuses the agency's efforts on a limited and targeted number of specific technical interventions, as recommended by the assessment team, it will dramatically improve the Peace Corps'

quality, professionalism, and impact and will simplify core technical training. However, reducing the number of technical areas is only the first step to improving training for generalist Volunteers.

Once the technical areas are identified, technical training in each area must be designed and established to achieve global excellence. When the agency consistently commits to providing resources to support training, the Peace Corps can once again assume prominence in this area.

The assessment team recommends the following five recommendations to improve Volunteer training:

Recommendation VIII-1: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps' leadership clarify both the mission and the responsibilities of the office of Overseas Programming and Training Support and the regions in supporting Volunteer training.

Recommendation VIII-2: The assessment team recommends hiring and training key full-time training staff members at posts.

Recommendation VIII-3: The assessment team recommends building the capacity of training staff by developing appropriate Training of Trainer workshops for training staff.

Recommendation VIII-4: The assessment team recommends standardizing core technical training materials for targeted intervention areas while giving posts the option of adding country specific information to the core material. Since different methods of delivering standardized technical training to Volunteers have different cost and staffing implications, the assessment team recommends testing two or all three of the proposed methods of delivering training—at post, sub-regionally, and in the United States.

Recommendation VIII-5: The assessment team recommends that the agency refrain from cutting training as a method of meeting budget reductions.

C.2. Strategy for Implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
VIII-1: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps' leadership clarify both the mission and the responsibilities of the office of Overseas Programming and Training Support and the regions in supporting Volunteer training.	Office of the Director	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	In Quarter 1 FY 2011
VIII-2: The assessment team recommends hiring and training key full-time training staff members at posts.	Office of Global Operations; Office of Management	Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Overseas Programming and Training Support; Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning; Office of the Chief Financial Officer	After the analysis of overseas staffing patterns is completed in Quarter 2 FY 2011

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
<p>VIII-3: The assessment team recommends building the capacity of training staff by developing appropriate Training of Trainer workshops for training staff.</p>	<p>Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning; Posts; Office of the Chief Financial Officer</p>	<p>In Quarter 2 FY 2011</p>
<p>VIII-4: The assessment team recommends standardizing core technical training materials for targeted intervention areas while giving posts the option of adding country specific information to the core material. Since different methods of delivering standardized technical training to Volunteers have different cost and staffing implications, the assessment team recommends testing two or all three of the proposed methods of delivering training—at post, sub-regionally, and in the United States.</p>	<p>Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support; Office of the Director</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts</p>	<p>a) Standardize first targeted intervention by the end of Quarter 1 FY 2011 b) Begin piloting different methods of delivering standardized technical training in Quarter 3 FY 2011</p>

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

<p>VIII-5: The assessment team recommends that the agency refrain from cutting training as a method of meeting budget reductions.</p>	<p>Office of the Director</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts</p>	<p>Immediately and ongoing</p>
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## **PART B: STAFF TRAINING**

### **A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS**

#### **A.1. Structure of overseas staff**

In the last few years, the Peace Corps' staff size has ranged from 2,000 to 2,200 staff members, approximately 10 percent of whom are United States direct hires. The rest are host country foreign service nationals (approximately two at each post) and host country personal services contractors. See chapter V for more information about personnel. Only U.S. direct hires and foreign service nationals are considered by the Peace Corps to be employees. However, in practice little distinction is made at the post level between foreign service nationals and personal service contractors.

While the organizational structure and number of staff varies among posts, there are some similarities. In each of the three regions, each post has a U.S. direct hire country director and U.S. direct hire or foreign service national administrative officer. The programming and training officer position is standard for two of the Peace Corps regions, while in Africa, twelve posts have programming and training officers and others are supported by a sub-regional programming and training coordinator. Most of the programming and training officers are U.S. direct hires while a few are foreign service nationals. U.S. direct hires are subject to the five-year rule while foreign service nationals and personal service contractors are not. Many foreign service nationals and PSCs have been working for the Peace Corps for more than ten years, some for more than 30 years.

Associate Peace Corps directors, often called program managers or project managers, are occasionally U.S. direct hires but are most often host country personal service contractors. Associate Peace Corps directors have project management and Volunteer support responsibilities.

Training staff members vary from post to post and can be full-time or part-time, depending on the number of training events sponsored by the post. In almost all cases, training staff members are personal service contractors.

All posts have a full-time personal service contractor safety and security coordinator, reporting to the country director. Posts also have medical staff members who oversee the Peace Corps health plan in-country.

Each post has an administrative structure in which the administrative officer manages the work of financial analysts, a cashier, a general services manager, an information technology specialist, a variety of administrative assistants, and, in some cases, guards, drivers, gardeners and cleaning staff. In general, most of the positions—except the administrative officer, cashier, and possibly one financial analyst—are personal service contractors.

Staff size varies with the number of Volunteers in-country and ranges from less than twenty members to more than seventy members per post.

A.2. Overseas training for country directors, program and training staff, and administrative officers

Traditionally, the Peace Corps has used Overseas Staff Training (OST) for country directors, senior programming and training staff, and administrative officers. OST is a Washington, D.C.-based program of orientation and job preparation. Ideally, U.S. direct hires get OST in the beginning of their employment, and host country staff members get OST within the first 18 months of employment. The length of OST has varied from three to five weeks, and content has been revised over the years.

OST is scheduled three times a year—in January, June, and October—and lasts for approximately three weeks. Three separate tracks are held concurrently: the country director, administrative officer, and programming and training tracks. The primary focus of OST is on building awareness and knowledge of responsibilities and challenges at post and on networking and resource identification. All sessions are linked to competencies and learning objectives. Each participant leaves OST with a list of recommended and required activities at post to extend training into application.

Depending on the urgency of filling a position and the availability of resources, some U.S. direct hire staff members report to their posts first and return later for OST. Other U.S. direct hires, usually those who have been Peace Corps staff previously, go through a brief headquarters orientation and may or may not return for OST. Host country staff members usually wait at least one year, and more frequently several years, to attend OST in Washington. Throughout the years and across the regions, various permutations of these patterns have existed, and there are no data to suggest that one approach is better than another is.

A.3. Staff orientation and development beyond OST

Only a limited number of post staff members are eligible for OST. Beyond OST, opportunities for training and development have been unsystematic and have fluctuated greatly as agency and post budgets have fluctuated. Staff development funds enable posts to provide training opportunities for local staff members, but there is no transparent process for allocating the funds and no agency-wide process for requesting funds.

Through its Field Assistance Unit, the Office of Programming and Training Support (OPATS) provides staff development through specialists and training staff who assist overseas staff in improving their performance in programming and training.

Additionally, each region develops its own approaches to ongoing staff development, and regions vary their policies and resource allocations. Annual or bi-annual conferences for country directors and administrative, programming, and training officers are common, as is support for staff exchanges, temporary duty assignments, and mentoring or shadowing models.

In the Inter-America and the Pacific (IAP) Region, a programming and training officer conference is held yearly, while the program and training officers meet in conjunction with the training managers every other year. The region sponsors one or more sector conferences each year, bringing together associate Peace Corps directors. Sometimes, a specialist will visit a number of posts to conduct training, such as sessions for language and culture coordinators. Regional and sub-regional conferences have been held for administrative officers, financial assistants, and general services coordinators. Posts turn in their staff development plans and requests for staff exchanges during the development of their operating plans. The exchanges are funded as the budget allows. In addition, the IAP Region uses its sub-regional programming and training officer to carry out staff development training throughout posts in the region.



The Africa Region employs four sub-regional program and training coordinators, each responsible for six to eight countries. These coordinators hold staff retreats and team building and skills training sessions for their countries when invited by the country director. Staff exchanges are common, and a roving administrative officer is responsible for on-going administrative staff development activities. The twelve program and training officers also have staff development responsibilities in their countries. In 2010, the Africa Region is requesting funds for two new staff training opportunities: (1) a twelve-day conference for training managers and language and culture coordinators on the issue of maintaining quality during growth and (2) two mini-OSTs events to be held in Africa and facilitated by headquarters staff members and the sub-regional program and training staff members.

The Europe, Mediterranean and Asia (EMA) Region has also encouraged staff development through a variety of programs. Two sub-regional workshops were held in 2009, including a workshop for trainers. At the conclusion of the workshop, the attendees were asked to return to their posts and train staff there. Then, three sets of trainers, who had been trained at the original workshop, went to other posts to train representatives from neighboring countries. Finally, a chat group was set up for post staffs to share their thoughts and concerns. Staff development was also organized through a monthly series of WebEx conferences. Such conferences dealt with Volunteer learning assessment methods, conflict transformation, and collaboration between administrative and programming staff, among other things. The region also supported staff exchanges, as well as a weekly newsletter containing links, information and staff development resources.

The majority of staff development occurs through on-the-job experience. Depending on budgets and the interest of the country director and the region, some posts develop ongoing staff development plans and support a variety of activities, such as all-staff retreats, outside courses, and learning sessions held at lunch time for post staff. Again, there is little to no data about the effectiveness of these various approaches, and posts' activities are not centrally tracked or evaluated.

Exceptions to this pattern have been the training of medical officers, safety and security coordinators, and information technology specialists. In addition to annual headquarters training for all new medical officers, the Office of Medical Services provides training each year to all of the medical officers, who are mandated to earn annual continuing medical education credit. The Safety and Security Office and the Chief Information Officer's office also deliver beginning and ongoing training for their field staff in regularly scheduled coaching and training events.

Recently, several headquarters offices—including the Office of Acquisition and Contract Management, the Chief Financial Office, and the Safety and Security Office—have initiated efforts to provide online training to overseas staff to address job requirements that are the purview of their offices.

#### A.4. Internal Management Assessment of the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research

An Internal Management Assessment of the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research (now the Office of Programming and Training Support) conducted in the spring of 2008, succinctly and plainly described the overseas staff development situation in the agency:

“There is basic agreement that the agency has long undervalued and under-invested in professional development for all its staff, but particularly for its host country national staff....staff training and development remains relatively static, narrowly defined and ad hoc in terms of scheduling.”

The assessment proceeded to make a number of recommendations to alter the situation, including encouraging the use of new technologies to address field needs for skills enhancement, information sharing and collaboration. A number of the recommendations centered around reorganizing the core function of the unit to refocus on overseas staff capacity building and to redefine staff members' primary focus from specialists to broad resource people who not only have technical backgrounds, but are conversant with the Peace Corps' core business practices.

The assessment made significant recommendations concerning staff training and professional development. For example, the team recommended:

“Organize and staff a unit tasked with developing and continuously updating a knowledge base that informs staff professional development options...expand e-learning courseware...recognize staff who complete training goals.”

#### A.5. Headquarters staff orientation and training

This assessment focuses on overseas staff training. While the predominant emphasis of the Peace Corps' training should be on our Volunteers and overseas staff members, the agency needs to ensure that headquarters staff also is engaged in continuous learning.

Staff development at headquarters is done on an ad-hoc basis and is not currently seen as an agency priority. An individual staff member may take a course, and various events are arranged for headquarters staff at lunch time. Computer training is offered on an on-going basis. However, an organized approach to continuous learning is lacking, as is an agency-wide approach to staff development that is tied in with performance evaluations.

Staff members working at headquarters as political appointees are in key and senior positions. They receive similar training to that provided to any newly-hired individual: security procedures, time sheets, etc. After several months, they are invited to attend a three-day management training course. They do receive an overview of the Peace Corps' approach to development, policy challenges, structure of the agency, and other overarching themes.

While not a formal recommendation, the assessment team strongly urges the agency to extend the learning continuum (as discussed in the next section) to headquarters staff members and to develop an orientation program for political appointees.

## B. RECENT CHANGES

### B.1. Office of Program and Training Support

Following the Internal Management Assessment, the Center was reorganized and renamed the Office of Program and Training Support (OPATS), with the mission of:

“Engaging in field staff capacity building and to support overseas programming and training staff at every opportunity.”

OPATS includes two major units: the Field Assistance Division and the Knowledge Exchange and Professional Development Division. The second division, composed of the Knowledge Exchange Unit and the Overseas Staff Development Unit, is responsible for providing reference, technical information, learning materials, and training to overseas staff members, both U.S. direct hires and host country staff. The Overseas Staff Development Unit's purpose was "to develop an initial training orientation for field staff and to create, implement, and evaluate a continuum of learning for field staff."

## B.2. The continuum of learning

Growing recognition of the importance of overseas staff training led to a recommendation that the Peace Corps develop a continuum of training. Over time, the term "continuum of training" has morphed into the "continuum of learning" to reflect the strong emphasis in the Internal Management Assessment on the creation of a staff unit tasked with professional development of overseas staff.

Work on the continuum of learning began about eighteen months ago with the question: How can one apply the concepts of training design and evaluation to staff development? In answering this question, the OPATS team developed a framework for a continuum of learning that includes the following:

- A job analysis for each overseas staff position will lead to a set of job competencies;
- Learning objectives can be developed from the competencies;
- Courses and learning events can be sequenced to meet the increasing job demands;
- A wide range of learning modalities, such as face-to-face instruction, online learning, webinars, peer-to-peer-learning, coaching, and regional or sub-regional meetings should be employed;
- Assessments determine competencies; and,
- Learning management and content management systems allow staff access to a bank of resources.

A summary document, published about a year ago, indicated that OPATS would take the lead in developing and implementing the continuum of learning and would have responsibility for developing the analyses and content for programming and training staff, as well as some administrative staff. Offices such as Safety and Security, Medical Services, Special Services, and the Chief Financial Office would develop specialized training, working with OPATS to coordinate course development. Regional staff members would provide input on development of elements and would adopt uniform approaches to using the continuum. Regional conferences would provide opportunities for integrating development activities either during or before post conference events.

### B.2.a Accomplishments to date

As described above, the fundamental building block of a continuum of learning is a clearly defined set of job competencies and learning objectives derived from a job analysis. So far, competencies and learning objectives have been developed for three positions: country director, program and training officer, and administrative officer. In addition, OPATS staff has developed a preliminary sequence of learning events for the staff positions that are eligible to attend Overseas Staff Training (OST). These learning events include attendance at OST, shadowing, structured activities at post, coaching, and attendance at specific training events and conferences.

The OPATS summary document indicates that the competencies and learning objectives need:

“Further development, review and testing ... Each track has used a different method for developing the ... competencies and learning objectives. Each product is at a different level of detail and contains different components ... Moving from the job competencies and learning objectives to a clearly defined curriculum of courses and other sequenced learning events reflecting a wide range of delivery modalities is a journey just begun. Streamlined processes that produce these desired results are required.”

#### B.2.b Current status of the continuum of learning

The OPATS staff, with the assistance of regional and field staff, has made a strong beginning to initiate the development of a continuum of learning for overseas staff members. While progress has been made, as detailed above, it has slowed due to a variety of factors:

- The complexity of the task;
- Competing demands on staff time; and,
- Lack of clarity about the scope of work and requirements of the task.

<p><b>Recommendation VIII-6:</b> The assessment team recommends that the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support redefine the continuum of learning to make it simpler, more focused, and adaptable.</p>
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#### B.3. The Global Online Village

Partly in recognition of the importance of informal, just-in-time learning, the Knowledge Exchange Unit has begun to focus on development of learning and content management systems to support a Peace Corps Global Online Village that would allow Volunteers, staff, and partners to share information, training, informal learning, and discussions worldwide. The Global Online Village could provide the means to support self-directed learning as well as online mentoring and peer-to-peer support.

The genesis of the learning management system began in late 2007 when the Staff Training and Development Council was formed as a “forum for developing an organization-wide staff training and development vision and mission.” Staff from thirteen departments met, with support from the Director’s office, to develop plans for a hosted learning management system and a content management system.

A learning management system, analogous to an online classroom, is software for developing, delivering, tracking, and managing training. A content management system, analogous to an online library, is a web-based software program used to create, edit, publish online, manage, and effectively search for various kinds of digital media.

This past year, the Peace Corps has developed a prototype for online applications using a free learning management system called Moodle, which is an open source platform. OPATS is now poised to instruct headquarters staff to use the system, and the system will be launched for field staff later this year.

See Appendix VIII-2 for a more thorough discussion of the learning and content management systems and the Global Online Village.

While the learning management system platform is scheduled to be introduced this spring, content is scarce. Courses under development include “Introduction to Peace Corps” and “Cross Cultural Communication.” The Office of Safety and Security has plans to develop additional courses, and the Peace Corps is beginning to develop partnerships to share various online courses currently available.

A pilot program was conducted in 2009 to test the interest in online courses. For five months, a bank of off-the-shelf courses was offered to staff at posts with very limited announcement of their availability. In general, there was enough interest to justify proceeding with further development of online courses. While the number of people completing a course was small, those who did so indicated that these types of courses are important (78 percent) and are helpful in carrying out their current jobs (56 percent) or are helpful in developing their careers (41 percent). Seventy-four percent indicated that they wanted a course on leadership skills, while 70 percent indicated that management courses and communication skills courses would help them do their jobs better.

Recommendation VIII-7: The assessment team recommends completion of the two courses under development and continued efforts to license or use already developed online courses in leadership, management, and communication skills as a way of providing immediate access to development for overseas staff. Additionally a concerted effort will need to be made to establish a culture of learning, so that overseas staff is motivated and rewarded for completing courses and is given time during working hours to do so. When overseas staff is comfortable with using online courses for development, then it may be useful to continue the development of additional in-house designed e-courses.

#### B.4. Staff development

The growing complexity of managing a large and diverse organization indicates a need for on-going staff training and development. As discussed above, at this time, posts have little capacity to train staff. Orientation programs, as well as direct training, have received little attention in the past. It is crucial that posts be prepared to orient and train staff, so posts can provide quality support to the Volunteers.

Recommendation VIII-8: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support develop a basic orientation for all overseas staff. Posts develop training plans for current and new staff members.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

A number of initiatives have been partially developed to support ongoing training for overseas staff. These initiatives have been delayed or even temporarily abandoned due to shifting priorities and budget concerns. The assessment team recommends that progress resume on development of a continuum of learning for overseas staff but that the project be considerably simplified. A simplified version can be deployed, tested and improved over time.

Additionally, the team recommends that the two courses under development—"Introduction to the Peace Corps" and "Cross Cultural Communication"—be finished and sent out to the field for use. They can be refined and, if necessary, improved based on feedback from posts.

Finally, it is crucial that each post has in place an orientation and training plan to support the on-going development needs of current and new staff. This will ensure the posts are able to provide quality support for Volunteers.

The following three recommendations are made concerning staff training:

Recommendation VIII-6: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support redefine the continuum of learning to make it simpler, more focused, and adaptable.

Recommendation VIII-7: The assessment team recommends completion of the two courses under development and continued efforts to license or use already developed online courses in leadership, management, and communication skills as a way of providing immediate access to development for overseas staff. Additionally a concerted effort will need to be made to establish a culture of learning, so that overseas staff is motivated and rewarded for completing courses and is given time during working hours to do so. When overseas staff is comfortable with using online courses for development, then it may be useful to continue the development of additional in-house designed e-courses.

Recommendation VIII-8: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support develop a basic orientation for all overseas staff. Posts develop training plans for current and new staff members.

C.2. Strategy for implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
VIII-6: The assessment team recommends that the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support redefine the continuum of learning to make it simpler, more focused, and adaptable.	Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	To be completed in Quarter 2 FY 2011
VIII-7: The assessment team recommends a) completion of the two courses under development and continued efforts to license or use already developed online courses in leadership, management, and communication skills as a way of providing immediate access to development for overseas staff. b) Additionally a concerted effort will need to be made to establish a culture of learning, so that overseas staff is motivated and rewarded for completing courses and is given time during working hours to do so. c) When overseas staff is comfortable with using online courses for development, then it may be useful to continue the development of additional in-house designed e-courses.	Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support	Office of Global Operations	a) In Quarter 1 FY 2011 b) In FY 2011 c) In FY 2012

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
VIII-8: The assessment team recommends that a) the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support develop a basic orientation for all overseas staff. b) Posts develop training plans for current and new staff members.	a) Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support b) Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts;	b) Office of Global Operations	a) In Quarter 1 FY 2011 b) In FY 2012



## **IX. COORDINATING WITH INTERNATIONAL AND HOST COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

### **A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS**

#### **A.1. Introduction**

Since its inception, the Peace Corps has coordinated with thousands of organizations in support of its operations at the local, national, and international levels. The coordination of the agency's activities with international and host country organizations is defined in a variety of ways and includes formal and less formal agreements, verbal collaborations, and, in some cases, may involve an exchange of funds. Traditionally, the Peace Corps has entered into these agreements<sup>75</sup> for the following reasons:

- To support programmatic activities in the field and the placement of Volunteers at sites;
- To support the Peace Corps' Volunteer recruitment efforts and to assist returning Volunteers in carrying out the Peace Corps' third goal activities; and,
- To obtain grants and donations.

#### **A.2. Types of agreements**

A discussion of the three different types of agreements that the Peace Corps pursues is provided in the sections below.<sup>76</sup>

##### **A.2.a Agreements with organizations and government agencies to support programmatic activities in the field and the placement of Volunteers at sites**

The Peace Corps' approach to development is founded on grass roots capacity building. In implementing this approach, the Peace Corps collaborates with a host country government to identify its development goals and project priorities. Depending on the needs of the project, the Peace Corps may also choose to collaborate with international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United States and international government agencies, and others in the design and implementation of the project. The Peace Corps' primary contribution to the project is human capital- the Volunteer on the ground. The host country government's contribution may include physical infrastructure, as well as programmatic, financial, and logistical support. NGOs and others may contribute technical skills, training, additional resources, assistance with site selection, housing support, and possibly program coordination.

By their nature, most of the Peace Corps' agreements are developed and implemented at the post level with host government agencies and local NGOs, although the Peace Corps has also developed worldwide relationships with international NGOs, United States government agencies, and other international organizations. As shown in Figure IX-1 below, in fiscal year 2009, Peace Corps posts reported 560 collaborations with host government agencies; more than 360 collaborations with local NGOs, universities and local private companies<sup>77</sup>; approximately 260

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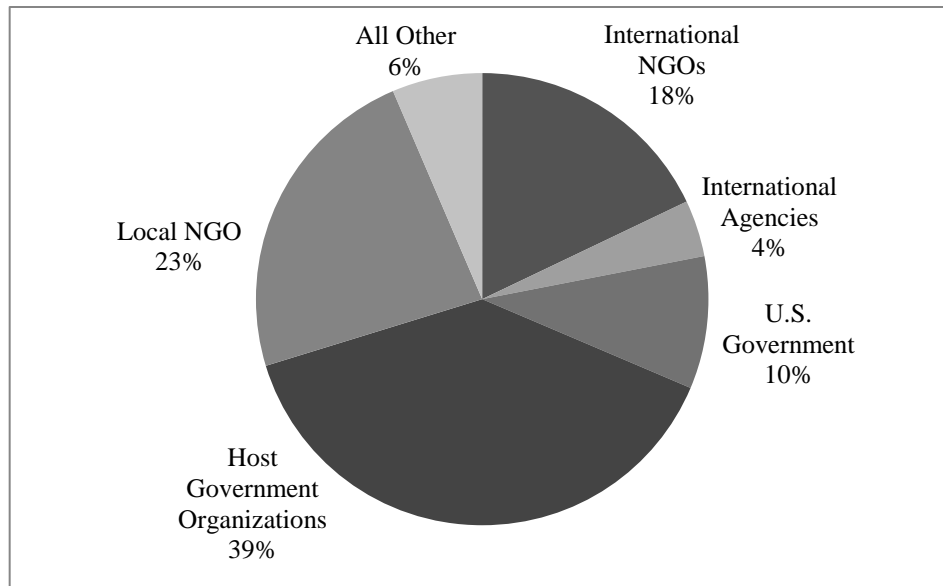
<sup>75</sup> The term "agreement" in this chapter refers to collaborations between the agency and international and host country organizations that are defined in a variety of ways, ranging from formal written agreements to less formal, verbal collaborations between parties.

<sup>76</sup> Agreements may serve multiple purposes. For example, an agreement may support programmatic activities and provide funding. The examples of agreements provided in this section are categorized by their primary purpose.

<sup>77</sup> These figures reflect the total of all reported collaborations; the data include different levels of collaboration with the same organization if different host countries worked with the organization. See Appendix IX-1, "Summary of Partnership Data Global FY 2009," and Appendix IX-2, "List of Organizations that Collaborated with the Peace Corps in FY 2009."

collaborations with 120 unique international NGOs; and 138 collaborations with seven different U.S. government organizations.

Figure IX-1  
Collaborations with Local and International Organizations



Examples of current Volunteer projects with different types of organizations include:

- The Peace Corps in Peru has assigned Volunteers to work with Plan International<sup>78</sup> on various activities, including early childhood development, youth groups, and nutrition. Plan International also offers technical assistance during in-service training.
- The Peace Corps in Mongolia has assigned Volunteers to work with Mongolian NGOs that partner with Mercy Corps in provincial centers. In addition to covering housing expenses for Volunteers placed at these NGOs, Mercy Corps also participates in pre-service and in-service training for Volunteers.
- In Benin, the Peace Corps has worked with Population Services International on health projects in that country. Through a tripartite arrangement between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Population Services International, and the Peace Corps, a third-year Volunteer has been assigned to work with Population Services International to increase coordination among the various organizations implementing the President's Malaria Initiative.
- The Peace Corps in Niger has placed Volunteers to work with and support the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization irrigated land project. Volunteers work with the organization's staff members to support irrigation projects, grain banks, and improved gardening in the community.
- In Costa Rica Volunteers are coordinating with NGOs working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in cooperation with the Government of Costa Rica's agency on children's issues and child protection.

<sup>78</sup> Plan International is one of the oldest and largest children's development organizations in the world. Plan works in 48 developing countries across Africa, Asia, and the Americas to promote child rights and lift millions of children out of poverty.

Third-year Volunteers are particularly in high demand by international NGOs given the Volunteers' advanced language skills, cultural understanding, and relevant field-based experience. The knowledge and experience that these Volunteers provide NGOs is invaluable, and at the same time, these types of working relationships offer third-year Volunteers an opportunity to continue their professional development. When working with NGOs, third-year Volunteers may work directly with their host organizations to assist in coordinating with other organizations or to assist the host organization with projects throughout the country.

#### **An Example of Peace Corps Collaboration with an International NGO**

Upon successful completion of service with Habitat for Humanity in a small town of western Romania, a Peace Corps Volunteer requested a third-year extension to use the time to make a broader, national impact. Upon review and approval of the request for a third-year extension, this Volunteer relocated to the capital city of Bucharest where he was assigned by the Peace Corps to work with Habitat for Humanity's national office to organize trainings for their offices around the country. Habitat for Humanity was interested in this Volunteer because of his fluency in Romanian and because of the cultural skills he had gained during his initial two years of Peace Corps service.

During his third-year, this Volunteer developed a series of programs that were national in scope. One of these programs was the Ambassador's Build, a program in which foreign Ambassadors came together to work with community members, Peace Corps Volunteers, and other staff members to build houses for poor families in rural communities. In addition to his work with Habitat for Humanity during this third-year, the Volunteer also assisted the Peace Corps Romania post in providing training and support to incoming Peace Corps trainees, as well as the currently-serving Volunteers and host country counterparts.

Habitat for Humanity gained a valued and seasoned Volunteer who knew their operations at both the field-level and nationally, as well as a team member with both a foreigner's perspective and a local understanding. The Volunteer has achieved fluency in Romanian, has gained in-depth knowledge of the operations of an international NGO, and has assisted the Peace Corps in helping incoming Volunteers best prepare themselves for service.

The Volunteer has recently applied for a fourth year of service.

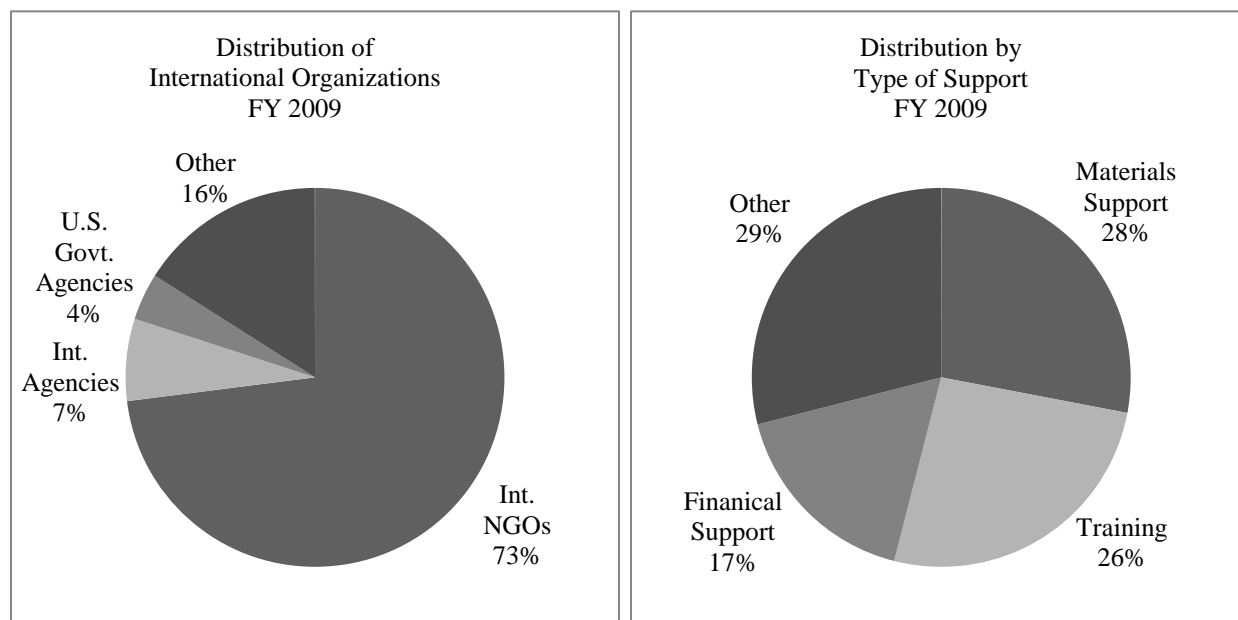
The partnerships focus group, within the agency's growth task force,<sup>79</sup> identified a need to promote a greater number of ongoing partnerships with the goal of encouraging more third-year Volunteers. These partnerships would focus on providing Volunteers that have completed their initial 27 months of service with new assignments in areas that would provide new opportunities for professional development while expanding the impact of the Peace Corps' presence in each country.

In addition to the host government and local NGO partnerships described above, in FY 2009, the agency also partnered with more than 160 international partners (see Figure IX-2 below), the most important of these being USAID. More than half of all posts (42), reported some sort of collaboration with USAID, making this agency the most frequently reported partner for the Peace Corps.

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<sup>79</sup> The growth task force was created by the Director during the first quarter of FY 2010 to identify innovative strategies that will facilitate the agency's goals regarding quality growth. Additional information on the growth task force is provided in chapter III.D.2.f.

Figure IX-2  
 Distribution of International Organizations by Type of Collaboration and Type of Support<sup>80</sup>



USAID supports the Peace Corps in a variety of purposes. The three most common forms of support are technical assistance and training arrangements, Small Project Assistance grants programs and Participating Agency Program Agreements. The Small Project Assistance program and the Participating Agency Program Agreements are primarily funding mechanisms and are discussed in section A.2.c of this chapter.

USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also provide the Peace Corps with technical assistance and training to assist the agency in disseminating appropriate practices in food security and to ensure the integration of the Peace Corps' efforts in this area with the overall U.S. strategy on food security. A list of some of the key areas of collaboration between the Peace Corps and other U.S. government agencies is provided in Appendix IX-3.

Another important partner at the post level for programmatic collaborations is the U.S. Department of State. Seventeen posts reported collaborations in FY 2009 in areas such as Volunteer assignments, technical assistance, and financial support. Other important collaborators include UNICEF (collaborating with fifteen posts), World Vision (twelve posts), Junior Achievement (eleven posts), and the United Nations Development Program (ten posts).

#### A.2.b Agreements supporting Volunteer recruitment, assisting returned Volunteers, and supporting third goal activities

The Peace Corps establishes agreements with domestic organizations to strengthen recruitment of applicants from a diverse population and to attract applicants with specialized skills. In the first half of FY 2010, the Peace Corps signed such agreements with City Year and the National Association of Community Health Centers.

City Year is a U.S.-based non-profit that places Americans, ages 17 to 24 and who have a high school diploma or a GED, in a year of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement in the United States.

<sup>80</sup> Percentages on the type of organization are based on the number of unique organizations worldwide (164). Percentages related to the type of support reflect the fact that collaboration may include more than one type of support.

The Peace Corps hopes to attract City Year's diverse members and alumni to continue their service internationally with the Peace Corps.

The partnership with the National Association of Community Health Centers offers the Peace Corps an opportunity to target applicants with relevant health experience and provides Returned Peace Corps Volunteers with job placement opportunities at the National Association of Community Health Centers. Both City Year and the National Association of Community Health Centers receive funding from AmeriCorps, and these agreements reflect the agency's goal of strengthening ties with AmeriCorps-funded programs to attract a more diverse Volunteer base.

The Peace Corps also has signed an important agreement with the National Peace Corps Association, which offers transition support to Volunteers returning to the United States after their service through a mentoring program. In addition, the Peace Corps and the National Peace Corps Association collaborate on third goal activities—bringing the world back home—through speakers programs and member groups.<sup>81</sup>

#### A.2.c Agreements and collaborations for funding and donations

The Peace Corps is an important participant in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and coordinates activities in this area with the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator. PEPFAR currently funds the Peace Corps' activities in 46 posts and provides resources for some of the activities of the Office of AIDS Relief at headquarters. It is the largest supporter of the Peace Corps' programs in dollar terms (approximately \$13 million in funding in FY 2010 and cumulative funding of approximately \$89 million from FY 2004 to FY 2010). While nearly two-thirds of current posts receive funding from PEPFAR, the largest Peace Corps programs receiving such funding are in southern and eastern Africa.<sup>82</sup>

The Peace Corps also receives financial support from USAID through Participating Agency Program Agreements and Small Project Assistance grant funds. Currently, three Peace Corps posts have negotiated five different Participating Agency Program Agreements with USAID under this framework. Two of these are in the Philippines (\$350,000 from FY 2004 to FY 2010 for the environment and \$1.8 million from FY 2003 to FY 2010 for education), two are in Mali (\$1.1 million from FY 2010 to FY 2013 for food security and \$300,000 from FY 2009 to FY 2011 for education), and one is in Senegal (\$1.6 million from FY 2010 to FY 2013 for food security).

The Small Project Assistance program is designed to provide small grants to communities within developing countries and training of host country nationals through Peace Corps-organized, in-service training activities and technical workshops. Volunteers assist communities in identifying projects and applying for these small grants. Volunteers also work with their communities in implementing the projects. USAID provided approximately \$2.5 million for Small Project Assistance activities in FY 2010 in more than forty countries. Since the inception of the current Small Project Assistance agreement in September 2007, USAID has obligated approximately \$7.8 million for Small Project Assistance grants and training activities.

Individuals and organizations can also choose to donate resources directly to support Volunteer projects, third goal activities, and other headquarters and regional activities through the Peace Corps Partnership Program, a tool through which Volunteers can promote and receive funding for projects they are working on. All donations are tax deductible and 100 percent of donations made to the partnership program are used for project purposes. In FY 2009, more than 10,000 donors contributed \$1.8 million through the partnership program that in turn leveraged another \$1.6 million in local monetary and in-kind support. Those donations benefited more than 640,000 individuals.

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<sup>81</sup> The agreement with the National Peace Corps Association is discussed in greater detail in chapter XI.A.3.

<sup>82</sup> See Appendix III-4; Volunteers working in HIV/AIDS prevention by country.

### A.3. The Peace Corps' management of agreements

As discussed in the previous section, the vast majority of all agreements are developed, implemented, and managed at the post level. However, several offices within the Peace Corps' headquarters also have the responsibility of developing and managing agreements with outside organizations. They are the Office of the Director, the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support, the Office of Public Engagement, the Office of AIDS Relief, the Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs, and the Office of Private Sector Initiatives.<sup>83</sup> A brief description of each of these offices and the role that they play in developing and managing agreements and collaborations with other organizations is presented below.

#### A.3.a The Office of the Director

The Director's office has the lead role in exploring how innovative partnership strategies can assist the Peace Corps in placing Volunteers in new types of assignments in countries in which the Peace Corps already has operations. The office also develops NGO partnership strategies that can be used for launching Peace Corps programs in new countries. At the time of the writing of this report, discussions were underway between senior Peace Corps staff and leaders of NGOs—including the World Wildlife Fund, Save the Children, and the Cooperative Housing Foundation—to explore possible worldwide partnerships.

#### A.3.b The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs

The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs is responsible for developing and implementing the Director's policy and strategy for building and maintaining relationships with other U.S. government agencies, with particular focus on agencies with missions that intersect most directly with the Peace Corps' mission. The office also contributes to the Peace Corps by identifying potential partners and synergies to maximize the Peace Corps' contribution to ongoing international development efforts.

As discussed in section A.2 of this chapter, USAID has historically been one of the Peace Corps central interagency partners. One of the primary goals of the Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs is to support and enhance the Peace Corps' relationship with USAID at headquarters and at post levels. The office also coordinates with and supports the other units discussed in this section in developing a criteria and structure for partnership development, with a focus on the agency's four key growth areas: agriculture and food security, health (HIV/AIDS and malaria), education (teaching English as a second language and girls education), and energy and environment.

#### A.3.c Overseas Programming and Training Support

The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS)—through its Partnership Development Unit, sector specialists and other staff—develops and manages partnerships with U.S. government agencies, international organizations, and NGOs that are beneficial to programming and training. OPATS' activities concerning partnerships fall into three general areas.

##### Partnership development

OPATS staff members organize and attend meetings with organizations, write proposals for funding and other agreements, and prepare draft agreements and concept strategy papers (some focused on specific partnerships, some more general policy pieces on partnerships). This work is done in conjunction with several offices, including the Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs, the three Peace Corps regions, the Office of the General Counsel, and others.

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<sup>83</sup> The Office of General Counsel, the three regions, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, and the Office of Contracts and Acquisitions also have some responsibilities regarding partnerships (e.g., ensuring the legality and suitability of partnerships).

OPATS, the Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs, and others are currently working on finalizing an Energy/Climate Change Agreement for Latin America with the U.S. State Department and a Global Education Framework Agreement with USAID.

#### Partnership implementation

OPATS staff manages and implements active agreements for the agency. For now, this is primarily the Small Project Assistance agreement with USAID's Office of Development Partners, which is managed by the Partnership Development Unit in OPATS. For sector-specific agreements that are currently in development, OPATS sector specialists and Partnership Development Unit staff members will work together to manage and promote the agreements. This management involves ensuring that the Peace Corps meets its obligations under the agreements, disbursing funds to posts, tracking use of funds, providing guidance to posts, writing and submitting programmatic reports, and coordinating with other agency offices and units to implement activities.

#### Partnership tracking, data analysis, and information dissemination

OPATS collects, analyzes, and shares information on partnerships and collaborations. An important aspect of this is the collection of data on all field collaborations; the data are maintained in a partnership database. OPATS also collects and shares information on agency-level partnerships. Currently, OPATS is upgrading the partnership database to expand its usefulness by providing a central location for information on meetings and partnership developments between the Peace Corps and external organizations.

#### A.3.d The Office of Public Engagement

The Office of Public Engagement, formerly the Office of Domestic Programs, manages initiatives that help the Peace Corps in achieving its third goal activities (to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans) and in supporting Peace Corps Volunteers as they return to the United States. The office is currently working on new partnerships with domestic organizations in support of both of these areas. The office manages the agreement with the National Peace Corps Association. The Office of Public Engagement most recently has worked with the Office of Volunteer Recruiting and Selection to develop the partnerships with City Year and the National Association of Community Health Centers signed earlier this year (discussed earlier in section A.2.b of this chapter).

#### A.3.e Office of AIDS Relief

The Office of AIDS Relief provides agency-level policy, overall leadership, and general supervision, direction, and coordination of all domestic and foreign HIV/AIDS activities relating to the Peace Corps' programs. The Office of AIDS Relief is also responsible for coordinating the agency's participation in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Attainable goals are established in the area of HIV/AIDS, with a clear framework of accountability. Much of this direction comes through the agency's participation in PEPFAR. The Office of AIDS Relief reviews, interprets, and recommends policies related to PEPFAR and provides guidance for post participation in interagency teams, utilization of funds, and compliance with requirements. To attain its goals, the Office of AIDS Relief works in close collaboration with the Peace Corps' three regions and the Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support.

While the agency will receive approximately \$89 million in PEPFAR funds from FY 2004 to FY 2010, it is still a relatively small partner—only 0.3 percent of the overall PEPFAR budget. At the same time, Peace Corps Volunteers excel in the areas that are currently being emphasized by PEPFAR: prevention, capacity building, and country ownership. Peace Corps Volunteers have demonstrated that they play a unique role in the fight against HIV/AIDS at the grass-roots level. Consequently, the Office of AIDS Relief, in coordination with the Office of

Inter-Governmental Affairs and the Director's office, is currently looking to expand the agency's role within PEPFAR.

#### A.3.f Office of Private Sector Initiatives

The Office of Private Sector Initiatives supports the first and third goals of the Peace Corps and serves three distinct customer groups: Peace Corps Volunteers and the host-country communities they serve, donors to the Peace Corps, and the agency itself. The office oversees and manages all cash and in-kind donations to the Peace Corps. The Office of Private Sector Initiatives offers a transparent mechanism for the private sector—which includes family and friends of Volunteers, returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups, schools, foundations, trusts, corporations, businesses, faith-based organizations, and civic groups—to be part of the Peace Corps experience by donating to the important work of Peace Corps Volunteers and agency initiatives. The office also accepts in-kind donations made to the Peace Corps and directly to Volunteers.<sup>84</sup>

Office staff members manage the Peace Corps Partnership Program, which began in 1964 as the “Schools to Schools” program, connecting American school children to school children abroad. Today, the Peace Corps Partnership Program continues to connect interested groups and individuals with Volunteer-led, community-initiated projects worldwide. Although many Volunteers are able to undertake projects utilizing local resources and skills, the partnership program provides a critical alternative for projects that require additional funds. The partnership program is available for Volunteers at every post.

The Peace Corps Partnership Program projects have made an important contribution to communities across the globe since the program was launched in 1964. In FY 2009, the partnership program received donations from 10,595 donors totaling \$1.8 million. These funds were applied to 639 community-initiated projects in 60 countries. A minimum 25 percent community contribution is required for a project to receive partnership program assistance, and in FY 2009, the actual community contributions were nearly 45 percent of project costs, with approximately \$1.6 million in cash and in-kind community contributions.

#### A.3.g Peace Corps Response

In 2010, Peace Corps Response expects to work with at least 75 different organizations as shown below:

Host country NGOs:	35
International NGOs:	19
Host country governments: <sup>85</sup>	19
United Nations organizations:	2

Peace Corps Response typically does not work with many partners in multiple countries. Catholic Relief Services works with Response Volunteers in three countries. The majority of the 200 Response Volunteers serving in FY 2010 are located in the Eastern Caribbean, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, and the Philippines. These five posts have approximately half of the all Response Volunteers in the field and consequently are where Peace Corps Response has entered into most of its agreements and collaborations.

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<sup>84</sup> As defined by the Peace Corps Act (Pub. L. 87-293, as amended: 22 U.S.C. §2501 et seq.), gifts or bequests to the Peace Corps are tax-deductible as charitable contributions under section 170(c) 1 of the Internal Revenue Code.

<sup>85</sup> May include several government agencies within one host country government.



## B. RECENT CHANGES

### B.1. A new perspective on partnerships

The Director has stated that through strategic partnerships, the Peace Corps intends to:

- Gain greater access to enhanced training opportunities for Volunteers and counterparts;
- Add levels of technical and financial resources to enhance community projects in the field;
- Expand the agency's network and clientele;
- Promote the exchange of best practices and lessons learned between the Peace Corps and other development organizations; and,
- Further integration into the larger development community within host countries.

Partnerships could also play a greater role in the Peace Corps' operations by facilitating site development and providing supervisory technical support, complementing staff capacity.

The Director also believes that in addition to those partnerships that support Volunteers and their counterparts in the field, strategic partnerships will also enhance the Peace Corps' initiatives in the United States. Specifically, the Director has asked staff to identify and develop strategic partnerships to enhance the agency's efforts in attracting a larger and more diverse group of Volunteers, to support third goal activities, and to support returned Peace Corps Volunteers as they integrate back into their communities in the United States.

The Director also recognizes that strategic partnerships must benefit all parties in the agreement or they will not be successful in the long run. The Peace Corps' partners would gain increased access to individuals, organizations, and service providers at the grassroots level, where the Peace Corps has a strong presence and where other organizations work on a very limited basis. This unique Peace Corps strength provides potential partners with sustainable support to expand their reach of services and implement national and regional activities at the community level. The development sector as a whole would benefit through the coordination of efforts and the elimination of overlapping activities, thereby increasing the number of beneficiaries reached and the overall impact in countries served by the Peace Corps.

### B.2. The growth task force

The Director created the growth task force<sup>86</sup> in the first quarter of FY 2010 to identify innovative strategies to facilitate the agency's goal of quality growth. An international NGO partnerships subgroup was one of twelve task force subgroups formed to research and develop recommendations in key areas. Assessment team members participated in all of the international partnerships subgroup meetings, which provided the assessment team with valuable input for the preparation of this chapter of the assessment report. More than twenty individuals participated in the partnership subgroup, including representatives from posts (country directors and program and training officers) and headquarters. In addition, representatives from two international NGOs that the Peace Corps has worked with in recent years provided insight.

The international NGO partnership subgroup focused on NGOs that support the Peace Corps' programmatic efforts in the field. This subgroup was not tasked with analyzing the types of agreements that the agency enters into with other organizations.

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<sup>86</sup> See chapter II.D.2.f. for additional information on the growth task force.

Historically, all agreements and collaborations that the Peace Corps enters have been considered partnerships, whether they are at the local, national, or international level. As a result, there was some initial confusion within the agency when the Director introduced the concept of working through strategic partnerships to accomplish the agency's goals. This became apparent when the growth task force's subgroup on international partnerships began its work on international partnerships. At the Director's request, the international partnerships subgroup was asked to provide a clear definition of "partnership."

The subgroup on international partnerships defined a partnership as:

"A mutually beneficial agreement signed by headquarters in which all of the parties share a common goal, contribute resources (either financial or in-kind), have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and share in the overall decision making process. To be considered a partnership, the agreement would need to be of sufficient size and scope to allow for activities in a large number of countries or, if the purpose is to support the agency's domestic activities, across a significant region of the United States."

The partnership subgroup made two important observations in developing and proposing three recommendations that specifically concern international NGO partnerships but that also apply to partnerships in general. The first relates to the roles and responsibilities of headquarters and field staff in the development and management of partnerships and is echoed in the assessment team's recommendation below.

**Recommendation IX-1:** The assessment team recommends that roles and responsibilities concerning the development and management of strategic partnerships within the agency be clearly defined. Headquarters should focus on identifying strategic partners and negotiating and formalizing partnership agreements that facilitate and support the development and management of field-level partnerships between the strategic partner and Peace Corps posts. The responsibility for developing and managing a country-level collaboration under a global partnership agreement that meets the specific needs of the country should rest with local staff members of the strategic partner and of the agency.

The second observation was that the development of strategic partnerships was seen primarily as a mechanism to improve program quality rather than as a mechanism to support rapid growth. This observation was made during a partnership subgroup discussion on the willingness of the agency to assign Volunteers to a strategic partner to quickly expand into a new country or into a new area of an existing Peace Corps country. The international partnership subgroup concluded that strategic partners can and should play an important role in supporting the agency and its Volunteers but that the Peace Corps was not willing to delegate the overall responsibility for Volunteers to the strategic partner. For example, while a strategic partner might provide funding for housing or assistance in site selection, the Peace Corps is not willing to delegate the overall housing and site selection process, nor could the agency delegate the responsibility for the medical care or safety and security of Volunteers to another organization. The assessment team agrees with this observation.

The international partnerships subgroup made the following three recommendations to the Director regarding international NGO partnerships:

- The Peace Corps should promote the development of partnerships with the goal of encouraging a greater number of third-year extensions, targeting a doubling of the number of third-year extensions in FY 2011 from FY 2009 levels;
- The Peace Corps should consider partnerships with international NGOs as a way to facilitate new country entries; and,

- The Peace Corps needs to develop an overarching strategy to guide the development of strategic partnerships.

The assessment team agreed with all three of these recommendations as discussed below and in section C of this chapter.

Recommendation IX-2: The assessment team recommends promoting the development of strategic partnerships on an ongoing basis with the goal of encouraging a greater number of third-year Volunteers, providing new opportunities for Volunteers while growing the impact of the Peace Corps.

The international NGO subgroup observed that in the past, the agency has worked with international NGOs to successfully support new country entries using Peace Corps Response or third-year transfer Volunteers. These partnerships can speed regular Volunteer assignments and help establish a permanent Peace Corps presence in a country more quickly than it could otherwise. The international NGO subgroup recommended that the agency identify best practices through case studies on recent new country entries and that the agency compare and contrast those experiences with experiences in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone. Based on this analysis, the agency should determine the best way to work with international NGOs to support future new country entries.

Recommendation IX-3: The assessment team recommends reviewing recent new country entry experiences with international NGOs to develop a strategy for working with international NGOs in the future on new county entries.

The international NGO subgroup also noted that the agency currently does not have a partnership strategy focusing on quality growth and recommended the establishment of such a strategy to guide the development of strategic partnerships with international NGOs to better support the agency’s programmatic efforts in the field. As discussed in section C of this chapter, the assessment team agrees with this recommendation and has expanded the recommendation to include all types of partnerships pursued by the agency.

### B.3. The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs

The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs was established in the first quarter of FY 2010 to strengthen the agency's coordination with U.S. government initiatives such as the inter-agency task forces on food security and alternative energy. It is responsible for developing and implementing the Director’s policy and strategy for building and maintaining relationships with other U.S. government agencies to cultivate new agreements and partnerships. Additionally, this office pursues broader collaboration with United Nations agencies, such as the World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization. The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs played an instrumental role in negotiating an agreement with USAID following the earthquake in Haiti to assign Peace Corps staff and Volunteers to support U.S. government relief efforts there.

The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs emphasizes implementing a strategic approach to partnership development focusing on the following:

- Agriculture and food security (The primary partners are USAID, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the World Food Programme, and the Food and Agriculture Organization.)
- Health – HIV/AIDS and malaria (The primary partners are the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, the President’s Malaria Initiative, USAID, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.)
- Education – teaching English as a foreign language and girls education (The primary partners are USAID, the State Department’s Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs, and the Department of Education.)

- Energy and the environment (The primary partners are the State Department's Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, and USAID.)

The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs also supports the work of other offices within the Peace Corps to help develop headquarters-level umbrella agreements that posts can use in establishing country-level agreements and to encourage more third-year Volunteers. The office is also working to facilitate the employment of returned Peace Corps Volunteers by federal agencies and to raise awareness of non-competitive eligibility within the executive branch agencies. The Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs also intends to engage USAID on greater involvement of returned Volunteers in that agency's Development Leadership Initiative new entry program.

#### B.4. The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support

The Office of Overseas Programming and Training Support (OPATS) has refocused partnership development efforts. OPATS' management, the Partnership Development Unit, and sector specialists within the Field Assistance Division have worked to re-establish and enhance relationships with U.S. government agencies and NGOs. In these efforts, OPATS has collaborated with several agency offices, including the Office of Inter-Governmental Affairs and the three Regions. OPATS is actively pursuing partnerships in all of the Peace Corps' programming sectors, with an emphasis on developing partnerships that will meet programming and training needs at posts. OPATS seeks relationships that will provide personnel, financial, and technical resources that will allow OPATS to deliver a wider array of support to the field, such as subregional programming and training workshops, technical experts to review and design projects, materials, and in-kind resources to distribute to posts.

The Peace Corps is currently establishing significant partnerships in three programmatic areas. The first of these initiatives is a proposed agreement for \$1 million over three-years to support the Peace Corps' renewable energy and climate change efforts in Latin America. That partnership would be supported through an interagency agreement between the Peace Corps and the Department of State Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. This initiative will advance the goals of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas. The agreement likely will be signed in the third quarter of FY 2010.

The second programmatic area where there has been significant partnership activity is in food security. Through a partnership with USAID's Africa Bureau, the Peace Corps hosted a workshop in December 2009 in Dakar, Senegal, at which programming and training staff from all Africa posts convened to learn about and exchange information about programming in food security. USAID and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are currently supporting, for at least one year, a full-time senior food security advisor in OPATS. In addition, the Peace Corps is exploring an interagency agreement with USAID to promote both headquarters and field-level collaboration on food security.<sup>87</sup> This will enable the Peace Corps to effectively mobilize its field resources to promote the objectives of the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative by expanding training and technical assistance in the fields of agriculture, food, and nutrition security.

The third initiative will establish an education framework agreement with USAID. By structuring the agreement to allow buy-ins by USAID headquarters, bureaus, and field missions, this mechanism will allow collaboration both for broader agency-level education initiatives, as well as specific interventions in interested countries. This agreement likely will be signed in the fourth quarter of FY 2010.

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<sup>87</sup> Discussions between the Peace Corps and USAID are also exploring the possibility of a broader interagency agreement that would state shared intentions for partnerships on Global Climate Change, Global Health, and other Administration initiatives. Both USAID and the Peace Corps believe that there are other opportunities for closer collaboration in the future.

## B.5. The Office of Public Engagement

As explained in section A.3.d, the Office of Public Engagement manages initiatives that help the Peace Corps in two areas: third goal activities and support of returned Peace Corps Volunteers as they transition back to the United States. The shift of the Office of Public Engagement out of the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection to now report directly to the Director's office reflects the importance the Director has attached to strengthening third goal initiatives within the agency.

Although, no longer a unit within the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, the Office of Public Engagement continues to support that office in the development and implementation of agreements with domestic organizations in support of the agency's recruitment efforts. In addition to the agreements negotiated with the National Association of Community Health Centers and City Year (discussed in section A.2.b of this chapter), the Office of Public Engagement has just negotiated an agreement with The Corps Network—an association of 143 environmental and conservation non-profit organizations—to help the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection identify potential Volunteers for environment and conservation assignments.

## C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

As described in the previous sections, six offices within the Peace Corps' headquarters are directly involved in the identification, promotion, development, and management of agreements and partnerships for the agency. Several offices are also involved in the collection and analysis of data on these agreements and partnerships. Although these offices coordinate with each other, the assessment team observed that to a large degree, these offices work independently within their focus areas. Furthermore, while these offices currently hold weekly meetings to exchange information on the status of their efforts, the agency lacks a coherent, overall partnership strategy.

**Recommendation IX-4:** The assessment team recommends that all activities within the agency's headquarters related to agreements and partnerships be coordinated by the Director's office.

The vision and strategy discussed in chapter II has implications for the development of future strategic partnerships, which will need to focus on the small number of intervention areas that the agency will work in. This focus, and the emphasis on impact, will help guide the development of an agency-wide partnership strategy, which currently does not exist.

**Recommendation IX-5:** The assessment team recommends developing an agency-wide partnership strategy. The partnership strategy would guide the agency's efforts on the promotion, development, and management of all agreements and partnerships and should reflect the strategic vision for the agency as presented in chapter II of this report.

The assessment team believes that the above recommendations, in conjunction with the recommendations made in previous sections of this chapter, will provide greater focus to the Peace Corps' efforts to develop the types of partnerships that will better enable the agency to accomplish its mission and three goals. The team makes five recommendations:

**Recommendation IX-1:** The assessment team recommends that roles and responsibilities concerning the development and management of strategic partnerships within the agency be clearly defined. Headquarters should focus on identifying strategic partners and negotiating and formalizing partnership agreements that facilitate and

support the development and management of field-level partnerships between the strategic partner and Peace Corps posts. The responsibility for developing and managing a country-level collaboration under a global partnership agreement that meets the specific needs of the country should rest with local staff members of the strategic partner and of the agency.

Recommendation IX-2: The assessment team recommends promoting the development of strategic partnerships on an ongoing basis with the goal of encouraging a greater number of third-year Volunteers, providing new opportunities for Volunteers while growing the impact of the Peace Corps.

Recommendation IX-3: The assessment team recommends reviewing recent new country entry experiences with international NGOs to develop a strategy for working with international NGOs in the future on new county entries.

Recommendation IX-4: The assessment team recommends that all activities within the agency's headquarters related to agreements and partnerships be coordinated by the Director's office.

Recommendation IX-5: The assessment team recommends developing an agency-wide partnership strategy. The partnership strategy would guide the agency's efforts on the promotion, development, and management of all agreements and partnerships and should reflect the strategic vision for the agency as presented in chapter II of this report.

C.2. Strategy for implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(S)	TIMING
IX-1: The assessment team recommends that the roles and responsibilities with regards to the development and management of strategic partnerships within the agency be clearly defined.	Office of the Director	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Office of Inter-governmental Affairs; Overseas Programming, Training and Support; Office of Public Engagement; Office of AIDS Relief; Office of Private Sector Initiatives; Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection	Implemented immediately upon the creation of the coordinating body for partnerships and as part of the development of an agency-wide partnerships strategy. This strategy should be developed and approved in Quarter 4 FY 2010
IX-2: The assessment team recommends promoting the development of strategic partnerships on an ongoing basis with the goal of encouraging a greater number of third-year Volunteers, providing new opportunities for Volunteers while growing the impact of the Peace Corps.	Office of the Director	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Office of Inter-governmental Affairs; Overseas Programming, Training and Support; Office of Public Engagement; Office of AIDS Relief; Office of Private Sector Initiatives; Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection	Should form part of the agency-wide partnerships strategy. This strategy should be developed and approved in Quarter 2 FY 2011

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (continued)

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(S)	TIMING
<p>IX-3: The assessment team recommends reviewing recent new country entry experiences with international NGOs to develop a strategy for working with international NGOs in the future on new county entries.</p>	<p>Office of the Director</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations, Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Office of Inter-governmental Affairs; Overseas Programming, Training and Support; Office of Public Engagement; Office of AIDS Relief; Office of Private Sector Initiatives; Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection</p>	<p>Should form part of the agency-wide partnerships strategy. This strategy should be developed and approved in Quarter 3 FY 2011</p>
<p>IX-4: The assessment team recommends that all activities within the agency's headquarters related to agreements and partnerships be coordinated by the Office of the Director.</p>	<p>Office of the Director</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The decision needs to be made and communicated to all staff in Quarter 4 FY 2010</p>
<p>IX-5: The assessment team recommends developing an agency-wide partnership strategy. The partnership strategy would guide the agency's efforts on the promotion, development, and management of all agreements and partnerships and should reflect the strategic vision for the agency as presented in chapter II of this report.</p>	<p>Office of the Director</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Office of Inter-governmental Affairs; Overseas Programming, Training and Support; Office of Public Engagement; Office of AIDS Relief; Office of Private Sector Initiatives; Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection</p>	<p>This strategy should be developed and approved by the end of the Quarter 4 FY 2010</p>



## X. LOWERING EARLY TERMINATION RATES

### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROCESS

#### A.1. Types of early termination

According to the Peace Corps Manual, Section 284:

“Service in the Peace Corps is voluntary, but once the commitment to serve is made, expectations are created on the part of the Peace Corps, the host country and cooperating agencies. By accepting an invitation, individuals commit themselves to serve the people of the host country to the best of their abilities for a specified period, usually about two years, within the framework and support systems established by the Peace Corps.”

“However, there are circumstances under which a particular [Volunteer or trainee] cannot or should not remain in service until his or her completion of service (COS) date. In these circumstances, the V/T's service will be subject to "early termination." There are four types of early termination, each discussed separately in this Manual Section.”

The four types of early termination are described below.

#### Resignation

A resignation is a decision made by Volunteers and trainees who no longer wish to continue in the Peace Corps.

#### Medical separation

If Volunteers or trainees have or develop medical conditions that the Peace Corps cannot medically accommodate or resolve within 45 days, they will be medically separated.

#### Administrative separation

Pursuant to the Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. 2504(i), the service of Volunteers or trainees may be terminated at any time at the pleasure of the President. The authority of the President to terminate service has been delegated to the Director of the Peace Corps. Accordingly, the Director, or anyone to whom the Director delegates such authority, may separate Volunteers or trainees at any time, purely at the discretion of the deciding official. In practice, administrative separation is the involuntary exit of Volunteers due to violations of the Peace Corps' policy. Volunteers are given the option of resigning in lieu of administrative separation.

#### Interrupted service

Volunteers or trainees may be separated with interrupted service status if the country director determines that circumstances beyond their control make it necessary for Volunteers or trainees to leave their assignments. An example is when there is an unexpected country closing.

#### A.2. Measurement of attrition

The Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP) analyzes the attrition data of Volunteers, using three methods described in the sections below.

#### A.2.a The annual method

The annual method uses the number of early terminations within twelve months, starting October 1 of a given fiscal year and ending September 30 of the following year. The annual early termination rate is calculated by dividing the number of early terminations within a twelve-month period by the number of all Volunteers who have been active within those twelve months. For example, in fiscal year 2009, starting October 1, 2008, and ending September 30, 2009, there were 1,155 early terminations. There were 11,549 Volunteers active during that period. The annual early termination rate for FY 2009 was 10 percent.

To calculate the annual resignation rate, divide the number of resignations in a twelve-month period by the number of Volunteers who have been active within the same twelve-month period. In FY 2009, there were 844 resignations and 11,549 active Volunteers; the annual resignation rate was 7.3 percent.

#### A.2.b The cohort method

Dividing the number of trainees who terminated early in a given fiscal year by the number of trainees who entered service in that fiscal year gives the cohort early termination rate.

The cohort method requires collecting data for the entire 27 months of a Volunteer cohort's service, so cohort early termination rates for FY 2008 or later cannot be calculated because those Peace Corps Volunteer cohorts have not yet ended their service. In FY 2007, there were 4,077 trainees who entered on duty, and there were 1,247 early terminations, including 1,001 resignations. The FY 2007 cohort early termination rate was 30.6 percent. The FY 2007 cohort resignation rate was 24.6 percent.

#### A.2.c The length of service measure

In addition to the two measures of early terminations and resignations, the Peace Corps reports the Volunteer average length of service in a fiscal year. OSIRP analyzes the months of service for Volunteers leaving during the twelve months (resignations, other types of early termination, and Close of Service). This measure, one of the Peace Corps' strategic plan indicators, summarizes the time Volunteers serve on average. In this measure, credit is given for extensions, as Volunteers who extend raise the average length of service.

#### A.3. Differences among the three measures

The cohort and annual methods differ fundamentally, because they measure different sets of Volunteers.

The cohort method, as the name suggests, measures a cohort of trainees and the percentage of those individuals who have terminated early as compared to the total number of individuals in the cohort. The advantage of using this method is that the information is complete and there is no ambiguity. The disadvantage is that complete analysis on the cohort can be delayed for as long as 27 months, because analysts need to wait and see what happens to Volunteers of the cohort who are still active.

The annual method was developed as the Peace Corps realized there was a need for more current data than the cohort method could provide. The advantage of the annual method is that analysis can be conducted as soon as a fiscal year ends, providing actionable data to posts. The Peace Corps conducts an analysis of annual termination and resignation rates on a rolling basis that gives the agency a fresh look at trends every quarter. The disadvantage of this method is that it does not allow a comparison among cohorts.

Comparing the two methods is like comparing high school dropouts in a given year (annual method) to dropouts of a graduating class, in which the count would start in the freshman year and end four years later (cohort method). The Peace Corps' two methods measure two different sets of Volunteers over different periods of time. However, both have specific and valid uses.

The length of service measure indicates how much opportunity Volunteers had to impact their communities. It provides additional information to the annual early termination/resignation rate and the cohort early termination/resignation rate. Consider the difference between an annual early termination rate of 10 percent with a length of service measure of fifteen months, versus an annual early termination rate of 10 percent with a length of service measure of 22 months. In the second case, Volunteers served longer in their communities and, it is assumed, would have had a better chance to impact those communities.

It is important to note that all three measures begin measuring attrition at the time a trainee enters on duty at staging. Thus, if an individual leaves the first day and does not even get on the airplane for his/her country of service, that person is considered as someone who has terminated service early. Trainees who leave during training are also considered to have "early terminated." Measuring attrition in this way ignores the fact that pre-service training is designed to be a period when trainees can make an informed decision about their continued participation in the Peace Corps and the Peace Corps staff can make an informed decision about the suitability of the trainee for service. At the end of training, both the Trainee and staff have decided that the individual is suitable for service and the trainee is sworn in as a Volunteer. It makes sense to begin counting attrition at that time: when an individual becomes a Volunteer.

Recommendation X-1: The assessment team recommends that the agency continue to collect and analyze early termination/resignation rates using all three methods. However, the assessment team recommends that these rates begin at the time a trainee swears in and becomes a Peace Corps Volunteer.

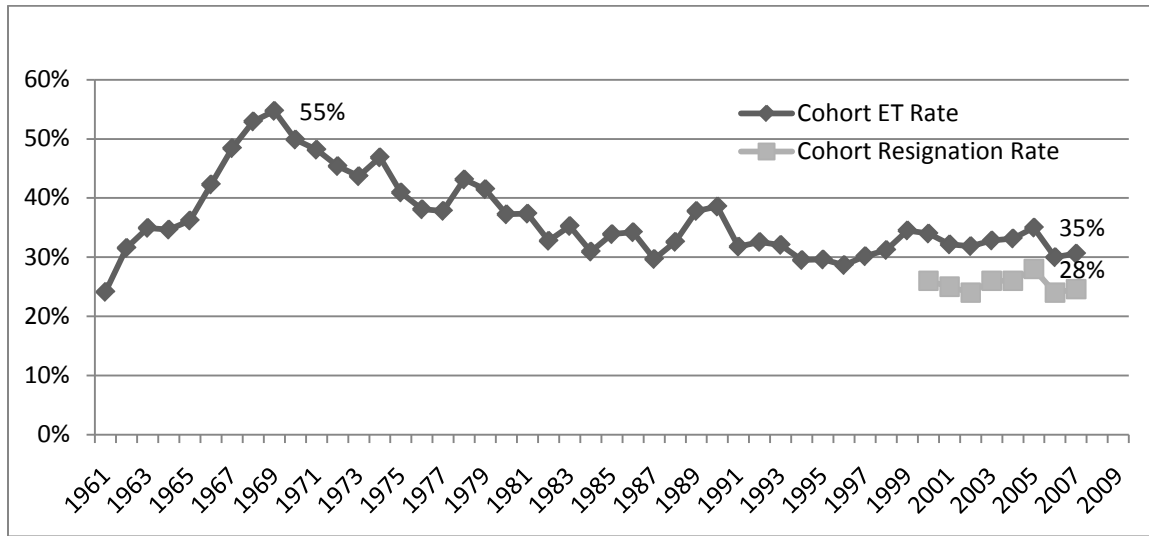
#### A.4. Trends in early termination/resignation rates

The Peace Corps has measured early termination rates since its inception, as shown in Figures X-1 and X-2. Many studies have offered recommendations for reducing attrition. OSIRP has recently finished a review of studies done since 1969 on early termination and, in that review, identified more than 90 memos, studies, research papers, task force documents, and concept papers dealing with attrition<sup>88</sup>.

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<sup>88</sup> See Appendix X-1 for a list of these documents.

Figure X-1  
 Early Termination and Resignation Rates (Cohort Method)  
 FYs 1961 to 2009



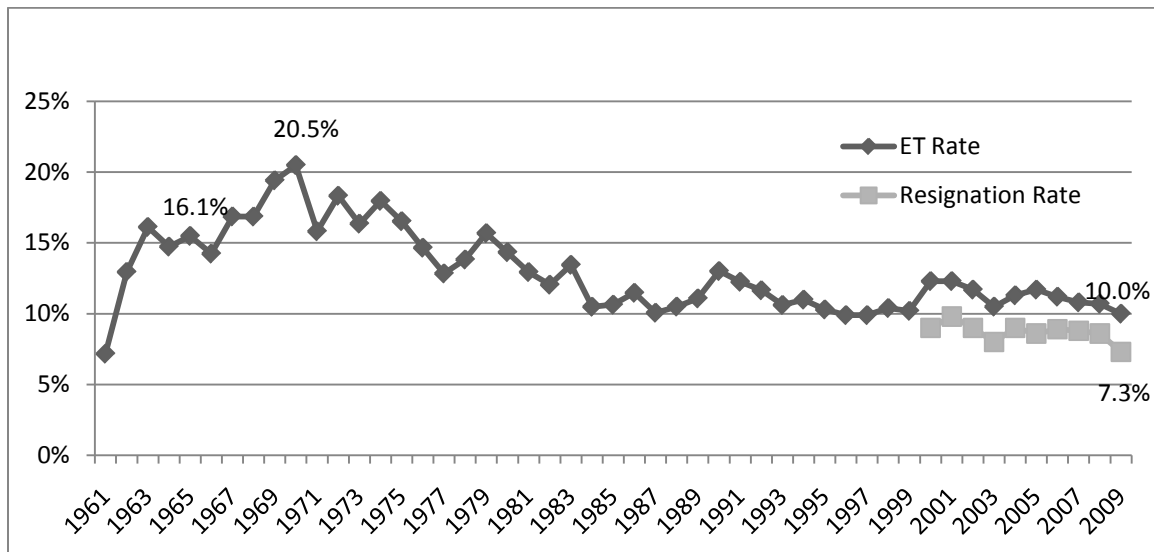
The OSIRP review summarizes the early termination (ET) studies by decade. In the early 1960s, precise ET rates were difficult to determine based on the few records available. However, during that time, ET rates (cohort method) ranged from 30 to 35 percent but were not broken down by region, demographic group, or type of early termination.

The ET rate (cohort method) during the late 1960s rose to all time agency high of 55 percent in 1969. Very little analytic data exist for ET rates of the early 1970s. The overall ET rate was 50 percent in 1970 and fell to 42 percent in 1972 before rising back up to 47 percent in 1974. By 1976, the rate had fallen to 38 percent and continued to fluctuate before decreasing in the 1980s. During the 1980s, information about ET rates became available by region and job assignment.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, information and statistical reports about ET rates have been well documented, with updates usually provided annually. Since 1991, overall ET rates have continued to hover in the 30 to 35 percent range (cohort method). Beginning in the 1990s, the Peace Corps developed increasingly sophisticated analyses of ET rates, separating overall ET rates from resignation rates.

The Peace Corps has reduced its cohort ET rate from 55 percent in 1969, its apex, to 31 percent in 2007, the agency's lowest cohort rate since 1961 (24 percent) and 1996 (29 percent). Similarly, the annual ET rate for 2009 was at a low of 10 percent, with a 7.3 percent resignation rate.

Figure X-2  
Early Termination Rates (Annual Rate)  
FYs 1961 to 2009



#### A.5. Volunteer resignations

The Peace Corps has been primarily interested in analyzing resignations rather than the overall ET rate, since the agency believes it can manage some types of resignations while other forms of ET are not within the control of the Peace Corps. For example, Volunteers who resign because they felt a lack of support from the Peace Corps or resign due to dissatisfaction with their work assignments are resigning for controllable or manageable reasons. On the other hand, resignations due to personal health matters or due to family-related issues are generally uncontrollable by the Peace Corps.

Over the years, the Peace Corps has solicited feedback from Volunteers who leave early and post staff members. Originally, the resignation form developed in 1996 consisted of six reasons for resignation. In 2003, the Peace Corps expanded the resignation form to include 51 reasons to better understand why Volunteers leave. Currently, Volunteers who resign (as opposed to other forms of ET) are asked to fill out a resignation form (See Appendix X-2) and select a primary and secondary (if there is one) reason for resigning. A space is also available for comments. This form, identical to the one filled out by post staff, contains 39 possible reasons grouped into seven categories:

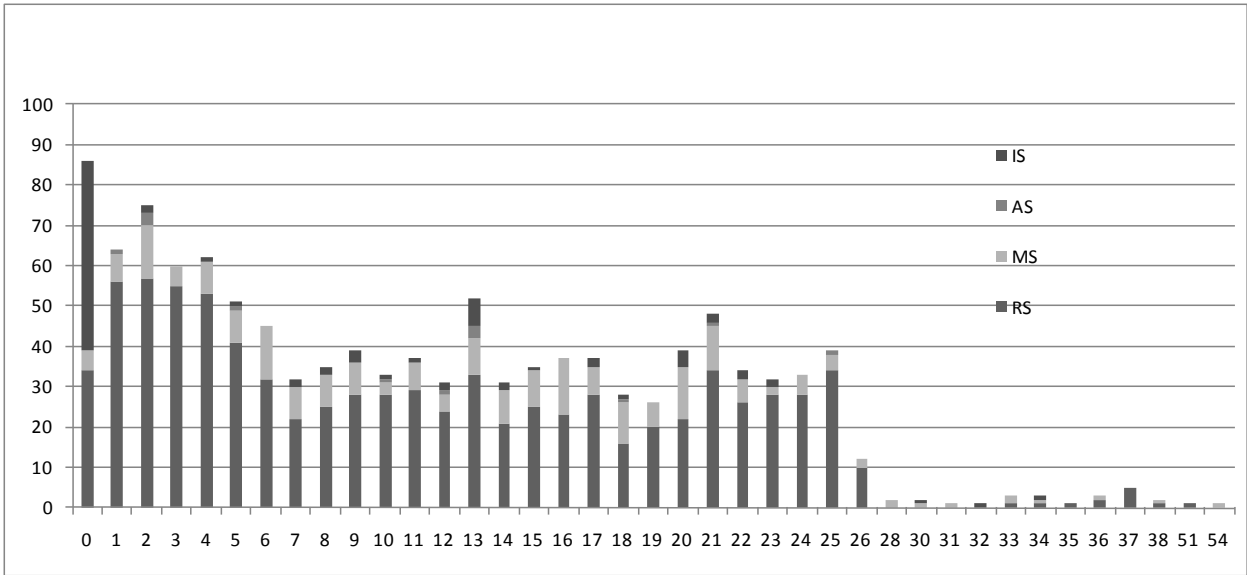
- Peace Corps Support;
- Personal Health;
- Personal Safety;
- Peace Corps Program/Work Assignment;
- Country Assignment/Adaptation;
- Personal/Family Related; and,
- Other

In general, Volunteers older than 30 are more likely to resign than younger Volunteers; Volunteers who are married, widowed, or divorced are more likely to resign than single Volunteers (which may be associated

with age); and Volunteers who report higher or lower education attainment levels than a BA degree are more likely to resign.

Another set of analyses has looked at when Volunteers are likely to resign during their service. Most studies have found that Volunteers resign at higher rates in the first months of service (25 percent of those who resign do so during the first three months, i.e., during training).

Figure X-3  
Time of Service at Resignation  
October 2008 to September 2009



IS: Interrupted Service  
MS: Medical Separation  
AS: Administrative Separation  
RS: Resignation

Volunteers resign for a variety of reasons, but they primarily resign for personal reasons. In the past three fiscal years, an average of 71.4 percent of Volunteers resigned for personal reasons.

Figure X-4  
Reasons for Resignation: FY 2009

Personal Reasons (73%)		Non-personal Reasons (27%)	
Personal/family related	17%	Resignation in lieu of administrative separation	5%
Further education	8%	Matching skills with work assignments	5%
Career opportunity	8%	Host country counterpart support	4%
Romantic interest	5%	Amount of work	3%
Spousal responsibility	3%	Living arrangements	3%
Other personal reasons	31%	Other	7%

Appendix X-3 lists the top 10 Volunteer resignation reasons during FY 2009 given by Volunteers and by staff.

As mentioned above, in general, the agency perceives that personal reasons for resignation are usually uncontrollable by the Peace Corps. On the other hand, non-personal reasons are generally perceived as manageable or controllable by the agency.

#### A.6. Managing resignations

The Peace Corps is attentive to ET and resignation rates, has a method for tracking them, and works to lower them. As mentioned earlier in this assessment, the Peace Corps has been monitoring ET rates and reasons for attrition since its inception. The agency takes attrition seriously, and in the 2003-2008 Strategic Plan, the Peace Corps included ET and resignation rates as an indication of performance. The performance indicator was changed to enhancing the length of Volunteer service in the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan for reasons discussed in section A.2.

Figure X-5  
2009-2014 Strategic Plan Goal 1

Strategic Goal 1: Enhance the capacity of host country individuals, organizations, and communities to meet their skill needs.

Performance Indicator: Enhance the average length of service of Volunteers to equal or exceed 21 months.

According to the FY2009 Peace Corps Performance and Accountability Report:

“The average length of service improved above the target in FY2009 to 22.1 months and the resignation rate (annual rate) decreased to 7.3 percent. Continued review of resignation data, along with external factors such as economic conditions and increased interest in volunteerism and service, could be positive factors in helping the agency to retain Volunteers.”

This continued review of resignation data is done both at the headquarters level and at the post level. OSIRP collects and analyzes ET and resignation rates using all three methods (cohort, annual, and length of service rates). These analyses are given to the three regional directors quarterly. The regional directors review them and pass them along to the country directors. When a post’s ET or resignation rate is too high, the regional director and the country director will discuss factors that may be contributing to the high rate and ideas for improvement. The regional directors follow up with the country directors on a regular basis.

Country directors receive guidance on how to evaluate and lower their resignation rates from a variety of sources, including sessions at Overseas Staff Training<sup>89</sup>, discussions with peers, discussions with their regional directors, and written materials developed by the Peace Corps. “Characteristics of a High Performance Post” is a handbook for country directors that attempts to define indicators of excellence in the Peace Corps’ overseas operations and to gather in one place information, strategies and resources that can make the country director more effective. The handbook has been periodically revised and has two parts: Part I lays out the characteristics of a high performance post, and Part 2 is a detailed collection of

<sup>89</sup> Overseas Staff Training is discussed in greater detail in chapter VIII.B.A.2.

strategies for achieving the standards. This handbook is used extensively during Overseas Staff Training, and country directors are encouraged to use it as a resource when they are at their posts.

In this handbook, the indicator for ET is:

“The early termination rate among Volunteers is within worldwide Peace Corps norms. Volunteers basically like the host country, their jobs, and their lives as Volunteers. The country director and staff work to reduce unnecessary resignations.”

The handbook then goes on to list questions to think about such as, “What was your early termination rate among Volunteers last year? How would your ET rate break down by time in service and primary reason? How prevalent were job-related problems or job dissatisfaction among the reasons for leaving?”

Under the section called “Ideas and Resources,” country directors are asked to think about adaptation problems, job problems, and unrealistic expectations and are given strategies to help Volunteers deal with these concerns.

Host country staffs have indicated, in discussions with the assessment team, that a Volunteer’s decision to resign is not taken lightly. Post staff members counsel Volunteers and seek to remedy the problems that lead Volunteers to contemplate resigning, if it is within their ability to do so. Country directors indicated that they use the ideas and strategies laid out in the handbook when counseling Volunteers who are contemplating resignation. Additionally, country directors mentioned that they periodically review their early terminations with host country staff to determine if programmatic changes or policy changes need to be made to reduce their in-country resignation rates.

The agency sometimes uses ET and resignation rates as synonyms for each other. Actually, the two are distinct. The ET rate refers to all types of early termination, and the resignation rate refers only to those Volunteers who resigned. The way the agency uses the terminology can be confusing. Thus, the assessment team makes the following recommendation:

<p><u>Recommendation X-2:</u> The assessment team recommends that the agency clarify which rate it is using and should focus on monitoring resignation rates, which put the focus on attrition that is perceived to be controllable by the agency.</p>
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#### A.7. Understanding what resignation rates measure

Some have argued that resignation rates represent a direct measure of the agency’s performance, including recruitment, placement, site development, training, and Volunteer support. Resignation rates are only an indirect measure of the quality of recruitment, placement, and post management. They can be viewed as indicators of what is happening at headquarters or at a post, but resignation rates do not indicate why.

For example, two posts may have the same resignation rate. However, at one post, Volunteers are resigning primarily for reasons related to their emotional and mental health due to the hardships associated with serving at that post. At the other post, Volunteers are primarily resigning to pursue further education or for other career opportunities. The resignation rates mean very different things for the two posts.

While the absolute resignation rate may tell us little directly about the agency’s performance or post management, changes in resignation rates may indicate that something is happening at headquarters or post that should be investigated.



#### A.8. Resignations and country director and post performance

If excessive attention is placed on viewing resignation rates as a direct measure of post management, there are a variety of ways that the rate can be lowered while, at the same time, decreasing the quality of the program. For example, a decision can be made to relax enforcement of policies such as number of hours a Volunteer is expected to teach or the amount of time a Volunteer can be away from site. Those actions may make Volunteers more likely to stay but will lead to a decrease in their impact and ability to fulfill the Peace Corps' three goals.

Rather than set a specific goal of lowering resignation rates, it makes more sense to work on the activities that directly affect a Volunteer's service. In September 2007, an Internal Management Assessment concluded that well-managed and efficient posts shared several fundamental characteristics, including:

- A well qualified, experienced, and trained country director with strong leadership ability;
- A motivated and well-trained staff;
- A system designed to meet safety and medical needs;
- A sufficient budget;
- A transparent management system; and,
- Well trained Volunteers engaged in meaningful projects and assignments at well developed sites.

When the agency and posts achieve those characteristics, the stage is set for a minimum and appropriate resignation rate.

#### A.9. Resignations and Volunteer impact

While the resignation rate may be a good indicator of Volunteers' resiliency, the measure is not a direct indicator of the impact that Volunteers have on their communities. It is possible that ambitious and effective Volunteers can complete significant projects and leave early to pursue further education or careers. On the other hand, less effective Volunteers may provide just adequate value to their communities yet stay for the full term of service.

<p><u>Recommendation X-3:</u> The assessment team recommends continued review of resignation data and the development of action items at headquarters and at post, when indicated by high resignation rates or an increase in resignation rates.</p>
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#### A.10. Controllable resignation rates

As mentioned above, the Peace Corps has reduced its cohort ET rate from 55 percent in 1969, its apex, to 30.6 percent in 2007, the agency's lowest cohort rate since 1961 (24 percent) and 1996 (29 percent). Since 2000, the cohort resignation rate has ranged from 28 to 24 percent and in 2007, the cohort resignation rate was 24.6 percent. Similarly, the annual ET rate for 2009 was at a low rate of 10 percent with a 7.3 percent resignation rate, down from a high of 9.8 percent in 2001.

Also as discussed above, the agency perceives some of the reasons for resignation as controllable, while others are seen as uncontrollable. A review of reasons for resignation indicates that, according to the latest figures, 73 percent fall into the uncontrollable category (such as health or family-related issues) while 27

percent fall into the controllable category (such as concerns over the Peace Corps' support, work assignment, etc.).

When the reasons for resignation are categorized into controllable by the agency and uncontrollable, the controllable cohort resignation rate for 2007 was approximately 6.6 percent (24.6 percent cohort resignation rate multiplied by 27 percent controllable resignations). Using the same reasoning, the annual resignation rate for 2009 was less than 2 percent.

Even if the figures err on the side of classifying reasons as uncontrollable when they are in fact controllable, the cohort resignation rate that can be managed by the Peace Corps certainly is less than 24 percent and most likely ranges from 8 to 15 percent. While the Peace Corps should work to reduce its resignation rate, and in fact does so, the problem of high resignation rates may not be as much of an issue as some have indicated.

#### A.11. Previous task force studies on reducing resignation rates

Many of the studies done since 1969 have made recommendations on how to reduce ET or resignation rates. In fact, 97 discrete recommendations appear in these studies, many of which have been adopted over the years.

A 2006 Peace Corps task force reviewed resignation reason data and a sampling of resignation form comments to "brainstorm solutions that may help reduce resignations." The task force identified one overriding problem: expectations. They concluded that:

"When expectations differ from reality, it causes problems at all levels from recruitment throughout a Volunteer's service. These expectations are held by the Volunteer, staff and/or host country personnel. The task force submits that managing these expectations could help reduce resignations."

The task force produced a table summarizing problems and 26 recommendations that fall within critical areas of managing expectations. The table listed offices that would take the lead on refining and developing specific recommendations. The offices included communications, recruitment, staging and posts. The task force also noted that some posts currently practice many of the recommendations and that these best practices should be used agency-wide. While many of the recommendations have been implemented, it is useful to review them again for current relevance.

Recommendation X-4: The assessment team recommends that the Early Termination task force findings of 2006 be reviewed and implemented.
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## B. RECENT CHANGES

### B.1. Encouraging extensions

One way to increase the length of service rate and to capitalize on the resources spent recruiting, placing, and training Volunteers, as well as capitalizing on the professionalism of current Volunteers, is to increase the number of third-year extensions. The agency is working to develop initiatives to encourage Volunteers to extend for a third-year and is collecting information about incentives for extension. Suggestions have been collected at the recent worldwide program and training officer conference and at the three country director conferences. Posts and agency staff members have contributed their ideas for encouraging extensions. For example, one study done at a post indicated that a significant number of Volunteers would be interested in serving an additional year if a number of incentives were put in place. A summary of this survey appears in Appendix X-4.

### B.2. Expectations management

The assessment team reached out to currently serving Volunteers through the Volunteer Advisory Committees at posts and asked them to send us their ideas concerning improvement of the Peace Corps' operations. One Volunteer wrote:

“Each Volunteer makes a 2 year-long term commitment and I believe most begin with a real dedication to service even if they fail to complete the time in entirety. As a Volunteer, I have personally known others who leave their service for a variety of reasons, some of which could not be predicted or changed. However, there are those who terminate early due to discomforts, discontent, disappointment and misbehavior. These are the cases in which there are possibilities of reform in the Peace Corps at an agency-wide level. The root of many of these cases is related directly to expectations.”

In recognition that expectations influence Volunteers' behavior and satisfaction with their Peace Corps experience, the agency in 2008 developed a set of core expectations for Peace Corps Volunteers. These core expectations are seen as the first step of in program to manage expectations, not only on the part of Volunteers but on the part of staff and host country counterparts as well.

The core expectations are presented in Appendix X-5. These expectations are currently used in recruiting materials and discussions and at posts during training and other events. Informal reports from posts indicate that the core expectations do clarify, for Volunteers and post staff members, the behaviors and attitudes expected of all Volunteers, and the expectations serve as the basis for fruitful discussions regarding what it means to serve.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

The Peace Corps has been concerned with and attentive to ET rates since its inception. The agency currently collects and analyzes ET and resignation data using cohort, annual and length of service rates, and the agency uses this information to discuss with posts ways to improve Volunteer retention.

The current resignation rate, measured by both the cohort method and the annual method, is at one of the lowest levels since the 1969 and 1996 fiscal years. Partially due to efforts to develop a growth strategy that ensures quality, additional attention is being placed on reviewing individual country resignation rates and on ways to encourage third-year extensions.

The assessment team makes four recommendations concerning ET and resignation rates.

Recommendation X-1: The assessment team recommends that the agency continue to collect and analyze early termination/resignation rates using all three methods. However, the assessment team recommends that these rates begin at the time a trainee swears in and becomes a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Recommendation X-2: The assessment team recommends that the agency clarify which rate it is using and should focus on monitoring resignation rates, which put the focus on attrition that is perceived to be controllable by the agency.

Recommendation X-3: The assessment team recommends continued review of resignation data and the development of action items at headquarters and at post, when indicated by high resignation rates or an increase in resignation rates.

Recommendation X-4: The assessment team recommends that the Early Termination task force findings of 2006 be reviewed and implemented.

C.2. Strategy for implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICES	TIMING
X-1: The assessment team recommends that a) the agency continue to collect and analyze early termination/resignation rates using all three methods. b) However, the assessment team recommends that these rates begin at the time a trainee swears in and becomes a Peace Corps Volunteer.	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning	Office of Communications; Office of the General Counsel	In Quarter 1 FY 2011
X-2: The assessment team recommends that the agency clarify which rate it is using and should focus on monitoring resignation rates, which put the focus on attrition that is perceived to be controllable by the agency.	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning	Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Office of Communications	Immediately
X-3: The assessment team recommends continued review of resignation data and the development of action items at headquarters and at post, when indicated by high resignation rates or an increase in resignation rates.	Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning; Office of Global Operations	Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	In Quarter 1 of FY 2011 and annually thereafter

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (continued)

<p>X-4: The assessment team recommends that the Early Termination task force findings of 2006 be reviewed and implemented.</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations</p>	<p>Office of Communications; Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; Overseas Programming and Training Support</p>	<p>In FY 2012</p>
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## **XI. STRENGTHENING THIRD GOAL ACTIVITIES AND REPORTING MECHANISMS**

### **A. DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PROCESS**

#### **A.1. Background**

The third goal of the Peace Corps is stated as, “Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.” Also referred to as the “bringing the world back home” goal, it supports the mission of the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship by increasing Americans’ understanding of people and cultures of other countries.

When Volunteers, returned Volunteers, and friends of the Peace Corps support and engage in third goal activities, they provide opportunities for Americans to gain a greater understanding of the world, foster a spirit of world peace and friendship, and provide a first-hand perspective into nations and cultures that are either unknown or have limited representation in the United States. Creating a “domestic dividend” is an integral part of the agency’s spirit and encourages the Peace Corps’ unique status of never having “former” Volunteers. Instead, “returned” Volunteers are expected to engage in a lifelong commitment of representing their country of service.

Thousands of current and returned Volunteers successfully contribute to the third goal by developing and completing classroom, workplace, and community talks about their Volunteer work; developing a blog or online photo album to share experiences from the culture where they served or are serving; writing to their local newspaper; giving an interview on a local radio program; and a host of other activities.

Over the agency’s history, the third goal has also extended to include a variety of initiatives, from promoting political participation in the United States to conducting and promoting volunteerism. This flexibility challenges the Peace Corps to meet the objective of its third goal even as it allows it to the agency to evolve to meet current global conditions.

The Peace Corps has historically been reluctant to provide the financial support necessary for the third goal to make a measurable impact. Through the history of operations, less than 1 percent annually of the agency’s total budget has been allocated to directly supporting the third goal. Today, the agency spends \$1.9 million of its \$400 million fiscal year 2010 appropriation on third goal activities. Expansion and a reliable measure of the magnitude and impact of the third goal could significantly affect recruitment, funding, and ultimately the long-term sustainability of the agency. Increasing third goal activities would also further highlight the value of the American taxpayers’ investment in the operation of the Peace Corps.

#### **A.2. Interpreting the third goal**

Over the course of the agency’s history, the third goal has been interpreted in a variety of ways. A literature review related to the third goal, conducted by the Leadership Development Academy at the Peace Corps’ headquarters in the spring of 2008, highlighted this lack of clarity, concluding: “There is an ongoing debate, or even struggle, to define or catalogue what third goal activities should be.” Numerous interpretations have included domestic democracy building, community service at home and abroad, and educating the American people about the rest of the world.

In the 1960s, leadership spoke of the third goal in terms of promoting opportunities for returned Volunteers to contribute to the United States through citizenship and governance. Indeed many early publications on the third goal indicate an expectation that returned Volunteers would bring home to the United States a passion and energy for political change. These returned Volunteers were expected to answer the country's needs for community development, improved civil rights, and individual capacity building. In urging Vice President Hubert Humphrey to serve as Chairman of the National Advisory Council of the Peace Corps, President Lyndon Johnson wrote, "The Great Society requires first of all Great Citizens, and the Peace Corps is a world-wide training school for Great Citizens."<sup>90</sup>

In the 1970s, third goal efforts were common for returned Volunteers, although somewhat less of a priority for the agency and suffering from clear definition. While a 1977 report conducted by the Peace Corps showed that 98 percent of returned Volunteers polled were participating in some third goal activities, the report goes on to state that "definitions of those activities are murky and largely characterized by the returned Volunteers' career choices."<sup>91</sup>

During the 1980s, a more expansive view of the third goal emerged that was more educative and was accompanied by a renewed focus on the goal. During this time, the agency fielded a survey for new activities and ideas for the third goal, resulting in the initial conversations on the Peace Corps Partnership Program; development of educational materials, curriculum and resources for American teachers; and the establishment of returned Peace Corps Volunteer Resource Centers.

Then-Peace Corps Director Loret Miller Ruppe expanded support for the third goal and launched the Volunteers in Development Education program, which sought to send returned Volunteers for six weeks at a time into local communities to participate in community and primary and secondary education efforts that focused on their service. Because of Director Ruppe's focus on the third goal, working groups identified third goal activities, as well as plans for evaluating and tracking such activities. The ideas from the 1980's formed the genesis of the Peace Corps' current third goal efforts. They included the following:

- Establishment of the Peace Corps Partnership Program;
- Publication of the Peace Corps Times;
- Enhancement of the Close of Service manual to include materials promoting third goal commitment;
- Establishment of the Returned Volunteer Services office;
- Initiation of a speakers bureau program; and,
- Emphasis of the relationship between returned Volunteers and the Peace Corps' recruitment offices.

Since the 1980s, levels of attention and direction have decreased. Stewardship for the third goal was moved from the agency as a whole, to almost completely under the Office of Domestic Programs. An Inspector General's report from 2004 evaluating domestic programs' success in achieving performance goals, acknowledged a lack of structure defining third goal efforts as well as a lack of resources allocated to offices supporting the third goal.

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<sup>90</sup> Letter from President Lyndon B. Johnson to the Vice President Asking Him To Serve as Chairman, National Advisory Council of the Peace Corps, January 26, 1965

<sup>91</sup> A Survey of Returned Volunteers, E.A. Winslow, Office of Special Services Action, Peace Corps



Outside of the agency's own interpretation of the third goal, the National Peace Corps Association and the returned Volunteer community it represents, have presented the third goal as 'bringing the world back home' and as an ongoing commitment to community service, both international and domestic.

The frequent redefining and multiple interpretations of the third goal provides strength and flexibility to allow the Peace Corps to best speak to the needs of the current world, as well as a source of confusion from the lack of clarity. The historical focus of the third goal—as being something returned Volunteers are tasked to complete—has limited the ability of the agency to strive fully to meet the goal and has overlooked the ability of currently serving Volunteers, their family members and friends, and the Peace Corps' staff members to contribute in this area.

#### A.3. Efforts to achieve the third goal

The assessment team's analysis indicated that current efforts to achieve the third goal of the Peace Corps can be divided into four categories:

- Peace Corps headquarters driven;
- Overseas post and Volunteer driven;
- National Peace Corps Association and member group driven; and,
- Independently initiated by an individual or small group of persons.

##### A.3.a Efforts led by Peace Corps headquarters

Agency-driven, third goal efforts are largely led by the Office of Public Engagement, which works with other departments within the Peace Corps to establish and implement policies and procedures that help engage as many Peace Corps Volunteers and returned Volunteers as possible. The office houses the Coverdell World Wise Schools Program, Fellows/USA, the Third Goal Program, and Returned Volunteer Services.

##### Coverdell World Wise Schools

The Coverdell World Wise Schools program was established in 1989 to help America's schoolchildren learn about the world's diverse peoples, cultures, and geography through standards-based classroom resources and educator partnerships with current and returned Peace Corps Volunteers. It achieves this mission through three programs: Correspondence Match, Speakers Match, and through the development of classroom resources.

The Correspondence Match program connects U.S. elementary and secondary school teachers with current Peace Corps Volunteers who share their Peace Corps experiences through letters, emails, photos, and phone calls. In 2009, 57 percent of Volunteers participated in the program. Presently, 3,300 Volunteers are participating; the target is to have 5,000 participating by the end of FY 2010. The number of interested schools is greater than the number of participating Volunteers, indicating an opportunity for Peace Corps to enhance its third goal impact through the program or by revising the program to capture greater Volunteer participation. The Peace Corps has recently begun an analysis of the Correspondence Match program to understand why a significant percentage of Volunteers do not participate in the program, to ensure the agency is capturing matches made outside the program, and to determine appropriate incentives for participation. The assessment team recommends that this analysis incorporate input from overseas staff and current Volunteers.

Some currently serving Volunteers establish relationships similar to those formed through Correspondence Match using their own initiative, without going through the agency-structured process. Input gained for the assessment and through the 2009 Annual Volunteer Survey of the Peace Corps indicates this may in part be due to the increased technology capabilities of incoming Volunteers, as well as the increasing access to modern technology in some counties of assignment. Ensuring those matches are also captured in the analysis will further enhance the Peace Corps' ability to track and report on third goal participation.

The Coverdell Speakers Match program connects U.S. educators with returned Volunteers who agree to share their Peace Corps experiences in elementary and secondary schools. Returned Volunteers incorporate photographs, artifacts, and music into their classroom presentations, which are aimed to increase awareness and understanding of countries and cultures where Volunteers have unique experience and insight. Twelve thousand returned Volunteers are currently in the Speakers Match database. The program could be expanded through the inclusion of family members and friends of Volunteers, as well as the Peace Corps' staff. While the program could potentially be expanded to non-school audiences, this would move the Peace Corps away from a clearly defined niche it can excel in, as well as result in a conflict with the National Peace Corps Association's Speakers Bureau program. This conflict could be mitigated through collaboration and communication between the Peace Corps and the National Peace Corps Association.

Finally, Coverdell develops classroom resources including country-specific videos with accompanying teachers' guides, Volunteer-written literature supported by standards-based lesson plans, podcasts, and narrated slide shows. While the agency does not currently have the ability to monitor the usage of these resources, the 2.5 million hits on the third goal section of the agency's website, combined with the fact that the number of hits has been steadily growing over recent years, are positive indicators.

Overall, the assessment team found the Coverdell program and its three operations to be reactionary, largely due to limited financial resources which could be used for the Peace Corps to promote and market returned Volunteers as a source of unique global education. For example over the course of 2009, the Peace Corps' staff participated in a total of four teacher conferences nationwide to present the Coverdell program.

Financial limitations restrict Coverdell's ability to have a more substantial impact. The team believes a more proactive posture for Coverdell could greatly strengthen its impact and relevance as a core function of the agency, as well as raise the public profile of the Peace Corps. For example, following the recent earthquake in Haiti more than 60 percent of American adults donated to relief efforts. Enhancing the capacity of the Speakers Match program to more aggressively market returned Volunteers and former agency staff who worked in Haiti to speak about the country and its culture during a time of crisis, could have served as an exceptional opportunity for the promotion of the third goal, as well as the promotion of relief efforts in Haiti. While Haiti is obviously a unique and dramatic case, the global perspective of returned Volunteers available through Coverdell programs, merits marketing.

Many of these challenges were both recognized and addressed during the Director's testimony to Congress on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009:

"I plan to utilize funds from the proposed fiscal year 2011 budget to bolster the operations of the Office of Public Engagement, which manages our third goal efforts. The funds will be used, among other purposes, to promote educational opportunities that place returned Peace Corps Volunteers with schools to share their overseas experiences and to develop educational curriculum materials for American classrooms."

The assessment team believes this course of action will be critical if the Peace Corps is to successfully enhance its third goal impact.

#### Returned Volunteer Services

Returned Volunteer Services offers career and transition support services for returned Peace Corps Volunteers, working directly and indirectly with current Volunteers, returned Volunteers, staff, National Peace Corps Association staff, and public and private sector leaders to develop career conferences, bulletins, and publications that help Volunteers upon their return to the United States. During these career conferences, Returned Volunteer Services encourages third goal efforts for returned Volunteers.

In 2009, 1,665 individuals participated in Returned Volunteer Services career-based events. The assessment team believes expansion of career-based events, perhaps leveraging regional recruiting offices in their delivery, would assist returned Volunteers in their post-Peace Corps job searches and provide motivation and direction for third goal engagement and reporting. Returned Volunteer Services has recently begun creating a series of online webinars to help deliver career-related services, a positive step that will further enhance the Office of Public Engagement's ability to communicate with the returned Volunteer community.

#### The Third Goal Program

Operating within the office of Returned Volunteer Services, the Third Goal Program aims to develop and implement several initiatives for returned Volunteers, notably the third goal section of the agency website, the Peace Corps Week campaign, third goal videos, promotion of the Peace Corps' third goal efforts in the National Peace Corps Association's Worldview Magazine, and an ongoing email campaign encouraging returned Volunteers to engage in the Peace Corps' programs, including those related to the third goal.

The Peace Corps website provides "Third Goal Activity Suggestions for Returned Volunteers" and their family members and other interested groups or individuals. Included are draft templates for letters to a newspaper editor, contacts for regional Peace Corps offices and National Peace Corps Association member groups, and information on how returned Volunteers can be involved in the Peace Corps' annual anniversary celebration (Peace Corps Week), as well as the coming 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. The website also includes a "How To Toolkit" for generating third goal efforts and offers an opportunity for participants to register their involvement. A free "Third Goal Resource Packet" of materials is provided to returned Volunteers who register. The Peace Corps follows up with returned Volunteers who request a resource packet to solicit information on the activity implemented.

Overseas Peace Corps staff members and currently serving Volunteers were less aware of these resources, perhaps as they are housed under resources for returned Volunteers on the agency website. Raising awareness of third goal materials beyond the returned Volunteer community, specifically targeting currently serving Volunteers and new enrollees in the Coverdell Correspondence Match Program may help expand the use of these resources, as would having a standard agency approach to third goal training for trainees and Volunteers.

The celebration of the Peace Corps' anniversaries provides a focal point for third goal activities by the Peace Corps. "Peace Corps Week" commemorates the anniversary of the agency in March of each year. In 2011, the Peace Corps will celebrate its 50th anniversary. To commemorate these 50 years of service, the Peace Corps is helping organize events and exhibitions in cities across the United States and in each country in which Peace Corps Volunteers currently serve. While continued promotion of agency anniversaries as a focal point for third goal initiatives is logical, increased allocation of financial resources

and a more aggressive and proactive promotion of the Peace Corps' third goal programs will extend beyond agency anniversaries and could create opportunities to reach new audiences, such as youth groups participating in summer camps or service activities.

#### Fellows/USA

Through the Fellows/USA program under the office of Returned Volunteer Services, participating graduate schools provide financial assistance to returned Volunteers enrolled in various advanced degree programs. At the same time, the returned Volunteer makes a commitment to work in an underserved local community as they pursue their degree. Returned Volunteers are eligible to participate in the Fellows/USA program at any point after they finish their Peace Corps service. Initiated in 1985 with the Institute of International Studies at Teachers College, Columbia University, today there are 52 Fellows/USA programs nationwide. The Office of Public Engagement is expanding to 54 programs by the end of FY 2010. The program is viewed favorably by Volunteers and returned Volunteers who contributed to the assessment.

On May 1, 2010, Fellows/USA issued a call for participation in the program to graduate schools around the country. The assessment team believes the Peace Corps would benefit from continued expansion of the Fellows/USA partnerships into new universities as well as identifying new programs at universities currently in partnership with Peace Corps Fellows.

The Fellows/USA model gives inspiration for an innovative third goal program that establishes positions within international NGOs, U.S. government agencies, and possibly private businesses. Through a new program managed by the Office of Public Engagement, and with the involvement of the offices of Private Sector Initiatives and Inter-Governmental Affairs, Volunteers completing three years of service could apply and compete for year-long Peace Corps internships within organizations that would provide the returned Volunteer with housing and a stipend to cover their cost of living.

Bringing the invaluable overseas experience and perspective of recently returned Volunteers to the U.S. operations of international NGOs, federal agencies, and private businesses would allow the Peace Corps to share some exceptional talent with potential partners. It would also provide an incentive for high-performing Volunteers to extend their service in-country. Such a program would have multiple benefits as the Peace Corps works to strengthen partnerships with leading development organizations, the private sector, civil society, and U.S. government agencies. It would also contribute to third goal objectives. The assessment team supports the establishment of a Peace Corps intern program.

Overarching themes discovered by the assessment team concerning the Peace Corps' third goal efforts include the lack of appropriate database systems for managing contact information of returned Volunteers and matching programs. Not having a working database also means the agency cannot effectively monitor and report on third goal contributions. The Peace Corps' systems lack the sophistication to identify types of participants and lack the ability to run reports. Furthermore, offices within headquarters maintain separate databases, tracking limited portions of third goal information but lacking the ability to communicate across systems.

Additionally, the team concluded financial constraints have limited the ability of the Peace Corps to effectively market its third goal programs. Having historically received such small allocations from the annual budget of the Peace Corps, third goal efforts will be difficult for the agency to promote, market, accomplish, monitor, and report without increased financial commitment.

Finally, the team concluded the Peace Corps' third goal efforts would benefit from the development of a comprehensive agency third goal strategy. As it stands now, third goal efforts at the Peace Corps are

implemented, but not guided by an overarching agency strategy to achieve the third goal. A strategy featuring goals and objectives for third goal achievement, including an assessment of the financial resources necessary to implement the strategy, should be developed.

Recommendation XI-1: The assessment team recommends an increased allocation of resources to undertake a more aggressive and proactive promotion and implementation of the Peace Corps' third goal programs.

Recommendation XI-2: The assessment team recommends continued expansion of the Fellows/USA partnerships into new universities, as well as identifying new programs at universities currently collaborating with Peace Corps Fellows.

Recommendation XI-3: The team recommends establishing a Peace Corps intern program to develop competitive, year-long positions with international NGOs, U.S. government agencies, and private businesses for exceptional Volunteers who have completed three years of service.

Recommendation XI-4: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps develop a returned Volunteer portal for collecting and maintaining contact information and third goal contributions, as well as establishing databases for managing the multiple Office of Public Engagement programs.

Recommendation XI-5: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps develop an agency-wide third goal strategy. The strategy should establish goals and objectives for third goal achievement, including an assessment of the financial resources necessary to implement the strategy.

#### A.3.b Post and Volunteer driven in the field

In reviewing input from a variety of overseas posts, it became apparent that individual Peace Corps country programs around the world address the third goal in a variety of ways and with a varied level of commitment. Some posts introduce the third goal as part of a Volunteer's job description as soon as they arrive in-country. Other posts do not introduce the third goal until Volunteers participate in their Close of Service Conference, viewing the goal more as a post service assignment.

It is also apparent that the majority of currently serving Volunteers are actively engaged in third goal efforts, whether they are aware of it or not. Contributions include developing blogs, sharing insights about life in any given country of service, and conducting monthly video conference calls with students at schools in the United States—all serve to share the overseas experience and educate others about Volunteers' countries of service. Posts have developed templates to help Volunteers returning to the United States deliver presentations on their countries of service. Training sessions and modules have been created and implemented by overseas staff. Family and friends are actively engaged during Volunteers' time in the field, visiting countries of service and financially supporting Volunteer efforts through the Peace Corps Partnership Program.

The list of third goal accomplishments is long and impressive. However, it appears that such efforts are often the result of an individual Volunteer or post's own initiative. Sometimes these efforts are not necessarily perceived by the Volunteer as an overall part of their Peace Corps service, nor does the agency monitor or track such successes in the way Volunteers' first goal contributions are monitored and tracked.

Additionally, much of the high quality third goal work being done today is isolated and not shared across posts or regions, nor institutionalized as agency practice to maximize impact.

The assessment team encourages the Peace Corps to strive for consistency across the agency in terms of how the third goal is incorporated into Volunteer service overseas. The team further encourages the agency establish a formalized commitment to the third goal at all levels, worldwide.

The team believes such consistency can be achieved through measures such as:

- Establishing third goal performance expectations and training for trainees, Volunteers and returned Volunteers;
- Capturing promising third goal practices from around the world to share amongst posts, as well as institutionalizing the most dynamic practices to heighten impact; and
- Changing the name of the agency's end of service process from Close of Service to instead reflect the concepts of "Continuation of Service" or "Close of Overseas Service," indicating the agency's commitment to third goal efforts once a Volunteer has concluded their overseas commitments.

#### A.3.c National Peace Corps Association driven

In 1979, returned Volunteers from across the United States came together to create the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, which was incorporated in 1981. In 1993, the Council changed its name to the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). Through an elected board of directors and a small Washington, D.C., staff, the NPCA has grown to a community of 30,000 returned Volunteers and more than 140 member groups who are engaged in community service and global education in the United States and advocacy and community-building efforts in many communities in the developing world.

The mission of the NPCA is to "lead the Peace Corps community and others to foster peace by working together in service, education, and advocacy." Their mission is achieved through goals that indicate a recognition and desire to accomplish the third goal of the Peace Corps:

- Promote the vitality of the Peace Corps and the application of its values;
- Establish the NPCA as the essential resource for and about the Peace Corps community; and
- Enable NPCA members to build upon and extend the Peace Corps experience and values by facilitating their engagement in global issues.

The more than 140 NPCA member groups shown in Appendix XI-1 can be divided into three categories: Country of Service Groups (i.e. Friends of Tanzania), Geographic Groups (i.e. Returned Volunteers of Los Angeles), and Nationwide/Worldwide Groups (i.e. returned Peace Corps Volunteers at the State Department). While groups vary in their level of organization, involvement, and commitment, active member groups successfully implement a variety of third goal efforts.

Member groups organize speaking opportunities for returned Volunteers through the NPCA's Speakers Bureau program, develop service activities to benefit communities, volunteer at places where they can apply the language and cultural skills gained overseas, coordinate events for international students at local universities, and fundraise. Fundraising is done to provide disaster relief, run scholarship programs supporting youth in their country of service, assist domestic charities, fund grants of Volunteers and their community partners through the Peace Corps Partnership Program, and provide operational funds for the member group.

Some of the activities are directly related to the completion of the third goal, while others are less direct and primarily support networking opportunities for returned Volunteers. However networking amongst returned Volunteers does provide the necessary framework for many third goal efforts, especially those on a larger scale. While many fundraising activities are not related to “promoting a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans,” in general, funds that come from returned Volunteer groups draw attention to a country of service and provide indirect third goal work. Such activities also reflect the ongoing commitment to community service, both international and domestic, previously mentioned as an expanded definition of the third goal perceived by many returned Volunteers.

#### **Selected Case Studies of Activities Carried Out By NPCA Member Groups**

1. The Greater Birmingham Returned Peace Corps Volunteers collaborated with selected Birmingham, Alabama, public schools for a World Map Project as part of its mission to promote “a continuing commitment to our community.” The World Map Project provides selected schools with a wall-sized world map in a highly visible location to encourage students to think beyond their classroom walls and expand their geographic knowledge. In past years, in addition to the actual painting of the map, the group has provided hands-on activities focused on geography, which were conducted on map production days, as well as a Geography Bee on map inauguration days.
2. Recognizing that many recent Hispanic immigrants to Northern Ohio had limited English language skills, the Northern Ohio Returned Volunteer Association teamed with a local Latino advocacy group to form an English as a Second Language program. The partnership provided local Hispanic immigrants free English instruction, a bilingual GED program, and life skills classes.
3. The returned Volunteers of Northeast New York organize an annual Thanksgiving dinner for more than 100 international students living in the region.
4. The Friends of Turkmenistan’s Buddy Program matches returned Volunteer members with Turkmen high school exchange students studying in the United States.

The NPCA has recently suggested additional innovative ideas to encourage returned Peace Corps Volunteers to participate more actively in third goal activities when they return home. These include a proposal to encourage newly returned Volunteers to plan, conduct and report on third goal activities over an additional period of time following their return, with a modest financial incentive for doing so. Another idea is to create a small grants program to expand innovative third goal activities using new technologies to reach new audiences.<sup>92</sup> Peace Corps funds for this purpose would be leveraged by a match from the NPCA. The assessment team believes these suggestions should be given strong consideration.

The assessment team found overlaps between the NPCA and the Peace Corps’ Office of Public Engagement. Both organizations run programs matching returned Volunteers with audiences for public speaking (NPCA’s Speakers Bureau and the Coverdell Speakers Match Program). They differ somewhat in that the NPCA’s Speakers Bureau has a more broad target audience, while the Coverdell Speakers Match focuses exclusively on students from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Both organizations express challenges in their ability to monitor, track, and quantify the number of beneficiaries reached in their programs.

Additional overlap is evidenced as each organization maintains its own database of returned Volunteers participating in their public speaking programs. The Peace Corps aims to focus more on collecting requests for speakers, while the NPCA focuses on maintaining and managing a list of available Volunteers.

<sup>92</sup> “Peace Corps’ Bringing the World Back Home/Third Goal”, A Concept Paper for Creating a Comprehensive and Innovative Program, In Partnership with the National Peace Corps Association.

Each organization also maintains a general database of contact information for returned Volunteers. Given the complexity of collecting and maintaining this information, as well as the fact that the Peace Corps is still entering such information and updates the information manually, coordination and information sharing provide an opportunity for efficiency and improved performance.

The need for regular communication and coordination is essential, so efforts are not unnecessarily duplicated and to ensure that all third goal efforts, whether led by the Peace Corps or NPCA, are counted as contributions towards the goal. Each organization appears aware of this potential, and the assessment team found evidence of cooperation between the two to reduce possible overlaps. For example under a FY 2008 cooperative agreement with the Peace Corps, NPCA designed and developed a web-based mentorship program among returned Volunteers and Volunteers soon to finish their tours overseas. In addition to facilitating the adjustment back home, the mentorship program increased the likelihood of long-term participation in third goal activities. By the end of FY 2008, 175 mentors, 106 mentees, and 25 groups had signed up for the program. By the end of FY 2009, 618 mentors, 493 mentees, and 35 groups were participating in the program.

In 2010, the NPCA has agreed to provide the Peace Corps with an additional 750 returned Volunteer contacts for the Coverdell Speakers Match Program. A cooperative agreement between the organizations is in place, in part to manage these roles, minimize overlap, and foster communication. The agreement also formalizes monthly meetings between NPCA and the Peace Corps Office of Public Engagement.

Continued communication with the NPCA to maximize third goal efforts, coordinate tracking and reporting, and minimize unnecessary overlap in third goal efforts will be essential in the future.

#### A.3.d Independently initiated and informal efforts

A third goal summary report completed by the NPCA for the Peace Corps in September 2007 concluded, “Some of the best Third Goal activities are those that are carried out quietly—but extremely effectively—outside of the limelight, either purposely or inadvertently.”<sup>93</sup> In reviewing information on third goal contributions of Volunteers and returned Volunteers in the past 49 years, the assessment team found this to be an accurate statement.

The impact of Peace Corps service in motivating and inspiring the more than 200,000 individuals who have served as Volunteers to share their global perspective over the course of their professional careers and lives is often an underestimated and underappreciated component of the taxpayers’ investment in supporting the agency. Returned Volunteers have become leaders in community service and community development efforts in the United States and overseas, become school teachers bringing a global perspective to American youth, and enter a variety of other professional paths, always with a unique and valuable optic gained through their service as Volunteers. Returned Volunteers are active financial supporters of projects in their countries of service, either through the Peace Corps Partnership Program, or by providing direct financial support to organizations and communities with which they once lived and worked.

The previously mentioned returned Volunteer portal (Recommendation XI-4), could potentially be a tool to assist the Peace Corps in capturing both formal third goal contributions, as well as a tool to better track the types of careers returned Volunteers pursue as they share their global perspective in the United States. The ability to measure the ongoing impact Volunteers have once they complete their overseas tours would be a powerful addition to the discussion regarding the impact of taxpayer investment in the Peace Corps.

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<sup>93</sup> Third Goal Summary Report, prepared by the National Peace Corps Association for the Peace Corps, September 28, 2007



A.4. Monitoring and reporting of current third goal mechanisms of Volunteers and returned Volunteers

Agency tools and mechanisms for monitoring and reporting third goal contributions have been limited but are increasing. The collection of specific third goal activities is incorporated in the Volunteer Report Form used by Volunteers to monitor their accomplishments during service, through the following question:

“If you have done something to promote more understanding among Americans (e.g., friends, family, former colleagues, classmates, acquaintances, or the American public in general) about aspects of life in your community or host country, please describe below what you did.”

Questions regarding the numbers of beneficiaries are not presently incorporated into the form, but would provide the Peace Corps a greater sense of the third goal impact of currently serving Volunteers.

Additionally, the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning (OSIRP) currently implements the Annual Volunteer Survey. Completed by Volunteers, the Annual Volunteer Survey collects information from currently serving Volunteers worldwide regarding a variety of issues. As of 2009, the survey now collects information regarding participation in third goal activities. In the 2009 survey, 98 percent of Volunteers reported participating in third goal work. The survey also collects information on whether Volunteers think Americans have “gained a greater understanding of host country nationals” as a result of their Peace Corps service and the types of third goal activities in which the Volunteers are engaged.

The Peace Corps has fewer mechanisms for monitoring and reporting third goal work of returned Volunteers. Those are:

- Returned Volunteers receiving an Office of Public Engagement Third Goal Resource Packet can voluntarily respond to a follow up email from the office asking them how they had used the materials. The office reported that few returned Volunteers responded to the email request.
- In 2008, OSIRP convened seven focus groups in Washington, D.C., with returned Volunteers currently employed by the U.S. government about their how their current positions related to their Peace Corps service, including their third goal efforts.
- In 2010, OSIRP convened a series of eight focus groups in the cities of San Francisco, New York, and Washington, D.C., with returned Volunteers to collect information about third goal efforts. Summary reports are currently being prepared.
- In 2010, OSIRP plans to conduct an Office of Management and Budget approved survey of returned Volunteers, the fourth decennial survey.

The NPCA could be an additional source for monitoring and reporting third goal work, but the NPCA’s 2007 report stated, “No comprehensive system exists to record every group’s activities.”

Given the rich contributions returned Volunteers make to “promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans,” the assessment team recommends the Peace Corps consider options for better monitoring third goal work. As returned Volunteers are no longer directly a part of the Peace Corps system, the agency cannot be held accountable for their reporting. Increasing the challenge, a sophisticated and accurate system may not be immediately attainable. However, the assessment team believes the mere establishment of reporting mechanisms for returned Volunteers—perhaps through the previously recommended returned Volunteer portal (Recommendation XI-4)—would be a significant accomplishment, allowing the Peace Corps to better tout its “domestic dividend” to the Congress and the American taxpayer.

**Recommendation X-6:** The assessment team recommends continuing to increase the collection of information regarding third goal participation amongst Volunteers, as well as beginning to monitor and track the number of beneficiaries reached by Volunteers' third goal activities using the standard Volunteer Report Form.

A.5. Incentives and awards

A.5.a The Peace Corps

To promote the third goal, the Peace Corps provides the Lillian Carter Award biennially. The award was established by the Atlanta Regional Office in 1986 to recognize an "outstanding senior returned Volunteer who demonstrates a commitment to the Peace Corps' third goal." In memory of Miss Lillian Carter, who served in the Peace Corps as a senior in the 1960s, the award is limited in scope, as well as in potential recipients, as only senior Volunteers are eligible.

Additionally, the Peace Corps also provides the Franklin H. Williams Award, recognizing ethnically diverse returned Volunteers for their continued commitment to community service and ongoing civic contributions. The award has been offered at least biennially since 1999. It differs from the Lillian Carter Award in that it is less directly tied to the third goal, but it similarly has a more limited scope of potential recipients.

On November 18, 2010, the agency's Director honored a returned Volunteer with the President's Volunteer Service Award through the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, which recognizes exceptional service of Peace Corps Volunteers abroad and in the United States, including third goal activities.

A.5.b National Peace Corps Association

Biennially, or in major Peace Corps anniversary years, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) presents the following awards for third goal excellence:

The NPCA Electronic Media Award

This award honors those groups that have labored to create and maintain effective services for "bringing the world back home" and enhancing the returned Volunteer community through innovative use of electronic media, such as websites, blogs, discussion forums, and RSS feeds.

The Loret Miller Ruppe Award for Outstanding Community Service

The Ruppe Award is presented by the NPCA to an outstanding member group for work that promotes the third goal or continues to serve host countries, build group spirit and cooperation, and promote service.

The Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service

This award is given by the NPCA to a returned Volunteer who continues to make a sustained and distinguished contribution to humanitarian causes at home or abroad or is an innovative social entrepreneur whose actions will bring about significant long-term change.

### The NPCA Print Media Award

The NPCA Print Media Award recognizes the diversity of print media produced by member groups, such as newsletters, how-to guides, and educational materials, including those promoting the third goal.

The assessment team found no Peace Corps agency-wide incentives or awards for currently serving Volunteers. While some posts have recognized individual efforts and activities, developing agency-wide incentives and awards, relying heavily on input from overseas staff, is recommended.

#### **Case Study: Third Goal Days**

To provide a no-cost incentive to currently serving Volunteers, a few posts have established “Third Goal Days” that permit Volunteers to take up to two days (discounted from their annual leave requests) for performing formal third goal presentations in the United States. Two formal third goal presentations constitute one day of annual leave reduction, and Volunteers can request up to four “Third Goal Days” during the course of their two-year tour.

Furthermore, the assessment team found many opportunities for greater engagement with, and recognition of, third goal efforts of returned Volunteers. Highlighting the third goal achievements of returned Volunteers through agency-wide awards, recognizing third goal excellence of NPCA member groups, and creating regional or statewide awards to draw attention to the contributions of returned Volunteers would cause the Peace Corps to place greater value on its third goal, as well as raise the public profile of the agency and highlight the accomplishments returned Volunteers make in the United States. Such efforts could also prove beneficial to the Peace Corps in better engaging returned Volunteers in recruiting new candidates for overseas service.

Recommendation X-7: The assessment team recommends enhancing third goal recognition from the Peace Corps and establishing awards for Volunteers and the entire returned Peace Corps Volunteer community recognizing third goal excellence.

## **B. RECENT CHANGES**

### **B.1. Significance of the third goal in the coming years**

The third goal’s present definition, as well as the goal’s role as part of the Peace Corps’ strategic vision for the future, has been articulated. Concerning how the goal will be interpreted, Director Williams speaks of sharing experiences of countries and cultures, as well as the concept of “citizen diplomacy,” best defined in his Winter 2009/2010 interview in WorldView Magazine. He further defines his vision for the third goal, which he has classified as one of his three priorities as Director of the Peace Corps:

“The third goal starts with Volunteers sharing experiences with their friends and family and it's also part of citizen diplomacy.... It's all the things that we do as Americans to engage with the outside world, which is terribly important in this era of American history. And Peace Corps is a big part of that. So that is why I am committed to expanding our involvement in the third goal.”

“We're going to put some real dynamic leadership to support the third goal. We're going to be present and accounted for in the wide ranging discussions and various forums regarding the third goal and what I would call citizen diplomacy. We're going to be engaged.”<sup>94</sup>

Given the historical confusion surrounding the definition of the third goal and what third goal activities are or should be, increased and emphatic messages about the third goal are needed. Additionally, further detail and guidance is needed from the agency to help the entire Peace Corps community (Volunteers, returned Volunteers, friends and families of Volunteers, and Peace Corps staff members) maximize third goal potential.

#### B.2. Correspondence Match Program

To bridge the gap between schools interested in partnering with a Volunteer in the Correspondence Match Program and Volunteer participation, the director of the Office of Global Operations spoke with all country directors on March 2, 2010, encouraging Volunteer participation. The director also announced a new quarterly review process for monitoring participation in Correspondence Match. Given the strong interest from American schoolteachers, the low numbers of participating Volunteers should be analyzed, understood, and subsequently addressed.

#### B.3. Integrated Programming and Budget System (IPBS) Process

The Director of the agency, in discussing strategic planning at posts and headquarters in March 2010, specifically asked for Integrated Programming and Budget System submissions to consider and incorporate the third goal in planning at all levels of agency operations. The assessment team saw this development as important in both institutionalizing the third goal, as well as raising the profile of the goal in terms of operations worldwide.

Along with the suggestions mentioned in section A.5 about the need for consistency in terms of how the third goal is incorporated into Volunteer service overseas, the assessment team believes institutionalizing the third goal in Volunteer service and at all levels of agency operations is essential for maximizing impact.

#### B.4. Plans for outreach and enhancement from the Office of Public Engagement

Through the current Integrated Programming and Budget System process, the Office of Public Engagement has developed a plan to increase outreach efforts to enhance agency third goal efforts. Specifically, the office plans to:

- Increase public awareness of Coverdell curriculum resources and programs by increasing the number of local, state, regional, and national education conferences attended by Office of Public Engagement staff members;
- Increase public awareness of Coverdell curriculum resources and programs by increasing the number of local school districts and state education agencies visited by Public Engagement staff members;
- Increase the number of Volunteers and U.S. educators enrolled in the Coverdell Correspondence Match program;
- Increase the number of returned Volunteers participating in career conferences;

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<sup>94</sup> WorldView Magazine, Winter 2009/2010

- Encourage accredited U.S. graduate schools to enroll in the Fellows/USA program by issuing a national request for proposals that will be distributed throughout the United States to increase the number of returned Volunteer Fellows;
- Increase the presence of the Speakers Match program by beginning work in tertiary classroom settings; and,
- Launch a “Back to School Campaign” to communicate with returned Volunteers to encourage them to make a third goal presentation during the coming school year.

Recommendation XI-8: The assessment team recommends continued and increased communication from agency leadership regarding the third goal’s present day definition, as well as guidance for the Peace Corps community to fulfill the goal.

Recommendation XI-9: The assessment team recommends institutionalizing the third goal in Volunteer service and agency operations.

Recommendation XI-10: The assessment team recommends an analysis of the low Volunteer participation rate within the Correspondence Match program.

## C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### C.1. Summary of findings and recommendations

The assessment team concluded that achieving the Peace Corps’ current vision for the third goal, to increase understanding of other cultures and generate commitment to volunteerism and community service, as well as the prioritization of the third goal within global Peace Corps operations is possible.

However, the team believes achieving this vision and prioritization cannot be done without increasing third goal messaging, modifying current operations, institutionalizing third goal procedures, establishing incentives and increasing resource allocation for third goal efforts. Furthermore, the aggressive engagement of returned Volunteers, key stakeholders, and the American public to more effectively bring the world back to America through strong partnerships with schools, private and civil society sectors, and government agencies will be essential.

The assessment team makes eleven recommendations:

Recommendation XI-1: The assessment team recommends an increased allocation of resources to undertake a more aggressive and proactive promotion and implementation of the Peace Corps’ third goal programs.

Recommendation XI-2: The assessment team recommends continued expansion of the Fellows/USA partnerships into new universities, as well as identifying new programs at universities currently collaborating with Peace Corps Fellows.

Recommendation XI-3: The team recommends establishing a Peace Corps intern program to develop competitive, year-long positions with international NGOs, U.S. government agencies, and private businesses for exceptional Volunteers who have completed three years of service.

Recommendation XI-4: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps develop a returned Volunteer portal for collecting and maintaining contact information and third goal contributions, as well as establishing databases for managing the multiple Office of Public Engagement programs.

Recommendation XI-5: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps develop an agency-wide third goal strategy. The strategy should establish goals and objectives for third goal achievement, including an assessment of the financial resources necessary to implement the strategy.

Recommendation XI-6: The assessment team recommends continuing to increase the collection of information regarding third goal participation amongst Volunteers, as well as beginning to monitor and track the number of beneficiaries reached by Volunteers' third goal activities using the standard Volunteer Report Form.

Recommendation XI-7: The assessment team recommends enhancing third goal recognition from the Peace Corps and establishing awards for Volunteers and the entire returned Peace Corps Volunteer community recognizing third goal excellence.

Recommendation XI-8: The assessment team recommends continued and increased communication from agency leadership regarding the third goal's present day definition, as well as guidance for the Peace Corps community to fulfill the goal.

Recommendation XI-9: The assessment team recommends institutionalizing the third goal in Volunteer service and agency operations by:

- Establishing third goal performance expectations and training for trainees, Volunteers, and returned Volunteers.
- Sharing promising third goal practices amongst posts, as well as institutionalizing the most dynamic practices.
- Changing the name of the agency's end-of-service process, Close of Service, to instead reflect concepts such as "Continuation of Service" or "Close of Overseas Service," indicating the agency's commitment to third goal efforts once Volunteers have concluded their overseas commitments.

Recommendation XI-10: The assessment team recommends an analysis of the low Volunteer participation rate within the Correspondence Match program.

C.2. Strategy for implementation of the recommendations

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

RECOMMENDATION	LEAD OFFICE	SUPPORT OFFICE(s)	TIMING
XI-1: The assessment team recommends an increased allocation of resources to undertake a more aggressive and proactive promotion and implementation of the Peace Corps' third goal programs.	Office of the Chief Financial Officer; Office of Public Engagement	Office of the Director	In FY 2011 and ongoing thereafter
XI-2: The assessment team recommends continued expansion of the Fellows/USA partnerships into new universities, as well as identifying new programs at universities currently collaborating with Peace Corps Fellows.	Office of Public Engagement	Volunteer Recruitment and Selection – (Regional Recruitment Offices)	In Quarter 2 FY 2011 and ongoing thereafter
XI-3: The team recommends establishing a Peace Corps intern program to develop competitive, year-long positions with international NGOs, U.S. government agencies, and private businesses for exceptional Volunteers who have completed three years of service.	Office of Public Engagement	Office of Private Sector Initiatives; Office of Intergovernmental Affairs; Office of the General Counsel; Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts	In Quarter 1 FY 2012

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

<p>XI-4: The assessment team recommends that the Peace Corps develop a returned Volunteer portal for collecting and maintaining contact information and third goal contributions, as well as establishing databases for managing the multiple Office of Public Engagement programs.</p>	<p>Office of the Chief Information Officer; Office of Public Engagement</p>	<p>Office of the Chief Financial Officer; Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VDS Redesign)</p>	<p>In FY 2012</p>
<p>XI-5: The assessment team recommends the Peace Corps develop an agency-wide third goal strategy. The strategy should establish goals and objectives for third goal achievement, including an assessment of the financial resources necessary to implement the strategy.</p>	<p>Office of Public Engagement</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Private Sector Initiatives; Office of Intergovernmental Affairs; Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts</p>	<p>In Quarter 2 FY 2011</p>
<p>XI-6: The assessment team recommends continuing to increase the collection of information regarding third goal participation amongst Volunteers, as well as beginning to monitor and track the number of beneficiaries reached by Volunteers' third goal activities using the standard Volunteer Report Form.</p>	<p>Office of Programming and Training Support</p>	<p>Volunteers; Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Office of Public Engagement</p>	<p>In FY 2011</p>



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

<p>XI-7: The assessment team recommends enhancing third goal recognition from the Peace Corps and establishing awards for Volunteers and the entire returned Peace Corps Volunteer community recognizing third goal excellence.</p>	<p>Office of Public Engagement</p>	<p>Volunteers; Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Volunteer Recruitment and Selection – (Regional Recruitment Offices); Office of the Director; Office of the General Counsel; Office of Congressional Relations</p>	<p>In Quarter 4 FY 2011</p>
<p>XI-8: The assessment team recommends continued and increased communication from agency leadership regarding the third goal’s present day definition, as well as guidance for the Peace Corps community to fulfill the goal.</p>	<p>Office of the Director; Office of Communications;</p>	<p>Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection – (Regional Recruitment Offices); Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Office of Public Engagement</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (CONTINUED)

<p>XI-9: The assessment team recommends institutionalizing the third goal in Volunteer service and agency operations by: a) Establishing third goal performance expectations and training for trainees, Volunteers, and returned Volunteers; b) Sharing promising third goal practices amongst posts, as well as institutionalizing the most dynamic practices; and, c) Changing the name of the agency’s end-of-service process, Close of Service, to instead reflect concepts such as “Continuation of Service” or “Close of Overseas Service,” indicating the agency’s commitment to third goal efforts once Volunteers have concluded their overseas commitments.</p>	<p>a) Office of Public Engagement; Office of Programming and Training Support b) Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts; Office of Programming and Training Support c) Office of the General Counsel</p>	<p>Overseas Staff; Currently serving Volunteers; Volunteer Advisory Committees</p>	<p>a) In Quarter 4 FY 2011 b) In Quarter 3 FY 2011 c) In FY 2011</p>
<p>XI-10: The assessment team recommends an analysis of the low Volunteer participation rate within the Correspondence Match program.</p>	<p>Office of Public Engagement</p>	<p>Office of Global Operations; Africa Region; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region; Inter-America and the Pacific Region; Posts;</p>	<p>In Quarter 3 FY 2011</p>





# The Peace Corps

A Comprehensive Agency Assessment

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