

July 24, 2009

**Memorandum**

**To:** Peace Corps Director-Designate Aaron Williams  
**From:** *Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff*<sup>1</sup>  
**Subject:** **Plan to Strengthen and Expand the Peace Corps:  
Priorities for President Obama's First Term**

**Executive Summary**

This Twenty Point Plan to strengthen and expand the Peace Corps—drafted over four years by a couple of two-time Volunteers and circulated widely for comment within the Returned PCV community—proposes an ambitious road map for President Obama and Peace Corps Director-Designate Aaron Williams and his leadership team.

Point One focuses on the budget crisis at the Peace Corps and President Obama’s pledge during the campaign to “double the size of the Peace Corps from 7,800 volunteers to 16,000 by its 50th anniversary in 2011 and work to partner volunteers with people from other nations.” (December 5, 2007, Mt. Vernon).

Points Two to Eighteen concentrate on strengthening the Peace Corps. The premise of this plan is that a stronger, more effective Peace Corps will make a persuasive case for expansion. Conversely, without fundamental reforms, expansion will be difficult to justify and could undermine the performance and reputation of the Peace Corps. Many of these strengthening steps have been part of the Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act (S. 732), introduced by Senators Christopher Dodd and Ted Kennedy in the last Congress, the authors’ testimony in favor of that legislation at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on July 25, 2007,<sup>2</sup> and the Peace Corps Improvement and Expansion Act (S. 1382), introduced by Senator Dodd in this Congress.

Point Nineteen examines the competition that the Peace Corps will face from a new international voluntary service program—Volunteers for Prosperity—authorized by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (Public Law 111-13). This plan argues that if the Peace Corps does not implement fundamental reforms, it is likely to fare poorly in this competition and its franchise may weaken over time.

And Point Twenty proposes a political campaign to secure the needed reforms.

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<sup>2</sup> See [http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/Ludlam\\_HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf](http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/Ludlam_HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf) and <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf>. A video of the hearing on S. 732 can be viewed at <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/2007/hrg070725a.html>.

Almost 50 years after its founding, it is timely and appropriate to ask penetrating questions about the Peace Corps. Why the Peace Corps? What is its mission in the 21st Century? Those of us who revere the Peace Corps should take the lead in asking these questions. Those who care the most—PCVs, RPCVs and PC managers—should ask the hardest questions. The Peace Corps is an historic and romantic vestige of the values of the 60s and the New Frontier, but that role is not sufficient to explain and justify its role in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The ultimate act of loyalty to the Peace Corps is to ask the tough questions before outsiders do.

This report argues that the *first budget priority* for the Peace Corps should be to fund implementation of an ambitious plan to strengthen the Peace Corps; its *second* should be funding to reverse the recent cutbacks; and its *third* should be to expand. The authors are campaigning to increase Peace Corps appropriations—principally to fund reform—and have proposed a detailed budget for reform. (See **Appendix D**) The first step in decisions over funding is to acknowledge the evidence demonstrating that the agency has deep-seated problems, Early Termination (ET) rates of Volunteers are too high, that tensions exist between Volunteers and managers, that First Goal (development) results are substandard, and that substantial reforms are needed to bring the agency into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The Twenty Points are as follows:

Point One: Address the Three Peace Corps Funding Priorities

Point Two: Make Listening the Hallmark of the Peace Corps Culture

Point Three: Place More Emphasis on Achieving Sustainable First Goal Results

Point Four: Reduce the High and Costly Early Termination Rates

Point Five: Recruit More Older, Experienced Volunteers

Point Six: Reconnect RPCVs for Life-long Service

Point Seven: Take Initiative to Build Peace

Point Eight: Protect Volunteers' Rights and Hold Managers Accountable

Point Nine: Strengthen Standard of Medical Support for Volunteers

Point Ten: Enhance Third Goal Opportunities for Returned Volunteers

Point Eleven: Substantially Modify the Five-Year Rule

Point Twelve: Adopt Incentives to Improve Management and Retain Staff

Point Thirteen: Strengthen Peace Corps Financial Management

Point Fourteen: Transfer Authority and Resources to the Country Posts and Volunteers

Point Fifteen: Implement Tough Evaluation Processes

Point Sixteen: Increase Transparency of the Peace Corps

Point Seventeen: Ensure Peace Corps Office of Inspector General Again Leads Investigations of Violent Crimes Against Volunteers/Staff

Point Eighteen: Enhance Congressional Oversight

Point Nineteen: Meet Competition from New International Service Programs

Point Twenty: Get Organized to Press for Implementation of Reforms

We have developed this reform plan because it aggrieves us to see the Peace Corps mismanage the Volunteers and fall short of its potential. While we strongly support confirmation of Aaron Williams, our focus is on ensuring that the fundamental reforms proposed here become

permanent elements of the Peace Corps culture and practice and do not depend on the qualifications, good will and policies of individual appointees at the agency.

The authors welcome comments on this plan. Please use the contact information provided in Footnote 1.

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary	page 1
Table of Contents	page 4
<b>Plan to Strengthen and Expand the Peace Corps</b>	page 5
Introduction	page 5
Rationale and Overview of the Twenty Point Plan	page 6
Calls for Reform From the Volunteers	page 11
Biennial Survey of Volunteers Echoes Calls for Reform	page 19
<b>Twenty Points</b>	page 39
Point One: Address the Three Peace Corps Funding Priorities	page 39
Point Two: Make Listening the Hallmark of the Peace Corps Culture	page 51
Point Three: Achieve Greater Sustainable First Goal Results	page 56
Point Four: Reduce the High and Costly Early Termination Rates	page 63
Point Five: Recruit More Older, Experienced Volunteers	page 67
Point Six: Reconnect RPCVs for Life-long Service	page 71
Point Seven: Take Initiative to Build Peace	page 72
Point Eight: Protect Volunteer Rights and Hold Managers Accountable	page 73
Point Nine: Strengthen Standard of Medical Support for Volunteers	page 77
Point Ten: Enhance Third Goal Opportunities for Returned Volunteers	page 80
Point Eleven: Substantially Modify the Five-Year Rule	page 81
Point Twelve: Adopt Incentives to Improve Management and Retain Staff	page 82
Point Thirteen: Strengthen Peace Corps Financial Management	page 82
Point Fourteen: Transfer Authority and Resources to the Country Posts and Volunteers	page 83
Point Fifteen: Implement Tough Evaluation Processes	page 85
Point Sixteen: Increase Transparency of the Peace Corps	page 86
Point Seventeen: Ensure Peace Corps Office of Inspector General Again Leads Investigations of Violent Crimes Against Volunteers/Staff	page 87
Point Eighteen: Enhance Congressional Oversight	page 92
Point Nineteen: Meet Competition from New International Service Programs	page 93
Point Twenty: Get Organized to Press for Implementation of Reforms	page 99
Conclusion	page 104
Appendix A: Email Affidavits From PCVs in 28 Countries Regarding Peace Corps	page 105
Appendix B: Using the Triple Convergence (Internet) to Listen to and Empower Volunteers	page 124
Appendix C: Robert Strauss Viewpoint on the Peace Corps	page 129
Appendix D: Proposal to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees Regarding Peace Corps Reform and Expansion	page 133
Appendix E: Amendments Proposed to S. 1382 (Dodd)	page 138
Appendix F: Biographical Information on Authors of 20 Point Plan	page 145

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**Subject:** **Plan to Strengthen and Expand the Peace Corps:  
Priorities for President Obama's First Term**

President Obama has pledged to “double the size of the Peace Corps from 7,800 volunteers to 16,000 by its 50th anniversary in 2011 and work to partner volunteers with people from other nations.” (December 5, 2007, Mt. Vernon) The following comprehensive reform plan urges the President and Peace Corps Director-Designate Aaron Williams to pledge to also strengthen the Peace Corps as proposed by Senators Christopher Dodd and Ted Kennedy in the last Congress—the Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act (PCVEA)(S. 732)—and Senator Dodd’s proposal in this Congress—the Peace Corps Improvement and Expansion Act (PCIEA)(S. 1382). A stronger, more effective Peace Corps will make a persuasive case for expansion. Conversely, without fundamental reforms, increasing the number of Volunteers may not be feasible and may undermine the performance of the Peace Corps. In addition, without fundamental reforms, the Peace Corps may fare poorly in competition with a new international voluntary service program—Volunteers for Prosperity—authorized by the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act (Public Law 111-13).

The authors have presented this reform plan because they love the Peace Corps, feel privileged to have served twice as Volunteers, and have attempted to dedicate their lives to the Peace Corps values. It aggrieves us to see Peace Corps mismanagement of the Volunteers and its falling short of its potential. While we strongly support confirmation of Aaron Williams, our focus is on ensuring that the fundamental reforms proposed here become permanent elements of the Peace Corps culture and practice and do not depend on the qualifications, good will and policies of individual appointees at the agency.

**Introduction**

Founded by Executive Order of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy on March 1, 1961, the Peace Corps has sent nearly 200,000 Americans to serve abroad as America's ambassadors of good will to assist the developing world to achieve its development objectives. Many believe that dollar-for-dollar, no U.S. government international program is more effective. The impact of the returned Volunteers on America has been substantial, giving millions of Americans a better sense of the strengths and needs of the majority of the world's peoples. To strengthen and expand this program is in the humanitarian and strategic interests of the United States.

The Peace Corps will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2011 with events on March 1 (the anniversary of the Executive Order) and September 22 (anniversary of the enactment of the Peace Corps Act and scheduled date for an anniversary celebration on the National Mall). President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama may well play a central role in celebrating this milestone. The Peace Corps and National Peace Corps Association, including the country-of-service Friends groups and regional RPCV groups, should closely cooperate with the Obama

Administration in planning and managing these events. Celebrations and programs should be held in every country where Volunteers are serving, and every region of the U.S. Successful implementation of plans to strengthen and expand the Peace Corps should be touted as a major accomplishment during the celebration. Congress has already enacted the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, which seeks to enlist 1 million Americans annually in community and international service in addition to authorizing the Volunteers for Prosperity program. So community, national, and international service—including Peace Corps service—should be the theme for the entire year.

## **Rationale and Overview of Twenty Point Plan**

The Peace Corps mission is cross-cultural, so it is appropriate to begin this plan to strengthen and expand the Peace Corps with a reaffirmation of the Peace Corps' central cultural values—listening to and respecting the individual Volunteers who carry forth its core mission and empowering them to inspire and, in critical respects, to lead from the grassroots. Only by supporting and empowering Volunteers can the Peace Corps achieve its goal to serve as an effective agent of grassroots development and cross-cultural exchange. Volunteers should succeed *in partnership with* the Peace Corps, not *in spite of* the Peace Corps.

At a time of uncertainty and hardship in the world and challenges to peace and tolerance, the Peace Corps entrusts Volunteers with responsibility for bringing the best of American values and traditions—respect for the individual generosity and entrepreneurship—to the high calling of economic development and cross cultural exchange. Nearly five decades ago the Peace Corps was founded as an organization ruled by egalitarianism in which command and control mechanisms did not stifle the power and initiative of the individual Volunteer.

The corollary of these values is that headquarters staff in Washington, D.C. need to listen to the staff in each country. Every focus of the headquarters' operation should be to support and empower the country staff, allocate to them every available resource, and not impose burdens that distract them from supporting and empowering the Volunteers.

The Peace Corps is justifiably proud of its tradition of taking risks, defying conventional wisdom, and combining the best of American idealism and resourcefulness. In reaffirming these core cultural values, the future of the Peace Corps and its Volunteers is bright. The Peace Corps can demonstrate to other government agencies that it's possible to structure a government agency as an inverted pyramid where the inspiration, and, in crucial respects, the leadership, come from those who carry forth its mission at the grassroots: the country staff and the Volunteers.

The premise of this plan is that Volunteers and country staff understand, better than anyone else and better than Headquarters staff, the Peace Corps strengths and weaknesses and what the agency must do to achieve the greatness that it promised nearly half a century ago. To quote Colin Powell, "The commander in the field is always right and the rear echelon is wrong, unless proven otherwise."

In terms of the twin goals—to strengthen and to expand—Senator Dodd has said,

[A]s we grow the Peace Corps—as we get it the volunteers it needs and the increased funding it deserves—we must respect its roots. We must work to make it more decentralized, because service at its best is personal and spontaneous, and because volunteers know far more about conditions on the ground than we in Washington ever will." [W]e ought to work to make the Peace Corps bigger, and more decentralized, at the same time. I believe we can, **at the same time**, [emphasis added] extend its worldwide reach and honor its grassroots past. Doing both is the best way to be true to the spirit that created it: the spirit that turned student activism into government action, that combined Cold War diplomacy with the spontaneous need to serve. (Speech to the National Peace Corps Association's Director's Circle, March 7, 2008)

The Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA from the last Congress includes 16 provisions that mandate reforms at the Peace Corps. These included empowering Volunteers to review personnel and programs, providing reimbursement to Volunteers for their work-related expenses, reforming the agency's arcane fundraising rules, recruiting more experienced Volunteers, launching the Peace Corps into the digital age, reforming the medical screening process, and protecting Volunteer rights. These are mandates, not requests for reports or plans. The mere fact that Senators Dodd and Kennedy introduced the PCVEA has been extremely useful in spawning a much-needed and long overdue debate about reforming the Peace Corps.

The mandates in the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA had strong support in the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) community. Early in 2007 the PCV and RPCV members of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) overwhelmingly endorsed, in an online poll, these mandates. Here are the key findings from the RPCVs:

- Seed funding: 84% in favor
- Fundraising: 82% in favor
- Third Goal: 84% in favor
- Recruiting experienced Volunteers: 79% in favor
- Removing disincentives for service by experienced Volunteers: 93% in favor
- Digital Peace Corps: 89% in favor
- Volunteers review of Senior Staff and Programs: 94% and 95% in favor
- Volunteer Advisory Committees: 85% in favor
- Reform of the medical screening process: 96% in favor
- Health care benefits of retirees: 91% in favor
- Equal tax benefits for Volunteers who own homes: 90% in favor
- Protecting rights of Volunteers: 96% in favor<sup>3</sup>

So by margins of from 79% to 96%, the NPCA members supported enactment of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA vision to strengthen and expand the Peace Corps.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> NPCA did not including "doubling" among the poll questions.

<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, in his testimony at the July 25, 2007 hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA, Kevin Quigley, NPCA President stated that

On June 25, 2009, Senator Dodd Introduced the Peace Corps Improvement and Empowerment Act (S. 1382). The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps Director to prepare a “new forward-looking strategy” that “analyzes and accounts for the strengths and weaknesses” of the agency. It would require the Director within 180 days to prepare an “assessment and strategic plan for improving and expanding the Peace Corps” that would address many of the substantive policy issues included in the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA.

The authors infer that since the Obama election, there has been substantial debate within Senator Dodd’s office about how to spur Peace Corps reform. On February 26 his staff had transmitted to us a “discussion draft of the latest version of the Peace Corps Modernization and Empowerment Act” noting, “We are planning to introduce [it] next week.” The February draft included all the mandates of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA plus a call for development of a strategic plan and imposition of a limit on the number of political appointees. The authors applauded the new draft and suggested including a requirement that the Peace Corps report accurate and meaningful ET rates, avoid switching Volunteers to different programs or countries without their consent, and publish all information that it has supplied to the public in response to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

Then on April 24, 2009, the same staffer emailed us, stating, “After much thought, discussion and debate, we have finalized our Peace Corps legislation.” And adding,

As you know, this bill represents a serious undertaking to build on the Peace Corps strengths, while at the same time, hone in on and address some key issues facing the Peace Corps in a positive way. These issues are critical for our boss, and he strongly believes they need to be faced head-on and addressed as quickly as possible. Unlike previous versions, this bill does not stick the Peace Corps with any specific mandates, instead, it asks for an assessment and plan, and requires the Peace Corps to really think about and analyze its key strengths and weaknesses and develop a robust plan going forward so it can both reform and grow.

The text of the PCIEA was attached and, as stated above, it was introduced on June 25.

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the legislation was "important and timely." He referred to the NPCA membership survey and said, "Although th[e survey] is by no means a rigorously scientific survey, we are confident that it is generally representative of the interested and engaged Peace Corps community. Overall, the respondents were extremely supportive of the provisions in the legislation..." He concluded by stating to Chairman Dodd and Ranking Member Corker, "the Peace Corps community thanks you for addressing the issue of expanding Peace Corps and providing funding for Third Goal Activities—which have been long-held aspirations for our community. We are also grateful for the many other creative provisions you are proposing for empowering Volunteers and lowering the barriers to service so that many more Americans can serve in a Peace Corps. With these changes, Peace Corps can have an even greater impact in addressing the problems of poverty and under development. As Chairman Dodd said in his statement introducing this legislation, this will 'make the Peace Corps even more relevant to the dynamic world of the 21st Century.' And for that reason, we strongly support it."



The authors are optimistic that enactment of the PCIEA will be the beginning and not the end of the reform process. Larry Leamer, an RPCV and champion of the Peace Corps,<sup>5</sup> has stated,

[In his statement upon introduction of the PCIEA] Dodd...suggested that many Peace Corps supporters were uncomfortable with the idea [of reform] but said that it must be faced straight on. Dodd is the only politician in America with the power and knowledge to say that and write this bill. It is the work of a man who loves the Peace Corps but understands its flaws and knows that you cannot mindlessly grow the agency but must reform it from the bottom up. There could have been dozens of specific reforms in this bill but it fundamentally puts the agency on notice. It orders the new director to do a serious study of the agency and how it should be reformed and then carry the mandate out. Dodd ran through a litany of questions that must be answered and then acted upon. It is clear that if this is not done quickly and well, the wrath of Dodd will be visited upon the agency. In the past few years, Dodd has not given the agency the oversight that he should have given it. But Dodd is not going to strut boastfully about because of the mere passage of [the PCIEA]. He promises to be there overseeing the agency and its new director helping to ensure that volunteers head out into the rich variety of the world, well prepared to help and to learn. (June 25 Huffington Post)

In an interview with NewsMax on June 16, Larry said,

The Peace Corps has to be held to the highest standards. Rajeev [Goyal] [, another RPCV and champion of the Peace Corps,<sup>6</sup>] and I are not in this for the short term. I've told Chairwoman Lowey and I've told Senator Leahy that we're going to be just as relentless and tough on the Peace Corps once they get the funding, making sure that they are true to the vision of what the Peace Corps can be. And if they squander it, we'll be back on the Hill next year blowing the whistle. This approach should apply to the Volunteers in the field, the Peace Corps staff, the

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<sup>5</sup> Laurence Leamer, a best-selling author and journalist, was a Ford Fellow in International Development at the University of Oregon and a International Fellow at Columbia University. Regarded as an expert on the Kennedy family, he has appeared in numerous media outlets discussing American politics. Leamer has also written best-selling biographies of other American icons, including Johnny Carson, the Reagan family, and Arnold Schwarzenegger. He served as a Volunteer in Nepal in the 60s. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurence\\_Leamer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurence_Leamer)

<sup>6</sup> Rajeev Goyal has been the principal field organizer for the More Peace Corps campaign. In 2005 he received the prestigious Franklin H. Williams award for his continuing volunteerism and work in the U.S. to support projects in Nepal, where he had served as a Volunteer. The award is in memory of Franklin H. Williams, a foreign and domestic public servant until his death in 1990, who was a Peace Corps regional director for Africa and the U.S. ambassador to Ghana. Each year the Peace Corps recognizes 12 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Color who have carried on Williams' spirit of volunteerism and commitment to the Peace Corps' third goal—"To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans."

appropriations and authorizing committees, OMB, NPCA, the Friends groups, and individual RPCVs.

See

[http://www.newsmax.com/headlines/peace\\_corps\\_party\\_divide/2009/06/16/225743.html](http://www.newsmax.com/headlines/peace_corps_party_divide/2009/06/16/225743.html)

The authors trust that this is the “tough love” approach that Senator Dodd will take if fundamental reform is not forthcoming in response to the PCIEA and that the mandates of the PCVEA are waiting in the wings to be enacted. We believe Senator Dodd understands the depth of the malaise at the agency and continues to support these specific reforms. We believe that his change in tactics arises from a sincere hope that the new Peace Corps management will address these reforms, obviating the need to enact them into law. The authors trust Senator Dodd as the longtime champion of the Peace Corps, give him the benefit of the doubt on his choice of tactics to achieve reform, and take him at his word that his highest priority is to defend the Volunteers. We will always remember the warm welcome he gave to us when we flew to Washington from Senegal to testify at the July 2007 hearing in support of the PCVEA.

Despite our support for and confidence in Aaron Williams, the authors are less hopeful than Senator Dodd that the needed fundamental reforms will be implemented—and become permanent features of the Peace Corps culture—without being mandating. The reforms should not be dependent on the commitment of the Director. Regarding the PCVEA provisions that establish mechanisms for listening to and respecting Volunteers, a more prudent approach—to ensure that these reforms become embedded in the Peace Corps culture—is to enact them into law. We are concerned that decades of complacency and inadequate oversight on the Hill and in the RPCV community have contributed to and enabled the deeply embedded dysfunctions in the Peace Corps documented in this report. All of us who love the Peace Corps must watch closely, keep up the pressure, and hold the agency to account. Ultimately, the Peace Corps legislative and oversight process has no time limit.

The new PCIEA would call on the Peace Corps to assess seventeen issues, including the “adequacy of the current program model of the Peace Corps,” “the medical care received by volunteers while serving,” “the causes of the early termination of service... using the cohort and other statistically appropriate methods,” “the prospects for partnerships with international and host country nongovernmental organizations,” “how the Peace Corps could utilize information technology to improve... communication among Volunteers,” and “mechanisms for soliciting the views of volunteers serving in the Peace Corps, on a confidential basis, regarding (i) the support provided to such volunteers by senior staff of the Peace Corps and (ii) the operations of the Peace Corps, including (I) staffing decisions; (II) site selection, (III) language training, and (IV) country programs...” In preparing the assessment and plan, the legislation calls on the Peace Corps to “draw on the knowledge” of “current Peace Corps volunteers,” RPCVs and “host country nationals.” Based on this assessment, the Director would be required to prepare—within the same 180 days—a strategic plan and report it to the House and Senate foreign relations committees. The plan would include one-year and five-year goals and benchmarks. It calls for the development of strategies for “distributing volunteers to countries in which they have maximum value-added for the host-country,” “reducing or closing” programs with “less strategic relevance to Peace Corps goals,” and “ensuring that Peace Corps operations and goals are not adversely affected in situations where the bi-lateral relationship between the host country and the

United States is problematic.” The bill also contains two substantive provisions: one limits the number of political appointees to 15 and the other raises the authorization for the Peace Corps to \$450 million in FY 2010, \$575 million in FY 2011, and \$700 million in FY 2012.

The authors believe that the PCIEA could be strengthened, and so by email of June 30, 2009, we transmitted amendments to Senator Dodd that we hope will be adopted. See **Appendix E** below. References to the PCIEA provisions and to our amendments are inserted at appropriate places below.

In addition to strengthening the list of subjects to be assessed by the Peace Corps, we have raised two major procedural points about the PCIEA process. First, the PCIEA requires that the assessments “be built on a review of past experiences and studies;” “draw on the knowledge of— (i) current Peace Corps volunteers and staff, at all levels of seniority; (ii) returned Peace Corps volunteers and staff; and (iii) host country nationals and officials who have worked closely with Peace Corps volunteers.” In an amendment, we have proposed that this outreach go also to “officials of government and non-government entities with expertise in managing volunteers and programs for sustainable development and cross-culture exchange.” We have also proposed that the Peace Corps be required to “offer these parties the option to submit their views on a confidential or non-confidential basis.”

Second, the PCIEA requires that the Peace Corps assessment and strategic plan be submitted to “the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate” and “the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.” In an amendment, we have proposed that the Peace Corps “publish the draft strategic plan for a period of public comment and comments by volunteers and Peace Corps staff of not less than 90 days and shall report to the appropriate Congressional Committees its response to these comments.” We believe both amendments would lead to a more complete and penetrating assessment and plan by the Peace Corps.

Because the authors believe that Senator Dodd is reserving the right and option to return to mandating the substantive reforms proposed in the PCVEA, we reference and explain its mandates throughout this plan.

## **Calls for Reform From the Volunteers**

In email affidavits sent to the authors of this plan, current and recent Volunteers have called for implementation of fundamental reforms at the Peace Corps. **The authors invite other Volunteers and recent RPCVs to send additional affidavits.**<sup>7</sup> These email affidavits were sent in response to the authors’ testimony in support of Peace Corps reform before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, and Narcotics Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations

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<sup>7</sup> The authors will be publishing additional affidavits as part of this reform movement. We will keep confidential the names of the Volunteers and the countries in which they are serving or have served. We ask that Volunteers not include information in their affidavits that enable others to identify the country or reveal their identity. We encourage Volunteers to focus on system-wide issues that reflect on the experiences of many Volunteers.

Committee on July 25, 2007<sup>8</sup>, and their call for Peace Corps reform in the November 2008 issue of *WorldView*, the NPCA quarterly magazine.

These email affidavits highlight deficiencies in the Peace Corps capacity to listen to, respect and empower the Volunteers. They reveal that Volunteers in 28 countries believe that they succeed despite the Peace Corps bureaucracy, not because of the support that it provides. They say that they succeed by ignoring or resisting the management. They say that the Peace Corps bureaucratic command and control approach stifles creativity and collaboration. This approach works poorly with younger Volunteers and is anathema to older, more experienced Volunteers.

Printed here are excerpts from affidavits from every country from which the authors have received affidavits. Where multiple affidavits have been received from one country, the affidavit printed here represents the point of view of the others. Affidavits printed here have not been selected because they represent our point of view on the need for reform.

Brief excerpts from affidavits from these 28 countries follow:

- “We had been through numerous discussions before [with the country Director] and been told that things would change that would improve the program. These never occurred. The administration would then flaunt our advice and enact further policies that restricted our ability to be proactive volunteers, treating us like children who couldn't be trusted with even the most basic risk management.” West Africa PCV 2001-2003
- “I served as the Co-Chair of our VAC, which reminded me a lot of a Student Council in its lack of effectiveness and in the disdain it was given by our Country Director...I left [name of country withheld] demoralized because the personal efforts I made to bridge the gap between volunteers and the PC administration ended in disaster...[in the face of] an unresponsive and sometimes hostile bureaucracy.” West Africa PCV 2004-06
- “The administration appeared to be more concerned with repressing any sort of independent expression from volunteers rather than trying to use such expressions as a guide for what could be changed or improved.” Central Asia PCV 2005-07
- “Across the board the administration has turned a blind eye to the sexual assaults that occur to female volunteers by male members of their host families.” Pacific PCV 2003-05
- “There really is a lack of support for the development work of PCVs. The country director did not believe that volunteers should help to find funding for projects and he has sabotaged many attempts.” West Africa PCV 2005-07

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<sup>8</sup> A video of the July Senate hearing is available at <http://dodd.senate.gov/index.php?q=node/3990/print> and copies of the testimony are available at <http://www.senate.gov/~foreign/hearings/2007/hrg070725a.html>.

- “I can’t tell you how much I appreciate your bravery in standing up for what you believe in, especially in an environment that is—at times—as hostile and unyielding as the Peace Corps bureaucracy.” West Africa PCV 2006-08
- “Mostly, [Admin] treated us with disdain—as though we were a bother to be dispatched as quickly as possible. It felt as though the staff had no respect for us and for our efforts as Volunteers.”
- “Oftentimes, the PCVs were treated like we were recalcitrant children who were bothering ‘the grownups.’” East Africa PCV 2002-04
- “I believed I was joining an organization that focused on community development, addressing local needs through sustainable projects and ultimately bettering the lives of the people I was to serve through improved education, health care and technology. This, unfortunately, was not the case.” South America PCV 2003-05
- “During [my] meeting [with my Peace Corps program officer] he made numerous offensive comments to me that were sexual in nature. I complained to the ACPD in a private meeting in her office. She told me that this behavior was normal for [name of country withheld] and it’s to be expected, but that she would talk to him about it.” Eastern Europe PCV, 2007-present
- “I can sum up my experience so far with the statement ‘If I am successful it is in my role as PCV I believe it will be in spite of Peace Corps Management and not because of it.’...Many of the volunteers I have spoken to have no faith in changes taking place based on Volunteer feedback. I have come to the conclusion that the Peace Corps staff views the volunteers as potential liabilities and not the assets that we are.” Central Asia PCV 2008-present
- “We came in under the watch of a CD who had the philosophy that PCV's didn't actually need a job in their assigned sites and consequently many of us felt underutilized and devalued, especially the teachers and social workers.” Asia PCV 2005-07
- “Of more concern to me was the treatment of the PCVs by some of the program managers, to the point I finally told our CD that if I continued to be treated like a 16-year old employed worker rather than a mature (65 years old) adult *volunteer*, that I would have no choice but to leave. North Africa PCV 2006-08
- “Just with the older PCVs I have come to know here in [our country], we have teachers, nurses, business people and university professors with 20 plus years of experience. All of these professions could be supporting the country at a level of their experience. But to a person, they are in an entry level position at sites that do not find the proper value in their experience, and most often are not even a match for the profession.” Southern Africa PCV 2008-present
- “[H]ow very sad that it’s the American [staff] who are acting like Soviets...I found myself constantly saying to the new PCVs, ‘If you want to be a successful PCV—lay low.’ Don’t ever call the PC office—especially if you have a complaint or concern or problem or issue. They

will always turn it on YOU for creating the problem. Or blame you for getting sick. Or blame you for putting yourself in a 'bad situation.' Or accuse you of not being able to solve your problems...Don't ever call anyone on staff unless you are dying—and even then think twice.” Eastern Europe PCV 2004-06

- “When I started PC I was so excited and eager and now I feel broken down and sad that I couldn't get it to work out. The PC systems really needed to be changed to better attune to Volunteers' needs. It's hard enough to come so far from home to learn a new language and way of life without having [no] support from people in the office especially the higher ups that are our fellow Americans.” Pacific PCV 2008-10

- “I can't believe that Peace Corps wants to double the number of volunteers by 2011. How about improve the existing system before you throw more people into the mess!!! The quality of the Peace Corps needs to be improved.” Pacific PCV 2008-10<sup>9</sup>

- “I left the country...bitter and a bit traumatized. I was a 'mature' volunteer in her mid-40s. I had been very vocal about the lack of support for the volunteers throughout my service. I felt that the staff, both USA staff and Host-country National staff, were there to serve themselves instead of the volunteers.” Southern Africa PCV 2006-08

- “[I]t became obvious to my entire group that the Bureau, as an entity, did not care about the volunteers, only the numbers being sent to Washington...Volunteers felt trapped and forced to do things that either weren't what they should be doing or were blatantly without reason.” West Africa PCV 2006-08

- “The more rules you impose out of Washington, the less effective you make the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps is supposed to represent freedom and the desire to do good in the world, but if you want to show freedom you have to give it to the volunteers. If you treat volunteers like children they will act like children. If you treat them like adults they will act accordingly.” West Africa PCV 2006-08<sup>10</sup>

- “I thank you both for shedding light on the multiple management issues currently affecting the Peace Corps and for striving to bring about change in this important agency... The bewildering lack of organizational wisdom that has been retained and dearth of project resources that have been compiled over Peace Corps' history also confuse me. In the field it feels as though each volunteer is reinventing the wheel every time he or she initiates a project or trouble-shoots a problem.” South America PCV 2006-08

- “Training for our program was miserable, irrelevant and ineffective. Our language training was terrible...Our technical training was also the bare minimum...The site selection process was...completely arbitrary...When I make my complaints to HQ, they just say...I should just spend a year to a year and a half getting to know the community, then the work will come. I should just 'hang out' for a year and a half, then get the work? Have you ever had to

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<sup>9</sup> Affidavit from same country as immediately above.

<sup>10</sup> Affidavit from same country as immediately above.

not do anything for a year? Its torture!” Asia 2008-10

- “As for the PC staff here on the island, they are basically useless and clueless...The Asst. CD cannot carry on a conversation that isn't dialog out of the PC rules and regulations book. She quotes it verbatim, like a wind-up doll...When we tell the locals we are working with some of the rules we have to follow, they are flabbergasted and totally amazed at the stupidity...We all feel that the PC staff are not on our side, are trying to find any reason to send us packing.” Caribbean PCV 2008 to present

- “The general view of Volunteers in [name of country withheld] is that Admin should be avoided at all times...As for the CD, the training unit, and Peace Corps Washington, the application of policy is arbitrary, rigid, authoritarian, command and control, all the worst aspects of bureaucracy. Volunteers expect that policy decisions handed down from Washington or from the CD of [name of country withheld] will be worst-case scenario decisions, 180 degrees contrary to Volunteer needs. There seems to be no consideration for Volunteers' personal or professional obligations, no respect for Volunteer input, and no regard for the reputation or the professionalism of individual Volunteers, and by extension for the Peace Corps as a whole. Individual letters, petitions, or meetings with the CD or the Peace Corps Director in Washington get stonewalled. Individual unofficial protests of policy are ignored. Peace Corps Volunteers are intelligent, creative, idealistic, educated people. They should be treated as an asset.” Central Africa 2007-present

- “‘That's Africa’ seems to be the general attitude when any volunteer has a concern; however, it seems more the case that, ‘That's Peace Corps.’ Volunteers are frequently referred to as ‘all 22-year olds, fresh out of college,’ which many of our stage group are not. Besides that fact, why should someone aged 22 not be respected as an adult? Many Peace Corps staff treat volunteers with not just contempt, but outright suspicion. Whereas one should feel that ‘support staff’ are the first ones to go to with a problem, PCVs often avoid seeing and talking to them at all costs. Unless reforms like those proposed by Senators Dodd and Kennedy are fully and well implemented, we could not in good conscience recommend Peace Corps service to anyone without expressing our many reservations, and unlike so many volunteers from the 1960s who served again in retirement, we could never consider doing so. We signed up for Peace Corps because we believed in its mission. We still believe in that mission, but like many volunteers who have ended their service early or stuck it out despite frustrations and anger at an ineffectual, impersonal, and frequently inept bureaucracy, we will look back upon our service with as much sadness as joy.” West Africa PCV 2007-2009

- “I love Peace Corps and I have enjoyed my experience. However, I have also been very frustrated with my administration and their unwillingness to include Volunteer input and constructive criticism.” South America PCV 2008 to present.

- “Volunteers are often not treated as adults by PC...Site development and site selection is severely lacking. Nearly all the Volunteers who have left early claim that some part of their decision was related to site development. PC staff often spends no more than a couple of hours at a site before determining it suitable for a Volunteer. What needs to happen is to put more

resources and time into site development.” South America PCV 2008 to present<sup>11</sup>

- “As volunteers we are treated as if we have little ability to manage our personal lives or make job decisions. Most of the volunteers I am serving with are the age of my three adult children but Peace Corps policies and rules restrict our own decision making as if we were children of 8 or 9 years...One of the reasons that I object so to these policy restrictions is the fact that when you treat people as if they can’t make their own decisions some stop making good decisions, some ignore policies and others just leave.” Central Asia PCV 1968-9 and 2008-present
- “Training...was geared for high school graduates, not college grads, let alone those with years of professional careers behind them...Training: Redundant, over and over the same material...Although we fill out forms asking for suggestions for training content, the same old, same old is presented...Staff do not return emails or phone calls: No matter the issue, they are too busy to help with anything, grants, simple questions, etc...Reimbursements are so slow that younger volunteers fake medical conditions to go into the PC office to obtain their past medical, VAC, or other reimbursements...Any concerns are framed as complaining or as your fault, so I am pleasant but distance myself from country staff. Where this plan is effective for me as an older volunteer, it is very difficult for some of the younger volunteers...I was told early in my service that “under the radar” is the best plan by far...Grants are not reviewed for months on end, then alternate directions are given as to how to complete grant forms, only to reverse or change directions once stated changes were made.” East Africa PCV 2008 to present
- “[We] discovered that our sites [as a couple] were *10 hours* apart. When we told this to Peace Corps they responded with “you can see each other on weekends...I was bullied by the PCACD into staying in the site that he set up [that was not safe], because he did not want the embarrassment of admitting the site was a failure...[Our case] is a prime example of gross Peace Corps oversight, lack of planning, and inability and (in some cases) outright refusal to sufficiently support its volunteers. In our situation our treatment on behalf of the Peace Corps [name of country withheld] staff was unethical at best and at worse a breach of contract and knowingly exposing us to dangerous situations.” Central America PCVs 2007 to present
- “There has been a chronic pattern of insensitive communication from staff to PCVs that creates low morale. The most disturbing examples of this were communications surrounding the violent assault and robbery of one PCV (and gang rape of his girlfriend,) and a volunteer’s death. Both of these incidents were handled throughout with administration’s obvious primary concern being to control media coverage of the incidents, rather than to relay clear information and attend to the emotional responses and needs of the remaining PCVs.” Central America 2007-present
- “My wife and I are 1 3/4 years into our service in [name of country withheld]. We are in our early 50s and gave up a beautiful home and very nice careers in order to try and make a contribution to the needs of the world's poor. That was our sole motivation for joining and is probably the reason why, unlike so many of the younger volunteers, we feel like our experience has been a waste. Where they have been able to create positive spins on their time here thru resume building, personal and romantic relationships, travel, and avoiding the start of a working life (or in most cases grad school), we can only see the wasted tax dollars and completely

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<sup>11</sup> Affidavit from same country as immediate above.



ineffective manner in which PC operates as a development service to its host countries, and how it fails in supporting the philanthropic motives of its volunteers.” Central America, 2007 to present.

**Extended excerpts from these email affidavits are presented in Appendix A of this plan.**

The authors continue to receive emails documenting mismanagement of the Volunteers. These email reports are confirmed in similar stories the authors have heard in many dozens of conversations with PCVs and RPCVs.<sup>12</sup> The strikingly similar tone and content of these reports indicates that the agency’s management problems are widespread and deeply embedded in Peace Corps culture.

To be sure, many outstanding staff, both Americans and host country nationals, provide professional, respectful and loyal service to the Peace Corps. It is apparent, however, that far too many others resemble those described above, certainly enough to justify implementation of the reforms in this report. We will not know the full extent of these problems until we adopt the proposals that solicit Volunteer feedback about managers and programs on a confidential basis (360 degree reviews)—an issue addressed in detail below under Point Two.<sup>13</sup>

Some may wonder why these views of the Volunteers have not been widely heard before. A key reason is that the overwhelming majority of Volunteers are young and straight out of college. They often fear that if they speak out, the Peace Corps will “fire them from their first job.” For fear of retaliation, Volunteers do not dare criticize their managers in their blogs.<sup>14</sup> Also, young Volunteers have little experience being managed and do not always know what constitutes

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<sup>12</sup> The authors of this plan have not commented in public on their experiences as Volunteers in Senegal (2005-07), avoiding mention of the Senegal program in their testimony or their *WorldView* article calling for Peace Corps reform. They do not believe it is appropriate for Volunteers to make statements in public that could harm the program in which they serve or have served. This is why the email excerpts made public here identify the region but not the country of service. The Peace Corps publishes a *Handbook* for Trainees and Volunteers that states, “Trainees/Volunteers are free to discuss their role in the Peace Corps with media representatives. However, they should notify their Country Director before such contacts. Trainees/Volunteers must be aware of, and remain sensitive to, the impact their personal comments may have on themselves, their co-workers, Peace Corps and the United States... Volunteers may write articles for publication; however, these must be reviewed in advance with the Country Director to ascertain whether they may cause problems that the Volunteer may not have anticipated. Publication of material, contrary to the advice of the Country Director, that subsequently results in adverse consequences for the Volunteer or the Peace Corps [name of country] program, may be grounds for administrative separation.”

<sup>13</sup> As explained in Point Two of this plan, the provisions of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA empowering Volunteers to participate in assessing the performance of Peace Corps managers and the effectiveness of Peace Corps programs will do much to give Volunteers a constructive outlet to express their views.

<sup>14</sup> Protecting Volunteer rights and giving them Whistleblower status is discussed below under Point Eight.

unsupportive management. The most discontented Volunteers terminate their service early and then often blame themselves for "failing." Their family and friends want to see them as heroes and they don't want to undermine this storyline with disparaging reports about the Peace Corps. A 50+ couple currently serving in Central America explains these points as follows:

One might wonder why these dissenting versions of the Peace Corps are rarely presented to staff and to the public. In the course of listening to other PCVs on the topic, we have learned that many have a vested interest in milking the myth for their own personal or career gain. These motivations may include fear of repercussions, the need for future recommendations, a desire to obtain Peace Corps Fellowships, or even a justification of their time spent abroad. Still others may believe the problem is within them, or may not look at the bigger picture, so really have no critique of the organization. In addition, we have found that there is little attention for anything but praise for the organization because of the pervasive myth surrounding it.

Finally, Volunteers have essentially no experience expressing themselves to the Congress or the media, so they do not have outlets for their views, and for decades the Congress has not engaged in serious oversight of the agency or attempted to listen to the Volunteers.

While the malaise and discontent expressed in these Volunteer emails is no longer news to the authors, it may come as a surprise to others. The authors have encountered RPCVs who resist the news that there are problems at the Peace Corps. Having served as Volunteers 40 years ago, the authors can understand this resistance. It's common for RPCVs to be sentimental about their experience as Volunteers. Many RPCVs were profoundly affected by their service and many are still engaged with the communities in which they served. Proud of their service, they are fiercely loyal alumni, just as college graduates tend to be fiercely loyal to alma maters. What grad wants to hear that their university or college is not thriving, declining, and has many dissatisfied students and a low graduation rate? Some RPCVs have misinterpreted drafts of this plan as criticizing the idea of the Peace Corps, rather than its practice, or criticizing the Volunteers rather than the managers, neither of which is true. Denial comes in many guises.

Predictably, the Peace Corps staff in Washington deny that there is any problem in need of fixing. When a Senator asked at the July 25, 2007 hearing on the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA if "there [is any] rub" between Volunteers and management within the Peace Corps organization, Director Tschetter responded, "[C]ertainly not that I'm aware of...[T]here are really no major rubs that I know of at all." He said the Peace Corps was "ship shape." Commenting on the legislation, he said, "[I]t's evident to me that those consulted on the bill believe that there are parts of the Peace Corps that need fixing. I'm here to tell you that the agency is thriving."

Consistent with its denials, Director Tschetter generally opposed enactment of any legislation focused on Volunteer-manager relations and expressed concern about 5 of the 16 provisions of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA. Suffice it to say, given that the PCVEA would press the managers to better listen to, respect and empower the Volunteers, the management's concerns about the bill highlight the depth and range of the problem and the need to implement this plan and enact elements of it into law. In addition, the agency's response to its PCV, RPCV and Peace Corps

staff critics is to castigate and/or ignore them. This is not the sign of a healthy agency committed to listening to the Volunteers and committed to reform.

Despite the denials of the Peace Corps management, the tensions documented in the emails have the appearance of a classic labor-management divide. In addition, these dysfunctional relationships appear to arise in part due to political considerations in the selection of Country Directors. The Peace Corps has the highest percentage of political appointees at headquarters of any agency of the government; virtually none of those who served in the Bush Administration had ever served as a Volunteer.

These email affidavits indicate that the Peace Corps has lost track of a simple fact—that only through its Volunteers acting at the grassroots does the agency accomplish its overseas missions to serve as an effective agent of development and cross-cultural exchange. It has not established a culture that encourages listening to, respecting, and empowering the Volunteers. It remains a top down, command and control, risk-averse government hierarchy. Simply put, it has lost its way.

## **Biennial Survey of Volunteers Echoes Calls for Reform**

The Peace Corps 2008 Biennial Survey of Volunteers confirms the gist of the viewpoints expressed above in the affidavits of Volunteers.<sup>15</sup> The survey provides evidence of pervasive mediocrity, low standards in training and Volunteer support (except for safety/security and medical), and a failure to give Volunteers reasonable opportunities to achieve sustainable First Goal (development) results.

Every two years the Peace Corps surveys the current Volunteers. The results of the most recent survey—reported on November 24, 2008—confirm a substantial difference between the Volunteers' views regarding their service, which are enthusiastic, and those regarding the management of the Peace Corps, which are equivocal. The Peace Corps often quotes the former survey results and fails to mention the latter.<sup>16</sup> Presented here is a summary of all of the survey

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<sup>15</sup> The survey—including the worldwide average results and country-by-country responses—is posted at [http://peacecorpswiki.org/2008\\_Biennial\\_Volunteer\\_Survey](http://peacecorpswiki.org/2008_Biennial_Volunteer_Survey). The default setting is alphabetical by country, but it is easy to sort the responses in any way by clicking the tab at the top. This yields rankings, top to bottom or bottom to top, positive to negative or negative to positive, for the responses and ranks the countries. This website is maintained by Mike Sheppard and Will Dickinson, RPCVs whose love of the Peace has inspired their support for Peace Corps reform. Mike Sheppard served as an education Volunteer in The Gambia (2003-05) and then received a masters degree in accounting from Michigan State University. See his Close of Service statement at [http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/Mike\\_Sheppard](http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/Mike_Sheppard). Will Dickinson served as a Volunteer in Armenia (2004-06). Since December 2007, he has worked with Mike to manage Peacecorpswiki. See <http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/User:Willd>

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the testimony of Director Ron Tschetter at the July 25, 2007 Senate hearing on the Dodd/Kennedy Peace Corps reform legislation that selectively quotes from the 2006 survey.

results, positive and not so positive. Also presented are country-to-country comparisons.<sup>17</sup> The results are given in considerable detail because no one knows better than the Volunteers how the Peace Corps is being managed and what it is accomplishing.

The most recent survey was completed by about half the Volunteers serving between May and August 2008. Some 87% of respondents did it on line.<sup>18</sup> We have strong evidence that the Volunteers who did not complete the survey have a **more negative view** of their Peace Corps service than those who did.<sup>19</sup> Given the pervasively mediocre and negative responses we have from those who did complete the survey, this is a distressing inference.

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<sup>17</sup> The process by which the authors obtained the 2008 survey results can only be described as Kafkaesque. In March of this year, at our request, Peace Corps staff gave us a hard copy of the worldwide responses to the survey. On April 13 we filed a FOIA request for the country-by-country breakout of the results. In our request we noted that the hard copy in our possession invited Country Directors to view the country-by-country results on the Peace Corps intranet—confirming that the country-by-country results exist there in electronic form. On May 11 the Peace Corps FOIA officer notified us that, “It is estimated that the total number of pages responsive to your request is 6,068 pages. The file containing these documents is too large to send electronically or scan to a CD-Rom. Therefore, your request will be subject to a reproduction charge of \$895.20 for all pages over the 100 page limit.” In short, she was insisting that we pay for a hard copy of the breakouts for each country. About this time she produced for us a sample table for Question E 11 (regarding Country Directors) that provided answers for all of the countries to this question, a question-by-question format. We inquired whether the answers were available in this question-by-question format as well as in the country-by-country format. We were told that it’d cost the Peace Corps \$2,242 to produce the responses in a question-by-question format, again apparently only in a hard copy. We asked repeatedly if the documents already existed in electronic format on the intranet site—she never confirmed that they did—and we offered to supply her with a mini-external hard drive to which to download the electronic files. Out of exasperation at her evasions and unresponsiveness, we filed a FOIA appeal on May 27 asking again for electronic copies of the files—country-by-country and question-by-question. On June 23 the Peace Corps formally denied our appeal saying that the processing of our request, including the refusal to produce the documents in electronic form and the outlandish cost estimates, was “proper.” Anticipating that our appeal would be denied, in early we approached Peace Corps headquarters staff who went to the Peace Corps intranet—just where we’d said the documents were posted—and downloaded for us copies of all of the country-by-country survey results—77 files. They fit easily on a flash drive. It took less than 5 minutes to download the documents. It was then easy to load the responses into an Excel spread sheets so we could rank the countries question-by-question. We forwarded the files to PeaceCorpsWiki and the documents soon were posted on line for the public to review. The lack of transparency of the Peace Corps is discussed at length in Point Sixteen of this below.

<sup>18</sup> 68% of the Volunteers who completed the survey “never” have Internet access at their residence and 54% never have it at their work site.

<sup>19</sup> We know that the worldwide Early Termination rate is roughly 35% (discussed in depth below). Yet in response to question H 4, only 2% of the Volunteers worldwide indicate that they do not intend to complete their service and only 4% state that they are “not sure.” This clearly indicates that the responses as a whole are considerably more positive than they would have been

The survey results are tabulated worldwide and country-by-country; the authors have access to both tabulations and reported both here. The country-by-country results are especially valuable for identifying the opportunities for reform. For example, the survey includes questions about the support provided by Country Directors and other Peace Corps managers to the Volunteers, as well as the adequacy of training, site preparation, medical and security support. Also included are questions about which program in which the respondent serves, so it's easy to focus on the design and impact of programs country-by-country. This data can be compared to that about the ET rates of Volunteers country-by-country and program-by-program. It can be compared to the reviews of Volunteers in 360 degree reviews—a survey methodology described below. In short, if the Peace Corps is committed to listening to, respecting and empowering Volunteers and to instituting a continuous process of reform, it has ample data about where to focus its efforts and how to evaluate the performance of its personnel.

In reporting the survey results on a country-by-country basis, the authors are well aware of the admonition in the Peace Corps *Handbook* that Volunteers be "aware of, and remain sensitive to, the impact personal comments may have on themselves, their co-workers, Peace Corps and the United States." Though we are no longer Volunteers, we will honor this admonition to the extent that it is consistent with holding Peace Corps officials accountable for their management of the Volunteers. In the end, the cause of Peace Corps reform trumps the personal interests of government employees to shield themselves from public scrutiny. In our point of view, we emphatically side with the Volunteer. We have no sympathy for Peace Corps managers who fail to listen to, respect, and empower Volunteers; who fail to design programs and training that give Volunteers a reasonable opportunity to achieve sustainable results; who fail to effectively prepare sites and recruit counterparts; who fail to provide effective technical and financial support; and who violate Volunteer rights. So, we publish here the Volunteer responses to this question on a country-by-country basis, including the question that focuses on the performance of individual Country Directors.

On the positive side, the worldwide results have the Volunteers reporting the following:

\* They find their overall Peace Corps service "personally satisfying"<sup>20</sup>: 25% say it is "exceptionally" personally rewarding; 45%, "considerably;" 24%, "moderately;" 5%, "minimally;" and 1%, "not at all";

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had all of the Volunteers who end up ETing been included—that the most dissatisfied Volunteers were among the 50% of the Volunteers who chose **not to** complete the survey. For a variety of reasons, the Volunteers who were inclined to ET did not complete the survey. 1) Those not enjoying their service had already left and were not sampled. 2) Those who were thinking about ETing chose not to fill out the survey thinking "I'm leaving anyway." 3) Those who were inclined to ET were dissatisfied with management and not responsive to its appeal for the Volunteers to complete the survey. And 4) those who are dissatisfied with management might believe that it won't listen to the survey results and take action in defense of the Volunteers. At any rate, the survey is clearly biased in favor of the Volunteers who are more satisfied with their Peace Corps experience, so it yields responses that are disproportionately positive.

<sup>20</sup> Question H 1.

\* “Today” they would make the “same decision” to join the Peace Corps<sup>21</sup>: 58% say “definitely,” 25%, “probably,” 11%, “possibly,” 4%, “not likely,” and 2%, “no”;

\* They would “recommend Peace Corps service to others [they] think are qualified”<sup>22</sup>: 58% say “definitely,” 25%, “probably,” 14%, “possibly,” 2%, “not likely,” and 1%, “no”.

\* They say that the Peace Corps experience “matches their expectations”<sup>23</sup>: 9% say “exceptionally”; 27%, “considerably”; 38%, “moderately”; 19%, “minimally;” and 7%, “not at all.”

\* They are well integrated into their community<sup>24</sup> (27% say “very well” and 38%, “well”) and communicate effectively in the “language used by most people” in their community<sup>25</sup> (18% say “very well” and 30%, “well”).

These positive responses are the only survey results that the Peace Corps tends to publish.

Analyzing the “personally satisfying” question country by country, we find that the top ranked programs are 1. Cambodia; 2. Kiribati; 3. Cape Verde; 4. Lesotho; 5. Kenya; 6. Peru; 7. Tanzania; 8. Belize and China (tied); and 10. Vanuatu. The bottom ranked programs are 58. Jamaica; 59. Romania; 61. Bulgaria; 62. Thailand; 63. Samoa; 64. Jordan; 65. Swaziland; 66. Ethiopia; and 67. Surinam. See <http://peacecorpswiki.org/H1>

Analyzing the “make same decision” question country-by-country, we find that the top ranked countries are 1. Cambodia; 2. Lesotho; 3. Cape Verde and Kenya; 5. Costa Rica; 6. Peru; 7. Mongolia; 8. Zambia; and 9. Belize. The lowest rankings are for 57. Philippines; 58. Samoa; 59. Mauritania; 60. Caribbean, Eastern; 61. Kyrgyz Republic; 62. Jamaica; 63. Thailand; 64. Swaziland; 65. Jordan; 66. Ethiopia; and 67. Surinam. <http://peacecorpswiki.org/H2>

Analyzing the “recommend to others” question country-by-country, we find that the top ranked countries are 1. Cambodia; 2. Cape Verde; 3. Kenya; 4. Belize; 5. China and Lesotho; 7. Guatemala and Macedonia; 9. Mozambique; and 10. Malawi and Panama. The bottom rankings go to 58. Togo; 59. Guyana; 60. Fiji; 61. Thailand; 62. Samoa; 63. Jamaica; 64. Swaziland; 65. Ethiopia; 66. Jordan; and 67. Surinam. <http://peacecorpswiki.org/H3>

The tone and substance of the Volunteers’ responses shift dramatically when they are asked if their Peace Corps experiences “match the expectations [they] had before [they] became a Volunteer.”<sup>26</sup> Here, only 9% say “exceptionally”; 27%, “considerably”; 38%, “moderately”; 19%, “minimally”; and 7%, “not at all.”

Analyzing the “match expectations question” country-by-country, we find that the top ranked countries are 1. Kiribati; 2. Guinea; 3. Cambodia; 4. Kenya; 5. Panama; 6. Mali, Mauritania and Senegal; 9. Burkina Faso; and 10. Peru. The bottom rankings go to 58. Bulgaria; 59.

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<sup>21</sup> Question H 2.

<sup>22</sup> Question H 3.

<sup>23</sup> Question H 5.

<sup>24</sup> Question C 3.

<sup>25</sup> Question C 4.

<sup>26</sup> Question H 5.

Turkmenistan; 60. Fiji; 61. Swaziland; 62. Moldova; 63. Albania; 64. Ethiopia; 65. Jordan; 66. Jamaica; and 67. Surinam. <http://peacecorpswiki.org/H5>

**Of greatest interest to the pending debate in the Congress over reforming and expanding the Peace Corps, when Volunteers are asked how “your host country [would] benefit the most”<sup>27</sup> 46% reply if the Peace Corps program was “refocused/redesigned.” Another 25% state that the host country would benefit most if the program were “maintained as is.” Only 20% say that program would benefit most if it were “expanded.” 6% say the best approach is to “reduce” the program and 4% say the best approach is to “discontinue” the program.**

Some of the Volunteers who support expanding the Peace Corps program may also support a “refocused/redesigned” Peace Corps, so the consensus about the need for reform rather than expansion is clear and unambiguous. This means that the views of the Volunteers are fundamentally inconsistent with the campaign to rapidly expand the Peace Corps.

Analyzing this question on a country-by-country basis, the Volunteers in some countries enthusiastically support expansion. The greatest support for expansion comes in Guinea (59%), Mexico and Peru (55%), Mozambique (51%), Kiribati (50%), Armenia (48%), Tanzania (47%), Madagascar (45%), China and Zambia (44%), and Azerbaijan (40%). In other countries there is very little support for expansion: only 3% support expansion in Surinam, The Gambia, and Macedonia; 4% in Benin and Samoa; 5% in Jamaica and Romania; 6% in the Eastern Caribbean; 7% in Bulgaria; Cape Verde and Togo; 8% in Ghana and Ukraine; and 9% in Botswana, Fiji, Moldova and Morocco. If the Peace Corps is listening to and respecting Volunteers, it will expand its program only in the countries where the Volunteers support expansion.

In terms of discontinuing programs, the Volunteers are equally decisive. Some 45% of the Volunteers in Togo support reducing or terminating the program; 40% in Jamaica; 38% in The Gambia; 35% in Samoa; 24% in Macedonia; 25% in Surinam (all for termination); and 21% in Ukraine. If the Peace Corps is listening to and respecting Volunteers, it will consider reducing or terminating these programs.

In many countries the overwhelming majority of the Volunteers support refocusing and redesigning the programs: 74% in Jordan; 73% in Ethiopia; 72% in Benin; 71% in Romania; 69% in Surinam; 68% in Botswana; 67% in Niger; 64% in Fiji, Guyana, and Cape Verde; 63% in Bulgaria and Moldova; 62% in Cambodia; 61% in Samoa and Tonga; 60% in Eastern Caribbean; 57% in Senegal and Turkmenistan; 56% in Cameroon, Ghana and Thailand; 55% in Morocco and South Africa; and 47% in China. Clearly, an investigation is needed in these countries to determine why so many Volunteers recommend that the program be refocused and redesigned.

In only a few countries do Volunteers support maintaining a program “as is.” These include 49% in Micronesia; 47% in Zambia; 43% in Panama; 41% in Paraguay; 40% in Vanuatu; 34% in Guatemala; 34% in Mali and Malawi; 33% in Ecuador, Dominican Republic, and Belize; 33%

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<sup>27</sup> Question H 6.

in Armenia and Bolivia; 32% in Costa Rica; 31% in Ghana, El Salvador and Albania; and 30% in Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, it appears that the Peace Corps has not followed up or asked open-ended questions to determine why so many Volunteers support a “refocused/redesigned” Peace Corps and so few support an expanded one. The Volunteer responses to this question are the most tantalizing in the survey and the most significant, given the current political agenda of some Members of Congress and RPCVs to rapidly expand the number of Volunteers. The priority of the authors is the same as that of the Volunteers—making reform the top priority.

In this survey the Peace Corps asks whether Volunteers “intend to complete” their service as Volunteers (or early terminate—ET). As mentioned above, the responses to this question raise fundamental questions about which Volunteers completed the survey. The survey finds that 2% of the Volunteers say that will not complete their service; 4% are not sure; 75% will complete their service; and 19% “might extend.” Given that the Peace Corps suffers from a 35% ET rate, six times the ET rate implied by these responses, it appears clear that the respondents to this survey do not include a representative sampling of the most dissatisfied Volunteers. If it had, the survey results would have been decidedly more negative.

Analyzing the responses on a country-by-country basis, the highest ratings for “might extend” are found for Volunteers in Cambodia, 46%; Dominican Republic 41%; Paraguay 38%; Madagascar 37%; Cape Verde 34%; Malawi 33%; Panama 31%; Tonga 28%; Philippines 28%; Mexico 27%; Ghana and El Salvador, 26%; Macedonia, Namibia, and Senegal, 25%; Ecuador and Zambia, 24%; Kenya, Cameroon, Vanuatu, The Gambia, and Guinea, 23%; Lesotho, Niger, and Micronesia, 22%; Mali and Honduras, 21%; and Belize, Ukraine, and Burkina Faso, 20%. The highest overall ratings to this question (weighting the four possible answers) are from Paraguay, Madagascar, Cape Verde, Dominican Republic, Malawi, Cambodia, Tonga, Philippines, Mexico, Namibia, Kenya, Ecuador, Lesotho, and Panama. The lowest overall ratings are in Ethiopia, Surinam, Jordan, Guyana, Samoa, Jamaica, Togo, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Albania.

The remainder of the survey provides evocative information about why Volunteers are so positive about their service and so equivocal about the agency.

One especially illuminating question focuses on the extent to which Country Directors “interact with Volunteers to be aware of Volunteer issues and concerns” through training events, in-service conferences, site visits, Volunteer Advisory Committee meetings, and other informal interactions.<sup>28</sup> Worldwide, the responses of the Volunteers to this question are evenly split between those who find this interaction positive (31% of the Volunteers say the Country Director interacts with the Volunteers in order to be aware and 20% say he/she does so “completely”) and those who don’t (30% say the interaction of the Country Director is “adequate,” 17% say it he or she does so “minimally,” and “2% say he or she does so “not at all”).

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<sup>28</sup> Question E 11.



The country-by-country results regarding the Country Director question give us vital information about precisely where the successes and the problems lie. The survey was conducted in the summer of 2008, so they do not apply to any Country Director installed since then, and the survey question could have been better crafted.<sup>29</sup> The results reveal a chasm between countries where the Country Directors are well regarded by the Volunteers and those where they are not. Presented below are the results (ranging from interacting “not at all,” “minimally,” “adequately,” “considerably,” and “completely”), the average rating for each country<sup>30</sup>, and the ranking of that rating compared to the rating for Country Director in all other Peace Corps countries.<sup>31</sup>

One preliminary question relates to the use of the word “adequate” in the survey. The dictionary definitions of the word “adequate” include “sufficient,” “barely sufficient,” “fair to middling,” and “passable.” The meaning of the term in the biennial survey can be sensed when it’s compared to more positive terms used in the same survey questions: “effective” and “very effective,” and more negative ones: “poor” or “not effective.” It’s clear that when the Volunteers report that something is “adequate,” they lack enthusiasm for it. The authors believe that it’s fair to infer that they mean “mediocre.”<sup>32</sup>

Question E 11: The extent to which Country Directors “interact with Volunteers to be aware of Volunteer issues and concerns” through training events, in-service conferences, site visits, Volunteer Advisory Committee meetings, and other informal interactions (2008 Biennial Survey of Peace Corps Volunteers)

	Not At All	Minimally	Adequately	Substantially	Completely	Total	Score	Rank
Romania		2	5	18	68	93	4.32	1
Botswana		1	4	13	26	44	4.23	2
Lesotho		1	5	11	23	40	4.20	3
Guinea			3	7	11	21	4.19	4
Moldova	1	2	11	31	52	97	4.20	5

<sup>29</sup> The wording of this question is rather strange. It focuses on whether the Country Director “interacts with Volunteers to be aware of Volunteer issues and concerns.” Whether a Country Director “interacts to be aware” is much less important than whether he or she takes effective action to address the issues. A better question is whether the Country Director listens to, respects and empowers the Volunteers. Another focus could be on whether the Country Director works effectively to give the Volunteers a reasonable opportunity to achieve sustainable results.

Another would be whether he or she respects Volunteer rights.

<sup>30</sup> The average is computed as follows: (a) “not at all” = 1, “minimally” = 2, “adequately” = 3, “substantially” = 4, and “completely” = 5. (b) Multiple values by number of Volunteers. (c) Divide by number of Volunteers to yield average rating.

<sup>31</sup> The ranking worldwide ranks the average ratings from the highest (1<sup>st</sup>) to lowest.

<sup>32</sup> The number “3”—often used in the survey questions—apparently carries the same meaning as “adequate.” Similarly, the number “4” apparently corresponds to “substantially” or “considerably.”

Vanuatu		1	1	12	12	26	4.17	6
Mauritania	1	1	3	10	18	33	4.22	7
Senegal		1	10	21	30	62	4.15	8
Micronesia	1	1	6	18	26	52	4.18	9
Dominican								
Republic	2	3	16	48	44	113	4.11	10
Kenya		1	5	10	10	26	4.06	11
Zambia		8	32	56	61	157	4.04	12
Turkmenistan		1	11	29	14	55	4.01	13
Fiji		2	3	11	6	22	3.98	14
The Gambia	2	6	14	42	27	91	4.02	15
Georgia		8	8	16	19	51	3.95	16
Armenia	1	3	10	21	13	48	3.98	17
Malawi		1	12	32	6	51	3.92	18
Kyrg Republic		5	12	16	14	47	3.91	19
Thailand	4	6	22	40	28	100	3.99	20
Nicaragua		10	23	30	23	86	3.88	21
Burkina Faso		2	22	31	9	64	3.87	22
Paraguay		5	23	27	14	69	3.86	23
South Africa		4	20	19	12	55	3.85	24
Mali	1	5	16	23	11	56	3.87	25
Ghana	1	3	11	18	7	40	3.89	26
Eastern								
Caribbean	1	11	25	29	17	83	3.82	27
Kazakhstan	3	5	43	45	12	108	3.82	28
Tonga		3	5	6	3	17	3.76	29
Cape Verde		3	14	9	5	31	3.76	30
Belize	1	5	13	21	4	44	3.79	31
China		6	27	20	8	61	3.75	32
Guatemala		9	35	32	9	85	3.74	33
Panama	2	14	33	42	12	103	3.77	34
Swaziland	1	5	6	8	5	25	3.80	35
Mexico	1	7	14	16	6	44	3.76	36
Togo		5	18	16	3	42	3.70	37
Costa Rica		7	37	20	8	72	3.70	38
Madagascar	1	9	22	19	6	57	3.71	39
Peru	3	19	27	22	15	86	3.72	40
Honduras	2	14	32	26	9	83	3.70	41
Cambodia	1	1	5	5	1	13	3.80	42
Jamaica	3	12	20	15	10	60	3.74	43
Albania	1	8	10	11	4	34	3.69	44
Kiribati		1	4	3		8	3.63	45
Samoa	1	7	11	9	4	32	3.68	46

Philippines	1	10	21	17	4	53	3.66	47
Namibia	1	16	19	17	6	59	3.62	48
Bulgaria	1	22	28	26	5	82	3.60	49
Ukraine	5	41	61	45	14	166	3.62	50
Niger		8	11	6	2	27	3.54	51
Bolivia	3	28	45	27	7	110	3.58	52
Macedonia		15	28	14	2	59	3.53	53
Azerbaijan	2	15	26	11	5	59	3.58	54
Tanzania	5	11	17	18	1	52	3.67	55
Benin	3	22	26	14	6	71	3.56	56
Cameroon	1	26	35	14	3	79	3.47	57
Morocco	5	45	54	23	8	135	3.51	58
Mongolia	4	19	23	11	3	60	3.53	59
Ethiopia		11	6	3	2	22	3.41	60
Suriname	5	13	8	8	2	36	3.60	61
Ecuador	4	19	17	7	2	49	3.48	62
Uganda	2	39	27	11	1	80	3.35	63
Mozambique	4	19	21	6		50	3.43	64
Guyana	2	8	9	2		21	3.43	65
El Salvador	10	26	22	5	2	65	3.48	66
Jordan	6	28	5	3	2	44	3.35	67

These results are stunning.

\* In 34 countries more than half of the Volunteers give their CD a mediocre to poor rating (including 90% in Guyana; 89% in El Salvador; 88% in Jordan and Mozambique; 85% in Uganda; 81% in Ecuador; 78% in Cameroon; 77% in Ethiopia and Morocco; 76% in Mongolia; 73% in Macedonia; 72% in Azerbaijan and Surinam; 71% in Benin; 70% in Niger; 69% in Bolivia; 63% in Tanzania and Ukraine; 62% in Bulgaria; 61% in Costa Rica; and 60% in the Philippines).

\* We have countries where many Volunteers find their CD “minimally” or “not at all” engaged (77% in Jordan and Ethiopia; 55% in El Salvador; 51% in Uganda; 50% in Surinam; 48% in Guyana; and 46% in Mongolia, Mozambique and Ecuador).

\* Only 12 of the 67 CDs received the equivalent of rave reviews (scores averaging more than 4).

These survey results combined with the Volunteer affidavits presented above—many of which focus on problems with Country Directors (CDs)—give us disturbing but useful information. The experience of the authors is that the most important predictor of the health of a country program—and the morale and effectiveness of the Volunteers—is the CD’s values and attitudes. If the CD focuses primarily on regulating the Volunteers’ behavior and treating them like children, the morale and effectiveness of the Volunteers suffers. If the CD listens to, respects and empowers the Volunteers, morale and effectiveness spiral upward.

The reason why the quality of the CDs varies so much is that, according to credible reports, the selection process for CDs has become politicized, with political appointees of the Bush Administration approving unqualified and/or unsuitable candidates over the objections of career

staff and RPCVs. RPCVs have reported that the selection process has proceeded as follows: the selection panels have included at least one RPCV and two agency political appointees; the RPCVs have routinely found the candidates “woefully unfit” to manage Volunteers; the political appointees have outvoted the RPCVs 2-to-1; and the RPCVs have eventually refused to sit on reviews they consider to be a sham.

As one former Country Director observed,

CDs are often political friends, or in some hard-to-staff countries, anyone they can get. The selection process often looked haphazard, and based on a buddy system more than a careful review of qualifications...For example, [name withheld] and...his sidekick...[name withheld] were religious, so they appointed a CD to [name of country withheld] who was born again, or touched by an angel, so some such thing, and the man was trying to convert his Muslim staff, always referring to Jesus when he was talking to the Volunteers! The Volunteers complained; no changes were made, the man did not stop his proselytizing.

As one headquarters staff has said, “You hit the nail right on the head with how many PC Directorships were handed out as a result of cronyism and political patronage rather than for excellence, management, leadership and innovation....something the Peace Corps has traditionally sought to transcend.” This staffer reported that a proposed CD for [an East African country] was found to have run his local [U.S.] school district into bankruptcy and a newly appointed Director for a region had a criminal record and lasted but a week or so.

It is clear from the 2008 Biennial Survey and Volunteer affidavits that the stories about unqualified CDs are well founded. Until the Peace Corps begins to utilize the survey results to weed out ineffective CDs and sets up 360 degree confidential reviews of CDs by Volunteers, as proposed below, survey results will be poor and Volunteer termination rates high. Going forward, it is essential to remove all political consideration from the process of CD selection. The only political appointee who should play a role in the CD selection process should be the Peace Corps Director, who should personally interview the candidates focusing on whether they will listen to, respect, and empower the Volunteers.

In addition to the key question about the values of and support from the CD, Question E 7 asks whether the Volunteers are satisfied by the support provided by in-country Peace Corps staff on 11 different subjects: Administrative support; Cross-cultural; Emotional; Feedback on work reports; Job assignment; Language learning; Management; Medical; Safety and security; Site selection; and Technical skills. When the answers are presented in an Excel spread sheet, it's easy for the Peace Corps management, PCVs, RPCVs and Congress to analyze the responses country-by-country, program-by-program and staff-by-staff.

Take the survey results regarding “job assignment” support. (To conserve space, we will only print here the top 10 and bottom 10 rankings among the 67 countries covered in the survey.)

	Not at all	2	3	4	Completely	Total	Score	Rank
China	2%	3%	25%	36%	34%	59	3.97	1
Guinea	5%	5%	23%	41%	27%	22	3.79	2
Kazakhstan	4%	8%	27%	31%	31%	114	3.76	3
Azerbaijan	3%	10%	22%	41%	24%	59	3.73	4
Nicaragua	3%	8%	26%	41%	21%	87	3.70	5
Tanzania	2%	14%	22%	41%	22%	51	3.66	6
Lesotho	2%	12%	25%	40%	20%	40	3.65	7
Guatemala	7%	11%	19%	39%	25%	85	3.63	8
Micronesia	4%	8%	31%	35%	22%	51	3.63	9
Bulgaria	7%	7%	25%	37%	23%	81	3.63	10
...								
South Africa	19%	17%	31%	22%	11%	54	2.89	58
Jamaica	15%	25%	30%	18%	12%	60	2.87	59
Belize	5%	32%	41%	18%	5%	44	2.86	60
Togo	5%	29%	49%	15%	2%	41	2.80	61
Guyana	14%	33%	29%	19%	5%	21	2.68	62
Uganda	18%	29%	32%	16%	5%	79	2.61	63
Ethiopia	19%	33%	29%	10%	10%	21	2.59	64
Jordan	9%	49%	24%	11%	7%	45	2.58	65
Samoa	13%	40%	30%	10%	7%	30	2.58	66
Suriname	34%	37%	14%	11%	3%	35	2.11	67

This chart shows a vast discrepancy between the highest ranked country (China) where 34% of the Volunteers report that they are “completely” satisfied with the job assignment support they receive and the lowest ranked country (Surinam) where 34% say that they are “not at all” satisfied with their job assignment support.

When these results were published last November, did the Peace Corps investigate the countries with the lowest rankings? Did it seek to determine what practices were being followed with regard to “job assignment” support in the top ranked countries? Did it respect the views of the Volunteers or ignore them?

Take “management” support as an issue. Here are the top 10 and bottom 10 rankings worldwide:

	Not at all	2	3	4	Completely	Total	Score	Rank
Georgia	2%	6%	22%	38%	32%	50	3.92	1

Macedonia	2%	5%	30%	32%	32%	57	3.86	2
China		7%	26%	43%	24%	58	3.84	3
Dominican Republic	1%	5%	29%	44%	22%	105	3.80	4
Bulgaria	10%	5%	15%	35%	35%	80	3.80	5
Malawi		4%	33%	45%	18%	51	3.77	6
Kyrg Republic		7%	35%	41%	17%	46	3.68	7
Nicaragua		5%	36%	45%	14%	83	3.68	8
Romania	3%	9%	32%	30%	26%	88	3.67	9
Mauritania	3%	6%	34%	34%	22%	32	3.67	10
...								
Cameroon	8%	27%	47%	15%	3%	73	2.78	58
Togo	10%	20%	56%	15%		41	2.75	59
Guyana		45%	40%	10%	5%	20	2.75	60
Fiji	17%	21%	33%	29%		24	2.74	61
Jordan	12%	33%	31%	21%	2%	42	2.68	62
Niger	19%	22%	44%	11%	4%	27	2.59	63
Uganda	12%	36%	40%	10%	3%	78	2.56	64
Samoa	20%	27%	40%	13%		30	2.46	65
Ethiopia	27%	27%	41%		5%	22	2.29	66
Suriname	51%	14%	29%	6%		35	1.90	67

Again, we see a vast discrepancy between countries where many Volunteers state that they are “completely” satisfied to countries where they say that they are “not at all” satisfied.

Did the Peace Corps notice that six of the lowest ranking countries for “management” were also among the lowest ranking for “job assignment”? Did this give urgency to the process of overhauling these programs? Or were the views of the Volunteers ignored? We see three countries appearing again in the top ranked list—China, Bulgaria, and Nicaragua. What are they doing that the others are not doing?

Take the question about “feedback on my work reports.” Here are the top 10 and bottom 10 rankings:

	Not at all	2	3	4	Completely	Total	Score	Rank
Bulgaria	4%	5%	20%	39%	32%	79	3.90	1
Ecuador		6%	36%	32%	26%	47	3.78	2
Azerbaijan	3%	8%	17%	51%	20%	59	3.78	3
Kazakhstan	2%	11%	31%	28%	29%	112	3.70	4
Georgia	2%	14%	22%	40%	22%	50	3.66	5
Nicaragua	1%	13%	28%	38%	20%	86	3.63	6
Mongolia	2%	12%	32%	33%	21%	57	3.59	7

Macedonia	7%	9%	31%	26%	28%	58	3.58	8
Guinea		14%	32%	36%	18%	22	3.58	9
Lesotho	3%	14%	32%	24%	27%	37	3.58	10
...								
Mali	18%	26%	30%	25%	2%	57	2.67	58
Jordan	9%	44%	27%	11%	9%	45	2.67	59
Tonga	18%	29%	29%	18%	6%	17	2.65	60
Samoa	23%	38%	15%	23%		26	2.38	61
Uganda	25%	38%	18%	15%	5%	61	2.38	62
Togo	20%	40%	28%	12%		40	2.32	63
Belize	19%	45%	26%	10%		42	2.27	64
Ethiopia	20%	40%	35%	5%		20	2.25	65
South Africa	27%	33%	35%	2%	4%	49	2.24	66
Suriname	43%	31%	11%	14%		35	1.96	67

Again, we see vast discrepancies and the patterns become even clearer. Seven of the bottom 10 countries appear in the bottom 10 on the earlier lists, five of them for the third time. Has the Peace Corps intervened to implement a top to bottom overhaul of the poorly ranked programs since the survey results were published? Does the Peace Corps assess the management practices in the best ranked countries—we see Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Nicaragua, Macedonia, and Guinea repeating—to see how to implement them in the worst ranked ones?

Take the question regarding “site selection.” Here are the top 10 and bottom 10 rankings:

	Not at all	2	3	4	Completely	Total	Score	Rank
China		2%	15%	25%	58%	59	4.39	1
Nicaragua	2%	5%	17%	29%	47%	87	4.14	2
Georgia	2%	12%	14%	29%	43%	49	3.99	3
Kenya		12%	15%	38%	35%	26	3.96	4
Kyrg Republic	2%	9%	23%	26%	40%	47	3.93	5
Azerbaijan	3%	3%	21%	43%	29%	58	3.93	6
Micronesia		4%	35%	27%	35%	52	3.92	7
Thailand	2%	14%	16%	27%	42%	96	3.92	8
Guinea	9%		14%	45%	32%	22	3.91	9
Mexico	5%	7%	17%	34%	37%	41	3.91	10
...								
Niger	4%	11%	50%	18%	18%	28	3.35	58
Ethiopia	10%	14%	33%	24%	19%	21	3.28	59
Samoa	12%	25%	12%	25%	25%	32	3.26	60
Romania	14%	19%	22%	24%	21%	91	3.19	61
Jamaica	17%	21%	19%	17%	26%	58	3.14	62

South Africa	17%	10%	35%	21%	17%	52	3.11	63
Uganda	21%	15%	26%	21%	18%	82	3.00	64
Fiji	12%	17%	42%	21%	8%	24	2.96	65
Togo	12%	25%	28%	30%	5%	40	2.91	66
Suriname	37%	17%	26%	14%	6%	35	2.35	67

Nine of the bottom 10 countries appear on an earlier bottom 10 list, five of them for the fourth time. Six countries repeat in the top ranked list.

While we see generally unimpressive ratings for the support provided to the Volunteers by their Peace Corps project managers and staff, the Volunteers report very positive ratings for the support they receive from the medical and security staff.<sup>33</sup> Overall Volunteers report “exceptional” and “considerable” support from their Peace Corps medical staff (39% say “exceptional” and 33% say “considerably”). Only 28% report mediocre or poor medical support.<sup>34</sup> The Volunteer satisfaction with the support for “safety and security” is rated as “completely” supportive by 40% of the Volunteers, with 33% rating it as a “4” (which apparently means “considerably”). Only 27% rate this support as mediocre or poor.<sup>35</sup> The Volunteers also give high rankings for “language learning” support.<sup>36</sup>

So, the Volunteers know how to give high ratings in this survey—when they are warranted.

In printing the top 10 and bottom 10 lists, we may tend to ignore the mediocrity in the middle. Is the Peace Corps satisfied when most of the Volunteers rate the support they received as a “3”—adequate or mediocre? Take four countries in the middle of the overall rankings: Turkmenistan, Ecuador, Micronesia and Tanzania, ranked 37<sup>th</sup>, 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, and 40<sup>th</sup>. Is the Peace Corps satisfied with their rankings on “job assignment” (36<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup>, respectively), “management” (38<sup>th</sup>, 47<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 53<sup>rd</sup>), “feedback on my projects” (25<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 39<sup>th</sup>), and “site selection” (41<sup>st</sup>, 45<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>)? Does the Peace Corps give a priority to reform in these countries?

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<sup>33</sup> Questions E 7.h and E 7.i..

<sup>34</sup> In four countries the medical support is rated very poorly. In Tonga 11% of the Volunteers say their medical support is “not at all” helpful and another 17% who say it’s “2” (poor). In Zambia 7% say “not at all” and 24% say “2”. In Micronesia, 15% say “not at all” and 23% say “2.” And in Guyana 27% say “not at all” and 27% say “2.” Did the Peace Corps intervene to raise the standard of medical support provided in these countries?

<sup>35</sup> With security support we have disturbingly low ratings in five countries. In Cambodia 14% of the Volunteers report “not at all” support and 7% report “2” (poor). In The Gambia 13% say “not at all” and 21% say “2.” In Samoa, 12% say “not at all” and 22% say “2.” In Cameroon 12% say “not at all” and 25% say “2.” And in Uganda 32% say “not at all” and 32% say “2.” Did the Peace Corps intervene to raise the safety and security support provided in these countries?

<sup>36</sup> Here again we have some countries with poor ratings. “Not at all” or “2” rankings were 25% in Fiji, 34% in Jordan and Belize, 35% in Uganda, 36% in Guyana, 37% in Jamaica, 41% in Eastern Caribbean, 45% in South Africa, 50% in Ethiopia and 73% in Namibia. Again, did the Peace Corps take notice and action?



Taking all of the Volunteer responses to these 11 categories for question E7 and giving appropriate weight to the answers, it's possible to give an overall ranking of staff support provided to the Volunteers for all of the countries in the survey. This list can be seen as the ultimate overall ranking of the management support given to the Volunteers, country-by-country.

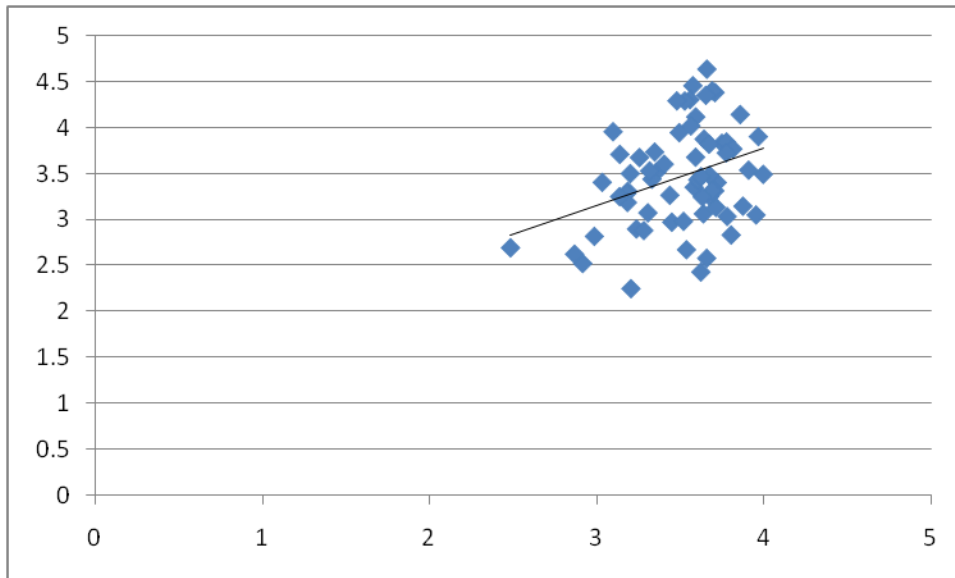
	Not at all	2	3	4	Completely	Score	Rank
China	1%	7%	21%	33%	38%	3.99	1
Georgia	2%	9%	18%	34%	37%	3.96	2
Macedonia	4%	7%	20%	28%	41%	3.96	3
Kazakhstan	3%	6%	23%	35%	33%	3.89	4
Bulgaria	3%	7%	21%	34%	34%	3.88	5
Dominican Republic	2%	8%	24%	39%	28%	3.84	6
Mongolia	3%	7%	24%	38%	28%	3.82	7
Nicaragua	2%	8%	23%	39%	28%	3.81	8
Vanuatu	2%	9%	26%	33%	29%	3.79	9
Azerbaijan	2%	8%	23%	43%	23%	3.78	10
Malawi	2%	10%	26%	33%	29%	3.78	11
Paraguay	1%	8%	27%	41%	23%	3.77	12
Kyrg Republic	2%	10%	24%	36%	27%	3.76	13
Costa Rica	3%	8%	25%	39%	25%	3.73	14
Ukraine	2%	10%	28%	34%	26%	3.71	15
Honduras	3%	11%	24%	38%	25%	3.71	16
Guinea	3%	9%	26%	41%	22%	3.70	17
Lesotho	2%	10%	28%	36%	24%	3.70	18
Kiribati	0%	13%	18%	53%	15%	3.70	19
Peru	4%	11%	26%	28%	30%	3.69	20
Thailand	4%	11%	25%	30%	29%	3.68	21
Guatemala	4%	9%	26%	34%	26%	3.68	22
Romania	5%	13%	23%	28%	30%	3.66	23
Mozambique	2%	11%	28%	37%	21%	3.65	24
Moldova	6%	10%	22%	35%	27%	3.65	25
Armenia	8%	10%	19%	34%	28%	3.65	26
Bolivia	4%	12%	26%	35%	24%	3.63	27
Philippines	3%	11%	27%	41%	19%	3.62	28
El Salvador	4%	11%	28%	33%	24%	3.62	29
Panama	4%	10%	28%	34%	23%	3.61	30
Mexico	6%	11%	25%	35%	24%	3.60	31
Madagascar	2%	14%	29%	34%	21%	3.59	32
Mali	3%	13%	26%	38%	20%	3.59	33
Botswana	6%	11%	27%	32%	24%	3.58	34

Mauritania	7%	10%	24%	37%	22%	3.58	35
Kenya	1%	12%	32%	38%	18%	3.58	36
Turkmenistan	4%	14%	27%	34%	21%	3.55	37
Ecuador	3%	13%	32%	30%	22%	3.55	38
Micronesia	4%	12%	33%	31%	20%	3.52	39
Tanzania	6%	13%	21%	41%	18%	3.51	40
The Gambia	5%	12%	29%	35%	19%	3.50	41
Senegal	4%	15%	29%	32%	20%	3.48	42
Benin	9%	12%	28%	27%	24%	3.46	43
Albania	8%	12%	28%	29%	22%	3.45	44
Eastern Caribbean	8%	14%	30%	28%	21%	3.40	45
Cape Verde	4%	17%	36%	26%	18%	3.36	46
Burkina Faso	4%	16%	33%	32%	14%	3.35	47
Swaziland	3%	16%	36%	37%	8%	3.33	48
Tonga	6%	14%	36%	31%	13%	3.31	49
Niger	6%	18%	32%	27%	17%	3.30	50
Morocco	7%	16%	33%	29%	15%	3.29	51
Ghana	6%	17%	34%	32%	12%	3.26	52
Cambodia	6%	15%	38%	32%	9%	3.24	53
Jordan	8%	25%	26%	20%	20%	3.20	54
Belize	4%	22%	32%	34%	8%	3.20	55
Cameroon	7%	19%	34%	26%	13%	3.18	56
Jamaica	10%	20%	30%	20%	19%	3.18	57
Namibia	7%	19%	36%	28%	11%	3.17	58
Samoa	10%	22%	25%	27%	15%	3.15	59
Zambia	6%	19%	39%	27%	9%	3.15	60
South Africa	10%	18%	36%	21%	15%	3.13	61
Fiji	7%	20%	36%	29%	8%	3.10	62
Togo	7%	22%	40%	24%	7%	3.02	63
Ethiopia	10%	27%	33%	15%	15%	2.99	64
Guyana	9%	26%	38%	19%	8%	2.92	65
Uganda	15%	26%	32%	16%	12%	2.85	66
Suriname	30%	24%	21%	17%	7%	2.49	67

The issue here is this: Why do we have so few countries with outstanding managers and so many where the majority of the Volunteers give their managers mediocre to poor rankings?

It is interesting to assess whether the composite rankings of staff support correspond to the rankings of the CDs. The following graph shows the degree of correlation between rankings for

## CDs and staff.



The convergence of the points in this graph indicates that there is a strong correlation; if the points were randomly spread throughout the graph, they would indicate a lack of correlation. In short, the data show that if a country has a highly ranked CD, it's more likely to have a highly ranked staff. The authors assume that the causation runs from the CD to the staff and not the reverse. This reflects the view of the authors that it is essential to depoliticize the CD selection process.

We can see that the responses to questions E11 (CD) and E7 (staff) give us a floodlit roadmap of the countries where the management is performing well and underperforming. The key question is whether the Peace Corps uses this survey—and other evidence, such as the ET and extension rates in the country<sup>37</sup>—to institutionalize a process for continual renewal and reform. How many staff were reviewed or terminated based on these survey reports? How many staff were notified and given training to provide better support to the Volunteers? How were Volunteers engaged in following up on the survey? How many new best practices—for example, for site selection—were developed and implemented (with the input of the Volunteers)? The bottom-line issue with this survey is simple: To what extent does the Peace Corps listen to, respect, and empower the Volunteers?

Turning to other survey results, the Volunteers reported especially negative views regarding the support they receive from “host country supervisors, sponsors, counterparts”<sup>38</sup>—all of whom are recruited by the Peace Corps as part of the site preparation process for the Volunteers.

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<sup>37</sup> As will be explained below, the authors believe that surveys should be supplemented with annual 360 degree reviews focused on the design of programs and the effectiveness of the program managers. This would be a listening mechanism even more evocative than this Survey.

<sup>38</sup> Question E 8.

- \* “Administrative/logistical” support”: 70% of the Volunteers report mediocre to poor support. 17% report “none” regarding support and only 9% report “exceptional” support.
  - \* “Feedback on my project activities”: 72% of the Volunteers report mediocre to poor support. None is 16% and exceptional is only 7%.
  - \* “Job development” support”: 74% of the Volunteers report mediocre to poor support. None is 19% and exceptional is only 6%.
  - \* “Technical skills” support: 74% of the Volunteers report mediocre to poor support. None is 21% and exceptional is only 7%.
- There is substantial variability country-to-country.

In terms of training, 60% to 75% of the Volunteers report mediocre to poor quality Pre-Service Training (PST)<sup>39</sup>, as follows:

- \* Training to “work with counterparts”: 70% of Volunteers report that their training was “adequate” (44%), “poor” (25%) or “not effective” (5%). Only 5% report this training was “very effective.”
- \* Training to “perform technical aspects of [their] work”: 63% report that their training was adequate (36%), poor (21%) or not effective (6%). Only 11% report this training was very effective.
- \* Training to “work with project goals and objectives”: 58% report the training to be adequate (41%), poor (14%) or not effective (3%). Only 10% report this training to be very effective.
- \* Training to use “participatory development assessments”: 63% report the training to be adequate (39%), poor (19%) or not effective (5%). Only 10% report this training to be very effective.
- \* Training to “monitor project goals and outcomes”: 67% report the training to be adequate (43%), poor (20%) or not effective (4%). Only 6% of the Volunteers report this training to be very effective.
- \* Most important, 45% of the Volunteers report that they are not adequately trained to “build capacity of local organizations,” which 70% of them reported to be a skill “needed for [their] Peace Corps work.” Building capacity is, in fact, the only way to achieve sustainable development results and it is the essence of the Peace Corps’ First Goal and arguably the single most important objective of the Peace Corps. Again, there is substantial variability country-to-country.

These unimpressive ratings regarding the five types of training contrast sharply with the unequivocally positive views regarding two other aspects of training—training to “maintain [their] personal safety,” where 78% of Volunteers report their training to be “very effective” (40%) and “effective” (38%). The ratings of the Volunteers regarding their training to “maintain [their] physical health” are similarly enthusiastic. This puts the poor rankings for other types of PST into stark relief.

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<sup>39</sup> Question B 2. Training for Volunteers is typically divided between Pre-Service Training for two to three months immediately after “trainees” arrive in country and before they officially are sworn in as Volunteers, and In-Service Training, which occurs during the service of the Volunteer.

The reports of Volunteers regarding their In-Service Training (IST) are similarly bifurcated, mediocre to poor ratings for most elements of training and enthusiastic and positive ratings for safety and health training.<sup>40</sup> Again, countries vary substantially.

The Volunteer ratings of the Peace Corps programs are also mediocre. In terms of “Volunteer assignment goals and impact”<sup>41</sup> between 40% and 60% of the Volunteers report mediocre or poor clarity about six key elements of their project assignment: “project plan’s goals and objectives,” “project activities,” “my role and responsibility,” “sponsoring agency’s responsibilities,” “my APCD/Program Manager’s responsibilities,” and “monitoring, reporting, and evaluating tasks.”

\* “Project plan’s goals and objectives”: Only 24% of the Volunteers report that they are “exceptionally clear.”

\* “Project activities”: Only 20% report that they are exceptionally clear.

\* “My role and responsibility”: Only 21% report that they are exceptionally clear.

\* “Sponsoring agency’s responsibilities”: Only 11% report they are exceptionally clear.

\* “My APCD/Program Manager’s responsibilities”: Only 19% report they are exceptionally clear.

\* “Monitoring, reporting, and evaluating tasks”: Only 16% report they are exceptionally clear.

Once again, there is substantial variability country-to-country.

Similarly, between 45% and 60% of the Volunteers report mediocre or poor accomplishments for their primary assignment with regard to “meets the objectives of my project” and “involves local people in planning and implementing activities.”<sup>42</sup>

\* “Meets the objectives of my project”: Only 16% of the Volunteers report “exceptionally.”

\* “Involves local people in planning and implementing activities”: Only 17% report “exceptionally.”

Again, there is substantial variability country to country.

In terms of three critical First Goal measures of their assignments—“builds local capacity for sustainability,” “complements other local development activities,” and “transfers skills to host country individuals and organizations”—the Volunteers report mediocre or poor impacts, as follow<sup>43</sup>:

\* “Builds local capacity for sustainability”: 59% of the Volunteers say that their accomplishments rate a “3” (which appears to translate as “possibly”), “2” (“not likely”) and “not at all.” Only 10% say “exceptionally.”

\* “Complements other local development activities”: 57% of the Volunteers say that their accomplishments rate a 3, 2 (not likely) and not at all. Only 10% of the Volunteers say “exceptionally.”

\* “Transfers skills to host country individuals and organizations”: 47% of the Volunteers say that their accomplishments rate a 3, 2 (not likely) and not at all. Only 15% of the Volunteers say “exceptionally.”

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<sup>40</sup> Question B 4.

<sup>41</sup> Question D 1.

<sup>42</sup> Question D 2.

<sup>43</sup> Also Question D 2.

Overall, these are mediocre results.

On the single most important measure—“building capacity”—results vary considerably from country to country. By this measure, few country programs are performing well. The top scores go to Ecuador where 55% of the Volunteers say that their assignments do well on building capacity. The scores are high for Costa Rica and South Africa (54%), Honduras (52%), Botswana, Peru and Zambia (51%), and Belize, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Senegal (50%). The scores are poor for Jordan (9%), Swaziland (16%), Namibia (19%), China and Samoa (25%), Benin (26%), Ethiopia and Lesotho (27%), and Cambodia and Fiji (29%). The Peace Corps must examine why some countries are so much more effective in achieving sustainable results and what it can do to raise all of the scores.

Strangely, the survey does not once use the word “sustainable” in assessing the development impact of the Volunteers’ service.<sup>44</sup> The closest it comes is the reference to “build capacity...” There is no challenge more important than that of achieving sustainable development results.

The survey invites the Volunteers to provide narrative recommendations regarding three subjects: 1) How can the Peace Corps better address the needs of your host country? 2) How are the realities of Peace Corps service different from your expectations before you became a Volunteer? And 3) If you have additional comments or concerns you would like to share, please do...below. Volunteers are offered the option for the Peace Corps headquarters not to share these responses with the country post. In response to our FOIA request, the Peace Corps has refused to produce these narrative results.

The survey respondents provide substantial demographic information so it would be possible to assess all of the subjects for different cohorts of Volunteers—program assignment, age, gender, ethnicity/race, marital status, education attainment level, living conditions, etc. This would enable the Peace Corps to assess successes and challenges cohort-by-cohort, including program-by-program, not just country-by-country. This data can be correlated also to the termination rates cohort-by-cohort. Overall, the survey responses provide useful information that confirms the gist of the affidavits printed above. But it does not ask penetrating questions that might yield more useful information.

The Peace Corps should transmit the country-by-country and program-by-program tabulations to the Congress, the media, PCVs, invitees to serve in the Peace Corps, RPCV groups, and on line services. By circulating and publishing them, the Peace Corps can demonstrate that it’s not afraid to acknowledge that the Volunteers believe that the Peace Corps must be “refocused/redesigned.”

The affidavits and survey results point directly to the reform recommendations presented in this report and plan. Reform must start with the Peace Corps, the Congress, and RPCVs

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<sup>44</sup> Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that enables the host country nationals to continue the development projects after the Volunteer has departed, without ongoing dependence on infusions of capital or assistance from outside sources—and to do so while preserving the environment so that these projects continue not only in the present, but in the indefinite future.

acknowledging the pervasive mediocrity in the agency's performance. This honesty must be matched with a sustained commitment to fundamental reform, to "refocusing" and "redesigning" the Peace Corps from the ground up. The agency must be cautious about expansion, which could well undermine performance and generate a public crisis as the failings of the Peace Corps became widely known. The Peace Corps stands at a turning point where it has an opportunity to match its Camelot reputation with well designed training and programs, respect for the Volunteers, effective staff support, and a process of continuous renewal that strives for excellence. That is precisely what this Twenty Point Plan proposes.

## **Twenty Point Plan to Strengthen and Expand the Peace Corps**

### **Point One: Address the Three Peace Corps Funding Priorities**

The 20 points in this plan are interrelated. Point One focuses on three budget priorities for the Peace Corps. President Obama has called repeatedly for doubling the number of Volunteers. But his success in securing the appropriations to fulfill this pledge will be contingent on the commitment and performance of the Peace Corps in strengthening its management of the Volunteers and its effectiveness as a development agency. These issues are addressed in Points Two to Eighteen. Success will also be affected by the ability of the Peace Corps to meet competition from new international service programs, an issue addressed in Point Nineteen. Point Twenty focuses on organizing a political campaign to secure implementation of the reforms.

Consistent with this view, the *first budget priority* for the Peace Corps should be to fund implementation of an ambitious plan to strengthen the Peace Corps; its *second* should be funding to reverse the recent cutbacks; and its *third* should be expansion.

The first step is to acknowledge that reform is the top priority. As we have seen with the 2008 Biennial Survey, few current Volunteers support expansion of the number of Volunteers as the top priority. They understand that the priority should be to focus on quality, not quantity, a point made repeatedly in the affidavits.

Then the Peace Corps must present a budget that specifies the top reform priorities and the cost of each. We have presented such a budget to the House and Senate Appropriations Committee. **See Appendix D.** We project the cost of reform to be \$31 million the first year. Our plan would include a) launching a strategy to reduce the high and costly ET rates; b) reimbursing Volunteers for their work-related expenses; c) reducing the ratio of country staff to Volunteers and strengthening site development and counterpart recruitment; d) strengthening language training to include written language materials and pod casts; e) strengthening medical support for Volunteers; f) utilizing the Internet to connect Volunteers worldwide and provide continuity among them; g) strengthening the agency's management and financial staff; h) reconnecting RPCVs to the Peace Corps for lifelong service; i) increasing funding of Third Goal initiatives; and j) increasing reimbursements to applicants for required medical tests and implementing the IG's proposed reforms of the medical screening process. Fortunately, many of the strengthening measures—instituting 360 degree reviews of programs and staff, reforming the out-of-site regulations, implementing new charitable donation rules, and protecting Volunteer rights—carry

essentially no cost. Rather, implementation of these measures might yield substantial savings, for example, if the Peace Corps manages to reduce the high ET rate.

The reform plan budget that we have presented to the Congress demonstrates clearly that we support increased appropriations for the Peace Corps.

Addressing the Peace Corps' funding shortfall of at least \$18 million<sup>45</sup> should be *the second budget priority*. This budget crisis has caused the Peace Corps to eliminate 400 new trainees (10%) as well as to postpone, in some cases indefinitely, the deployment of Volunteers already approved. It has consolidated some of its recruiting offices in the U.S. and deferred the hiring of some new personnel overseas. It has asked its managers in Washington, and its 11 regional offices to reduce their budgets by 15.5%. Overseas, many of the Corps foreign posts are reducing spending by consolidating two or more employee positions into one and reducing time devoted to Volunteer training. These cutbacks—caused by the depreciation of the dollar and higher commodity (principally fuel) costs overseas—are reportedly just the beginning; the shortfall exceeds the current estimates. Coming soon are increases in Volunteer allowances, which represent approximately one-sixth of the overseas costs. Some have alleged that the Peace Corps has failed to adequately forecast these higher overseas expenses. Covering this budget shortfall would cost approximately \$30 million per year.

The goal of expanding the number of Volunteers—*the third budget priority*—should first be accomplished organically. The first and most effective growth strategy is to reduce the high and costly ET rate among Volunteers, which runs at about 35% worldwide. The ET rate issue is discussed in depth below. It is realistic to believe that the rate of ETs could be cut in half. The most effective strategy to reduce the ET rate is to implement elements of this reform plan—giving Volunteers a better opportunity to achieve First Goal (development) results and listening to, respecting and empowering them. This is a growth strategy based on quality improvements.

The second organic way to grow the Peace Corps is to end the policy of eliminating one training slot for every Volunteer who extends for a third year of service. Those who extend tend to be the most productive and highly motivated, so growing the Corps with third-year Volunteers achieves several goals at once. Again, the best way to increase the number of Volunteers who seek to extend is to implement the elements of this reform plan, thus ensuring that the Peace Corps make investments in quality.

The most costly and least productive way to increase the number of Volunteers is to appropriate funds for additional slots without implementing fundamental reforms.

The logistics of expansion are critical. One central question is whether the supply of “qualified” applicants is sufficient to fuel expansion. Many mistakenly believe that for every Volunteer selected, the Peace Corps receives three applications from individuals who could become Volunteers. Inspector General (IG) Kotz, in a cautious statement, says, “In the last five years, the

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<sup>45</sup> The Peace Corps has not revealed the baseline for calculating this \$18 million shortfall. It could be a shortfall based on the FY08 appropriations (\$330 million) or on some projection of the appropriations for FY09.



number of applicants the Office of Medical Services **has medically qualified for service** has exceeded the number of Volunteers requested by Peace Corps posts.<sup>46</sup> This statement makes a distinction between the total or **gross** number of applicants and the **net** number who meet the minimum standard (e.g. they have survived the medical clearance process). Only those who successfully complete the medical process<sup>47</sup> are eligible to be invited to serve as Volunteers. Only they are “qualified.” It appears that the references to the three to one ratio applies to the gross—not the net—number of applicants. This is critical because so many applicants do not, in fact, survive the medical and legal clearance process and are not “qualified.” They cannot become Volunteers.

Applicants who meet the minimum standards and become “qualified” are almost certain to be invited to train to become Volunteers. Here are the statistics regarding the net number of “qualified” applicants compared to the number invited to training:

\* In FY 2007 the Peace Corps reports that it received 11,108 applications, but only 4,588 survived the medical and legal clearance process to become “qualified.” Of this pool, 4,408 were invited to training. This means that of this pool of “qualified” applicants, all but 180 or 96% were invited to training. The ratio of those who were medically and legally cleared to those who were invited to training was 1.04 to 1.

\* In FY 2008 the Peace Corps reports that it received 13,041 applications, but only 4,265 survived the medical and legal clearance process to become “qualified.” Of this pool, 4,123 were invited to training. This means that from this pool of “qualified” applicant, all but 142 or 96.7% were invited to training. The ratio of those who were medically cleared to those who were invited to training was 1.03 to 1.<sup>48 49</sup>

These statistics mean that if applicants survive the entire application process, including medical and legal clearance, they are **not** then compared to other “qualified” applicants to determine which of them is the **most** qualified. Rather, in almost all cases, applicants who survive the

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<sup>46</sup> See <http://www.rpcv.org/BillJosephsonPocantico.pdf> The Inspector General also found that the agency’s dysfunctional medical clearance process had turned away “numerous” individuals.

<sup>47</sup> Applicants must also survive “legal clearance,” which includes a check to see if the applicant has a criminal record and if the applicant has any outstanding financial obligations—pending bankruptcy filings or pending legal actions for breach of contract—that cannot be managed if they serve as a Volunteer. They must also be U.S. citizens and 18 years of age.

<sup>48</sup> In processing our request, the Peace Corps stated that it did not have these statistics and would have to generate them from scratch, stating that this would require our covering its costs (\$184). It’s hard to imagine that the Peace Corps was not generating these elemental statistics about its selection of Volunteers, but given the importance of these statistics, we absorbed the costs.

<sup>49</sup> The ratio of applicants to trainees used to be quite high. In 1962 there were 20,058 applicants for 4,421 trainees; in 1963 33,762 for 4,951; in 1964 45,653 for 8,085; in 1965 42,125 for 8,742; in 1966 42,246 for 11,230; in 1967 35,229 for 8,628; in 1968 30,450 for 7,735; in 1969 24,229 for 5,563; in 1970 19,022 for 4,450; and in 1971 26,534 for 4,692. All told from 1961—71 there were 331,952 applicants, 69,410 registered for training (21%)—a ratio of five applicants for every trainee. We do not know if this was the gross number of applicants or the net number who have survived the medical and legal clearance process. See [http://peacecorpswiki.org/Early\\_Termination#Historical\\_ET\\_Rates](http://peacecorpswiki.org/Early_Termination#Historical_ET_Rates)

clearance process are invited to train as Volunteers. The Peace Corps rejects essentially none of these survivors. There is, therefore, no surplus of applicants who survive the medical and legal clearance process who are not invited to training. This makes it difficult or impossible for the Peace Corps to draw on a surplus of “qualified” applicants to fuel a rapid expansion of the number of individuals who are invited to training.

The perspective of a former Peace Corps recruiter is relevant here. This recruiter observed,

Although not specifically told to do so, we were encouraged to accept all applicants for recommendation for nomination. That recommendation would go to the regional office that would then nominate the applicant, with Headquarters approval. The quality of the applicants was widespread, but in the whole year I only not recommended one applicant, with agreement from the regional office. [I even recommended one individual who]...in answer to the question of “what motivates you to seek a service position, as a Peace Corps Volunteer,” had said, “It's my senior year and I couldn't find a job, so I figured I'd try the Peace Corps.” It was all about the numbers, both in reaching the quota [set for each school] and in accepting all viable candidates that met the minimum standards. At the end of the year we had the final meeting of what was accomplished and what to look forward to for the next year with the new recruiter. It was then that I mentioned the shock I had on the quality of applicants we had throughout the year that we were encouraged to recommend, in which the reply came, “Let us worry about the quantity and DC [Headquarters] worry about quality.” I am almost certain all those who were nominated, pending no medical and legal complication, were all invited to serve. For some it is a chance of a lifetime; for others it's more of a “Well, I can always join the Peace Corps” type mentality.<sup>50</sup>

This emphasis on numbers is what one would expect when the ratio of “qualified” applicants to training slots is roughly one to one. If the recruiters were more selective, the ratio would be less than one to one, and the Peace Corps would fail to fill the available trainee slots. With this emphasis on quantity rather than quality, the high ET rate is not surprising.

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Strauss, a former Peace Corps Country Director, states, “The Peace Corps claims that about 1 in 3 applicants eventually becomes a volunteer, implying that the agency is about as selective as many “elite” schools in the United States. Not long ago, the figure commonly cited was 1 in 7. Either way, the truth is that so long as applicants meet the minimum standards and are healthy and persistent, the Peace Corps rarely rejects them outright. Each group sent overseas includes a few highly motivated and capable individuals—and then there are the vast majority who before joining the Peace Corps weren't sure what to do with their lives, were fresh out of school and seeking a government-subsidized travel experience or something to bolster their résumé, or for whom the Peace Corps represented a chance to escape a humdrum life or recent divorce. Once overseas, the chances of being kicked out are slim. I queried my fellow country directors in Africa to find out how many trainees they had sent packing due to unacceptable performance. The figure was less than 2 percent a year, meaning that once accepted, an individual—qualified or not, motivated or not—is pretty much assured of sticking around.”

For the Peace Corps to tout a 3-for-1 ratio while ignoring the impact of the medical and legal clearance processes is like touting a 3-for-1 ratio when two of three applicants are not U.S. citizens, a minimum requirement for service as a Volunteer. It's like a website touting "hits" rather than "sales" (let alone profits) or a marathoner touting starts rather finishes (let alone times).

With essentially no surplus in (minimally) "qualified" applicants, it is not possible for the Peace Corps to implement another critical initiative—improving the quality of the Volunteers. Saying that an applicant is "qualified" means nothing more than that he or she survived the medical and legal clearance process. The Peace Corps has a worldwide 35% ET rate (see below). This seems to indicate that it is inviting too many individuals to training who lack sufficient commitment to grassroots development or cross-cultural immersion.

Presumably when the Peace Corps nominates or invites an individual to become a Peace Corps Volunteer, the agency has high confidence in the motivation and qualifications of the individual applicant. Yet, here's what happens **after** applicants are nominated to be Volunteers or invited to training:

\* In FY 2007, 2,746 of the applicants who were nominated did **not** survive the medical and legal clearance process. In FY 2008, 4,129 did not.

\* In FY 2007, 244 of the "qualified" applicants (who had survived the medical and legal process) did **not** accept the invitation to training. In FY 2008, 604 did not.

\* In FY 2007, 245 of those who accepted the invitation to training did **not**, in fact, begin training. In FY 2008, 1,241 did not.

\* In FY 2007, 305 of those who began training did **not** complete it to be sworn in as Volunteers. In FY 2008, 733 did not.

These drop offs at each stage of the process after the nomination and invitation indicate that issuing nominations and invitations indiscriminately is a poor strategy for picking those who will survive medical and legal screening or training. Surely it's no better at selecting those who will thrive as effective Volunteers for the full term of their service.

To improve the quality and staying power of the Volunteers, the Peace Corps needs a ratio of (minimally) "qualified" applicants to trainees that is substantially greater than one to one. Teach for America takes only 12.5% (eight to one: 30,000 applicants for 3,800 positions)<sup>51</sup> of those who apply and it sets high quality standards in choosing from among the applicants.<sup>52</sup> Ideally the

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<sup>51</sup> Reports are that 11% of the graduates of the Ivy League and 35% of the African American graduates of Harvard applied to Teach for America.

<sup>52</sup> Teach for America says "we view applicants holistically by looking for evidence of: a) Demonstrated past achievement: achieving ambitious, measurable results in academics, extracurriculars, and/or work leadership; b) Perseverance in the face of challenges; c) Strong critical thinking skills: making accurate linkages between cause and effect and generating relevant solutions to problems; d) Ability to influence and motivate others; e) Organizational ability: planning well, meeting deadlines, and working efficiently; f) Understanding of and desiring to work relentlessly in pursuit of our vision; and g) Respect for students and families in

Peace Corps would achieve at least a three-to-one ratio and set similar high standards. Then, when it has three qualified applicants, it can select the one that is the most qualified. Surviving the medical and legal screening process should be the minimum qualification, not a more or less certain ticket to an invitation to train as a Volunteer.

The number of applicants has reportedly increased recently in response to the election of President Obama and the economic downturn.<sup>53</sup> Because the application process takes approximately a year, we will not know whether this surge alters the ratio of nominees who survive the medical and legal clearance process to the invitees to training. The question remains how many of them will meet the minimum qualifications. Then we can see if the Peace Corps can and will become selective among those who meet the minimum qualifications. If applications are up because young people can't find jobs on Wall Street as investment bankers, they do not necessarily have the appropriate motivation to serve as Volunteers in a cross-cultural immersion setting with impoverished villagers. A surge in applications may indicate only that these applicants have no other feasible alternatives. Inviting them to train as Volunteers seems to be a prescription to continue or even exacerbate the high ET rate and malaise among Volunteers.

If the Peace Corps becomes selective, it will be important to see on what basis it chooses among the minimally qualified applicants. Will it select in favor of applicants with demonstrated commitments to international grassroots development service and cross-culture engagement and, if so, how will it measure these commitments?

The authors hear complaints from CDs and staff about the values and expectations of the Volunteers. But it is the Peace Corps that selects the Volunteers; they are not foisted on the agency by some third party. When problems arise with the quality of the Volunteers, it's hypocritical of the Peace Corps staff to complain. The best response for the agency is to increase

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low-income communities.” It also seeks “evidence that applicants operate with professionalism and integrity, and meet basic writing standards.” The Peace Corps sets no such standards.

<sup>53</sup> With regard to the invitation to serve as a Volunteer, the Peace Corps needs to pay better attention to the form, not just the substance. In a blog posting on May 12, 2009, Alison Boland said she'd sent a letter to President Obama saying, “I am joining the Peace Corps. I will be leaving for my 27-month stint in Mongolia on June 11. I am extremely excited to become a part of this program and nothing makes me happier than knowing that I am serving my country in a way that you fully support! When I received my invitation packet in April, it included a welcome letter from the President. I understand that it takes time to get all of these things updated, but I was a little bit disappointed to see that it was still a letter from George W. Bush. I know that you are very very VERY busy with all the important problems of the world, but I am writing to request that, when you are able to get around to updating the Peace Corps welcome letter, can you have it sent to all the people currently serving as well? Or just make it a Youtube video and send us the link! You were a big motivation for my decision to join the Peace Corps and it would make me (and I'm sure many other PCVs) extremely happy to receive a letter of welcome from you. I'm really glad you're my president and it's an honor to be embarking on this journey under your administration! P.S. If, by any chance, you're in Los Angeles on June 11, do you think you could make time to stop by our orientation event? It would make my year (and this is going to be a pretty exciting one.”

the ratio of applicants who meet the minimum qualifications and then to be very selective. The best way to augment the number of these applicants is for the Peace Corps to burnish its reputation by providing Volunteers with a reasonable opportunity to achieve sustainable development results, a high quality cross-cultural immersion, and strong site preparation, training and support—all issues addressed in detail in this plan.

Another benefit of achieving at least a three to one ratio would be to enable the Peace Corps to more carefully match the background and interests of the applicants to their country and program assignment. Applicants' preferences and skills are often ignored in the placement process. If applicants speak French, they should be sent to French-speaking countries. If they are teachers or environmentalists, their assignment should match those skills. If the Peace Corps cannot make a reasonable match, it should be honest and tell the applicants, rather than persuading them to accept inappropriate matches. Surely, reducing the number of mismatches would reduce the number of early terminations. But reducing the number of mismatches is possible only if the ratio is increased.

In terms of mismatches, one key statistic is the number of switches that occur between the time an applicant is “nominated” to serve as a Volunteer and the time the applicant is “invited” to serve. Applicants are “nominated” to serve in a program sector, say “small business,” and a region, say “Africa.” Then they accept the nomination and rely on it as they undergo the medical and legal clearances. If they survive these clearances, they are invited to serve in a specific country and program at a specific time, say “Agriculture, Romania, July 2009.” Approximately 40% of the applicants are invited to serve in a program or region that is different from that they were told when they were nominated to serve. After applicants are invited to a program and region, Peace Corps sometimes surprises them further by shifting them to programs or regions that do not match their interests or experience. When they receive their invitations, they are given a “take it or leave it” period of 10 days to consider the invitation.<sup>54</sup> If the ratio is increased, the Peace Corps should be able to reduce the number of switches and surprise fewer applicants.<sup>55</sup>

Assuming that the Peace Corps demonstrates its commitment to reform and attracts more qualified applicants, the Peace Corps must prepare a strategic plan including an assessment, country-by-country and year-by-year, of the costs and implementation requirements of such an expansion.<sup>56</sup> This has never done this before. This plan must specify how many additional staff

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<sup>54</sup> In some cases the invitations change because the nominee has a medical condition that cannot be accommodated in the program and region specified in the nomination. The same also holds true for time constraints or political situations arising in the original country of nomination. Also, when the nomination is made, the Peace Corps has in mind a specific program and a specific country and if that changes, than it's included in the 40% figure even if the program, say small business, and region, say Africa, remain the same as communicated to the nominee.

<sup>55</sup> A related issue, discussed below, is the number of Volunteers who, after they are invited to serve as Volunteers and begin training, are switched to another program.

<sup>56</sup> One especially useful resource for planning and implementing this expansion is “Scaling Up—From Vision to Large-scale Change: A Management Framework for Practitioners,” by Larry Cooley and Richard Kohl of Management Systems Incorporated (March 2006). The report, funded by the MacArthur Foundation, create a manual to scale up programs in communities and

would need to be hired, and the impact on training, site placement, and Volunteer safety and support, and the needed expansion of facilities. The plan should consider increasing the number of Volunteers in countries where they currently serve as well as launching or re-launching programs in new countries. Expansion of the current “Friendship Volunteer” program in China should be a high priority.

If and when the Peace Corps expands, it should focus the expansion in the countries that have demonstrated an exceptional ability to manage Volunteers. We have specified the criteria that should be used in identifying these countries in our proposals to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees (see **Appendix D**) as follows:

- a. The non-medical ET rate is well below the worldwide average.
- b. The extension rate is well above the worldwide average.
- c. The ratings of the managers and programs in the 2008 Biennial Survey of Volunteers is among the top 15%.
- d. The ratio of APCDs and PCMOs to Volunteers is reduced and the other staff slots—Administrative Officers—and resources are appropriately increased to accommodate the additional Volunteers.
- e. The CD establishes a program for 360 degree confidential reviews of programs and staff and publishes the results of these reviews to Headquarters and the Volunteers currently serving in that program.

There should be no expansion in countries that do not meet this standard.

In terms of expanding into new countries, advocates for Peace Corps expansion often claim that there are “20 countries” requesting Peace Corps programs. The list of these countries has not been made public so we cannot know if it’s a realistic and up-to-date list.<sup>57</sup> The list may include

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villages that are exemplary so they are not “lost.” The report is a field-tested framework and set of guidelines to improve management of the scaling-up process. This framework was intended to be of direct and immediate use to those planning, implementing, and funding pilot projects and to those hoping to take the results of such projects to scale. Founded in 1981, MSI is a woman-owned consulting firm located in Washington, D.C., and serving clients worldwide. MSI provides management consulting services to local organizations, foundations and international donor agencies in a number of areas including Managing Policy Change; Planning, Measurement and Evaluation; Institutional Development; and Training. This publication may be found electronically at <http://www.msiworldwide.com/documents/ScalingUp.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> The authors filed a FOIA request for the list of these countries on July 5, 2009, which was denied on July 20. The denial ruling was, “The information is not available and is being withheld in full pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 exemption (b)(5). This document was prepared for Peace Corps staff and is intended for internal use only.” The (b)(5) exemption from disclosure applies to “inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency.” Given the fact that Acting Peace Corps Director Jody Olsen has touted this list—in her interview with the Los Angeles Times of June 2, 2009 (<http://articles.latimes.com/2009/jun/02/world/fg-peacecorps2?pg=2>)—as

stale requests or requests from countries where the safety of Volunteers cannot be maintained. In its Fiscal 09 budget justification, the Peace Corps proposed to field Volunteers in “79 countries” with the expansion occurring “primarily in programs in existing countries, along with three proposed new country entries.” See the discussion of this list below with regard to the Senate FY 2010 appropriation for the Peace Corps.

In determining whether and where to expand, the Peace Corps should set standards for determining which countries are best suited for Volunteers. The fact that a country requests that a Peace Corps program be launched or re-launched is not remotely sufficient to justify doing so. The Peace Corps should much better assess which countries most need its services and are most committed to development and utilization of the Volunteers. The Peace Corps is active in 10 countries with “high human development,” 49 with “medium human development,” and 11 with “low human development.” The Peace Corps’ development impact would be maximized if it concentrated its resources in the world’s poorest countries and those facing a humanitarian crisis.<sup>58</sup> Countries should be asked about their commitments to support the Volunteers—say in assisting with the recruitment of able counterparts and providing Volunteers with seed funding for projects. In addition, the Peace Corps should set an exit strategy for ending programs in countries that advance in their development. The results of the 2008 Biennial Survey indicate that Volunteers in better developed countries often question whether these programs should be continued.

It will cost about \$30 million in the first year to plan for this expansion, begin to hire the additional headquarters staff and support and training staff, expand office and training facilities, prepare sites, and recruit counterparts.

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justifying increased Peace Corps appropriations, it’s clear that the list no longer exists solely for internal use at the Peace Corps. The facts cited by Ms. Olsen have become central to the legislative and public debate about increased appropriations for the agency. The Peace Corps has, in effect, waived any right it may have had to conceal the list. Accordingly, on July 20 we have filed an appeal from the denial of our request.

<sup>58</sup> The PCIEA requires that the strategic plan resulting from the assessments include “Strategies for—(i) distributing volunteers to countries in which they have maximum value-added for the host country, for the United States, and for the volunteers themselves; (ii) identifying countries with strategic value to Peace Corps goals, currently not served or dormant, and proposals for starting new country programs or re-activating dormant programs, as well as countries with less strategic relevance to Peace Corps goals, including proposals for reducing or closing such country programs; (iii) balancing the Peace Corps’ independence with its need to remain relevant to broader United States foreign goals; and (iv) ensuring that Peace Corps operations and goals are not adversely affected in situations where the bilateral relationship between the host country and the United States is problematic.” In addition, the PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of “the distribution of Peace Corps volunteers in country programs, including how and why volunteers are assigned to various countries and jurisdictions within countries...” We have proposed that the Peace Corps also be called upon to assess the “standards that determine in which countries Peace Corps programs should be established or expanded and in which countries existing programs should be terminated.”

To summarize, the Peace Corps needs a first-year increase of roughly one-third in appropriations—about \$90 million. A total of \$30 million of this increase would go for strengthening; \$30 million, to cover the budget shortfall; and \$30 million, to prepare for expansion. The increases would then need to be sustained over the long term. This is what we support.

The ultimate cost of doubling the number of Volunteers is uncertain. In the fall of 2008 the Peace Corps management presented to Congress estimates of the cost. (Senators Kennedy and Hatch had requested the estimates during the drafting of the Serve America Act legislation.) The estimates were that doubling would raise the expenses of the Peace Corps from about \$330 million (FY08 estimate) to \$450 million (FY09), \$560 million (FY10), \$625 million (FY11), \$750 million (FY12), and \$925 million (FY13). These were the costs for a plan to double the number of Volunteers by 2013. This estimate projects significantly higher expenses than have been presented on the Hill. For example, the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA proposed to raise the authorization—to achieve doubling—from \$336 million (FY08) to \$380 million (FY09), \$450 million (FY10), and \$618 million (FY11). The Peace Corps Expansion Act introduced in 2009 by Congressman Sam Farr (H.R. 1066) would raise the authorization—to achieve doubling—to \$450 million (FY10), \$600 million (FY11) and \$750 million (FY12). The Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA and Farr bills see the cost of doubling to be roughly double the current budget (rising to \$750 million). The Peace Corps estimates that the cost of doubling would require a tripling of the current Peace Corps budget (rising to \$925 million). This higher estimate is apparently based on the expenses associated with reconfiguring the Peace Corps offices to accommodate an increase in the staff necessary to manage the increased number of Volunteers.

The Peace Corps did not learn how much it would secure in appropriations for FY 2009 until March 11, 2009. The FY 2009 fiscal year began on October 1, 2008, and most of the government operated under a “continuing resolution” (CR) at the previous year’s funding levels until the final appropriations bill was enacted. (Public Law 111-8; HR 1105). Part of the delay was caused by the focus of the Congress on enacting the economic stimulus bill. The FY08 appropriations for the Peace Corps were \$330 million and President Bush asked for \$343 million for FY09. The Senate Appropriations Committee has reported a bill calling for \$337 million for the Peace Corps. The final appropriations were \$340 million. It appears as if the delay in the confirmation of the new Peace Corps leaders handicapped the Peace Corps in securing adequate FY2009 appropriations.

President Bush did not present a budget for FY10. This means that President Obama was forced to develop his FY10 budget from scratch, an urgent and monumental undertaking. The normal budget process for FY10 should have begun well before the end of FY08 (during the summer of 2008). His plan unveiled on February 27 stated only that he wanted to “expand goodwill and inspire service by increasing the size of the Peace Corps,” but provided no specific appropriation. [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/fy2010\\_new\\_era/Department\\_of\\_State\\_and\\_Other\\_International\\_Programs1.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/fy2010_new_era/Department_of_State_and_Other_International_Programs1.pdf) In May 2009 President Obama presented more details regarding his proposed budget for the Peace Corps—calling for a \$36 million increase for FY 2010 for the Peace Corps, taking the Peace Corps appropriations to \$373 million. See pages 868-869 of the appendix to the President’s FY 2010 budget at



<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2010/assets/sta.pdf>. We will see additional details when the Peace Corps releases its final Congressional Budget Justification for FY 2010, but it appears that much of the increase will go to institution building, not rapid expansion of the corps of Volunteers. The President states that the \$36 million increase will increase Volunteer numbers, recruitment efforts and the entry of the Peace Corps into new countries in order to have 9,000 Americans enrolled in the Peace Corps by the end of FY 2012 and 11,000 by the end of FY 2016, but this seems implausible.

On May 20, 2009, the House Foreign Affairs Committee reported an authorization bill for U.S. foreign operations (H.R. 2410) that includes an authorization for Peace Corps appropriations for FY 2010 of \$400 million and FY 2011 of \$450 million. On June 17 the House Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee reported an appropriations bill providing for \$450 million for the Peace Corps for FY 2010 (H.R. 3081). On July 9 during consideration of this bill on the House floor, Republican Congressman Cliff Stearns offered an amendment to hold the appropriation for the Peace Corps to the level recommended by President Obama (\$373 million vs. \$450 million in the Committee bill). Stearns argued,

This is a bipartisan amendment. The President has requested \$373 million be allocated to the Peace Corps under the State-Foreign Operations bill and related appropriations. The [subcommittee chair] should realize, all my amendment does is ensure that we fund the Peace Corps at simply the level the President requested. So when you look at this amendment, it's really an President Obama-Stearns amendment...[I]t's obvious that the [subcommittee chair] does not agree with her President.

Rising in defense of the \$77 million bump up from the President's request were RPCV Representatives Farr and Driehaus and Representative McCollum. The Stearns amendment lost on a near party-line vote of 172-259 (Roll Call vote 518)<sup>59</sup> indicating that the appropriations for the Peace Corps may have become a partisan issue.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Thirteen Democrats voted for the Stearns amendment and seventeen Republicans voted for the committee bill. Half of the Republican members of Representative Lowey's subcommittee voted for the Stearns amendment and against the committee appropriation for the Peace Corps. Representative Kay Granger, Ranking Republican on the subcommittee, missed the vote.

<sup>60</sup> The House report on H.R. 3081 "directs the Comptroller General of the Government Accountability Office to conduct an assessment of Peace Corps recruitment, selection, field placement, retention and management practices, as well as steps required to expand the number of volunteers while ensuring volunteer and management quality. This comprehensive review should assess and include recommendations for improvement in: the Agency's ability to recruit, train, equip, deploy, retain and sustain skilled volunteers for the duration of their service term [apparently a reference to the agency's high early termination rate]; the Agency's mechanisms for recruiting qualified skilled volunteers and matching those with country requested skills; the process for evaluating the performance of its managers in accordance with federally accepted standards [apparently a reference to 360 degree reviews]; and the Agency's ability to absorb an

In stark contrast to the action in the House, the Senate Appropriations Committee supported President Obama's request for \$373 million for the Peace Corps (See S. 1434).<sup>61</sup> In the report accompanying the legislation, the Committee stated

The Committee strongly supports the mission of the Peace Corps, which can be as relevant today in promoting American values abroad as it was when it was founded almost a half century ago. But the world has changed significantly since then, and the Peace Corps needs to adapt to the 21st century. Past efforts by the Committee to encourage the Peace Corps to reform and make better use of resources have been ignored. A new Director with a new vision, who recognizes the need for reform, supports transparency and seeks a constructive relationship with Congress, is urgently needed. The Committee is aware that some have called for a large increase in funding above the amount requested by the President for fiscal year 2010, in order to send volunteers to new countries. Very few of such countries are safe enough or otherwise ready to host volunteers, and there are hundreds of volunteers currently serving in countries with little if any strategic importance to the United States who could be used more effectively. The Committee expects to recommend additional increases in funding to support the goal of doubling the Peace Corps, including sending more volunteers to countries with large Muslim populations, once it is clear that a new Director is providing the leadership the Peace Corps needs. (See Senate Report 111-44).

The Senate Committee bill must now go to the full Senate. It will be interesting to see if Senator Dodd will mount a challenge to the Leahy bill. If this happens, we may see a full-blown debate about the Peace Corps.

Assuming that the Senate bill is not modified, it is not clear how the House and Senate will reconcile these two views of the Peace Corps involving a \$77 million difference in the appropriations. The House and Senate commonly split the difference between their bills, which would yield an appropriation of \$412 million. It's also common that the House and Senate do not complete work on each separate appropriations bill, instead wrapping many into one bill, a "continuing resolution." Also, the House requests a GAO investigation and the Senate requests that the Peace Corps itself prepare a report (using the new Dodd PCIEA as the point of reference). It's possible that both reports will be required.

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increase in volunteers." House Report 111-187. There is no deadline put on the submission of this report by the GAO.

<sup>61</sup> The Senate committee bill requires that "not later than 180 days after enactment of this Act, the Director of the Peace Corps shall submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations and Foreign Relations of the Senate, and the Committees on Appropriations and Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, consistent with the requirements of section 3 of the Peace Corps Improvement and Expansion Act of 2009 (S. 1382), as introduced in the Senate on June 25, 2009." The clock starts when this "Act"—the appropriations bill—is enacted, not when a new Director is confirmed.

Over the long term, one additional consideration may affect Peace Corps appropriations, namely competition for appropriations from a new international service program enacted into law as part of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act—Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP). It would place volunteers with NGOs and provide matching funding to the volunteers. It was included in the Kennedy/Hatch national service legislation. See Public Law 111-13, S. 3487 in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress and S. 277 in the 111<sup>th</sup>. The authorization for the VfP program is \$10 million for Fiscal Years 2009-2013 (\$50 million total). The appropriations to launch this program will come through the same House and Senate appropriations subcommittee that funds the Peace Corps. The Nineteenth Point in this plan focuses on the competition that these new programs may pose for the Peace Corps.

## **Point Two: Make Listening the Hallmark of Peace Corps Culture**

Listening should be the most important value in the Peace Corps culture. The Volunteers listen to the aspirations of the host country nationals with whom they serve, learning how to help them help themselves to achieve sustainable results. In turn, the Peace Corps managers should listen to the Volunteers, supporting and empowering them as agents of development and cross-cultural exchange. Managers should understand that site-by-site and program-by-program Volunteers understand, better than anyone, the opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses of the Peace Corps. This means that listening to the Volunteers—about what works and what doesn't, who helps and who doesn't—is the best way to enhance the development and cross-cultural results of the Peace Corps.

The principal option available to the Peace Corps for listening to and respecting Volunteers is 360 degree reviews that would enable Volunteers to confidentially review the performance of their managers and the design and implementation of the programs (e.g. agriculture, small business, health) in which they serve.<sup>62</sup> These reviews by Volunteers are the mirror image of the manager reviews of Volunteers that already take place. These 360 reviews are comprehensive and include feedback from employees (or in this case Volunteers), peers and supervisors as well as the manager's own self-assessment. The objective is to compare self-perceptions with perceptions of each constituency. The reviews of the Volunteers are "upward feedback," an essential part of a 360 degree review. These mechanisms hold managers accountable, sensitize them to the views of their principal clients (the Volunteers), and continually improve program design and implementation. Confidentiality is critical to ensure that the Volunteers, most of whom are young, will speak openly and honestly.

A former CD in West Africa emailed to say: "Reviews of staff (360 reviews) are standard in the private sector, why not the public sector?" But his positive response may be atypical. The Peace Corps managers may argue that such reviews will undermine their authority to discipline the Volunteers. They may remark, "What do these young people know about management?" Further arguments might be that the system would reduce management to a popularity contest or prevent them from recruiting good managers. They might complain that it's inconsistent with the culture

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<sup>62</sup> Dr. Steven J. Noble (RPCV Tunisia, 68-70), is an expert on 360 degree reviews. He is Managing Director, Noble Consulting Associates, Inc. ([www.Sjnobleconsulting.com](http://www.Sjnobleconsulting.com)) and can be contacted at [Sjnoble@optonline.net](mailto:Sjnoble@optonline.net) and 516/524-0126.

of host country nationals to be openly criticized by “lower ranking” individuals. Those in authority may resist being held accountable. They may want to be free to exercise their power. Naturally, they want the minimum of uncertainty about their job tenure. So it's understandable that they may resist Volunteer input in their personnel reviews.

These 360 degree reviews can be a critical tool to improve the overall effectiveness of the Peace Corps, as explained in the context of a company. Private companies have traditionally operated as pyramidal organizations with a chief executive at the top, fanning out through the management levels to the workers at the bottom. More enlightened companies have started organizing with the pyramid inverted: chief executive at the bottom and workers at the top. This emphasizes the idea that each level of management exists to support the level above it in the chart. In other words, managers aren't there to crack the whip to ensure their staff works hard. Instead, their purpose is to establish an environment in which their direct staff performs effectively.

The logic behind 360 degree reviews is that the people being supervised have a unique perspective on their supervisor's skills, which should be incorporated into any assessment of the supervisor. They may be thought of as the primary “customers” of the manager's work; that is, subordinates receive—and are in a good position to evaluate—their supervisor's support. We want supervisors to see that their customers are the Volunteers and the supervisors need to solicit and respect their views. Cracking the whip never works well with Volunteers.

These reviews are only as good as their application, especially the means by which the information is communicated to those who are rated. Their fundamental purpose is to improve management performance, not to inflict punishment. That means that the supervisors of those who are rated need to be competent to use the feedback (ratings and comments) to coach their subordinate supervisors/managers, reinforcing strengths and targeting needed improvements. In other words, the data from 360 degree reviews needs to be used to enhance performance.

These mechanisms will have the combined effect of shifting power from managers to the Volunteers, from headquarters to the country posts, and from the political appointees to the competitive staff. Prounelle's Iron Law of Bureaucracy holds that bureaucrats will defend their self-interests even if this is inconsistent with the mission of the entity; thus, managers, headquarters staff, and political appointees may resist these reviews.

Section 201 of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA called on the Peace Corps to establish 360 degree review mechanisms for both personnel and programs.<sup>63</sup> If the Peace Corps does so, it would still

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<sup>63</sup> Regarding personnel reviews, Section 201 states, “The Director of the Peace Corps shall establish a mechanism for soliciting the views of Peace Corps volunteers serving in country regarding the support provided by senior staff. The information shall be kept confidential and reported to the appropriate Regional Peace Corps Directors... The information collected pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be given appropriate weight in the decision making process with respect to the extension of contracts for Country Directors, Chief Administrative Officers, Peace Corps Medical Officers, and Associate Peace Corps Directors.” Regarding program reviews this section states, “The Director of the Peace Corps shall establish a mechanism for soliciting the views of

be useful to enact this provision into law to ensure that it remains a permanent part of the Peace Corps culture. Managers do not always appreciate the value of these mechanisms or the reviews they receive and over time they are likely to put pressure on the Peace Corps Director to water down or eliminate them.

The Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA stated that the 360 degree reviews should be given "appropriate weight." Yet in Section 203 of the PCVEA—focusing on Volunteer recommendations regarding sites and training—the legislation provides that the views of the Volunteers shall have "substantial weight." Effective management and support of Volunteers is the single most relevant measure of staff performance, which should lead the Peace Corps to give these reviews substantial weight.<sup>64</sup>

The Peace Corps should also consider establishing similar 360 degree review mechanisms to enable country post personnel—CDs, AOs, PCMOs, and APCDs—to provide confidential reviews of the headquarters staff to hold them accountable, reduce the burdens that headquarters imposes on the country staff, and augment headquarters' support of the country staff. Headquarters staff from the competitive service should be given the opportunity to confidentially review the agency's political appointees. The Peace Corps Director should not be immune from these reviews.

Finally, regardless of whether the Peace Corps institutes 360 degree reviews, the Volunteers themselves may establish their own system for holding managers accountable via the Internet. As the Peace Corps begins to connect Volunteers to each other, it will find the Volunteers speaking out more forcefully and in concert due to the power of the Internet. The Internet is enabling individuals to organize themselves in groups for concerted action. "Word of mouth" power has exploded. Power is fast devolving from institutions to individuals who demand to be heard and respected. Individuals can now "shop around" in ways that hold institutions unsparingly accountable for performance, results and service.

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Peace Corps volunteers serving in country regarding the design, effectiveness, and continued need for the programs in which they serve. The information shall be kept confidential and reported to the appropriate Regional Peace Corps Directors... The information collected pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be given appropriate weight in the decision making process with respect to the design of, and continued need for, Peace Corps programs."

<sup>64</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of "mechanisms for soliciting the views of volunteers serving in the Peace Corps, on a confidential basis, regarding—(i) the support provided to such volunteers by senior staff of the Peace Corps; and (ii) the operations of the Peace Corps, including—(I) staffing decisions; (II) site selection; (III) language training; (IV) country programs; and (V) dialogue with host country partners and ministries" and "mechanisms for incorporating the[se] views... into programming and management decisions of the Peace Corps." We have proposed that this assessment focus on "strategies for developing and utilizing substantial written and electronic language curriculum materials designed to facilitate the learning of foreign languages by Peace Corps volunteers."

With Volunteers increasingly finding their voice through the democratizing power of the Internet, it is likely that they will establish a Zagat-like system that will publish Volunteer reviews of Peace Corps managers and programs.

RateMyTeachers.com—with its 10 million reviews of elementary and secondary teachers at 55,000 schools—provides a template for establishing RateMyPeaceCorps.com. RateMyTeacher.com has set strict rating rules,<sup>65</sup> defends its anonymous ratings,<sup>66</sup> and argues that it is a useful resource to teachers who are open and self-assured enough to face the opinions of their customers, i.e. students and parents.<sup>67</sup> An independent and public rating system established by Volunteers will enable applicants, OMB and the Congress to assess the quality of the managers and programs of the various countries in which Volunteers serve.<sup>68</sup>

The best way for the Peace Corps to respond to a RateMyPeaceCorps rating system would be to establish its own 360 degree reviews, protect the confidentiality of Volunteers, and demonstrate that these reviews are given substantial weight. Then Volunteers would have no need to utilize an independent Internet rating system. If the Peace Corps does not establish its own confidential review systems, the independent rating system would flourish as the principal forum for Volunteers to express themselves.

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<sup>65</sup> These rules include a ban on statements of opinion about facts, vulgar or profane words, statements of a sexual nature or about personal appearance, name calling, and any references to mental capacity, alcohol or drug use, possible law violations, race, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, age, or personal life. Any threat to a teacher is reported to law enforcement authorities. Similar rules should be applied to RateMyPeaceCorps.com.

<sup>66</sup> It says that "the most important voices are often ignored," but with the ratings, "the student is being heard." It believes that administrative reviews of a teacher's performance "can never substitute for a review from someone who interacts daily with that teacher—the student." It has found that 70 percent of the ratings are positive. In fact, its website publishes a popular Hall of Honor for the top ranked teachers and schools. It trusts that with a broad enough ratings sample, the views of students with a grudge will not dominate the ratings. The website "facilitate[s] a positive change in the way parents, students, and teachers alike look at the education system and therefore to encourage structural changes..." The website is also a place "for students and parents to have their opinions validated." It finds that "opponents of the website clearly believe that students are not astute enough to form a valid opinion nor should parents be given the opportunity to voice their observations."

<sup>67</sup> Teachers want to be respected by their students. They entered the profession in order to help students develop as individuals. By studying the ratings, the teacher can often adjust teaching methods, helping create an environment of mutual respect in which their knowledge will translate more effectively to the student. Progressive teachers commonly tell the website how they adjusted their approaches to better connect with students after reading comments on the site.

<sup>68</sup> For a review of the application of web-based reviews of doctors see "Doctor's Orders: Want Treatment? Just Sign this No-Complaint Contract," Sandra Boodman, July 21, 2009 *Washington Post* at E1. The article focuses on the 40 web sites that permit patients to rate doctors and the practice of some doctors to demand that their patients sign agreements—gag orders—pledging not to post a rating. For the application of web-based ratings to travel see TripAdvisor.com.

As the Peace Corps begins to face competition in the “marketplace” for international volunteers, the potential applicants will shop around. They’ll seek information that permits them to compare the available options. A RateMyPeaceCorps site will give them a reading on the quality of the Peace Corps experience directly from the Volunteers. Those that view this market competition as an opportunity will prosper. Those institutions that deny this reality, or attempt to squelch it, will suffer. Any attempt to squelch the voice of the Volunteers would generate substantial press and public interest in a RateMyPeaceCorps website.<sup>69</sup>

The leadership of the Peace Corps is critical. In 21<sup>st</sup> Century organizations we need leaders who understand the concept of a “flat” organization that listens to, respects and empowers individuals. The Peace Corps will thrive with leaders who are personally modest and understand that the Volunteers, in critical respects, inspire and lead the Peace Corps. The influence and success of the agency’s Director and senior management will rise to the extent that they keep the spotlight on the Volunteers, bathe in the glory reflected from them, empower and listen to them, respect and love them, delegate power and allocate resources to the country posts and Volunteers, and minimize the footprint of the headquarters. In this way the Volunteers, not the political appointees, will supply the charisma for the Peace Corps. This approach will establish the Peace Corps as the paradigmatic 21<sup>st</sup> Century organization led by “servant leaders.”

Finally, the excessive number of political appointees in the Peace Corps undermines the inclination of headquarters to listen to the Volunteers and Country Post staff. The agency’s 33 political appointees constitute perhaps the highest percentage of appointees per employee of any government agency. The positions they hold go way beyond the standard for federal agencies, which limits political appointees to persons with “confidential or policy-determining...duties.” Taking this standard as a guide, the number of political appointees at the Peace Corps should be reduced to 17, and include only the Director, Deputy Director, Chief of Staff, General Counsel, Director of Congressional Relations, Director of Communications, the Chief Financial Officer, and Director of Press Relations and their deputies/confidential assistants. The following positions, currently filled with political appointees, should be filled instead with professionals from the competitive service who are committed to listening to, respecting and empowering the Volunteers: the Director of the Office of Planning, Policy, and Analysis; the Director of the

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<sup>69</sup> Lawsuits to shut down the site for posting anonymous speech or to hold the site managers liable would fail. The U.S. Supreme Court has held that anonymity of speech is protected under the First Amendment to the Constitution (see McIntyre v. Ohio, 514 U.S. at 337; Talley v. State of California, 362 U.S. 60). U.S. courts also recognize the right to speak anonymously—and have held that the right extends to speech on the Internet. Anyone questioning the legality of anonymous postings on an Internet site should become familiar with 47 USC Section 230, the federal law that permits many entities to “host” other people’s content without being liable for defamation/libel etc. “By its plain language, § 230 creates a federal immunity to any cause of action that would make service providers liable for information originating with a third-party user of the service.” Zeran v. AOL, 129 F.3d 327, 330 (4th Cir. 1997). Under 230(c)(2)(A) states “No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be held liable on account of...any action voluntarily taken in good faith to restrict access to or availability of material that the provider or user considers to be obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, excessively violent, harassing, or otherwise objectionable, whether or not such material is constitutionally protected.”

Office of Private Sector Initiatives; the Director of the Office of Volunteer Support; the Director of the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection; the Associate Director of the Office of Management; the Chief Information Officer; the regional directors for Inter-America and the Pacific, Africa, Europe, Mediterranean and Asia; and the Director of the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research.<sup>70</sup>

Implementing these listening mechanisms should reduce the high and costly ET rate and organically grow the number of Volunteers.

### **Point Three: Achieve Greater Sustainable First Goal Results**

The Peace Corps has been highly successful in achieving its Second Goal, "helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served." Where it falls short is in achieving the First Goal, "helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women."

Typically, Volunteers are intensely focused on what they can accomplish to improve the lives and standard of living of the host country nationals with whom they live. The Volunteers are goal- and task-oriented and focused on what they can "do." This is what we'd expect from Americans. Their greatest source of frustration lies in the obstacles to effectively contribute to the well being of their host country friends and colleagues. It seems that many CDs and APCDs have low expectations of the Volunteers' ability to achieve sustainable results.<sup>71</sup> Making friends, being sensitive in cross-cultural communications, and giving a good impression of America—the Second Goal—are not sufficient accomplishments without achievement of sustainable First Goal results.

The Peace Corps rarely engages in meaningful evaluations of its development impact and does not appear in respected and comprehensive reports on development assistance. Books on this topic by Paul Collier, William Easterly, Jeffrey Sachs, and Tony Blair do not even mention the Peace Corps. The Center for Global Development has issued *The White House and the World: A Global Development Agenda for the Next U.S. President*, its blueprint for the Obama administration. The lengthy and detailed agenda dismisses the Peace Corps as an historic relic—"part of the Cold War arsenal aimed both at stemming the spread of communism and at encouraging development in some of the world's poorest countries."

Many provisions of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA directly related to achieving greater First Goal results. First, Section 101 of the PCVEA stated that Volunteers should be reimbursed for reasonable work-related expenses to enhance their First Goal results.<sup>72</sup> Volunteers often need

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<sup>70</sup> The PCIEA limits to 15 the number of Peace Corps political appointees.

<sup>71</sup> One Country Director was especially blunt and honest about this point in an email to a Volunteer. He said, "It is imperative to understand the near-futility of trying to accomplish ANYTHING in a two year timeframe and consider that thing to be—'sustainable'" (emphasis in original email). This patronizing view demoralizes Volunteers.

<sup>72</sup> Section 101 of the PCVEA includes three findings regarding seed funding for Volunteers: "(1) The Peace Corps is an agency focused on grassroots, bottom-up development. (2) Seed funding



small amounts of capital to fund the demonstrations that serve as their best teaching tool. This provision addresses a source of considerable frustration among Volunteers, their inability to obtain sufficient seed funding to mount demonstrations. In the Developing World, a live demonstration is worth a million words and is, in fact, the best and often the only way to teach a new idea. In our culture, we're used to making decisions based on reports, data, arguments, and pictures. We're willing to take risks based on analogies, corollaries, and propositions. We experiment and we design feasibility studies. With citizens of the Developing World, words are almost never enough. They rightfully demand that we show them that something works before they take risks to try it. Just because it works in America does not mean it will work in the village.

In implementing a reimbursement regime, the Peace Corps may wish to require that the Volunteers first attempt to secure funds from other sources (USAID SPA grants, Ambassador

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for local demonstration projects is crucial to the success of Peace Corps volunteers. And (3) Demonstration projects are a very effective method for Peace Corps volunteers to educate people in host countries.” It then authorizes to be appropriated “up to 1 percent of the total amount appropriated for the Peace Corps for FY08 and each fiscal year thereafter for seed funding for Peace Corps volunteers to carry out demonstration projects that have been approved in advance by the Country Director in the country where the volunteer is serving.” It states, “The Director of the Peace Corps shall determine at the beginning of each fiscal year the amount of funding that will be available as seed money for demonstration projects for that fiscal year and inform each Country Director of the portion of that amount that will be available to distribute to volunteers under the supervision of such Country Director.” The Director “shall promulgate rules pursuant to which each Country Director may award seed funds made available under this section to eligible Peace Corp volunteers.” To be eligible for a seed fund award under this subsection, a Peace Corps volunteer shall “(A) submit to the Country Director of the country where the volunteer is serving a plan for a demonstration project, including an explanation of how the demonstration project will lead to sustainable development; and (B) make a written attestation that funds awarded under this subsection are utilized for the purposes specified in the plan.” A seed fund award provided to a volunteer under this subsection “may not exceed \$1,000.” Finally, each Peace Corps volunteer who receives a seed fund award under this subsection “shall submit to the Country Director of the country where the volunteer is serving before the close of such volunteer's service a report on the demonstration project funded by the award.”

Unfortunately, the PCIEA does not call on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of reimbursement of Volunteers for work-related expenses or Volunteer fundraising. We have proposed that the assessments include a focus on “strategies to empower and support Volunteers to serve as effective agents of development and cross-cultural communication, including providing sufficient funding and reimbursement to Volunteers for their work-related expenses and enabling Volunteers to engage in appropriate charitable fundraising.” We have also proposed that it focus on “strategies for enabling volunteers to engage in charitable fundraising from non-government organizations and persons personally known to them, including family members, friends, and members of their home community in the United States, and from government and nongovernmental agencies, including but not limited to working through the Peace Corps Partnership Program.”

"self help" funds, and NGOs). The availability of funding from these sources varies widely from country to country. Then the Peace Corps would serve as the fallback source of funding when no other sources are available. One key issue is the timeliness of the reimbursement; holding up projects for two to six months can substantially impair Volunteers' accomplishments during their service. Two years of service goes by in a flash.

The expense reimbursement strategy supports the Volunteer's role as a teacher and does not establish the Peace Corps as a bank for the local community. However, the Peace Corps has expressed concern that Section 101 would shift one of the "main tenants [sic] of Volunteer service" from providing the "impetus for [communities] developing their own funding sources" to viewing the Volunteer "as a source of cash." Director Tschetter argued that allowing Volunteers to either raise funds or use seed funding for demonstration projects diminishes their primary objectives. He said, Volunteers "are not encouraged to give out money or be seen as a constant source of funds... [Seed funding to mount demonstrations] goes against the agency's basic philosophy of helping others to help themselves. The Peace Corps has never been a funding institution... Volunteers should not be requested by host countries or placed in a particular community for their ability to bring money to the table."

This position is undermined by the fact that Volunteers are currently permitted to seek reimbursement for their expenses from the Peace Corps, although often in insufficient amounts. It's also undermined by the fact that Volunteers are permitted to secure funding from the sources cited above as well as the Peace Corps Partnership Program. The funds that the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA would authorize are for use by Volunteers to mount demonstrations, not for grants to the community. The Peace Corps misconstrued the provision and failed to understand that providing seed funding is necessary to give Volunteers a reasonable opportunity to achieve sustainable First Goal results.

When seed funding leads to a successful Volunteer project—one that establishes the viability of a prototype or pilot program—allocating additional sources of funding would enable the Volunteer to replicate the project throughout the region or country and even in other countries. The Peace Corps could work to secure NGO or foundation funding for multiplying the Volunteer's impact. Perhaps the Peace Corps could secure donations from corporations or wealthy individuals to establish a fund known as the "Sarge Fund."

These funds could be available to any program or Volunteer that seeks to replicate the successful project in their community, train other Volunteers, or train host country trainers. The funds could be used by the original Volunteer/entrepreneur to cover travel funds to propagate the success by training other Volunteers. In short, the Peace Corps needs to take its best development strategies to scale. Networks of Volunteers could organize cooperatives that could produce inventory sufficient to satisfy the needs of a large importer, such as Ten Thousand Villages (<http://www.tenthousandvillages.com>) or Shop the Cause (<http://www.ShopTheCause.org>), The Hunger Site, Mercado Global, Third World Craft, World of Good, or other fair trade retailers. These Volunteer-initiated networks could work together to establish export markets, manage export financing and customs procedures, and secure "organic" certifications and lower cost shipping.

A few real life examples of this approach will make the point. Volunteers in a West African country developed software that facilitates the process of recording and calculating school grades and attendance. These Volunteers should have access to funding for 500 copies of the disc and training manual, travel funds to visit and train other Volunteers in this country or in other French speaking countries,<sup>73</sup> and access to video equipment to create a documentary to motivate school administrators. Other Volunteers in the same country developed a sophisticated solid waste management system, including composting. They should have access to funding to develop training manuals and videos (in English, French and local languages) for use in other communities and travel funds to propagate the lessons learned. Other Volunteers in the country developed quilt, hammock and solar dried fruit making projects. They should have access to funding to create prototypes, manuals and videos to train other Volunteers and to travel funds (and leave). Another Volunteer organized a collective to produce porridge. If Volunteers could develop a countrywide network of Volunteer porridge making collectives, they might be able to supply the needs of the World Food Program and obviate its need to import porridge. For the WFP, buying locally would be cheaper and would also create local jobs.

Second, Section 102 of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA reformed the rules regarding charitable fundraising by Volunteers to provide additional funding to launch demonstrations. It would have permitted the Volunteers to fundraise for projects from “family, friends, and members of their U.S. home communities, and also from government and nongovernmental agencies,” including but not limited to utilizing the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP). As Senator Dodd said, “I presume the [Volunteers] do [this] anyway, in terms of getting help from back home or whatever else, in terms of supporting a project or an effort.” Unfortunately, the Peace Corps bars this common practice and requires that all fundraising be funneled through the PCPP. If a Volunteer needs only \$100 to keep a project going, it is not reasonable to require that it be funded through this highly bureaucratic program. The program's paperwork requirements often delay the funding until late in the Volunteer's term of service, when a project has lost momentum or there is no time left to complete it. Many Volunteers do not have sufficient access to computers or the Internet to fill out and file the complicated PCPP forms. Any fear that Volunteers will solicit funds for corrupt purposes can be minimized by limiting the fundraising to persons known to them or government or nongovernment agencies who have reason and capacity to monitor the expenditure.<sup>74</sup>

Under the Bush Administration, Peace Corps management expressed concern that the fundraising provision of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA would adversely affect Volunteer safety and security in that Volunteers believed to possess extra cash (reimbursements for work-related expenses) might become targets for theft. As stated above, however, some Volunteers already have access to seed funding for demonstrations, which apparently has not led to many attacks. Volunteers may be living on a subsistence wage by American standards, but they appear wealthy by local standards. Reimbursing Volunteers for their expenses won't make them any more attractive as targets.

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<sup>73</sup> The issue of providing Volunteers with leave for these trips is discussed below.

<sup>74</sup> Donations that pass through the PCPP or NGOs with tax-exempt status would qualify for charitable tax deductions. Donations to the Volunteers directly from donors would not.

Third, Section 103 of the PCVEA authorized government funding for RPCV programs and projects and for building the capacity of returned Volunteers and returned Volunteer groups to support projects. The Peace Corps should implement this provision. Some Friends groups already offer support to Volunteers, and more should be encouraged to do so. Enactment of this authorization is necessary as a pre-condition to securing appropriations.

And fourth, Section 105 of the PCVEA pressed the Peace Corps to better utilize the Internet and web to provide Volunteers with technical assistance and to disseminate best practices guides. In all cases, complete documentation of the project—technical specifications, downloadable software, references to helpful NGOs and funding sources, pictures and videos, training curriculum (in many languages), and economic analysis would be preserved in the form of best practices guides that could be wikied on the Internet.<sup>75</sup>

The Peace Corps only recently established a website that enables Volunteers to share their experiences about successful First Goal projects. This website should include the final reports on projects funded through the Peace Corps Partnership Program and indexed so they can be easily found. Close of Service reports should be posted on the Internet. All Volunteers extending the practices in a given field—beekeeping, for example—should be part of one master list serve. That site should present Best Practices Guides for every aspect of beekeeping that can be updated and refined in a wiki process. Links to resources—technical and financial—could be posted. These websites will work best with the participation of RPCVs. They could reconnect with their sites to support successor Volunteers. They can help to wiki project designs and identify resources and funding sources. We need to engage RPCVs as life-long First Goal agents of development. **For an outline of how the Peace Corps could utilize the Internet to connect Volunteers, see Appendix B for the excerpt from the authors’ testimony in July 2007.**

As the Volunteers develop these best practices guides, the Peace Corps should reorient its training to rely on them as part of the core curriculum. In training, pre-service or in-service, the Volunteers need to face realistic problem solving challenges. Lectures won’t teach them what they need to learn and will likely bore them. With a best practices guide for porridge making, for example, a training session could start with a challenge: “How would you develop a porridge making project in your village?” The Volunteers would work through the issues including surveying the diet and nutrition of the children at their site, determining the appropriate manufacturing specifications, and pricing and marketing, and then compare their ideas with the Best Practices Guide. This is real life, practical, non-theoretical training. Schools in the Developing World usually focus on academics, so host country trainers often prefer an academic approach to training. But such guides can give the Volunteers the practical information they need to serve as entrepreneurs at their sites.

Former Peace Corps Volunteer, President of the National Peace Corps Association and Ambassador Dane Smith observes,

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<sup>75</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of “how the Peace Corps can utilize information technology to improve—(i) program efficiency, effectiveness, and coordination; and (ii) communication among volunteers.”

[A]side from education, has the Peace Corps been an effective development agency? There is no doubt that individual Volunteers—highly motivated, resourceful and able to communicate in the local language—have stimulated significant local advances in access to potable water, soil conservation, and primary health care in many different countries. As an agency, however, the Peace Corps has never placed high priority on the development task. Until 2007 it did not develop a strategic planning capacity which would examine systematically what has worked developmentally in the sectors where Volunteers are present and what does not. It has never put into place a serious evaluation process to obtain systematic feedback from Volunteers and the communities they work in about their development impact nor shaped that feedback into lessons learned and best practices. It has not collaborated with development NGOs working in the field. And, absent a mechanism within the agency for promoting and monitoring the developmental task of Volunteers, it has not made Peace Corps directors and staff accountable for the development success of their programs. Perhaps the most important development constraint at the local level is the failure of the Peace Corps to develop ways to promote continuity between the work of a departing Volunteer and her successor. Given training and assignment sequences, there is often a gap. The hiatus may not be a serious problem in a formal classroom, but in sectors like small business or agro-forestry the new Volunteer regularly starts from scratch in figuring out the most appropriate approach. So the Peace Corps contribution to development, though substantial in some countries, has not been large overall.<sup>76</sup>

Ambassador Smith proposes to strengthen the development thrust of Peace Corps service. He says, “Adding a strategic planning capacity to the agency focused on the role of Volunteers in development should be combined with accountability of Peace Corps staff overseas for supporting PCVs in their development role. Specifically, establishing a system for publicizing lessons learned and best practices, both in-country and generally, would help overcome the lack of continuity between Volunteers at a single site.”<sup>77</sup> These recommendations reinforce those in this reform plan.

Going beyond the PCVEA, the Peace Corps should reduce the ratio of Volunteers to Assistant Peace Corps Directors (APCDs), who are the agency’s program officers.<sup>78</sup> The current caseload is often 40 or more Volunteers, far too many for an APCD to manage effectively. A more reasonable ratio would be 20-1. Travel in the developing world can be time consuming. Simply visiting all of these Volunteers may take a month of travel time and APCDs normally visit Volunteers at least twice a year. These visits are crucial for determining what kind of support the Volunteers need and whether they are prospering and adjusting well at their site. Visiting Volunteers is an important safety check. The APCDs come with language skills, cultural

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<sup>76</sup> From the "Afterword: Peace Corps" in Ambassador Smith’s forthcoming book, “U.S. Peacefare: Organizing Official Peace-Building Operations.”

<sup>77</sup> From the "Afterword: Peace Corps" in Ambassador Smith’s forthcoming book, “U.S. Peacefare: Organizing Official Peace-Building Operations.”

<sup>78</sup> The ratio of Volunteers to Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs) is discussed below.

understanding and prestige, which can help the Volunteers gain support in their community. In addition to site visits, APCDs may spend two to four months a year training new Volunteers. APCDs need time to secure funding and other support for Volunteer projects, provide technical assistance, and confer with officials of the host government. Volunteer participation in 360 degree reviews will lead to continuous upgrades and modifications of program design and training manuals. APCDs must file reports, review and approve Close of Service and Description of Service statements, and review best practices guides. When a Volunteer is having trouble, the APCD may have to make an emergency visit. Of course, increasing the number of APCDs is an expensive proposition. They need access to vehicles to get to the Volunteer sites, which often means using Peace Corps drivers. But the APCD support is crucial to strengthening the Peace Corps, especially with regard to First Goal accomplishments.

Nothing that the APCDs do is more important to the success and happiness of a Volunteer than site preparation. Developing a new site for a Volunteer can take numerous visits with tasks such as consulting with the local leadership about their needs and interests, determining which Peace Corps programs will match best with these needs and interests, recruiting an enthusiastic counterpart, determining which language the Volunteer should be trained to speak, finding a host family, ensuring appropriate housing, and checking out the security measures. One key decision is whether to place a Volunteer where other Volunteers have previously served. Here soliciting and listening to the advice of the current Volunteer is crucial. An overworked APCD may simply place Volunteers in the same old sites, one after another, even if the previous Volunteers have recommended against it. Volunteers need “fresh” sites that have not become inured to Volunteers.<sup>79</sup>

Of course, increasing the ratio of APCDs to Volunteers will accomplish little if the staff do not listen to, respect and empower the Volunteers. If the staff is focused on enforcing bed checking rules and other forms of bureaucratic condescension, an increase in the field staff could be counter-productive. The focus of the APCDs should be to support Volunteers in achieving sustainable development results and cross-cultural communication.

The Peace Corps will be stronger if it ends its “go it alone” approach to development. Since the Peace Corps was established, the number of NGOs has grown from a few to tens of thousands. The Peace Corps should take full advantage of them by establishing relationships with NGOs that share its philosophy of sustainable, grassroots development. Among the best NGOs are PACT, TechnoServe, International Youth Foundation, World Education, SAVE, Freedom from Hunger, Refugees International, AFSC, World Vision, Solar Cooking International, the Seed and Light Foundation, EchoNet, and Junior Achievement. The Peace Corps should also establish relationships with host country NGOs and government agencies, always looking to train counterparts. In addition, it can connect with U.S. firms that wish to import products such as organic honey or organic cotton and agree to supply seed funding, seeds, training, and

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<sup>79</sup> During their service as Volunteers in South Africa (2006 - 2008) David and Marti Fine developed and field-tested a sophisticated site development protocol. In their view, site development is critical to the success of Volunteers. David can be reached at [dave@finetastic.com](mailto:dave@finetastic.com) or 414.312.0861 (CST).

guaranteed markets. These connections provide continuity and expertise to achieve better First Goal results.<sup>80</sup>

Volunteers could be engaged to conduct field trials on innovative technologies such as StockOSorb (a water conservation technology)(see [http://www.americansoiltech.com/docs/stockosorb\\_brochure.pdfz](http://www.americansoiltech.com/docs/stockosorb_brochure.pdfz)), drought resistant tomatoes (see <http://www.foodnavigator.com/Science-Nutrition/Drought-resistant-tomatoes-promise-increased-yields>), and water pasteurization indicators (WAPI)(see [http://www.treehugger.com/files/2005/09/for\\_water\\_purif.php](http://www.treehugger.com/files/2005/09/for_water_purif.php) and <http://65.108.108.197/catalog/waterpasteurizationindicatorwapi-p-42.html>).

The Peace Corps should consider preparing Volunteers to serve effectively as responders in the event of a natural or man-made disaster, including an outbreak of Avian Flu or other infectious disease or a tsunami, earthquake, flood, drought, or locust infestation. The Peace Corps should maintain contact information for the United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent, and other disaster relief organizations and assess the possible roles that Volunteers might play and the training they would need. It should also consider whether Volunteers might serve effectively and safely in conflict avoidance and resolution programs, such as those maintained by the NGO, Search for Common Ground.

The Peace Corps should keep current on the best thinking regarding development strategies, e.g. how to extend mosquito nets so that they are well utilized, how to establish businesses capable of tapping into export markets, how to develop an entrepreneurship culture where innovation is common, how to prevent the spread of AIDS, and how to purify and conserve water. The challenge is to find ways to spur sustainable development, that is, development that survives beyond the intervention of the Volunteer or NGO. The Peace Corps should lend its expertise to the ongoing debate about successful development strategies.

With implementation of this strengthening strategy, the Volunteer trainees will be have dozens of successful development project Best Practices Guides. With this smorgasbord of opportunities, plus sources of seed funding for demonstrations, the Volunteers will have more of the tools needed to succeed. If they develop a new type of project, they will add to this database for the benefit of the Volunteer corps. And they will be less likely to early terminate, the next point in this plan. Implementing these First Goal reforms is an effective way to organically grow the number of Volunteers.

#### **Point Four: Reduce the High and Costly Early Termination Rates**

The early ET rate of Volunteers is one of the clearest indicators of Peace Corps' performance, reflecting the quality of volunteer recruitment and placement, management of country programs, and the development work that is the Peace Corps mission. The ET rate is the percentage of Volunteers who leave their country of service before completing two years of service. With an

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<sup>80</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of “the prospects for partnerships with international and host country nongovernmental organizations and other entities to achieve the goals of the Peace Corps through development projects...”

ET rate of roughly 35%, the Peace Corps is losing volunteers and trainees at an unacceptable and costly pace. Without these Volunteers, the Peace Corps loses both its investment in its most important human resources and its ability to fulfill commitments made to communities in the developing world. Reducing this rate should therefore be among Peace Corps' highest priorities for institutional reform. Regarding the recent calls for more Americans to serve their country as volunteers, a concerted effort to support Volunteers all the way through completion of service, is the most rational strategy for organically growing the number of Peace Corps Volunteers in the field. In light its commitments and obligations to host communities, reducing the rate is a moral imperative.

With over one third of volunteers leaving before completing their service, the Peace Corps is squandering substantial sums of taxpayers' funds at a time when it is pushing for increased appropriations. At a time when budget deficits are exploding, the Peace Corps must show that it is a prudent steward of the public purse. The agency's goal, therefore, should be to lower the ET rate to 20%-25%, with a focus on halving voluntary early terminations (that is, those not due to medical reasons). To achieve this goal, and thereby increase the number of Volunteers serving, the Peace Corps must adopt a coherent strategy to retain the Volunteers it recruits, trains and places in the field. Since the high rate indicates significant selection and management problems, the Peace Corps should implement all elements of this comprehensive plan, listening to and respecting Volunteers, giving them a reasonable opportunity to achieve sustainable First Goal results, providing financial and other support for their work, and respecting their rights.

A further problem is that the Peace Corps is publishing a fictitious ET rate that does not inform OMB, the Congress and the public how many Volunteers complete their two+ years of service, masking the mismanagement at the Peace Corps.<sup>81</sup> The agency claims that the rate is "8.6%," meeting its goal to hold it to less than "10%." It says, "Retaining Volunteers is an area the Peace Corps has examined and analyzed carefully. The agency's target to keep resignations for FY 2008 below 10 percent was achieved. Offices throughout the agency benefited from being updated quarterly. The agency continues to monitor early terminations and to use both quantitative and qualitative data to assist in improving recruiting, training, programming, and all other aspects of the Volunteer experience."<sup>82</sup> This report gives the impression that programs are much better managed and the Volunteers are much more satisfied and productive than is the case. Instead of reporting early departures as a percentage of total arrivals, the Peace Corps reports the number of departures in a given year as a percentage of the total number of volunteers who served any part—even just a day—of that year. This is like reporting university dropouts as a percentage of the total student population in a given year, with all students including both outgoing seniors and incoming freshmen in the total. This yields an artificially low rate. Compared to a university with a four-year term, the underreporting is more pronounced in Peace Corps since a greater portion of its Volunteers leave and arrive in any given year. At best, this misleading accounting is incompetent. At worst, it is intentional deception.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> See [http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/Early\\_Termination](http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/Early_Termination) for more information.

<sup>82</sup> <http://multimedia.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/annrept2008.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> See [http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/reports/ET\\_Report.pdf](http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/reports/ET_Report.pdf) for a detailed review of the ET rate statistics and their (mis)interpretation.



The Peace Corps used to report an accurate “cohort” rate that provided a direct measure of the number and percent of Volunteers who completed their service. It switched to an “annual” rate in 2005. While the Peace Corps has stated that it retains no documents explaining the rationale for switching its accounting methods regarding early terminations, the change occurred just as OMB began to pressure the Peace Corps to report measures of its effectiveness under the Government Performance and Accountability Act.<sup>84</sup>

The Peace Corps should publish accurate ET rate statistics about how many Volunteers complete their service as a percentage of the number that swear in as Volunteers. This is a cohort rate. It should recalculate all of its historical ET rate data using the cohort rate. The Peace Corps should use this cohort ET rate data to identify opportunities to strengthen management and programs. For example, if one program within a country has a high ET rate, or if certain countries have high ET rates, the Peace Corps should seek to improve these programs.<sup>85</sup>

If the Peace Corps continues to report an “annual” rate and claims that it has meaning in measuring the Volunteer “early terminations,” it should at least publish an annual rate that is substantially less misleading. The annual rate that the Peace Corps publishes is misleading because it gives all Volunteers who served during a given year the same weight—whether they served for one day during that year or 365. With this calculation, every Volunteer who served even a day is included in the denominator of the ET rate fraction. (The numerator is those who ETed in that year.) Including every Volunteer with full weight swamps the denominator and makes the ET rate appear to be lower. Both parts of the fraction are contributing to the computation of the rate and are “competing” to move the number up or down. If there are more than the usual ETs in one month the ET rate (for that month) should go up; but if there happened to be a new group of trainees that also arrived that month they could “overpower” the number of ETs and, by virtue of being a ratio of the two numbers, actually make the ET rate (for that month) appear to decrease. What we have is a random number divided by a random number, which, depending on the interpretation of the number, can generate a meaningless number. The number itself may have meaning—in this case it says that 10% of all Volunteers who served any portion of a fiscal year ETed within that same year. Unfortunately, what Peace Corps is trying to make us believe is that that rate is the rate “out of 100,” which it isn’t. That’s where this “rate” is meaningless and misleading. The core of the deception is using two “correct” numbers, with different definitions of what those numbers mean. It’s like comparing apples and oranges in a ratio. What OMB and the Congress and RPVCs think of as an ET rate is the percent who complete their service. The Peace Corps’ annual rate tells you nothing about that. The fact that the Peace Corps publishes the most misleading type of annual rate is the main reason why there

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<sup>84</sup> <http://multimedia.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/annrept2008.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> The comparison of Peace Corps ET rates to those of similar programs in other countries is particularly interesting (see pages 21-24 of this report). Although the rates are not entirely comparable, the attrition rates for these other programs seems to be considerably lower than the Peace Corps rate. The VSO attrition rate was 20%; the VSA (New Zealand) rate, 20%; the APSO (Irish) rate, 5.5%; the German rate, 7%; the SNV (Netherlands) rate, 3.6%; and the OBS (Austria) rate, 9.1%. It seems as if these programs make more concerted efforts to identify and remedy the cause of attrition while the Peace Corps seems more focused on concealing its 35% ET rate. See [http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/reports/ET\\_Report.pdf](http://www.peacecorpswiki.org/reports/ET_Report.pdf)

is such a discrepancy between the reported 10% annual ET rate and the (actual) 35% cohort ET rate.

If the Peace Corps is interested in publishing a more meaningful annual rate, it must give a weight to the Volunteer number (in the denominator) according to how many months of the year the Volunteers served. So, if a Volunteer served one month, he or she would be included as 1/12 of a Volunteer.

The most accurate measure of Early Terminations is a cohort rate where the statistic directly measures how many Volunteers complete their service.

The cohort ET rates are crucial because the Peace Corps invests much of its budget in selecting, training, posting and installing Volunteers. In other words, the expenses to support the Volunteers are front-loaded. When Volunteers terminate early, these investments are squandered and the Peace Corps must select, train, post and install replacements. Then 35% of these new Volunteers ET, continuing an expensive and wasteful treadmill. The less tangible losses resulting from the high ET rates are also great. Community hopes are dashed. Community investments in preparing sites for Volunteers are lost. And the Volunteers who ET have to live with the idea that they have "failed."

The Peace Corps should calculate the cost of early terminations including direct costs and a prorated percentage of the agency's overhead. One can argue that if 35% of the Volunteers ET, the Peace Corps has squandered 35% of its overall budget. A more accurate measure would give weight to how long the Volunteer served. The presumption should be that if a Volunteer ETs before the second year, most of the Peace Corps investment in that Volunteer has been squandered because Volunteers achieve most of their successes in their second year.

While family issues back home and health problems are factors in many ET cases, the principal cause appears to be the poor quality of Peace Corps programs and managers. It's important to note that the number of Volunteers who ET does not include those who are demoralized but remain at their sites. In other words, the ET rates are a symptom of a deeper, more pervasive management problem as reflected in the email affidavits and Biennial Survey results cited earlier. These three measures—plus 360 degree reviews—should be combined as a strategy for continual renewal and reform of the Peace Corps.

The logical corollary to reducing the high ET rates is to increase the number of Volunteers who extend for a third year. Just as a high ET rate is a sign of problems, a high extension rate is a sign of a well-run program. The easiest way to increase the number of Volunteers is to reduce the ET rate and the second easiest way is to increase the number of extensions. Unfortunately, for some time the Peace Corps has rationed the number of extensions it authorizes, apparently due to budget constraints, and even plays it as a zero sum game, reducing the number of trainees by one for every Volunteer who extends. Volunteers who extend are likely to be the most productive in

terms of First Goal results, so lifting this limit on extensions is an effective way to generate greater First Goal results.<sup>86</sup>

### **Point Five: Recruit More Older, Experienced Volunteers**

The Peace Corps has many times campaigned to recruit additional older, more experienced Volunteers—most recently the “50+” campaign. Older, more experienced Volunteers typically bring more confidence, organizational and leadership skills, and resourcefulness to their service. They can also serve as mentors to the younger Volunteers. Unfortunately, these campaigns have not succeeded, and the demographics of the Peace Corps remain heavily skewed toward recent college graduates who have limited work and life experience.

As the authors stated to the Dodd Subcommittee,

Given the problems we'd discussed [in our testimony], you may wonder if we recommend that older persons and RPCVs serve as Volunteers. Our answer is, ‘Yes, absolutely.’ Older and second-time Volunteers often have special insights into how to launch and sustain development projects. Also, older Volunteers tend to speak up about the quality of staff support, program design, training curricula and site placements. In our view, the more older Volunteers the Peace Corps recruits, the better—both for development and Peace Corps reform. To be clear, you will substantially strengthen the hand of the Volunteers, the young and not-so-young, and the cause of Peace Corps reform if you enact th[e Dodd/Kennedy] legislation into law.<sup>87</sup>

Older Volunteers will tend to be especially interested in implementation of the reforms presented here and in Points Two (listening), Three (First Goal), Eight (Volunteer rights), and Nine (medical support). Older Volunteers will be especially receptive to reconnecting with RPCVs (Point Six). RPCVs who return to service will be even more interested in these reforms.

If it is to be successful in recruiting more older, experienced Volunteers, it needs to do a much better job of managing their applications and managing them in country. Through a FOIA request, the authors have obtained a copy of the summary of the Peace Corps 2007 survey of 50+ Volunteers. The results point the way to the special problems the Peace Corps faces in recruiting these more experienced Volunteers. Some 61% of the Volunteers reported that the costs of the medical screening tests required during the application process were not covered by their health insurance. These Volunteers reported paying “out of pocket costs” of \$500-999 (21%), \$1000-

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<sup>86</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of “the causes of the early termination of service in the Peace Corps, using the cohort and other statistically appropriate methods and the reasons cited by volunteers terminating their service in the Peace Corps early...” We have proposed that this assessment go to the “costs of” these early terminations and “strategies for reducing the early termination rate of volunteers and increasing the number of volunteers who extend their service.”

<sup>87</sup> See [http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/Ludlam\\_HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf](http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/Ludlam_HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf) and <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf>.

1999 (31%), \$2000-4999 (10%) and \$5000+ (4%). On a five-point scale—ranging from “difficult obstacle” to “not an obstacle” (with 2, 3 or 4 in the middle), an overwhelming majority reported that the medical clearance process is “too long.”<sup>88</sup> A clear majority said that the health screening review was “not easy to complete and/or understand.”<sup>89</sup> Not surprisingly, 71% of the more experienced Volunteers said that the improving the medical screening process was the “one specific change that might make Peace Corps service a better experience for people 50+.” In terms of reforming the medical screening process, 28% said that it needs to be “50+ oriented,” 13% said the process needs to be “streamlined,” 12% said the process is “too slow,” 10% said the process needs better feedback and transparency,” 9% said it was “too complicated,” 6% said there needs to be “better communication with applicant’s doctors/dentists,” and 6% reported an “adversarial attitude in forms/personnel.”

In terms of service, 75% of the more experienced Volunteers reported “problems” at their post. This compares with only 6% who reported “application process” problems and 8% “recruitment” problems. Some 17% cited problems with “language training for 50+,” 16% reported the need to “improve staff attitudes towards 50+” Volunteers, 14% cited the need for “more appropriate site development,” and 13% reported the need for “more meaningful work for 50+.” Only 2% cited the need for “better living conditions.”

Section 104 of the PCVEA focused on this issue and contained several mandates. It finds, “The Peace Corps should include among its ranks more experienced individuals as Peace Corps volunteers to help meet specific development needs in certain countries and to serve as mentors for less experienced volunteers.” It states that the Peace Corps “shall set a goal of doubling by December 31, 2009, the number of Peace Corps volunteers with at least 5 years of relevant work experience serving in the Peace Corps and shall implement measures to achieve such goal.” It “shall conduct, every 2 years, a survey of Peace Corps volunteers with substantial work experience who are serving in country to determine what additional actions would reduce or eliminate disincentives and barriers to service for Peace Corps volunteers with substantial work experience.” In addition, it “shall direct a study on the disincentives and barriers to service for Peace Corps volunteers with substantial work experience and shall establish and report to Congress on a plan for eliminating such disincentives and barriers. The plan shall include the development and use of substantial written language curriculum materials designed to facilitate the learning of foreign languages by Peace Corps volunteers with varying degrees of work experience and academic training.” Finally, it “shall designate for each of fiscal years 2008, 2009, and 2010 at least 20 sector-specific programs in at least 20 different countries for which a minimum of 5 years of relevant work experience shall be required of Peace Corps volunteers. The Director shall evaluate the issues that arise with respect to those programs as they are implemented and conducted.” The Peace Corps objected that these mandates were too specific and inflexible.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> 35% rated it as “difficult obstacle,” 35% rated this as a 2, and 19%, as a 3.

<sup>89</sup> 12% said this was a “difficult obstacle,” 25% rated this as a 2 and 22%, as a 3.

<sup>90</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of “the effectiveness and efficiency of volunteer recruitment strategies, methods, and resource allocations used by the Peace Corps” and “the effectiveness of the Peace Corps in recruiting ethnically, socio-economically, and geographically diverse volunteers with wide ranging skills and interests...”

Section 301 of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA pressed the Peace Corps to focus intensively on reforming the medical screening process. This could be achieved by implementing the extensive reforms that the Peace Corps IG proposed in a recent report.<sup>91</sup> These reforms will benefit both applicants and staff and the spouses of staff, all of whom must navigate the dysfunctional medical screening process. Going beyond the IG recommendations, several additional reforms to the medical screening process should be considered.

A. The IG report did not recommend that the Peace Corps publish its Medical Screening Guidelines, as provided in the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA. Given that these guidelines are already public information on *PeaceCorpsOnLine*<sup>92</sup>, it seems appropriate for the Peace Corps to publish them to help Volunteers navigate the medical screening process.

B. Similarly, the IG did not recommend that the Peace Corps establish a process for applicants or others to propose amendments to the Guidelines, some of which are considerably out of date. The PCVEA provides for such a process. The Peace Corps might find it can utilize this process to keep the guidelines more up-to-date.

C. Also, the IG did not recommend permitting Volunteers who are rejected on medical grounds to appeal based on the inadequacy of the Guidelines. The PCVEA provides for this process. At present, Volunteers who are rejected can appeal only the facts of their case; they cannot challenge the adequacy of the Guidelines. Given that some of the guidelines are out of date, this appears to be unfair to the applicant.

The IG report recommends that the Peace Corps review its reimbursement fee schedule for required medical tests. Unfortunately, in his testimony at the July 2007 hearing, Director Tschetter argued against the requirement in the PCVEA that the Peace Corps fully reimburse applicants for these costs. He argued that full reimbursement would cost “upwards of \$10 million.” He said that the Peace Corps currently spends “under \$1 million” for such reimbursement. He may not have understood that his statements implied that the Peace Corps was reimbursing Volunteers for only 10% of the costs of these tests. Whatever the percentage might be, it would appear that failure to provide full reimbursement serves as a financial

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We have proposed that this assessment extend to “strategies for increasing the recruitment of volunteers with at least 5 years of relevant work experience, including strategies for identifying and reducing the disincentives and barriers to service by such persons.” We have also proposed that it focus on “the selectivity of the Peace Corps with regard to applicants who meet the minimum qualification standard for service as a Volunteer.”

<sup>91</sup> Peace Corps Inspector General *Final Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps’ Medical Clearance System* (IG-08-08-E)(March 2008).

<sup>92</sup> The authors obtained the guidelines through a FOIA request and on August 16, 2006, published them on *PeaceCorpsOnLine* together with a detailed explanation of the guidelines and reform proposals.

disincentive for service, particularly for low income individuals and older, more experienced Volunteers who are more likely to need medical tests.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to reforming the medical screening process, the Peace Corps must recognize that older, more experienced applicants require greater advance notice of their assignments and staging dates. They may well need time to rent or sell their homes or apartments, leave or retire from their current employment, or make other arrangements before departing for two plus years overseas. The Peace Corps should guarantee that it will give older applicants ample advance notice.

During training these older Volunteers are more likely to have difficulty in learning a new language, so the Peace Corps should—as specified in Section 104 of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA<sup>94</sup>—develop and use substantial written language curriculum materials. These are often unavailable. It should also make available downloads of PodCasts for language learning at Volunteer sites. It should reimburse older Volunteers for language tutors throughout their service. In the past, it was limited to the first year.

Section 302 of the PCVEA calls on the Peace Corps to secure the right for Volunteers to suspend enrollment in retiree health plans of State and local governments, private entities, and other organizations while the Peace Corps insures them and to resume enrollment after completion of service.<sup>95</sup> This eliminates the need for Volunteers to pay double for health insurance during their service. Federal retirees have gained this right—an effort led by the authors of this report.<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately, despite a request from the authors, the Peace Corps declined to seek promulgation of a similar rule for non-Federal retirees. This refusal casts doubt on the Peace Corps commitment to recruit older, more experienced Volunteers. Section 302 of the PCVEA calls on

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<sup>93</sup> The PCVIE calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of “the medical screening process for volunteers entering service in the Peace Corps, including—(i) the cost to the Peace Corps of providing full reimbursement for medical tests undertaken by volunteers applying for or entering service in the Peace Corps; (ii) expanded information for applicants including potentially disqualifying medical conditions...”

<sup>94</sup> The PCVEA states, “The [Peace Corps plan for recruiting experienced Volunteers] shall include the development and use of substantial written language curriculum materials designed to facilitate the learning of foreign languages by Peace Corps volunteers with varying degrees of work experience and academic training.”

<sup>95</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of “the options available to volunteers to suspend payment of student loans while serving in the Peace Corps...” We have proposed that it also assess “the rights available to volunteers to suspend premium payments for retiree health insurance while serving in the Peace Corps without losing the right to reinstate such insurance upon the completion of service.”

<sup>96</sup> See “*Suspension of Enrollment in the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program for Peace Corps Volunteers*” by the Office of Personnel Management (Federal Register: November 30, 2005 (Volume 70, Number 229)).

the Peace Corps to undertake this initiative. The Peace Corps should obviate the need to legislate this provision by finally taking the initiative to eliminate this disincentive.<sup>97</sup>

Consideration should be given to determining Peace Corps policy regarding applications from same-sex couples that are legally married under state law. It should also consider permitting parents and children (or grandchildren) to serve together.

The Peace Corps should determine whether a recruitment campaign specifically directed at RPCVs, perhaps giving them a priority in placements, might be effective.

The Peace Corps should determine with IRS help which Volunteer expenses may be itemized as deductions and develop a financial guide for these older, more experienced Volunteers. These were mandates of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA (Sections 305 and 307, respectively).

Finally, the Peace Corps recruitment campaigns need to be reevaluated. These campaigns have an impact on the types of applicants, their expectations, and the subsequent ET rates. The campaigns should be evaluated, not just by how many applicants they attract but also by whether they share the Peace Corps' commitment to grassroots development and cross-cultural exchange. Volunteers should understand that they will work under difficult conditions to benefit those in need. The opportunity for Volunteers to be citizen ambassadors and to learn about the world and other cultures should be secondary. Adventure and career advancement might be mentioned, but they should not be presented as the main reason for applying.

### **Point Six: Reconnect RPCVs for Life-long Service**

The Peace Corps has an incredible resource in the nearly 200,000 Returned Volunteers. It should move to "reconnect" them with the sites in which they served, or new locations, in order to support the current Volunteers and to ensure a life-long engagement with these communities.

As for the logistics of reconnection, RPCVs should be invited to register an interest in reconnecting and provide information about their Peace Corps service, technical and language skills, and availability to provide virtual or on-site consulting, mentoring or coaching services, technical support, or financial support to Volunteers serving in their country of service or elsewhere. The Peace Corps could forward this information to the Volunteer serving in the RPCV's former site or to other Volunteers nearby or to the CD for that country.

RPCVs might visit their countries of service or sites for short visits or even return for three- to six-month periods. They could serve as consultants, mentors, or coaches to the PCVs or to the

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<sup>97</sup> The Peace Corps also declined to participate in seeking to enact a modification of the rules regarding the capital gains taxes to be paid by Volunteers and Peace Corps staff (as a result of their time overseas) for sale of a principal residence, another issue of interest to older Volunteers. Section 302 of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA called on the Peace Corps to take on this issue. Then without assistance from the Peace Corps, the authors managed to secure enactment of this modification in late 2008. See Section 110 of H.R. 6081, the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-245).

Peace Corps staff. These reconnected Volunteers might provide short-term direct "capacity building" assistance to host country officials or NGOs. They might provide financial support or raise funds for local projects. The Peace Corps could ask that the RPCV commit to providing at least 12 months of ongoing virtual technical support to the PCV, host country Peace Corps staff, host country government, or NGO officials. In the end, we want PCVs to establish a life-long supporting relationship with their host communities, and to communicate these updated perspectives and understanding to people throughout the U.S.<sup>98</sup>

## **Point Seven: Take Initiative to Build Peace**

Intercultural relations and contributions to social and economic development are among the building blocks of peace, but the authors believe the agency can do even more to focus on conflict prevention and resolution. Volunteers should be given training in the concept and practice of peace building and an orientation that would better enable Volunteers to discuss violence prevention and conflict resolution (in a nonpolitical way) with their host country counterparts. Volunteers should know how to respond in case of violence at any level. (Ambassador John McDonald of the Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy has developed a curriculum for Peace Corps Volunteer and staff training that could be considered.)

The Peace Corps should focus on the "peace" element of its mission and consider posting highly skilled Volunteers with multinational peace-building interventions in countries recovering from civil wars (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nepal), facing humanitarian disasters (Sudan, Haiti), and existing as failed states (northern Afghanistan). Obviously, security issues must be a high priority in these placements. The Peace Corps should consider preparing Volunteers to serve as responders in case of natural or man-made disasters, including an outbreak of Avian Flu or other infectious disease or a tsunami, earthquake, flood, drought, or locust infestation. The Peace Corps should maintain contact with the United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent, and other disaster relief organizations and assess the possible roles that Volunteers might play and the training they would need. It should also consider whether Volunteers might serve effectively and safely in conflict avoidance and resolution programs, such as those maintained by Search for Common Ground.<sup>99</sup>

As Ambassador Dane Smith observes regarding the "Future of the Peace Corps,"

In one of his last speeches, Sargent Shriver suggested addition of a fourth goal to the Peace Corps mandate: 'to bind all human beings together in a common cause to assure peace and survival for all.' Congressman Sam Farr, a returned Volunteer and Peace Corps champion on Capitol Hill, has advanced a more specific

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<sup>98</sup> For more information on the Reconnect proposal, contact Dr. Russell E. Morgan, Jr., (Kenya/Ed 66-69), President, SPRY Foundation, 3916 Rosemary Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815, (301) 656-3405 (fixed) and (240) 447-7369 (cell), and [morganr@spry.org](mailto:morganr@spry.org).

<sup>99</sup> For more information on the Peace Building proposal, contact John W. Chromy, Vice President, CHF International, (301) 587-4700, and [JChromy@chfinternational.org](mailto:JChromy@chfinternational.org) and Chic Dambach, President and CEO, Alliance for Peacebuilding, (202) 822-2047, ext. 115 and (410) 703-8650 (cell) and [chic@dambach.org](mailto:chic@dambach.org).



formulation: “to help promote global acceptance of the principles of international peace and non-violent coexistence among peoples of diverse cultures and systems of government.” Adding a goal of this nature to the Peace Corps legislative charter should be carefully considered. The agency has presented a friendly and constructive American face to the world for almost fifty years. To give it an explicit peace-building goal would be logical and good public diplomacy.<sup>100</sup>

Ambassador Smith proposes that Returned Volunteers perform this function.

## **Point Eight: Protect Volunteer Rights and Hold Managers Accountable**

Listening to, respecting and empowering Volunteers means that the Peace Corps must respect Volunteer rights and hold managers accountable.

The Peace Corps should welcome constructive suggestions for reform and honor Volunteers and staff who step forward with them. The culture of listening must extend to those who have complaints about the Peace Corps. A healthy organization honors its critics, particularly those from the inside that offer constructive reform recommendations. **See Appendix C for the viewpoint of an articulate critic of the Peace Corps, former CD and Volunteer Robert Strauss.**<sup>101</sup> The authors do not agree with all of what he says, but he clearly loves the ideals of the Peace Corps and he is an articulate, provocative and constructive critic.

The Peace Corps must retain the right to terminate the service of Volunteers who do not honor rules and regulations designed to protect them and the Peace Corps program. But it must give the Volunteers advance written notice of the specific conduct violations that may lead to administrative separation. This is elemental due process. Strangely, the Peace Corps has expressed concern about Section 306 of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA which required that these rules be published "in Section 204 of the Peace Corps manual"—the section that details the terms and process for Administrative Separation. In a bizarre interpretation, the Peace Corps argued that this language bars it from amending Section 204 to include additional rules. The key point is not where the rules are published in this specific place but the requirement that they be published in advance so that Volunteers have Due Process notice. Surely, the Peace Corps would not oppose that.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> From the "Afterword: Peace Corps" in Ambassador Smith's forthcoming book, "U.S. Peacefare: Organizing Official Peace-Building Operations."

<sup>101</sup> Robert L. Strauss has been a Peace Corps country director (Cameroon 2002-07), recruiter (Denver 1982), consultant (Fiji, Nepal and Belize 1980s), and Volunteer (Liberia 1978-80). He is a recipient of the State Department's Meritorious Honor Award and lives in Madagascar, where he runs a management consulting company. He can be reached at [RobertLStrauss@hotmail.com](mailto:RobertLStrauss@hotmail.com).

<sup>102</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of "the procedures of the Peace Corps for mandatory medical separation of volunteers serving in the Peace Corps..." We have proposed that this assessment include "administrative separation" and procedures for "respecting the rights of Volunteers."

The Peace Corps should ensure that Volunteers reporting the misconduct of staff or advocating for reforms are treated in accordance with the provisions of chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, prohibiting certain personnel practices. These provisions are commonly referred to as whistleblower protection. The Peace Corps IG supports the whistleblower provision, which must be enacted into law to be effective.<sup>103</sup> These protections should be added to the pending “Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2009,” H.R. 1507 introduced by Congressman Van Hollen on March 12, 2009.

In addition, Volunteers should be apprised of their rights to file complaints with the IG and informed of how to do so.

Once individuals are accepted for service in a particular program and country, the Peace Corps should not switch them to another program or country without their consent. Here is how one Volunteer explains the practice:

My disappointment with Peace Corps began within days of arriving in [name of country withheld], when I had my scheduled short meeting with one of the APCDs to discuss my assignment. He asked me what I understood my Peace Corps assignment to be. I explained it as it had been explained to me by my placement officer over the phone and in my invitation to serve: my assignment was to train *secondary school* English teachers. Before I received my invitation, my placement officer even told me that before he officially invited me to serve in this country, he had to contact in-country staff to see if they would accept me for this project, as it usually required a master’s degree. (This, I came to learn, was not even remotely a requirement.) The APCD smiled as I explained in detail what I understood my assignment to be, and then he explained that, no, in fact, that was not my assignment. Instead, I would be working in all subject areas with *primary school* teachers. Let me say right away that if this had been the assignment I was given in my invitation to serve, I would not have accepted it. My previous experience was in the field of English and working with teachers and older students, not children. I had no education degree and no desire to work with educators at the primary school level. On my Volunteer Assignment Description, my placement officer had crossed out “primary” and written “secondary” and even wrote a note saying essentially, “It says primary but you will be working

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<sup>103</sup> Inspector General Kotz testified at the July 2007 Dodd hearing regarding the PCVEA, “We applaud Section 306(b) of the Bill that increases whistleblower protection for Volunteers reporting the misconduct of Peace Corps staff as we feel that as much protection as possible should be provided to these whistleblowers. Because of their status as Volunteers and not employees, currently Volunteers are not afforded significant protection from retaliation for their whistleblower claims. Whistleblowers provide a great deal of critical information to our office with respect to the inner workings of the Agency and we need to make sure Volunteers are protected when they provide this important information. Very often, our information comes from whistleblowers and complaints and our Office would not be able to prevent waste, fraud and abuse in the Agency without the help and support of Volunteers acting as whistleblowers.”

with secondary schools.” Months into my service, when I brought this concern to the attention of both in-country and U.S.-based staff, it became clear to me that the volunteer assignment descriptions were often intentionally tweaked to get more recruits and fill a quota. Considering the high attrition rate of volunteers in South Africa, doesn't it make sense to present the assignment accurately and thereby ensure the presence of volunteers who are actually passionate about and committed to the assignment that they've accepted? I see no advantage to increasing the number of volunteers on an assignment if those volunteers do not actually want to be doing the assignment. I find it highly disturbing, not to mention unprofessional, that Peace Corps is intentionally dishonest with its volunteers from the start.

In another case, a Volunteer was excited to be invited to serve as an agro-forestry Volunteer, so prior to training he consulted in depth with forestry NGOs, assembled a huge library of forestry materials, and bought tree grafting knives. Two days after arrival at training, he was unceremoniously switched to agriculture (cereal crops). When the Volunteer objected, he was told he could either accept the switch or Early Terminate. Five other Volunteers were put in the same position and six had been switched from forestry to agriculture a year earlier. Later when the Volunteer focused his service on forestry projects, he was threatened with Administrative Separation for not focusing on agriculture. When he reminded his APCD that the Peace Corps had invited him to serve in the agro-forestry program, the APCD accused him of lying. When the Volunteer produced the “forestry” invitation, the APCD backed off from this threat but did not apologize for the threat or the accusation. The Volunteer then filed a formal request to be reclassified as a forestry Volunteer. The CD sat on this request for six months and then falsely claimed that he'd denied the request many months earlier. The Volunteer then attempted to appeal the denial to headquarters. After several months attempting to secure a response from headquarters to his appeal, headquarters staff responded by saying,

You know...one of the key tenets of being a Peace Corps Volunteer is flexibility. Most folks are so excited to be serving in the Peace Corps—learning a new language, experiencing a new culture and helping those around them with new skills—that they don't focus on whether or not their actual assignment is exactly what was presented. While Volunteers generally serve in the project area assigned, many, if not most projects evolve and are reformulated to meet the needs of the Volunteers' community. Sometimes their secondary assignments become more meaningful than the actual sector they were assigned. They simply learn to adjust—to be flexible...[M]y advice to you is to enjoy it—enjoy the people, the culture, and the amazing opportunity you've been granted to serve in the Peace Corps... In 5-10 years, what will truly matter is the impact that you...had on the lives of those you served in [name of country withheld]—not the title of your assignment area. During this process the Volunteer filed a FPO Freedom of Information Act request that produced many documents stating that the Volunteer acceptance of a program assignment is binding on the Volunteer but no documents indicating that the offer of an assignment is binding on the Peace Corps—an all too typical asymmetry where bureaucratic convenience trumps Volunteer rights and interests.

The practice of switching Volunteers from one program to another without their consent should end. These switches represent a failure to listen to and respect the Volunteers. If it became widely known that the program assignments were meaningless and that they could be changed by bureaucratic fiat without the consent of the Volunteer, applicants might become reluctant to accept assignments. This might be an especially sensitive issue for applicants who expect their substantial interest or experience in specific fields to be utilized in their service.

The Peace Corps should examine the appropriate systems for contacting the Volunteers in case of an emergency. Some countries use a “warden” system where Volunteers are grouped in a “telephone tree” so that one call from the CD can generate calls to any or all members of the tree. In these cases, the CDs do not seek to know whether the Volunteers are at their site; the system simply ensures that they may contact any or all of the Volunteers on short notice.

However, many country programs have systems that go way beyond the need to contact Volunteers in an emergency and to ensure safety and security. They regulate day by day how much time Volunteers spent at their sites. Volunteers are often required to seek permission from their APCD whenever they want to leave their sites. There are often limits on how many days per month that the Volunteer can be away from site. The definition of what constitutes the Volunteer’s “site” can be quite narrow. These bed-checking policies seems to have little to do with the safety and security of the Volunteers but arise because managers see no affirmative way to keep Volunteers at their site—through better designed programs, site preparation, counterpart recruitment and support—and take no responsibility for failing to give Volunteers work assignments that engage them at their sites. The regulations appear to assume that the only way to keep the Volunteers at their sites is to threaten them with termination for leaving without permission. Volunteers who become demoralized do tend to wander away from their sites, but imposing bed-checking rules is a sure way to demoralize all of the Volunteers.

Volunteers detest these “out of site” policies to the point that they routinely violate them (at the risk of being terminated). Typically the APCDs enforce the regulations, which undermines their role as the primary source of support for the Volunteers and takes considerable time away from substantive duties. Some APCDs take steps to “catch” Volunteers out of their sites, further undermining their relationship with the Volunteers. These regulations embody condescension and disrespect for the Volunteers, who are treated like children. They are a major source of the Volunteers’ alienation from staff and are inimical to a respectful partnership.

The Peace Corps should adopt the warden system for notifying Volunteers in case of an emergency and abolish the “out of site” regulations. If the Peace Corps finds that Volunteers are spending considerable time away from their sites, the managers might well ask how they can provide better support to the Volunteers to encourage them to stay closer to site. In this way, the managers share responsibility for the Volunteer’s effectiveness and well being. This contrasts with the “gotcha” game we find in many countries.

In cases where Volunteers travel to other countries to train Volunteers, the Peace Corps should consider reimbursing them for some of their expenses or granting them additional vacation leave. The Peace Corps should establish a budget for such reimbursement. No special medical or

security burdens should be placed on countries hosting Volunteers during job-related international travel beyond what it would provide were they visiting as tourists.

Finally, the Peace Corps should reconsider its procedures for setting Volunteer living allowances. Reports are widespread that with the depreciation of the dollar, the current allowances are not sufficient. Volunteers are frequently asked to fill out expense surveys but the countries do not act on them to adjust allowances without a 75% return rate, which often proves to be impossible. Keeping track of expenses is difficult in the village environment where no one routinely issues receipts. Some other means should be found to document living allowances to ensure they are adequate.

### **Point Nine: Strengthen Standard of Medical Support for Volunteers**

Upgrades in the medical support to Volunteers should be implemented. The Peace Corps assumes responsibility for providing medical support for Volunteers during their service. Once an applicant is accepted to serve, this support applies to new and pre-existing conditions that require medical intervention during their service. The Peace Corps should give the Volunteers (and the staff) the highest standard of care, within the limitations imposed by the local conditions.

The Peace Corps states that the ratio of Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs) to Volunteers should be 1 to 60. But this standard is not always honored. The authors know of countries where the ratio is 1 to 80 or 1 to 90. PCMOs are important participants in the training of Volunteers, which is very time-consuming. They have little time to visit Volunteers in the field to provide counseling or check on their psychological well being. Efforts to provide the highest standard of care start with moderating the PCMO's workload.

The Peace Corps should utilize the most effective anti-malarial prophylaxis with the fewest side effects, regardless of cost. The Peace Corps prescribes Lariam as the standard prophylaxis for malaria. Volunteers who have side effects from Lariam can switch to Doxycycline. If the Volunteers do not tolerate Doxy, they might be switched to Malarone, but this decision has been grudgingly made because Malarone is much more expensive than either Lariam or Doxy.<sup>104</sup> The Peace Corps says that it prefers Lariam in part because it's taken once a week, whereas Doxy and Malarone are taken daily. In addition, the Peace Corps has wanted to reserve Malarone as the treatment drug of choice for Volunteers who contracted malaria (either through non-compliance in taking their medicines or through failure of the medicines). The Peace Corps now uses the new Chinese anti-malarial Coartem (Artemesin) for treatment, so Malarone does not need to be held in reserve. It appears that Malarone has far fewer side effects than either Lariam, which is notorious for inducing psychotic episodes in some Volunteers, or Doxy, an antibiotic that causes gastric problems in some Volunteers. If this is true, then the Peace Corps should prescribe Malarone as its first-line malaria prophylaxis and willingly pay the extra cost. The Volunteers are worth it.

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<sup>104</sup> A week's dosage of Malarone costs about \$33; Lariam, \$10; and doxycycline, \$3.

The Peace Corps is rightfully concerned about applicants with mental health problems. Service in isolated posts under harsh environmental and cultural conditions is tough enough on anyone, let alone someone prone to depression, for example, or an obsessive-compulsive disorder. However, the Peace Corps also apparently rejects applicants who have sought psychological counseling during transitions (such as a divorce), whereas this counseling may well give the Volunteer special strengths during their service. The Peace Corps should consider whether it should prefer Volunteers who have the strength to process their fears and failures with the help of professionals and whether these Volunteers are more reliable and less likely to Early Terminate (ET).

Female PCVs are often given annual gynecological exams but are sent to gynecologists only if a medical problem is suspected. Male Volunteers are sometimes, but not always, given annual prostate examinations and tests for Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA). Volunteers sometimes get skin cancer screenings by dermatologists. The Peace Corps should consider whether these are the appropriate standards of care.

The Peace Corps routinely gives Volunteers HIV/AIDS and STD tests. However, when Volunteers request these tests, some fear that they will be questioned about their sexual practices with an implicit or explicit threat of separation (medical or administrative) on the assumption they would not have requested the test unless they had engaged in unsafe sexual practices. The Peace Corps should make it clear that these questions will not lead to separation. Without this reassurance, some Volunteers might fear asking for the tests, thus delaying diagnosis and treatment. The Peace Corps should consider whether to provide these tests on a no questions asked basis.<sup>105</sup>

Peace Corps medical personnel routinely threaten Volunteers with medical separation for alleged failure to disclose medical conditions on their applications. In many cases these alleged failures arise due to ambiguities or omissions in the medical application form. Applicants should be given ample notice of both the need to disclose all medical conditions on their applications and the consequences for failing to do so. The Peace Corps should rewrite the medical application to be sure that it calls for complete disclosure and informs applicants of the consequences for non-disclosure.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> In July of 2008, under pressure from the American Civil Liberties Union, the Peace Corps settled a complaint with a Volunteer who had been terminated following a positive HIV test. The Volunteer claimed that he'd been automatically terminated pursuant to an official Peace Corps policy to that effect. The ACLU argued that the automatic termination violated the Rehabilitation Act. Under the settlement, the Peace Corps acknowledged that it cannot legally terminate Volunteers merely because they test positive for HIV. In the same month as the Peace Corps terminated this Volunteer, the U.S. Foreign Service amended its policy of banning HIV-positive employees. Of the 75,000 Americans who have joined the Peace Corps since 1989, 36 have tested positive either during or at the conclusion of their overseas tours.

<sup>106</sup> In one case the "full disclosure" and "medical test reimbursement" issues overlapped. A woman applicant, aged 59, checked "post menopausal" on her application. She was asked whether she'd taken hormones when she'd been in menopause and she submitted a signed

The Peace Corps routinely switches Volunteers from one brand of pharmaceutical to another or from branded to generic pharmaceuticals without notifying the Volunteer or securing the PCV's private physician's approval. This is notoriously true for birth control pills. The reasons for switching include cost, problems with late/lost shipments, or the short shelf lives of drugs ordered from the U.S. According to guidelines, PCVs are supposed to be notified of any switches, but this appears not always to happen. The Peace Corps should notify the Volunteers of these switches and give them and their physicians the right to object, even if this imposes additional costs on the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps used to provide sanitary products to female Volunteers due to the limited supply of these products or their prohibitive cost in the host country. Apparently, it stopped this practice to save money. It should consider resuming this practice.

The Peace Corps requires that Volunteers bring with them to training a three-month supply of their prescription drugs but does not reimburse them for the cost. The Peace Corps should consider whether this is inconsistent with its commitment to cover the Volunteer's medical costs throughout their service.

Finally, Volunteers are supposed to be reimbursed for some routine medical expenses incurred post-Close of Service (COS). With regard to dental claims, however, the Peace Corps plays a "bait and switch" game. First it forces Volunteers to defer dental checkups until after they COS and then it finds excuses to deny them reimbursement for their dental expenses. For example, the Peace Corps policy is to reimburse the Volunteers for dental fillings on an "all or nothing basis" (that is, all elements of a dental claim, that is all fillings, must be "approved" or no reimbursement is forthcoming for any of them). Blue Cross or other health insurers do not provide reimbursement on an "all or nothing basis." The Peace Corps also looks for ways to argue that certain dental expenses arise from a "pre-existing" condition and deny reimbursement for this reason. If a dental filling is needed soon after COS, there can be no doubt that the need for it arose during the Volunteer's service and that the Peace Corps is liable to pay for it. When a Volunteer "appeals" the denial of a claim, the same Peace Corps staff who rejected the claim process the appeal—with predictable results. These bureaucratic evasions of the Peace Corps financial responsibility for the Volunteers' post-COS medical expenses should end. Until the Peace Corps does so, Volunteers should insist on scheduling their final dental exam and perhaps other medical interventions before they COS.<sup>107</sup>

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affidavit saying "no." The Peace Corps wouldn't accept her affidavit and required that a physician vouch that she'd not taken hormones. No physician existed who could vouch to this, so the best she could do was locate one who could say, "She says 'no hormones' and I believe her." She paid out of pocket for the visit. She found the whole experience "derogatory and denigrating." This is no way to recruit an older applicant.

<sup>107</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of "medical care received by volunteers while serving in the Peace Corps..." We have proposed that this assessment include medical care received by Volunteers "upon completion of service for service-related health care matters."

Strengthening the medical support for Volunteers should help to reduce the ET rate and organically grow the number of Volunteers.

### **Point Ten: Enhance Third Goal Opportunities for Returned Volunteers**

The Peace Corps should establish constructive relationships and substantial program and financial support for the organizations representing the Returned Volunteers that work toward the Peace Corps Third Goal.

The Peace Corps should establish a stronger relationship with the National Peace Corps Association in funding Third Goal activities and working closely with the Friends groups. It should inform COSing Volunteers about NPCA and the Friends Groups and facilitate their joining these groups. The Peace Corps should involve the Friends groups in staging programs and mentoring COSing Volunteers (a new program of the National Peace Corps Association). It should also utilize the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers—Washington (RPCV-W)—in supporting Volunteers who have to be medically evacuated to Washington, D.C. Those Volunteers could be housed with RPCVs who would support them during a difficult period in their service. The Peace Corps should work to professionalize these organizations so that they can help to support current Volunteers. For example, it could help them to secure tax-exempt status so that donations to the Volunteers through the Friends groups would qualify for charitable tax deductions. Donations from Friends groups to current Volunteers should be encouraged.

The Peace Corps should continue to support NPCA's *WorldView* magazine as an independent publication and forward copies to all current Volunteers even when articles criticize the agency management. The Peace Corps should not seek to influence the editorial policy of the publication.<sup>108</sup>

Section 103 of the Dodd/Kennedy PCVEA authorized funding for Third Goal programs of returned Volunteers. It stated, “The Director of the Peace Corps shall award grants on a competitive basis to private nonprofit corporations and returned Peace Corps volunteers for the purpose of enabling returned Peace Corps volunteers to use their knowledge and expertise to develop programs and projects,” including “educational programs designed to enrich the knowledge and interest of elementary school and secondary school students in the geography and cultures of other countries where the volunteers have served;” “projects that involve partnerships with local libraries to enhance community knowledge about other peoples and countries; and...audiovisual projects that utilize materials collected by the volunteers during their service

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<sup>108</sup> For many years the Peace Corps has paid for subscriptions to *WorldView*, the publication of the National Peace Corps Association, and mailed the magazine to all current Volunteers. In December 2007 the Peace Corps demanded to preview *WorldView* before the Peace Corps mailed it to the Volunteers. The Peace Corps subscriptions to *WorldView* are essential to the finances of this publication. The primary interest of most of the advertisers in *WorldView* is reaching the current Volunteers (e.g. about graduate education programs), not the RPCVs. So, if the Peace Corps did not continue its subscriptions, the NPCA might have to terminate the publication. The NPCA President refused the request and the Peace Corps withdrew its demand.



that would be of educational value to communities.” The grants would be available only to “an individual who has served as a Peace Corps volunteer and shall have successfully completed all aspects of the volunteer’s required Peace Corps service” or to “a nonprofit corporation that shall have a board of directors composed of one or more returned Peace Corps volunteers with a background in community service, education, or health.” An additional \$10 million year—“in addition to any other funds made available to the Peace Corps under any other provision of law...” This authorization is not included in the PCIEA.

One issue with this funding proposal is whether it is appropriate to establish a program where eligibility is limited to individuals based on their status as returned Volunteers. Legal challenges to this limitation might be mounted by individuals or organizations with programs focusing on the same social issues. It is not clear why these individuals and organizations should be excluded from this program solely due to their not being returned Volunteers.

### **Point Eleven: Substantially Modify the Five-Year Rule**

The Peace Corps should recommend that the Congress enact legislation to substantially modify the current five-year rule, which has become an impediment to the retention of professional management talent. The authors propose that the Congress enact a hybrid rule that would permit the Peace Corps to issue a series of two and a half or five-year contracts with no limit on the number of such contracts and no required gap between them. This would permit the Peace Corps to retain the personnel who are committed to listening to, respecting and empowering the Volunteers, while not renewing the contracts of those who do not. This would also provide needed continuity in support services such as human resources, information technology, contracting, global financial services—all areas that struggle with high turnover at the Peace Corps. This proposed approach would retain the advantages of the five-year rule, enabling the Peace Corps to avoid the rigidities of the civil service system where unproductive employees cannot easily be removed.

In practice the five-year rule means that employees start looking for a new position after two or three years, not waiting until the last minute. The rule makes it difficult for these employees to plan their careers and provide for their retirement as they shuttle between different systems. The uncertainty and insecurity limits the types of individuals who seek employment with the Peace Corps. When former Peace Corps staff return to the agency after their required period away, the Peace Corps pays twice, once for having “closed out” these individuals and another for bringing them back into the system (which requires retraining them on current systems).

On balance it seems that the disadvantages of the current five-year rule outweigh the advantages. The hybrid rule proposed here would retain the advantages without incurring the disadvantages of the civil service system.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> The PCIEA does not call on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of issues of interest to Peace Corps staff. We have proposed that the assessments include a focus on “strategies to enhance recruitment and retention of professional staff, including a review of the impact of the five-year limit on employment and proposals for modifying it.”

## **Point Twelve: Adopt Incentives for Improving Management and Retaining Staff**

The Peace Corps should give CDs incentives to run their programs more efficiently. Specifically, it should allow them to retain and reprogram the financial benefits of any savings they achieve. It should also retain a reserve for innovative new programs and widely disseminate the findings of these demonstrations.

The Peace Corps faces tough competition in recruiting both American and host country nationals as staff. If the Peace Corps salary and benefits do not compare well with competing agencies, the quality of the personnel and the support for Volunteers suffers. Accordingly, the Peace Corps should retain an independent human resources/compensation consulting firm to analyze the salary and benefits of Peace Corps managers and personnel to determine whether the current system allows recruitment and retention of top talent to support the Volunteers. Among the policies that should be considered are amending the five-year rule, increasing the ratio of staff to Volunteers (to make the workload more manageable), investing more in staff professional development, providing staff with hardship differential pay and cost of living allowances, and providing annual home leave/R&R.

The independent consultants should examine whether the Peace Corps posts are handicapped by the lack of both in-country human resources (HR) personnel and an "objective" entity/body to whom the host country nationals can raise larger HR issues similar to the function of the Foreign Service Nationals (FSN) committee at US Embassies or an HR department that serves in most companies in the U.S. The consultants should also examine the issues that arise for locally hired Peace Corps employees who are contractors with non-standardized grade levels, a situation that can lead to inconsistencies in grades for those holding the same position or sometimes within a post for positions that are similar in nature.

## **Point Thirteen: Strengthen Peace Corps Financial Management**

Strengthening the financial management of the country posts must be a high priority in the overall Peace Corps strengthening plan.

The information technology and financial systems of the Peace Corps have advanced greatly in recent years. These advances have provided the agency with more sophisticated tools for managing its budgets and complying with the reporting requirements of the U.S. Government (Federal Manager's Financial Integrity Act of 1982; OMB Circular A-123; Performance and Results Act of 1993; and Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002). More rigorous audits at the headquarters level have forced country posts to enhance their financial, accounting and documentation processes. These system automations and process realignments have provided the posts with better tools, procedures, and checks and balances.

Unfortunately, the country posts are basically working with an outdated administrative structure, which is built from the old State Department model of GSO (general services) and Finance as the two main components. State Department has since realigned their processes, provided extensive and continual training of local staff, restructured the management functions when necessary, and

even renamed the Administrative Officer as Management Officer to better reflect the duties. Additionally, the in-country Peace Corps administrative teams currently comprise low- to mid-level staff with the exception of the IT Specialist. This level of staff was appropriate decades ago in small operations that were more manual in nature. In the current model of Peace Corps, in-country staff need advanced language skills, information technology skills, overarching management knowledge, and experience in critical decision-making in order to support Volunteers of the 21st century in the world of advanced information technology. As the Peace Corps proceeds to upgrade its systems and processes, it needs to re-evaluate its administrative team and staff structure, assess workloads and competencies and provide necessary training to local staff in order to create a more dynamic model. This is not always easy in the context of the government planning process and the local labor laws and practices in the countries in which the Peace Corps operates.

The system advancements, automation and agency initiatives that have driven the need for more dynamic staffing and skills alignment include Forpost forecasting (an advanced enterprise accounting systems linked to Washington), broad use of Electronic Funds Transfer, a strong push for purchase and travel card use and on-line card reconciliation systems, reduction in the use of Imprest (cashier services), stricter policies and regulations regarding inventory and property accounting, a push to recuperate VAT taxes from the host country (an extremely labor- and paper-intensive process in many countries), stricter guidelines and auditing of time and attendance procedures and greater use of locally developed time and attendance systems, stricter reporting/documentation on leases, stricter reporting/documentation on vehicles, stricter compliance to agency-wide collection regulations, and a bar on cash payments made by Volunteers to maintain regional/transit houses. There remain areas where systems and automation are needed, including Volunteer allowance quarterly payments and reimbursement coordination/focal points that enable the agency to adhere to current government regulations related to international payments, yet accommodate the nature of the local banking system and local Peace Corps operations.

These changes in Peace Corps systems and procedures would mean that the in-country U.S. direct hire Administrative Officers' (AO) role would start to resemble that of a chief operating officer requiring delegation of many functions that could previously remain at the AO level. The country finance teams would need re-evaluation and reengineering to ensure workload balances. Certain positions should be added (Junior Financial Assistants and Human Resource Assistant). The GSO (general services) area should be completely restructured with significant increase in staffing. Administrative staff development and training is necessary in order to keep staff up with the pace of change at Peace Corps and in the information technology field. Standardization or normalization should be implemented across posts for position grades and scopes of work with flexibility so that best practices in the Admin team structure will be implemented world-wide.

## **Point Fourteen: Transfer Authority and Resources to the Country Posts and Volunteers**

The bottom line for the Peace Corps lies with the Volunteers, without whom the agency accomplishes nothing. This means that the Peace Corps should decentralize by transferring as much authority and resources as possible to the Volunteers and country staff to become an

“edge” organization. In terms of listening to, respecting and empowering the Volunteers, the Peace Corps should learn from other Federal agencies about how to distribute power and resources to their operatives in the field. Among Federal agencies, the leading practitioner of this approach is—surprisingly—the Department of Defense, where “net centric warfare” delegates power to individual soldiers and units. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Network-centric\\_warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Network-centric_warfare). The best publication dealing with the developing theory of network centric warfare is *Power to the Edge* (2003) by Dr. David S. Alberts and Richard E. Hayes of the Department’s Command and Control Research Program (CCRP). The book argues for a major flattening of traditional military hierarchies. [http://www.dodccrp.org/files/Alberts\\_Power.pdf](http://www.dodccrp.org/files/Alberts_Power.pdf).

The corollary in the civilian sector is a network-centric organization. These organizations create and leverage information to increase competitive advantage through the collaboration of small and agile self-triggered and self-directed teams. For this, the organizational culture needs to change from one solely determined by a command and control, rule-based hierarchy to a hybrid structure which supports loosely-organized, self-managed teams (e.g. of Volunteers) to make cooperative decisions by sharing knowledge. Socially-constructed, collective knowledge, at the small team level, is recognized as the predominant source of learning, creativity and innovation even in large highly structured business enterprises. Power to the Edge involves the empowerment of individuals at the edge of an organization (where the organization interacts with its operating environment). Empowerment involves expanding access to information and the elimination of unnecessary constraints. Moving power to the edge implies creation of an edge organization, with greatly enhanced peer-to-peer interactions. Edge organizations also move senior personnel into roles that place them at the edge. Industrial Age organizations, like most government agencies, are anything but agile. Agile organizations must be able to meet unexpected challenges and accomplish new tasks in new ways. They are able to tolerate (even embrace) disruptive innovation. Agile organizations depend upon the ability of individual members and organizational entities to get the information that they need to make sense of a situation and to combine and recombine as needed to ensure coherent responses. The Peace Corps should aspire to become an agile edge organization.<sup>110</sup>

It appears that the Washington headquarters has become bloated, the opposite of an edge organization. In 1966 when Peace Corps had 15,000 Volunteers in the field, the Peace Corps Washington telephone staff directory had about 850 names. Current headquarters personnel are

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<sup>110</sup> For a review of how the Department and NATO respond to natural and other disasters without reliance on a command and control decision-making structure, see the Defense Department Directive 3000.05 (November 28, 2005) regarding “Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations” and NATO’s Network Enabled Capability (NED) “C2 Maturity Model Overview” (October 16, 2008). The latter includes a detailed description of a NATO NEC Command and Control Maturity Model (NNEC C2MM) for SSTR operations. These doctrines focus on innovative edge organizational strategies like “smart swarming,” “self-triggering,” and “hastily-formed networks” where they find it is possible to achieve a unity of effort when unity of command is not feasible or advantageous. These military organizations find that command and control hierarchies do not work well in the context of natural and other disasters. Certainly, the Peace Corps can learn how to avoid command and control hierarchies in its dealings with the Volunteers.

estimated at 790. This estimate seems high for an established program half the size it was in 1966.

Many of the current Peace Corps Washington offices bear familiar titles: regional operations, training, recruitment and selection, Volunteer support, medical, congressional relations. A few reflect programs that did not exist in 1966: Private Sector Initiatives (Gifts in Kind, Partnerships), Crisis Corps, Domestic Programs including Coverdell WorldWide Schools, Fellows USA, and Masters/International, AIDS Relief, IG, Office of Safety and Security. But public relations seems to have exploded: Communications Office, Press Relations, Chief Information Officer.

The traditional management offices also seem to have exploded. They occupy two plus columns in a current *Federal Yellow Book* while regional operations occupy little more than three columns. Today there are many new management offices: Planning, Policy and Analysis; Planning and Budget; Budget Implementation and Planning and Management. Director Tschetter testified that he had established the Office of Strategic Information, Research and Planning. Clearly, the next Peace Corps Director needs to take a hard look at what appears to be bloated PC Washington staffing.

While the country staff must listen to, respect, and empower the Volunteers, headquarters staff must listen to, respect, and empower the country staff. Some CDs use a colorful term, "feeding the beast" when referring to the endless and duplicative forms, surveys and reports that the Country staff must file. The new Director, Deputy Director and Staff Director should dramatically curtail the agency's bureaucratic demands on country staff. All forms, surveys and reports should be reviewed and then eliminated unless justified as essential. Another goal of the new managers must be to substantially reduce the size of the bloated headquarters bureaucracy and transfer these resources to the field. The Peace Corps must curb its bureaucratic tendency to aggrandize power and resources. In addition, CDs must have incentives to run their programs more efficiently. One such incentive would be to allow them to retain and reprogram the financial benefits of any savings they achieve. Another would be to allow them to retain a reserve for innovative new programs and widely disseminate their findings.

### **Point Fifteen: Implement Tough Evaluation Processes**

The Peace Corps should institutionalize evaluation processes so that the search for ways to increase its effectiveness, particularly as an agent of development, is never ending.

The Volunteers should be surveyed annually or biannually regarding the effectiveness of Peace Corps management, programs, and possible reforms. The current annual Peace Corps survey of Volunteers asks whether their service was "personally rewarding," whether they "would recommend service" to others, and whether they "have been successful in helping people from other cultures better understand Americans." The Volunteers should also be asked in detail to what extent the Peace Corps has supported them in their development work and cross-culture immersion. These surveys would complement the 360 degree reviews implemented in each country and Volunteer whistleblower protections. This information could be transmitted to the

Congress for its review, showing that the Peace Corps is open to being held accountable for its performance.

The Peace Corps should set non-numeric measures of its First Goal accomplishments. These will be key elements of the doubling campaign. Excessive reliance on quantitative measures will not be productive or persuasive. Volunteers need to tell the Peace Corps story in personal terms, emphasizing their accomplishments in the communities in which they serve.

### **Point Sixteen: Increase Transparency of the Peace Corps**

The Peace Corps is among the least transparent agencies of the Federal government. It does not utilize the “notice and comment” process of the Administrative Procedure Act to set its procedures, rules and regulations. And it does not publish most of these documents on line.

It should launch a wide-ranging program to become more open and transparent. The agency should publish on line its regulations and manuals; an organization chart and staff directory; explanations of how to solicit grants from the Peace Corps Partnership Program, file FOIA requests and requests for IG investigations; and copies of all reports, legislation, testimony, and news articles about the Peace Corps. It should publish on line the documents it supplies to the public in response to FOIA requests.

In an effort to provide useful information to individuals invited to serve as trainees, one CD gave them access to the “Volunteer only” portion of the program’s website so that the invitees could contact current Volunteers with questions prior to accepting or rejecting the invitation. He found that when the invitees arrived as trainees they were much better prepared and informed and the ET rates dropped. It would be useful for the Peace Corps to provide all invitees with this opportunity and also to publish data regarding the ET rates and Volunteer safety and health data for the country and program in which they are invited to serve.<sup>111</sup> It should give the invitees access to the 360 degree reviews of the personnel and programs for that country.

The Peace Corps should provide applicants, nominees, invitees and trainees with links to the social networking website of the National Peace Corps Association and links to the returned Volunteer “friends” groups for each country. It should provide them with links to [PeaceCorpsOnLine](#), [PeaceCorpsJournals](#), and [PeaceCorpsWiki](#) and the web-based discussion groups, such as [peacecorps2@yahoogroups.com](#). The Peace Corps should monitor these sites to determine how to improve the briefing materials and website information it provides to applicants, nominees, invitees, and trainees.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> The most recent Volunteer safety date (Fiscal Year 2006) is published at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/volsafety2006.pdf>. The most recent Volunteer health data (again for Fiscal Year 2006) is published at [http://peacecorpswiki.org/The\\_Health\\_of\\_the\\_Volunteer](http://peacecorpswiki.org/The_Health_of_the_Volunteer).

<sup>112</sup> The PCIEA does not call on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of the transparency of the Peace Corps. We have proposed that the Peace Corps be called upon to assess “actions to increase the transparency of the Peace Corps within the Executive Branch, to the Congress, the volunteers, the returned volunteer community, and others.”

## **Point Seventeen: Ensure Peace Corps Office of Inspector General Again Leads Investigations of Violent Crimes Against Volunteers/Staff**

The Peace Corps should re-examine how it handles investigations of violent crimes and lapses in security for Volunteers and staff and put the Peace Corps' Office of IG (PC/OIG) back in charge.

In 2003-04 the Peace Corps conducted a major restructuring of these procedures in response to criticism in a GAO Report<sup>113</sup> and a seven-part expose in the *Dayton Daily News*.<sup>114</sup> As a result of that effort, the Office of Safety and Security (OSS) was established under Peace Corps administrators who are often political appointees. More importantly, in 2008 the Peace Corps political appointees ended the responsibility of the PC/OIG for overseeing criminal investigation of violent crime. The latter move in this restructuring raises doubts about whether investigations—including those involving questions about the culpability of the Peace Corps—will be sufficiently independent to be thorough and credible. At risk is whether perpetrators of crimes against Peace Corps Volunteers and staff will be brought to justice—detering other would be perpetrators—and giving families and friends of the victims a sense of closure.

These investigations are analogous to those regarding commercial aircraft crashes. Our society does not allow the airline company to investigate the crash nor to report the findings. The National Traffic Safety Administration, an independent agency, investigates the crashes and its findings are credible. Without such independence, questions of bias would arise no matter how the investigation was handled. For this reason some argue that the PC/OIG, not the political appointees at the Peace Corps, should resume its former role as the lead governmental investigative body.

The most recent PC/OIG Semi Annual Report to the Congress focuses at length on its objections to transferring the criminal investigations to the OSS.

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<sup>113</sup> See “Initiatives for Addressing Safety and Security Challenges Hold Promise, but Progress Should Be Assessed,” July 2002, <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02818.pdf>.

<sup>114</sup> See “Casualties of Peace”: Part 1: Mission of Sacrifice (October 26, 2003) (<http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/daily/1026main.html>); Part 2: Missing Without a Trace (October 27, 2003) (<http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/daily/1027bolivia.html>); Part 3: Danger in the Highlands (October 28, 2003) (<http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/daily/1028lesotho.html>); Part 4: Mystery Deaths (October 29, 2003) (<http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/daily/1029death.html>); Part 5: Who Killed Karen Phillips? (October 30, 2003) (<http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/daily/1030gabon.html>); Part 6: Marked for Death (October 31, 2003) (<http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/daily/1031ukraine.html>); Part 7: Trouble in Paradise (November 1, 2003) (<http://www.daytondailynews.com/project/content/project/peacecorps/daily/1101capeverde.html>)

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/7448352/-Peace-Corps-Inspector-General-Semiannual-Report-to-Congress-2008> and

[http://multimedia.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/SARC\\_20080528.pdf](http://multimedia.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/SARC_20080528.pdf). The report states clearly that the OIG opposed this transfer. It argues that the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officers (PCSSOs) “are not trained to conduct criminal investigations,” are not able “to derive investigative authority to forward evidence to the FBI for analysis or present a case to Judicial System,” and “*are not recognized law enforcement officials or criminal investigators.*” (Italics in original.) It notes that the PCSSOs “may not be able to perform their current work responsibilities in addition to [investigations of] violent crimes.” It noted that the focus on violent crimes “*currently consumes 70% to 90% of the time of the OIG’s four person Investigations Unit.*” (Italics in original.) It also questioned “how responding to violent crimes will be prioritized with existing [RSSO] work.” OIG emphasized that “*protecting and processing crime scenes, collecting and admitting DNA evidence for analysis, interviewing victims and witnesses of violent crimes, coordination with post, headquarters, local authorities, the [Embassy] RSO, and other investigative activities are time-consuming and must be conducted within prescribed time frames according to both U.S. legal standards and the local legal system.*” (Italics in original.) It also noted that it was “concerned about notifying [RSSOs] of a violent crime in a timely manner.” The OIG advised the agency that “its proposed reliance on host country law enforcement agencies where Peace Corps programs operate is problematic.” It warned that “any transfer of functions [to the RSSOs] must not limit or prohibit the OIG’s ability to investigate any and all crimes involving Peace Corps and its resources.” The OIG concluded, “Peace Corps management should refrain from policy decisions that can be construed as interfering with the objectives and independence of the OIG.”

The questions regarding the transfer are partly about appearances. The Peace Corps political appointees might be tempted to give high priority to controlling damage to the agency’s image, minimizing reports of their own lapses, and moving on as soon as possible at any cost. The Peace Corps might be tempted to argue—as it does on its website—“health and safety risks are an inherent part of Volunteer service...because Volunteers serve worldwide, sometimes in very remote areas.”

The questions are also partly about training and competence. Non-OIG Peace Corps staff are ill prepared to confer with, question, observe and/or advise host country nationals in the area of criminalistics. As a result, the OSS staff may come to rely on the Regional Security Officer (RSO) attached to the local US embassy, but these officers are often swamped with crimes against American tourists, business personnel and military personnel. Assisting the Peace Corps is not the RSO’s sole or major focus. Some RSOs are not supportive of the Peace Corps mission. In addition, RSOs have a rapid staff turnover. Supplementing the RSO’s role, the OSS may rely on the Peace Corps Regional Safety and Security Officer (RSSO) and other host country staff who often have little or no prior experience in criminal investigations or law enforcement. Some of those who work on these cases are lower level host country nationals or “police buffs” without security clearance.

In contrast, the PC/OIG staff maintains trained investigators who have the title of "Special Agent" within the U.S. government. This title describes any federal criminal or non-criminal law enforcement investigator or detective in the 1811 job series title in the Office of Personnel



Management (OPM) handbook. Foreign police agencies have utilized PC/OIG's 1811s to help maintain "the chain of custody" of evidence to forensic labs (Quantico, VA) for analysis or to courts of law; this is a task PC/civilian staff cannot perform. PC/OIG's 1811s have also accompanied PCVs back to judicial proceedings in their country of service, months or years after their service actually ended. For this reason the FBI—called in on the Karen Phillips<sup>115</sup> and Walter Poirier<sup>116</sup> cases—always believed that PC/OIG Special Agents should be the ones investigating these kinds of cases.

PC/OIG has been especially impressive in attempting to determine the cause of death of a Volunteer, a crucial question from the families who seek closure. Parents want to know how their son or daughter died. The cause of death is also a crucial question in cases involving homicide. PC/OIG was instrumental in establishing an MOU (memo of understanding) with the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP). PC/OIG arranged for AFIP personnel (pathologists) to fly to any Peace Corps country to assist/advise/observe the local mortician on any post mortem of a PCV where the cause of death was unknown or due to suspicious circumstances. AFIP also agreed at the request of the PC/OIG, to have PCV fatalities flown to Dover for a comprehensive post mortem. This was no small undertaking, as the PC/IG at the time was an Orthodox Jew and had religious reservations about the practice. The AFIP personnel explained to him and PC/OIG how these concerns are handled for the various faiths in the military. A high-tech CAT scan-type machine could graphically strip away every layer of the human body for a closer examination of damage to internal organs, broken bones and foreign objects. Convinced, the PC/OIG entered into the agreement. This MOU and protocol were five years in the making. (Note: AFIP handles similar matters for incidents in a number of governmental agencies, including both Space shuttle disasters.) Prior to this agreement, the Peace Corps had sent home a number of fatalities in which the cause of death was undetermined and is still unknown to this day. The agency's political appointees now control the MOU so they will determine if and how AFIP will be utilized.

The reports on the recent death of Kate Puzey, a Volunteer in Benin, state that she "appeared to have been murdered...however, neither the State Department nor the government of Benin have determined the cause of death." Appen Country Newspapers, March 19, 2009 (article by Jason Wright). [http://www.northfulton.com/Articles-c-2009-03-19-177184.114126-sub\\_Slain\\_Peace\\_Corps\\_volunteer\\_from\\_Cumming\\_a\\_beacon\\_of\\_light\\_.html](http://www.northfulton.com/Articles-c-2009-03-19-177184.114126-sub_Slain_Peace_Corps_volunteer_from_Cumming_a_beacon_of_light_.html) Was the AFIP immediately brought into the case under the MOU to investigate the cause of death, as would have been done if PC/OIG had been involved? Prior to the transfer, a Special Agent from PC/OIG would have been immediately sent to Benin to consult (simultaneously as the body was transported back to the U.S.) with the Benin police investigation and advise them on the collection of vital evidence (and supply them with forensic tools if needed, which is often the case) and the interview of potential suspects. Did OSS do this?

Despite the pointed and poignant objections of PC/OIG to the transfer, it was implemented on July 15, 2008. The notice stated that the "change is being implemented with the concurrence of,

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<sup>115</sup> Karen Phillips was murdered in 1998 in Gabon. A botched investigation, involving an eccentric former rock star in Gabon, may have all but assured that her killer will never be found.

<sup>116</sup> Walter Poirier has been missing in Bolivia since 2001.

and cooperation and coordination between OIG and SS.” The acting PC/IG who had raised the objections quoted above was ultimately overruled by the agency’s political appointees and then a newly-appointed IG acquiesced to the transfer to the political appointees who had just appointed her.

With the transfer of violent crime investigations from the PC/OIG to the OSS, investigations are likely to end once a PCV crime victim or the corps leaves the country. This was not the case with the PC/OIG investigations. PC/OIG encouraged but did not force PCVs who were victims of crime to prosecute. PC/OIG agreed with the prevailing thought that seeking prosecution would send a message to the host country and to the populace that justice would be sought in crimes against Volunteers. The investigative cost for PC/OIG to seek prosecution was enormous, but it believed that the safety of the Volunteers required no less. If the transfer results in less follow through in these cases, less advocacy for the victim, and less deterrence, Peace Corps service might become more perilous.

For the most commonly occurring crime of rape, the agency used to medevac the PCV to Washington for 45 days (for rape counseling and medical treatment).<sup>117</sup> The 45-day D.C. medical evacuation also allowed PC/OIG personnel to interview the victim. It was often during the 45 days in D.C., that the RSO would notify PC/OIG that a suspect was being held and the victim was needed back in the country for a lineup; the OIG investigator frequently escorted the PCV back to the country for the line-up and then returned to DC with the PCV for their continued treatment. In 2006, Peace Corps started to institute a new/old policy (that PC/OIG investigators termed the "outta sight, outta mind medevac", whereby the medevac took rape victims directly to their home of record where they then received vouchers for local counseling and medical evaluation). Under the new policy, that type of thorough follow-through no longer occurs.

Another loss in the transfer is that the PC/OIG no longer reports on its investigative work in its Semi-Annual Report to the Congress (SARC). These reports have provided considerable detail about the pending cases. It’s clear that this made the agency’s political appointees uncomfortable as they took every opportunity to “scrutinize, cajole and finagle with each of the IGs about what information [was to be] included in the SARC before it was officially published.”<sup>118</sup> Now these political appointees can control both the investigation and the reporting. The OSS produces an annual “Safety of the Volunteer” report, but it focuses on dull statistics, not reports of individual cases. A comparison of the PC/OIG reports with the OSS reports<sup>119</sup> regarding violent crimes shows clearly why the Peace Corps is more comfortable with the latter.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Under the Bush administration, no U.S. dollars were to be expended for abortion fees, even for rape.

<sup>118</sup> Quote from affidavit of Peace Corps staff familiar with the report.

<sup>119</sup> See <http://multimedia.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/policies/volsafety2007.pdf>

<sup>120</sup> The PCIEA does not call on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of its investigations of crimes against Volunteers. We have proposed that the legislation call on the Peace Corps to assess “the organization and effectiveness of investigations of crimes against Volunteers, including an evaluation of whether the Peace Corps Inspector General shall again be given the lead in these investigations.”

One reason why this transfer took place is that the Peace Corps IG is not sufficiently independent of the Peace Corps political appointees. The Peace Corps Director or Chief of Staff is actually the PC/IG's boss. Some advocate that the President rather than the Peace Corps Director should appoint the Peace Corps IG. Indeed, the independence of the Peace Corps IG would have been granted in legislation that passed the House on June 1, 2004 (H.R.4060), but died in the Senate). This legislation would have “cure[d] the serious independence issue that the Peace Corps IG...currently faces; periodic, but uncertain, reappointment within a set, nonrenewal [nonrenewable] timeframe. This amendment would protect the IG and OIG staff from the restrictions affecting independence that are built into the agency's personnel rules. As in other IG offices, it would permit the development of a core professional staff, increase sophistication about the agency, work on longer term projects and greater insight and complexity and analysis.” (Testimony of Peace Corps IG at hearing of House Foreign Affairs Committee; [http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa92743.000/hfa92743\\_of.htm](http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa92743.000/hfa92743_of.htm)). The Project on Government Oversight recommends, “The Peace Corps IG should be excepted from that agency’s five-year limit on time with the possibility of only two extensions. By the time an IG has learned his way around the agency, he is faced with having to ask his agency chief for an extension of time.” <http://www.pogo.org/pogo-files/reports/government-oversight/inspectors-general-many-lack-essential-tools-for-independence/go-ig-20080226.html>. Just as RPCVs have influence over who is selected to be Peace Corps Director and Deputy Director, they should have influence over who serves as PC/IG through a public confirmation process.<sup>121</sup>

The issues about the safety and security of Volunteers would become immeasurably more important and complex if they were to become victims of terrorism.

In addition to controlling the independence of the PC/IG, some Peace Corps political appointees would like to confine the OIG's mandate strictly to the detection of waste, fraud and abuse within the agency, while dismissing the IG's authority to investigate or promote, economy, efficiency and effectiveness in Peace Corps programs. This view is reflected in the July 15, 2008, notice on the transfer of authority for investigating violent crimes, which includes a gratuitous slap at the PC/OIG: “This transfer will facilitate OIG’s focus on responsibilities under the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended...” The sensitivity of the political appointees to PC/OIG investigating the effectiveness of country programs apparently stems from the politicization of the CD appointments, which is largely responsible for the scathing and heart-

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<sup>121</sup> The agencies with Presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed IGs include the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, Interior, Justice, Labor, State, Transportation, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs and the General Service Administration, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Personnel Management, Small Business Administration, Social Security Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, Agency for International Development, Central Intelligence Agency, Corporation for National and Community Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Export-Import Bank of the United States, and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. See <http://www.ignet.gov/igs/pas1.html>. If the Peace Corps is interested in demonstrating its openness to reform, it should make the PC/IG presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed.

breaking affidavits printed in this report. Now, having lost its responsibility for the investigation of violent crimes, it seems that the IG will focus primarily on investigations involving embezzlement, employee misconduct and fraudulent claims under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), which provides federal employees injured in the performance of duty with workers' compensation benefits for total or partial disability.

There is a website in memoriam for Fallen PCV's: [http://www.fpcv.org/fallen\\_pcv.htm](http://www.fpcv.org/fallen_pcv.htm).

## **Point Eighteen: Enhance Congressional Oversight**

The best way to ensure that the Peace Corps realizes its full potential and addresses challenges and problems is for Congress to engage in vigorous annual oversight. It is incumbent on the Hill friends of the Peace Corps to ask tough questions and demand high standards. This process will strengthen the Peace Corps and empower the Volunteers.

The best source of information about the performance of the Peace Corps, as stated frequently in this report, is the Volunteers. The Peace Corps is a unique agency; its only accomplishments arise from the service of the lowest ranking, lowest paid, and most remote members of its team. Fortunately, it's easy for the Congress to directly solicit the views of the Volunteers because the CDs maintain lists of the email address of every Volunteer. Peace Corps headquarters occasionally uses these lists to send notices and conduct surveys. This means that the Congress can use these lists to conduct an annual survey of the Volunteers to determine whether the Peace Corps is listening to, respecting and empowering them. This could be a stand-alone survey or it could dovetail with a survey from Peace Corps headquarters.

Whenever the Peace Corps or the Congress develops a survey instrument, it should ask questions that focus in part on the quality of the Peace Corps managers and their support for Volunteers.

In conjunction with an annual survey of the Volunteers, each House of the Congress should schedule one oversight hearing per year, focusing on a wide-ranging and penetrating appraisal of the Peace Corps' effectiveness in managing Volunteers and its First and Second Goal accomplishments. Management issues like the Five-Year rule and competition from programs like Volunteers for Prosperity (see below) should be explored. An in-depth investigation and audit, perhaps led by the GAO, should precede the hearings. Current and recent Volunteers should be invited to testify. With this intensified oversight, the Peace Corps will thrive.

As the authors of this report testified at the July 25, 2007, hearing on the Dodd/Kennedy legislation, "We are pleased that you do not assume that the Peace Corps management always speaks for Volunteers. In the private sector, management and labor often have different perspectives on the workplace; the same is true of the Peace Corps managers and the Volunteers. Representatives of management are posted here in Washington so you will hear from them. It's more difficult for Volunteers to make themselves heard." Listening to the Volunteers should become the hallmark of Congressional oversight.

In their testimony, the authors proposed that the Congress "empower Volunteers to participate in the legislative process for [the Dodd/Kennedy] bill" through a Congressional survey. "It's common

knowledge that management and labor often have different points of view. We believe that Peace Corps management and Volunteers also have very different perspectives. We have clearly stated our perspective on this difference, but it's easy for the Committee to determine through a survey of the Volunteers if our view [in favor of the legislation] is typical. . . The Committee could easily survey the 8,000 current Volunteers regarding the legislation.”

We suggested that the Senate Computer Center “could set up an online survey to automatically tabulate answers to the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ questions and collate responses to open-ended questions. The Center could code the responses according to Volunteer country of service, age, sex, etc. to note any demographic differences.” Putting this in context, the authors said, “The Committee survey of Peace Corps Volunteers, a specific and limited population of experts, could be part of a major trend in our democracy as we increasingly use the Internet to empower citizens to participate in the legislative process.” Volunteers could be surveyed “in conjunction with pre-service or in-service training or close of service conferences.”

The surveys could address the issues raised in this report—the Peace Corps budget situation, listening mechanisms, First Goal support and accomplishments, ET rates, recruitment of more older, experienced Volunteers, reconnecting Volunteers for life-long service, building peace, protecting Volunteer rights and safety, and the standard of medical support for Volunteers.

The Congress should also have access to the Peace Corps surveys of Volunteers, including the biennial survey and the 360 degree reviews of staff and programs, which would provide a wealth of information from the Volunteer perspective. It would, in effect, give the Congress the substantive information provided here in the Volunteer affidavits. The survey instrument—be it a Peace Corps or a Congressional survey—and confidentiality for the Volunteers is crucial.<sup>122</sup>

With enhanced Congressional oversight, the Peace Corps will be held accountable for listening to, respecting and empowering the Volunteers, producing enhanced First Goal results, reducing the ET rate, and achieving the other reform objectives in this plan.

### **Point Nineteen: Meet Competition from New International Service Programs**

For decades, in what may turn out to have been a strategic error, the Peace Corps and its supporters have focused on increasing the quantity of Volunteers rather than the quality of their experience. The Peace Corps apparently has believed that only a focus on numbers would provide the leverage to secure increased appropriations. But the Hill has noticed that Presidential pledges to “double” the Peace Corps have frequently been made, but no President has submitted a budget that is remotely sufficient to achieve this goal. The Peace Corps has not developed a plan for doubling. The Hill apparently has concluded that “doubling” is no more than a slogan and that no realistic plan exists to do so. It will be difficult for the Peace Corps now to shift gears and focus on the funding necessary to achieve quality.

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<sup>122</sup> The inadequacies in the Peace Corps biennial survey of the Volunteers and survey of 50+ Volunteers are discussed above.

Unfortunately, if the Peace Corps continues to focus on quantity rather than quality, its appeal to applicants in the competitive “marketplace” for international volunteers may suffer. This competition may soon intensify as new international service programs emerge that are similar to AmeriCorps. Over the next 5 to 10 years the Peace Corps is likely to find itself in an increasingly intense competition for applicants, alliances and appropriations.

The Peace Corps is only one model of how to organize volunteer service. Established in 1961, its model is that of a U.S. government agency that pays all of the costs for selecting, placing, training, and supporting its 8,000 Volunteers. This model costs about \$45,000 annually per Volunteer for the two years of service. In contrast, a newer model, exemplified by AmeriCorps, places its 71,500 volunteers with NGOs. Most of them, 57,000 volunteers, participate in the Corporation for National Service’s “State and National” program where the cost is \$9,600 per volunteer. Another 5,400 volunteers participate in a hybrid-model program, AmeriCorps VISTA, which costs \$17,364 annually per volunteer. A small number, 1,000 volunteers, participate in a Peace Corps-model program, the National Civilian Conservation Corps, which costs \$25,000 annually per volunteer. These costs include education awards of \$4,725. Many volunteers receive a modest living allowance. They are entitled to some education loan forgiveness, and 78 colleges and universities match the education awards.<sup>123</sup>

The substantial difference in cost per volunteer between the AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps explains in part why there have been nearly 500,000 AmeriCorps volunteers in the past 14 years versus 200,000 PCVs in the last 47 years.

The AmeriCorps model of service will soon be applied to international service. Congress has authorized a new international service program that places volunteers with NGOs: Volunteers for Prosperity (VfP). See Public Law 111-13.<sup>124</sup> Senator Obama supported this program while serving as a Senator and as President. VfP—like AmeriCorps—takes a decentralized, private sector approach. In the early 1960s, international NGOs were few, so it is understandable that Peace Corps was founded as a wall-to-wall government program. However, there are now tens of thousands of NGOs, many founded and managed by host country nationals.

The VfP program provides, through “VfPServ”, “eligible skilled professionals with matching grants to offset the travel and living expenses of volunteering abroad with nonprofit

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<sup>123</sup> The PCIEA calls on the Peace Corps to undertake an assessment of “the adequacy of the current program model of the Peace Corps and the feasibility of program models such as the Peace Corps Response Program...” We have proposed that this assessment focus on the “comparative effectiveness and cost of” different models of service and specifically focus on how the Peace Corps compares to the new Volunteers for Prosperity program...”

<sup>124</sup> President George Bush established the VfP program in Executive Order 13317 (September 25, 2003) to encourage international voluntary service by highly skilled Americans supporting major U.S. efforts to promote health and prosperity around the world. Working under the direction of U.S. nonprofits and companies, volunteers are deployed to developing countries on flexible, short-term assignments ranging from a few weeks to a year or more. See [www.volunteersforprosperity.gov](http://www.volunteersforprosperity.gov). The Kennedy-Hatch national and community service bill would provide a statutory authorization for VfP.

organizations.” The program may provide “matching grants to offset the travel and living costs of volunteering abroad to any eligible organization” including a “a dollar-for-dollar match for such grant—(i) through the organization with which the individual is serving; or (ii) by raising private funds.” There is no dollar limit on the funds that might be provided. Because the authorization states “may,” the managers of VfP may choose to provide matches on a one-for-two or one-for-three or other basis.<sup>125</sup>

The program provides up to \$7,500 in support for fellowships lasting between 181 days and one year. This support is to be used to cover the following costs: international airfare, accommodations, and transportation within the host country; reasonable fees assessed by sponsoring organizations to defray international service program costs and administrative costs; subsistence living allowance in accordance with local market conditions; program materials and tools used for service-related purposes; seed funding for local service projects; and language and cultural training and other costs associated with pre-service project orientation.

When the new international service model is fully deployed, potential applicants will compare it to the Peace Corps model; they will “shop around.” Applicants will compare the reputations of the two programs, focusing on which provides the better quality experience. They will compare international service to the expanding range of domestic service programs. One point of comparison will be the two-year service requirement for PCVs and the one-year (or less) requirement for VfP. Another may be differences in the countries where the volunteers are posted. The Peace Corps and VfP may also compete in securing alliances with NGOs. Finally, competition over appropriations is likely in the House and Senate Subcommittees on State, Foreign Operations and Related Agencies, which have jurisdiction over appropriations for all three programs.

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<sup>125</sup> The VfP program promotes “short- and long-term international volunteer service by skilled American professionals, including connecting such professionals with nonprofit organizations, to achieve such objectives”; helps “nonprofit organizations in the U.S. recruit and effectively manage additional skilled American professionals for volunteer assignments throughout the developing world”; provides “recognition for skilled American volunteers and the organizations deploying them”; helps “nonprofit organizations and corporations in the United States to identify resources and opportunities in international volunteer service utilizing skilled Americans”; encourages the “establishment of international volunteer programs for employees of United States corporations”; and encourages “international voluntary service by highly skilled Americans to promote health and prosperity throughout the world.” The objectives of the program include “(1) eliminating extreme poverty; (2) reducing world hunger and malnutrition; (3) increasing access to safe potable water; (4) enacting universal education; (5) reducing child mortality and childhood diseases; (6) combating the spread of preventable diseases, including HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis; (7) providing educational and work skill support for girls and empowering women to achieve independence; (8) creating sustainable business and entrepreneurial opportunities; and (9) increasing access to information technology.” Service carried out by the volunteer “may not provide a direct benefit to any— (A) business organized for profit; (B) labor union; (C) partisan political organization; or (D) religious or faith-based organization for the purpose of proselytism, worship or any other explicitly religious activity.”

President Obama was eloquent in explaining the concepts behind VfP in his speech in Cairo on June 4, 2009.

Finally, I want to discuss economic development and opportunity. I know that for many, the face of globalization is contradictory. The Internet and television can bring knowledge and information, but also offensive sexuality and mindless violence into the home. Trade can bring new wealth and opportunities, but also huge disruptions and change in communities. In all nations—including America—this change can bring fear. Fear that because of modernity we lose control over our economic choices, our politics, and most importantly our identities—those things we most cherish about our communities, our families, our traditions, and our faith. But I also know that human progress cannot be denied. There need not be contradictions between development and tradition. Countries like Japan and South Korea grew their economies enormously while maintaining distinct cultures. The same is true for the astonishing progress within Muslim-majority countries from Kuala Lumpur to Dubai. In ancient times and in our times, Muslim communities have been at the forefront of innovation and education. And this is important because no development strategy can be based only upon what comes out of the ground, nor can it be sustained while young people are out of work. Many Gulf States have enjoyed great wealth as a consequence of oil, and some are beginning to focus it on broader development. But all of us must recognize that education and innovation will be the currency of the 21st century—(applause)—and in too many Muslim communities, there remains underinvestment in these areas. I'm emphasizing such investment within my own country. And while America in the past has focused on oil and gas when it comes to this part of the world, we now seek a broader engagement. On education, we will expand exchange programs, and increase scholarships, like the one that brought my father to America. (Applause.) At the same time, we will encourage more Americans to study in Muslim communities. And we will match promising Muslim students with internships in America; invest in online learning for teachers and children around the world; and create a new online network, so a young person in Kansas can communicate instantly with a young person in Cairo. **On economic development, we will create a new corps of business volunteers to partner with counterparts in Muslim-majority countries.** And I will host a Summit on Entrepreneurship this year to identify how we can deepen ties between business leaders, foundations and social entrepreneurs in the United States and Muslim communities around the world. On science and technology, we will launch a new fund to support technological development in Muslim-majority countries, and to help transfer ideas to the marketplace so they can create more jobs. We'll open centers of scientific excellence in Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and appoint new science envoys to collaborate on programs that develop new sources of energy, create green jobs, digitize records, clean water, grow new crops. Today I'm announcing a new global effort with the Organization of the Islamic Conference to eradicate polio. And we will also expand partnerships with Muslim communities to promote child and maternal health. All these things must be done in partnership. Americans are ready to join with



citizens and governments; community organizations, religious leaders, and businesses in Muslim communities around the world to help our people pursue a better life. (emphasis supplied)

Clearly, President Obama intends to use programs like VfP to extend the soft power of America.

The VfP program has already received strong support on Capitol Hill in the House and Senate Appropriations Committee bills. The House report states, “The Committee is aware of the authorization legislation that was signed into law for the Volunteers for Prosperity program. The Committee directs USAID to consult with the Committees on Appropriations not later than 60 days after enactment of this Act on implementation of this program.” House Report 111-187. The Senate report states, “The Committee is aware that the Volunteers for Prosperity program was authorized after the fiscal year 2010 budget request was finalized. The Committee recommends USAID support VFP, and directs USAID to consult with the Committee not later than 60 days after enactment of this act on the implementation of this program.” Senate Report 111-44. With both bills including similar language, this point will undoubtedly survive the conference between the two bills. The Senate bill includes an increase of \$356 million in un-allocated Economic Support Funds for USAID. The House bill provides a similar substantial increase in overall AID discretionary funds. This makes it highly likely that there will be sufficient funds to create a substantial new program commensurate with the \$10 million line item included in the Kennedy Hatch Serve America Act authorization.

When the legislation for this new program was being developed (which included the introduction of a similar program, Global Service Fellowships, S. 2609 in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress), overtures were made to see if the Peace Corps was interested in administering the program. Instead of embracing the new program, the Peace Corps chose to oppose it. This may prove to be a short-sighted choice.

As enacted, VfP will be administered at USAID and it may well be championed by the State Department, which has more clout with the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees than does the Peace Corps. Notably, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is deeply knowledgeable about the AmeriCorps model of service and has been among its greatest champions. She may become a champion of VfP and GSF and, because these programs are so much less expensive, be able grow them to a scale that exceeds that of the Peace Corps. This would be consistent with the views of those who advocate that America enhance its “soft power.” She may draw on her experience with AmeriCorps to structure these new programs to be more transparent and applicant-friendly, and less bureaucratic than the Peace Corps and more effectively focused on development impact.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Jack Lew, the new Deputy Secretary of State, served as Special Assistant to the President under President Clinton in 1993-94 and, according to Wikipedia, “was responsible for policy development and the drafting of the national service initiative (AmeriCorps).”

To be sure, the VfP program (the AmeriCorps model) may face challenges as it is implemented overseas. The NGOs with whom VfP works will vary in their effectiveness as agents of development and managers of volunteers. It will take time for the “market” to sort out which NGOs are the most effective. But because the VfP service model is so decentralized, any problems with certain NGOs will affect only a few volunteers. The Internet grapevine and volunteer and agency evaluations should serve to weed out problem NGOs from the network.

Reality dictates the mention of one final point of comparison: The respective vulnerability of these international service programs to acts of terrorism. The Peace Corps and its Volunteers might be considered to be a high-value target to terrorists intent on forcing the U.S. to retreat from the world stage. With its substantial and visible institutional footprint overseas, the Peace Corps and its Volunteers could be targeted. In contrast, the VfP and GSF programs would be so decentralized and private sector-oriented that they would have a limited overseas U.S. government footprint.

The analysis in this comprehensive plan leads to the conclusion that the Peace Corps is not well positioned for this competition. In many countries it has failed to adhere to its ultimate core value of listening to, respecting and empowering the Volunteers without whom the Peace Corps accomplishes nothing. This comprehensive plan has reviewed the Peace Corps’ performance and concluded that the agency has major deficiencies in listening to and empowering Volunteers and serving as an effective agent of development.

With an implosion of government finances, increasing reports of mismanagement of the Volunteers, sparse evidence of its development impact, and competition arising from new international volunteer programs, the Peace Corps franchise may be weakening. We have an early warning and time to act, but we must begin with a frank appraisal of the Peace Corps’ performance and the competition it may face. We are not likely to see a sudden crisis; the Peace Corps is not in immediate jeopardy. Unless the process of reform and renewal is institutionalized, however, we may see an erosion of the Peace Corps’ effectiveness and reputation and a decline in its success in the competition for applicants, alliances and appropriations. It is no exaggeration to say that the Peace Corps has one last great opportunity to renew itself.

The authors firmly believe that with an honest assessment of these challenges and issues—and an emphasis on listening to the Volunteers, honoring critics, and implementing reforms—the Peace Corps will thrive in the new competition to recruit and manage international service volunteers. The Peace Corps has the opportunity to renew, update, and strengthen its franchise as an agent of grassroots development and cross cultural exchange. The Peace Corps is justifiably proud of its tradition of taking risks, defying conventional wisdom, and combining the best of American idealism and resourcefulness. In reaffirming these core cultural values, the future of the Peace Corps and its Volunteers will be bright.

With this approach, the Peace Corps will be acclaimed for effectively ameliorating seemingly intractable social and environmental problems in the developing world. It could become an acknowledged leader in developing projects and strategies that work in a world where too many of them have failed. The developing world is littered with relics of these boondoggles and white

elephants. Government assistance agents and NGOs are desperate to find development models that work. Because volunteers work at the grassroots, learn the local languages, understand the culture, and serve for two years, they have unique insights about what really works on a sustainable basis. We need to have high expectations for these Volunteers and give them the tools to achieve breakthroughs. In the end the NGOs should look to the Peace Corps and its Volunteers for leadership. The ultimate beneficiaries will be the poor of the world, whose needs continue to fester and escalate.

## **Point Twenty: Get Organized to Press for Implementation of Reforms**

The authors hope that the recommendations in this reform plan will be fully implemented at the initiative of the Peace Corps. But the evidence is that the Peace Corps does not tend to ask probing questions about its policies and programs, does not establish mechanisms to empower Volunteers, and takes action to silence its critics and quell unfavorable press attention. This means that reform may come only if Volunteers and RPCVs get organized to place political pressure on the Peace Corps, the Members and Committees of the Congress, and the representatives of the RPCVs. Fortunately, the community of interested and knowledgeable advocates and organizers is highly motivated and entrepreneurial and intimately conversant with the modern Internet tools for communicating and organizing themselves. Some Volunteers have already shown considerable courage in speaking out in public against the conventional wisdom and wishful thinking that all is well in Camelot.

Presented here is a description of the principal options for organizing this Peace Corps reform campaign. The authors of this plan are committed to this reform effort over the long run, but so far it's been a lonely effort. We need many more Volunteers and RPCVs to become engaged. Without their engagement, the Iron Law of Bureaucracy at the Peace Corps will dominate and the agency's pervasive sense of self-satisfaction will prevent implementation of fundamental reforms.

**1. Dissemination of this Report:** We invite Volunteers, RPCVs and staff to disseminate this report and reform plan. We urge them to offer comments and additions to it. We urge others to compile and publish their own reform recommendations. We hope that there will never be a time when there are no comprehensive reports recommending reforms for the Peace Corps. The ultimate goal of this plan is to foster a continuous, penetrating and wide ranging reform process at the Peace Corps.

**2. Affidavits:** We invite current and recent Volunteers to send us affidavits about their Peace Corps experiences. We will collect them and disseminate them to key decision makers. Volunteers and RPCVs could post their affidavits on line and disseminate them to other Volunteers and RPCVs, to the Peace Corps, the Congress and the media. They comprise compelling evidence of the need for reform.

**3. Country-by-Country Reforms:** In each country Volunteers have ready access to email lists of their fellow Volunteers. They should use these lists to get organized to press for reforms. Basically we urge them to "unionize" and engage in collective bargaining with their employer.

We urge them to press first to establish 360 degree review mechanisms with which Volunteer views about programs and personnel are solicited on a confidential basis. They should disseminate these reviews within the Volunteer community and insist that the managers take action based on these views to reform programs and improve management practices. If the managers retaliate against those who lead these reform efforts, the Volunteers should band together to defend their leaders.

**4. Country-by-Country 360 Degree Reviews:** If the management of a program in a given country refuses to establish 360 degree reviews, the Volunteers should band together to create their own system. They can set the format, solicit the views of the Volunteers, and protect the confidentiality of the Volunteers who submit reviews. They can then email the reviews to the Peace Corps managers in that country, to the Regional Peace Corps Director and others at headquarters, and, if necessary, to the Hill and the media. One way or another, these 360 degree reviews are the key to securing reforms.

**5. Banding Together Worldwide:** It should be relatively straightforward for Volunteers in one country to secure access to the lists of emails for Volunteers in other countries. Volunteers in every country maintain blogs and a list of them is available through [PeaceCorpsJournals.com](http://PeaceCorpsJournals.com). Once a Volunteer in one country has an email for a Volunteer in a second country, they can create a merged list of the emails of all of the Volunteers in the two countries. Indeed, with some effort, it's possible to develop a list of EVERY Volunteer worldwide. The Peace Corps has ready access to such a master list but cannot reveal it due to Privacy Act constraints. Once a master list exists, it should not be difficult to maintain it over time. The same results can, of course, be achieved establishing a group within *FaceBook* or *PeaceCorpsConnect* (NPCA's social network) or another social network. Once these lists and groups are created, it's easy to set up chat groups on Peace Corps reform, the provisions of the PCVEA, the reform recommendations in this report, and every other proposed reform. With the power of the Internet, the current generation has potentially more political power than any preceding generation.

**6. RateMyPeaceCorps:** We urge Volunteers to set up a *RateMyPeaceCorps* site where Volunteers may confidentially post reviews of agency programs and personnel.

**7. House and Senate Authorizing Committees:** We urge Volunteers and RPCVs to press the House and Senate committees with oversight authority over the Peace Corps to enact legislation mandating fundamental reforms at the Peace Corps, especially 360 degree reviews.

So far Senator Chris Dodd is the key Member who has championed enactment of fundamental reforms. His PCVEA was landmark legislation. He is chairman of the "authorizing" subcommittee of the Senate for the Peace Corps—the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Global Narcotics Affairs. The message for Senator Dodd is that if the Peace Corps does not implement fundamental reforms, he should reintroduce the PCVEA and secure its enactment into law. He should engage in vigorous oversight of the Peace Corps.

The contact information for Senator Dodd is U.S. Senator Chris Dodd, 448 Russell Building, Washington, D.C., 20510. It's a waste of time submitting comments on a Member's website;

writing letters is just as ineffective.<sup>127</sup> The most persuasive course is to call his office (202-224-2823) and ask for the name of the staff person or persons who handle Peace Corps affairs for him. You can ask to talk with them or you can send them an email. The staff are busy so ask to speak with them only if you have an urgent message about the Peace Corps. The offices won't give out the staffer's email address, but when you have the name, it's easy to deduce their email address. The style used in the Senate is "first name" + underline + "last name" @ "name of Senator" (e.g. Dodd) + dot + "Senate.gov." If the staffer works on the committee staff (in this case the Foreign Relations Committee, where Senator Dodd sits and which has jurisdiction over the Peace Corps), the email address for the staffer is the same except that instead of the name of the Senator, insert "foreign" (a reference to the committee).

You can also target the other Subcommittee Members, who are Robert Menendez (NJ), Benjamin Cardin (MD), Jim Webb (VA), Kirsten Gillibrand (NY)—all Democrats—and John Barrasso (WY), Johnny Isakson (GA), James Risch (ID), and Richard Lugar (IN)—all Republicans. Because Senator Dodd served as a Volunteer, the other members of this subcommittee will undoubtedly defer to his judgment about Peace Corps reform.

In the House, the authorizing subcommittee is the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. None of this subcommittee's members is an RPCV. The Chair is Bill Delahunt (MA) and the members are Russ Carnahan (MO), Donald Payne (NJ), Robert Wexler (FL)—all Democrats—Dana Rohrabacher (CA), Ron Paul (TX) and Ted Poe (TX)—all Republicans. The main phone number for the Committee and Subcommittee is 202-225-3121. The style of the emails used in the House is "first name" + dot + "last name" @ "mail.house.gov". This works for staffers in the offices of Members or on committee staff.

**8. House and Senate Appropriations Committees:** We urge Volunteers and RPCVs to press the House and Senate committees that appropriate funds for the Peace Corps to mandate fundamental reforms at the Peace Corps.

These committees have crucial leverage over the Peace Corps—they hold the purse strings. The Peace Corps comes begging to them. And the committees can ask penetrating questions, press for implementation of reforms and even steer the funds towards reform.

One crucial issue here is whether the funds should be used to expand the number of Volunteers—doubling the quantity—or to improve the quality of the Peace Corps experience and impact. The authors believe that the latter is the higher priority. The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) has launched a MorePeaceCorps campaign that emphasizes quantity rather than quality. We urge Volunteers to insist that the MPC campaign emphasize quality, not just quantity. They should focus their effort on the Board of Directors, some of whom are elected by the NPCA membership. In addition, they could work through the Friends Groups who are major players in setting NPCA priorities.

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<sup>127</sup> Due to new security screening procedures, letters to Washington, D.C. offices take an average of seven weeks before they are read.

As explained above, there is often tension and conflict between the House and Senate authorizing committees and the appropriations committees. In general the latter do not amend the substantive legislative mandates for the agencies, but they can do so by designating which elements and programs of an agency receive funding and which do not. They can also make demands on the agencies to file reports or take other actions. These commands might appear in the text of the appropriations bill or in the committee report accompanying the appropriations bill. The authors have urged the House and Senate appropriations committees to become deeply engaged in the cause of Peace Corps reform. We have suggested that the committees require the Peace Corps to submit reports and plans on a variety of subjects:

a. ET Rates: A report on ET rates using the cohort accounting. Submit plan for growing the Peace Corps organically by reducing the ET rate. Submit estimate of the direct and indirect cost (with an explanation of the accounting method utilized) of the early terminating Volunteers, including an appropriate portion of Peace Corps overhead.

b. Biennial Survey: A report on how the Peace Corps uses the ET rate data (cohort rate) and the 2008 Biennial survey to focus on improvements in the countries and programs that are substandard.

c. New Countries: A report on where the Peace Corps proposes to open new programs (or relaunch programs) and expand programs. Explanation of the standards the Peace Corps uses to determine which countries are eligible/appropriate for programs and which countries have graduated from these standards.

d. Ratio of Staff: A report on the appropriate ratio of APCDs and PCMOs per Volunteer in each country. Provide report on whether the ratio meets the Peace Corps standards.

e. Connecting Volunteers: A report on how the Peace Corps is connecting Volunteers worldwide and country-by-country so that they can share experiences, post Best Practices Guides, and otherwise work together to achieve greater sustainable development results.

f. Relationship with USAID and NGOs: A report on how the Peace Corps is working cooperatively with AID and NGOs.

g. Organic Growth of the Peace Corps: A plan to grow the Peace Corps organically by fully funding Volunteers who extend, without any reduction in training slots.

h. Ratio of Qualified Applicants to Trainees: Detailed information on ratio of Volunteers who have completed the medical and legal clearance process as compared to the number invited to training and detailed information on the substantive selection process that determines which of the medically/legally “qualified” applicants are invited to training.

i. First Goal Accomplishments: An evaluation of the First Goal accomplishments of Volunteers, including an explanation of the methodology utilized.

j. Seed Funding: An explanation of the policy and practices of the Peace Corps in reimbursing Volunteers for their work-related expenses, including reimbursement for the cost of mounting demonstration projects.

k. Fund Raising Policies: An explanation of Peace Corps policy regarding fund raising by Volunteers and whether Volunteers should be permitted, with the CD’s permission, to fund raise from persons personally known to them, including family members, friends, and members of their home community in the U.S., and from government and nongovernmental agencies, including but not limited to working through the Peace Corps Partnership Program.

l. Decentralization: A report on the extent to which the Peace Corps might substantially reduce the personnel and expenditures of headquarters staff and transfer these to the country posts.

m. **Reconnecting Volunteers:** A report on ways the Peace Corps might reconnect RPCVs as resources for current Volunteers and for the communities in which they served.

n. **Medical Support Standard:** An evaluation of the recommendations to strengthen medical support for Volunteers in this plan.

o. **IG Investigations:** A report on Peace Corps transfer of authority away from Peace Corps IG for the investigation of violent crimes against Volunteers.

p. **VfP Competition:** A report on how the Peace Corps intends to meet the competition from the new Volunteers for Prosperity program, including an explanation for how the Peace Corps can justify expending more than four times as much per Volunteer.

q. **Political Appointees:** A report on the number of political appointees at the Peace Corps together with recommendations for limiting the number.

The members of the House appropriations subcommittee are Nita M. Lowey (NY), Chair, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (IL), Adam Schiff (CA), Steve Israel (NY), Ben Chandler (KY), Steven R. Rothman (NJ), Barbara Lee (CA), Betty McCollum (MN), David R. Obey (WI), Ex Officio—all Democrats, and Kay Granger (TX), Ranking Minority Member, Mark Steven Kirk (IL), Ander Crenshaw (FL), Dennis R. Rehberg (MT), and Jerry Lewis (CA), Ex Officio—all Republicans.

The members of the Senate appropriations subcommittee are Patrick Leahy (VT), chairman, Daniel Inouye (HI), Tom Harkin (IA), Barbara Mikulski (MD), Richard Durbin (IL), Tim Johnson (SD), Mary Landrieu (LA), Frank Lautenberg (NJ), Arlen Specter (PA)—all Democrats—and Judd Gregg (NH), Ranking Minority Member, Mitch McConnell (KY), Robert Bennett (UT), Christopher Bond (MO), and Sam Brownback (KS)—all Republicans.

**9. Whistle Blower Protections:** We urge Volunteers to press for enactment of legislation giving Volunteers the rights of whistle blowers who are government employees. The Senate Homeland Security Committee is the lead on this issue.

**10. Peace Corps PCIEA Assessment and Strategic Plan:** We urge Volunteers to press the Peace Corps to publish its plan in response to the Dodd PCIEA for public comment and submit detailed comments on it to the Peace Corps and the Congress.

**11. GAO Report:** We urge Volunteers to submit detailed information to the GAO for inclusion in its study of the Peace Corps (mandates by the House Appropriations Committee).

**12. Independence of Inspector General:** We urge Volunteers to press to give the Peace Corps Inspector General true independence. Now the IG is appointed by the agency's political appointees. Again, the key committee is the Senate Homeland Security Committee.

**13. Funding for Volunteers for Prosperity:** We urge Volunteers to press for full funding and rapid expansion of the VfP program. The competition it will provide for the Peace Corps is the ultimate incentive for Peace Corps reform.

**14. Applicants:** The results of the 2008 Biennial Survey of the Volunteers have been published on a country-by-country basis. Applicants should review these results for the country to which they have been invited to serve and consider declining invitations to serve in countries with

particularly poor Volunteer reviews. If Volunteers set up 360 degree review systems or a RateMyPeaceCorps site and post the reviews on line, applicants should review this data with the same options in mind. Another key indicator of the quality of the program is the ET rate. Applicants should demand to know the ET rate for the country to which they have been invited and consider their options if the rate is particularly high. In all of these ways, applicants can put pressure on the Peace Corps to reform the poorly managed programs.

With this concerted political campaign, the prospects for securing implementation of fundamental reforms is substantial. Implementation of 360 degree reviews is the single most critical reform. It empowers Volunteers to participate in the personnel decisions of the Peace Corps. Ultimately, reform will come and become continuous only if we successfully shift political power away from management in favor of the Volunteers.

## **Conclusion**

President Obama and the new Peace Corps management have an opportunity to renew, strengthen and expand the Peace Corps as a centerpiece of an ambitious National Service plan. This initiative will provide a powerful theme for this Presidency. There is substantial evidence of widespread management problems in the Peace Corps, including high Early Termination rates and a failure to achieve substantial First Goal results. These issues need to be addressed before the Peace Corps can effectively campaign to double the number of Volunteers. With this approach, the Peace Corps will more fully live up to its noble potential so that Americans can serve their country as President Kennedy challenged them to do. With enactment and implementation of these reforms, Volunteers will work more effectively with their local partners, promoting development and cultural exchange in a spirit of peace and generosity, and ensuring that the Peace Corps will thrive for decades to come. The authors love the Volunteers and love the Peace Corps. We believe that with fundamental reform, the Peace Corps can achieve its full potential.

Again, the authors welcome comments on this plan. Please send them to [Chuck.Ludlam@gmail.com](mailto:Chuck.Ludlam@gmail.com), [Phirschhoff@gmail.com](mailto:Phirschhoff@gmail.com), 4020 Reno Road NW, Washington, D.C. 20008. 202-364-6021 (home).



## **Appendix A: Email Affidavits From PCVs in 28 Countries Regarding Peace Corps**

Following are extended excerpts from email affidavits from Volunteers in 28 different countries sent to Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff following their testimony in favor of the PCV Empowerment Act, S. 732 at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Dodd) in July 2007 and publication of their article calling for Peace Corps reform in *WorldView* in November 2008. The names of the countries and Volunteers are withheld.<sup>128</sup>

### **1. West Africa**

“We had been through numerous discussions before [with the country Director] and been told that things would change that would improve the program. These never occurred. The administration would then flaunt our advice and enact further policies that restricted our ability to be proactive volunteers, treating us like children who couldn't be trusted with even the most basic risk management.” PCV 2001-2003

### **2. West Africa**

“I served as the Co-Chair of our VAC, which reminded me a lot of a Student Council in its lack of effectiveness and in the disdain it was given by our Country Director...I left [name of country withheld] demoralized because the personal efforts I made to bridge the gap between volunteers and the PC administration ended in disaster...[in the fact of] an unresponsive and sometimes hostile bureaucracy.” PCV 2004-2006

### **3. Central Asia**

“I would like to voice my full-throated support for your efforts to enhance the efforts of Peace Corps by improving its administrative organs. I hope that this will allow volunteers to feel that they are succeeding in their communities in partnership with, not in spite of, Peace Corps' management...The administration appeared to be more concerned with repressing any sort of independent expression from volunteers rather than trying to use such expressions as a guide for what could be changed or improved...I can say that over his two years in country he did not initiate or support any significant changes to Peace Corps policies or programs in the country, despite the obvious need for improvement and the plethora of suggestions from volunteers on how such improvements could be made.” PCV 2005—2007

### **4. Pacific**

“My biggest continued fear for future PCV's in [name of country withheld] is the host family policy. Across the board the administration has turned a blind eye to the sexual assaults that occur to female volunteers by male members of their host families. In my situation, my host family did nothing to deter drunk males from yelling outside my window at night. In country administration was not alarmed by this, nor was the regional safety inspector. Her response was that Peace Corps worldwide was moving to longer stays with host families. Due to community dynamics, this should not be a blanket policy...I feel that general priority of the administration was more focused on self fulfilling needs like remodeling their homes than best serving the needs of the volunteers.” PCV 2003-2005

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<sup>128</sup> These affidavits do not mention the Volunteer or countries by name. The Volunteers often fear that retaliation for speaking out.

## 5. West Africa

“[M]y experience with the PC Administration has been discouraging and frustrating. There really is a lack of support for the development work of PCVs. The country director did not believe that volunteers should help to find funding for projects and he has sabotaged many attempts. There are numerous cases where PCVs partnership proposals have sat on his desk and not been submitted to Washington for approval but the volunteer was not aware of this until it was too late. The PC staff treats us as if we are high school students, and moreover are the bad students. We have had a high rate of early termination (ET) for this reason... Few volunteers are willing to serve on the volunteer advisory committee (VAC) as the former country director would often filibuster at the meetings, would not listen to us and if anyone spoke up he would react in a condescending way—essentially shutting off any type of a two-way dialogue... The country director viewed any suggestion as a personal attack and would retaliate against those volunteers that offered suggestions or tried to explain some of the problems that existed out in the field... The lack of resources and support from PC administration is also demoralizing when we contemplate the thinking that is behind it—that we are not serious, development experts, but are youngsters who cannot be trusted and have little to offer beyond being friendly Americans who, unlike the tourists, are willing to learn and speak the host country native languages. I have watched one demoralized PCV after another leave... It saddens me because it was so unnecessary.” PCV 2005-2007

## 6. West Africa

“I can’t tell you how much I appreciate your bravery in standing up for what you believe in, especially in an environment that is—at times—as hostile and unyielding as the Peace Corps bureaucracy... First and foremost, is the manner in which volunteers (and their service) is viewed here. I consider myself a fairly intelligent individual... I worked for [many] years before coming into the Peace Corps, and was used to being treated as an adult. In the small amount of time that I have spent in Peace Corps [name of country withheld], I feel like the clocks have been turned backwards, and I am back in my parent’s house repeating high school. We are constantly monitored, **constantly mistrusted**, constantly questioned, and constantly driven away from service due to these issues... The Peace Corps has bred an environment of intimidation, telling the volunteers ‘you should feel privileged to even be a part of this’ and constantly threatening administrative separation. Now, I do feel privileged to have been chosen to serve my country as a Peace Corps volunteer, but this BY NO MEANS gives them the right to then treat me as a worthless and skill-less individual that is incapable of managing myself... [T]hrough intimidation, they breed a fraternity-like environment where we are expected to bend over, get paddled, and simply say ‘thank you sir, may I have another.’ It is this lack of respect, which in turn causes the many volunteers to become disillusioned and ET.” PCV 2006-2008

## 7. East Africa

“I was dismayed early in my service to observe how the staff at PC-[name of country withheld] treated us Volunteers. Mostly, they treated us with disdain--as though we were a bother to be dispatched as quickly as possible. It felt as though the staff had no respect for us and for our efforts as Volunteers... I think that the most difficult thing for me as an older (I was 56 when I started my service) Volunteer in Peace Corps-[name of country withheld], was learning how bureaucratic Peace Corps was... When we would make any sort of request to the

staff, the response invariably included a comment about how busy the staff person was, or how we didn't need what we were requesting. Oftentimes, the PCVs were treated like we were recalcitrant children who were bothering 'the grownups.'...We Volunteers got the sense that what mattered most to the CD was getting in as many vacation days as possible." PCV 2002-2004

## **8. South America**

"The organization I believed Peace Corps to be was not the same one I experienced as a volunteer. I believed I were joining an organization that focused on community development, addressing local needs through sustainable projects and ultimately bettering the lives of the people I was to serve through improved education, health care and technology. This, unfortunately, was not the case. It appeared that the general attitude toward volunteer hosting, site placement, project development and volunteer issues was one of convenience, with little respect paid toward the needs of the community or the skills of the volunteer...[O]ur training was inadequate, our site placement was poorly researched and project support was almost non-existent...[N]o system for organizational memory existed. We were to repeat the mistakes of past volunteers, raising the question of how serious Peace Corps considered our service. Housing and project placement appeared to be based on nepotism and cronyism, with little to no research into the needs of the community...Most volunteers learned at some point during their two-years in country that if they were to consider their service a 'success,' they needed to disconnect themselves from the Peace Corps office, develop projects on their own and bypass official Peace Corps funding." PCV 2003-2005

## **9. Eastern Europe**

"I have had numerous bad experiences with the staff of PC [name of country withheld]. With one exception, every time I have complained or given constructive criticism, my comments have been dismissed by the staff...I informed the staff immediately that my host organization was not a good fit for me. I was told that I did not know what was right for me and to leave these decisions in the hands of the staff, the experts on the issue. It has now been a year since my site placement and I am still incredibly unsatisfied with my host organization. I have let the Peace Corps staff know about this and they simply dismissed my statements and told me I needed to work on these things by myself...I was highly offended by the same program staff during his visit to my site during our first 3 months of service. During our meeting he made numerous offensive comments to me that were sexual in nature. I complained to the ACPD in a private meeting in her office. She told me that this behavior was normal for [name of country withheld] and it's to be expected, but that she would talk to him about it." PCV, 2007-present

## **10. Central Asia**

"I am not sure whether to be happy that I am not alone in my feelings or to be disheartened by the fact that so many volunteers around the world have run into the same issues. I can sum up my experience so far with the statement 'If I am successful it in my role as PCV I believe it will be in spite of Peace Corps Management and not because of it.'...In my short time in country about all we have heard from Peace Corps Administration is 'don't do that or you will be Administratively Separated' and 'If you get caught doing this you will face Administrative Separation.' They use that threat for about everything imaginable...Many of the volunteers I have spoken to have no faith in changes taking place based on Volunteer feedback. I have come to the conclusion that the Peace Corps staff views the volunteers as potential liabilities and not the assets that we are." PCV 2008—present

## **11. Asia**

“We came in under the watch of a CD who had the philosophy that PCV's didn't actually need a job in their assigned sites and consequently many of us felt underutilized and devalued, especially the teachers and social workers. Little or no effort was made to communicate with host agencies about what was expected of them in utilizing PCV's and therefore teachers were not allowed to teach and those of us in the social work agencies were only peripheral with no real tasks assigned...Living allowance did not meet the needs of daily living if a PCV chose to live on their own and this was not information shared beforehand. Therefore, each month I had to tap into my own savings to pay for food and transportation...There was rampant alcohol abuse among some of the younger volunteers, probably because of isolation and loneliness, but I know part of the reason was the pervasive feeling of not being able to do what they came to do as a volunteer.” PCV 2005-2007

## **12. North Africa**

“Of more concern to me was the treatment of the PCVs by some of the program managers, to the point I finally told our CD that if I continued to be treated like a 16-year old employed worker rather than a mature (65 years old) adult *volunteer*, that I would have no choice but to leave. I know I was not the only person who felt the same. That program manager is no longer with the PC but the replacement has already created her own ‘culture of disrespect’ as stated to me by the current PST group....The new PM has called HCNs who live in rural areas “ignorant,” yet during training she lectures and interrupts other's presentations, making comments that clearly indicate she has no knowledge of the subject as pertains to our lives/work here... I must add at this point that every survey that has been taken for the past two years, and for some years previously, on settling-in allowance and monthly living allowances have not had adequate response percentages to effect an increase.” PCV 2006-2008

## **13. Southern Africa**

“As ambassadors, I think the Peace Corps is terrific. But in making meaningful change while we are here, in a way one can see, it is not being done by the vast majority of volunteers...Just with the older PCVs I have come to know here in [our country], we have teachers, nurses, business people and university professors with 20 plus years of experience. All of these professions could be supporting the country at a level of their experience. But to a person, they are in an entry level position at sites that do not find the proper value in their experience, and most often are not even a match for the profession.” PCV 2008-present

## **14. Eastern Europe**

“Even though [name of country withheld] had more Peace Corps Volunteers than anywhere else in the world (300+), I am sorry to say that PC [name of country withheld] was very poorly run. Whenever PCVs would get together, all we would do was complain about the staff. One day - I realized that it was usually about the same staff members. And then it dawned on me—all of the people we were complaining about where also the American staff members—not the [name of country withheld]! And I remember thinking how very sad that it’s the Americans who are acting like Soviets—not the [name of country withheld]!...Our country director was very polarizing. [T]he majority of us did everything possible to stay away from him. I heard numerous staff members complain that he was treating them like it was the old soviet times...I found myself constantly saying to the new PCVs, ‘If you want to be a successful

PCV—lay low.’ Don’t ever call the PC office—especially if you have a complaint or concern or problem or issue. They will always turn it on YOU for creating the problem. Or blame you for getting sick. Or blame you for putting yourself in a ‘bad situation.’ Or accuse you of not being able to solve your problems. Even if you want to let your RM know of a situation, they will interpret all comments as complaining and will mark you as high maintenance and as a complainer. The most successful volunteers are those who the staff doesn’t even know exist. Don’t ever call anyone on staff unless you are dying—and even then think twice. How sad that my advice was to not stand out, to not excel, and just try to blend in.” PCV 2004-2006

### **15. Pacific (a)**

“When I signed up for the Peace Corps, a complete young idealist, I really believed in the vision of President Kennedy. Unfortunately I have found my service to be anything but Idealistic...When I started PC I was so excited and eager and now I feel broken down and sad that I couldn't get it to work out. The PC systems really needed to be changed to better attune to Volunteers needs. It's hard enough to come so far from home to learn a new language and way of life without having support from people in the office especially the higher ups that are our fellow Americans.” PCV 2008-2010

### **15. Pacific (b)**

“I was put in the Hindi language class which I cannot use at site... The site development and counterparts are not thoroughly planned and organized... I often call or email programming staff at the main office and do not get return calls. I send in my trimester reports and receive a generic template response about my work. There are many PCV's in my group that never send in their reports and it pisses me off that I take the time to do it and they are not reprimanded for it. All we've heard in the last 4 months is BUDGET CUTS, BUDGET CUTS! The Peace Corps Medical Officer doesn't even have funds to bring volunteers in for our annual physical. How is that? I can't believe that Peace Corps wants to double the number of volunteers by 2011. How about improve the existing system before you throw more people into the mess!!! The quality of the Peace Corps needs to be improved.” PCV 2008 to present.

### **16. Southern Africa**

“My house had been broken into twice in one night (10:30 PM and again at 3:00 AM after the police stationed a guard) while I was inside... I lived less than two hours from the Peace Corps Country Office in the capital city. Not once was I asked if I felt comfortable staying in my house that next night with its broken windows and lack of security. The Peace Corps Medical Officer wasn't contacted until after 7 PM that next evening...Another night of stress and no sleep, and I told the PCMO that I wanted to leave. I was summoned to the Peace Corps Office and told by the now returned Country Director that the Regional Director would not approve my staying in country to attend the Close of Service conference. I gave examples of two other volunteers who had been allowed to leave their sites and stay in [name of country withheld] for months until they could COS. I requested a hearing in Wash D.C. as per the rules and regulations stated in our Volunteer Handbooks. I was denied that request as per the set of rules for volunteers in Wash D.C., which volunteers had not been informed of and which could not be accessed in Malawi...I left the country a few days later bitter and a bit traumatized. I was a "mature" volunteer in her mid-40's. I had been very vocal about the lack of support for the volunteers throughout my service. I felt that the staff, both USA staff and Host-country National staff, were there to serve

themselves instead of the volunteers.” PCV 2006-2008

### **17. West Africa (a)**

“The issue with [name of country withheld], and I believe many other countries, is that, as often as not, the individuals who work in the Bureau of that country (most often the Americans rather than the locals who have been hired for important positions) are more interested in their careers and forwarding policy than the support of the volunteers in the field. These individuals will attempt, at the expense of the PCVs, to institute blanket guidelines that have been created by an office worker thousands of miles away. In addition, the people who are in fact there to support volunteers have forgotten this; they live and work in conditions that are similar to the Western World from which we've come and grown accustomed to. Meanwhile, volunteers are asked or required to act in ways that are either not possible, or very difficult to achieve with high moral, in the respective cultures in which they live...[I]t became obvious to my entire group that the Bureau, as an entity, did not care about the volunteers, only the numbers being sent to Washington...Finally, after having left, very disenchanted with what had been my experience was I came to grips with the issues that made me become angry and depressed. I can't speak for all the countries around the world, but for Peace Corps [name of country withheld] the main problems came down to a lack of communication between volunteers and the Bureau; however, it was not often from the volunteer side. Decisions were made in regard to the lives of volunteers without our input, or, even when we had input, often that knowledge was ignored...[T]he Bureau was more interested in control of the activities and movements of the people and choose those [to be PCVLs] who would tell them what they wanted to know not necessarily what was needed to be known. Volunteers felt trapped and forced to do things that either weren't what they should be doing or were blatantly without reason.” PCV 2006-2008

### **17. West Africa (b)**

“The...more important issue to me is the lack of responsibility that is given to volunteers. I felt like I was treated like a child. No motorcycles, no driving, no drinking, no this, no that; it was an endless dictum from up high on how I was supposed to live my life. I felt oppressed and even scared at times. Give volunteers good advice, but don't tell them what to do. We work on the ground, and more often than not, know how best to help the communities that we work with...The bureau is supposed to help volunteers, not be their watch dogs...If you truly want to make the Peace Corps a better institution than please deregulate it. Return to volunteers the ability to make their own decisions. The more rules you impose out of Washington the less effective you make the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps is supposed to represent freedom and the desire to do good in the world, but if you want to show freedom you have to give it to the volunteers. If you treat volunteers like children they will act like children. If you treat them like adults they will act accordingly.” PCV Niger 2006-2008

### **18. South America**

“I thank you both for shedding light on the multiple management issues currently affecting the Peace Corps and for striving to bring about change in this important agency... Throughout my service there existed a constant tension between volunteers and the country's administration in the central office. Battles sprung from conflicts over vacation policy and the regulations surrounding when it was and was not appropriate to leave site. At times the administration seemed more determined to hunt down 'illegal' vacationers than to improve the

overall program, or even answer volunteer emails. Rarely would staff return emails or provide feedback, which served to further widen the gap in volunteer-administration communication and trust. At times the administration's concern over a volunteer spending an extra day in the city to catch up on errands seemed a bit hypocritical, considering the abundance of office holidays, half-day Fridays, and extended lunches taken by the staff on a regular basis...The bewildering lack of organizational wisdom that has been retained and dearth of project resources that have been complied over Peace Corps' history also confuse me. In the field it feels as though each volunteer is reinventing the wheel every time he or she initiates a project or trouble-shoots a problem." PCV 2006-2008

### **19. Asia**

"My complaints with PC start from before service. I speak Russian and Spanish fluently. I requested Eastern Europe/Central Asia, Africa and then South America (in that order). I was offered Eastern Asia (A region I told my recruiter I DIDNT want to go to), and told by my placement officer that if I didn't accept, that Peace Corps would not give me a second choice and that I would have to reapply from the very beginning. I found out later that this was a lie...Training for our program was miserable, irrelevant and ineffective. Our language training was terrible. We weren't allowed to take notes, no consideration was made for how quickly volunteers learn the language, and no consideration was made for different learning styles...Our technical training was also the bare minimum...The site selection process was...completely arbitrary. ..When I make my complaints to HQ, they just say...I should just spend a year to a year and a half getting to know the community, then the work will come. I should just 'hang out' for a year and a half, then get the work? Have you ever had to not do anything for a year? Its torture!" PCV 2008-2010

### **20. Caribbean**

"After a year of the most trivial and repeated medical testing (to the point where my own doctor picked up the phone and called the PC nurse to tell him in no uncertain terms that I did not have an on-going condition they swore I had (cost me \$1000 out-of-pocket to prove it) I was accepted and assigned to Grenada. One week before I was to fly to Miami for Staging, I got a call saying I was being switched to [name of country withheld]. And they had put me in Youth Development. I asked if they had by chance read my resume. I don't 'do kids' and I am a small business specialist. No, hadn't seen it, wasn't in my file from DC...As for the PC staff here on the island, they are basically useless and clueless. ..The Asst. CD cannot carry on a conversation that isn't dialog out of the PC rules and regulations book. She quotes it verbatim, like a wind-up doll...When we tell the locals we are working with some of the rules we have to follow, they are flabbergasted and totally amazed at the stupidity...We all feel that the PC staff are not on our side, are trying to find any reason to send us packing." PCV 2008 to present

### **21. Central Africa**

"The general view of Volunteers in [name of country withheld] is that Admin should be avoided at all times. There are exceptions to this - the PCMO and the Health APCDs are responsive to Volunteer needs in the field, and their attention to detail is widely appreciated. As for the CD, the training unit, and Peace Corps Washington, the application of policy is arbitrary, rigid, authoritarian, command and control, all the worst aspects of bureaucracy. Volunteers expect that policy decisions handed down from Washington or from the CD of [name of country

withheld] will be worst-case scenario decisions, 180 degrees contrary to Volunteer needs. There seems to be no consideration for Volunteers' personal or professional obligations, no respect for Volunteer input, and no regard for the reputation or the professionalism of individual Volunteers, and by extension for the Peace Corps as a whole. Individual letters, petitions, or meetings with the CD or the Peace Corps Director in Washington get stonewalled. Individual unofficial protests of policy are ignored. Peace Corps Volunteers are intelligent, creative, idealistic educated people. They should be treated as an asset.” PCV 2007-present

## **22. West Africa**

“Unfortunately, as with many—even most—of our fellow PCVs, we found that both our patience and our flexibility have been tested more by an impatient, inflexible, and occasionally incompetent Peace Corps bureaucracy than by the challenges of living for two years in an undeveloped African country...[M]any PCTs problems and concerns aired in an open session were fairly dismissed—even derided—by Peace Corps staff. Of course, some concerns were overblown, perhaps, but the condescension was unnecessary...Indeed, ‘That's Africa’ seems to be the general attitude when any volunteer has a concern; however, it seems more the case that, ‘That's Peace Corps.’ Volunteers are frequently referred to as ‘all 22-year olds, fresh out of college,’ which many of our stage group are not. Besides that fact, why should someone aged 22 not be respected as an adult?.. We're told it is not as difficult here, and that we should ‘suck it up.’...Finally, staff are constantly surprised by discontent in the ranks, surprised to hear that we do not feel we are getting the—even minimal—support we need...Many Peace Corps staff treat volunteers with not just contempt, but outright suspicion. Whereas one should feel that ‘support staff’ are the first ones to go to with a problem, PCVs often avoid seeing and talking to them at all costs. Certainly, in a position where even unfounded ‘suspicions’ of illicit activity, raised ‘anonymously,’ are ruthlessly investigated, where threats of ‘administrative separation’ loom large, Peace Corps staff are the last people one would wish to confide in...As for program management, it is simply ineffective and unevaluated. Results, if there are any, are unmeasured... Unless reforms like those proposed by Senators Dodd and Kennedy are fully and well implemented, we could not in good conscience recommend Peace Corps service to anyone without expressing our many reservations, and unlike so many volunteers from the 1960s who served again in retirement, we could never consider doing so. We signed up for Peace Corps because we believed in its mission. We still believe in that mission, but like many volunteers who have ended their service early or stuck it out despite frustrations and anger at an ineffectual, impersonal, and frequently inept bureaucracy, we will look back upon our service with as much sadness as joy.” PCV 2007-2009

## **23. South America (a)**

“For a long time we have felt that the higher administration is out of touch with the needs of both Volunteers in the field and with the communities they serve...Our former Country Director terminated our Peer Support program and told volunteers in a mass email that if they were unhappy they should just go home and that the Country Director and Program Training Officer know more about volunteer life than Peer Support so a Volunteer should just go directly to them for support...I love Peace Corps and I have enjoyed my experience. However, I have also been very frustrated with my administration and their unwillingness to include Volunteer input and constructive criticism. PCV 2008 to present.



### **23. South America (b)**

“Volunteers are often not treated as adults by PC...Site development and site selection is severely lacking. Nearly all the Volunteers who have left early claim that some part of their decision was related to site development. PC staff often spends no more than a couple of hours at a site before determining it suitable for a Volunteer. What needs to happen is to put more resources and time into site development. PC [name of country withheld] has a Volunteer Advisory Committee, however, this committee is constantly told that the issues they raise are non-negotiable. Therefore, this advisory committee doesn't do anything and thus many of its members quit... There is zero continuity here in PC [name of country withheld]. Many Volunteers quickly find themselves in a position of not knowing who their immediate superiors are... Training needs to be revamped. The best parts of training with the tech trips that we took to receive more practical hands-on knowledge. Most of training, however, was spent sitting in a room getting lectured to by current PCVs, staff, or some other technical expert. Without the hands-on experiences a Volunteer walks away from training with a bunch of ideas and information, but little real ability to put those into action... I still scratch my head trying to figure out why PC-[name of country withheld] does not have a website of its own. A place where Volunteers can access documents (PC Forms, grant applications, etc.) and technical resources... In my time here I have heard staff call Volunteers: whiners, complainers, spoiled brats, members of Posh Corps, entitled, jerks, and titty-suckers. Hey, we do whine and complain at times, we do need to be coddled a bit, but the bottom line is that each and every one of us gave up the comforts of the U.S. to serve in Peace Corps, to learn a new culture, to learn a new language. The primary role of staff is to support the Volunteers so that they can make positive impacts in their sites. Only by working together can PC function as a development organization.” PCV 2008 to present

### **24. Central Asia**

“I too am a returning Peace Corps Volunteer. I served in [name of country withheld] in 1968-69 and now serve in [name of country withheld]...As volunteers we are treated as if we have little ability to manage our personal lives or make job decisions. Most of the volunteers I am serving with are the age of my three adult children but Peace Corps policies and rules restrict our own decision making as if we were children of 8 or 9 years...Now I am one of a very few 50+ volunteers in my country but along with the younger volunteers policies treat us as if we don't have the sense to come in out of the rain...One of the reasons that I object so to these policy restrictions is the fact that when you treat people as if they can't make their own decisions some stop making good decisions, some ignore policies and others just leave...I believe in the Peace Corps as much now as I did 40 years ago. I agree that it is time to make it more a part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The base this more mature Peace Corps is built on must be sound. In my short period of this second stint I have seen too many volunteers disappointed with their opportunity for service. Part of this is the policies under which we serve and part is what we have been asked to do. PCV 1968-9 and 2008-present

### **25. East Africa**

“Rather than narrative form, I am opting to use bullets to make more points in less space. I am an older volunteer in an Eastern African country. Where I have 8 months left of service, I prefer to remain anonymous now, but would be glad to assist with your PC reform efforts after I complete my service.

- Training: It was geared for high school graduates, not college grads, let alone those with years of professional careers behind them...
- Language: Again, geared for 20 somethings, when older adult learners require alternate learning strategies due to known cerebral changes associated with aging.
- Staff ineptitude: One example would be the APCD for my program said at IST that when he had not received any responses from my site personnel that they wanted a volunteer, he interpreted that as “Yes.” I will spare you a long list of possible examples.
- Site placement: I told staff I would go anywhere or do anything, but do not place me on the Eastern African coast due to the climate. Where was I first sent? The coast with a sweltering, humid, hot climate that started out at 90 degrees F at 8 a.m., only to go up from there to 120 degrees in the sun by 10 a.m.
- Staff rudeness: I am mentoring younger volunteers because I enjoy that role. One recently received a rude call, as I have many times, asking where certain forms were. The staff member had not checked his email before placing this rude call. I once was accused of being away from my site in a town 14 hours away from my site. After repeating the same questions numerous times and interrupting my language lesson, staff called another volunteer to confirm my whereabouts. I find this quite insulting since as an older volunteer, everyone knows I stay in my village.
- Training: Redundant, over and over the same material. We are all college grads and don’t need to be told the same things over and over. Although we fill out forms asking for suggestions for training content, the same old, same old is presented.
- Staff do not return emails or phone calls: No matter the issue, they are too busy to help with anything, grants, simple questions, etc. They work a 4.5 day week and have group sports on Friday afternoons because of the stress they state they have.
- Reimbursements are so slow that younger volunteers fake medical conditions to go into the PC office to obtain their past medical, VAC, or other reimbursements. Otherwise, reimbursements go into a black hole. There is no notification of what the problem may be. There has been some improvement lately with this due to staffing changes.
- Lack of volunteer support: Any concerns are framed as complaining or as your fault, so I am pleasant but distance myself from country staff. Where this plan is effective for me as an older volunteer, it is very difficult for some of the younger volunteers and as a result they languish in their villages, doing very little for their service or spend their time drinking. I was told early in my service that “under the radar” is the best plan by far.
- We have filled out numerous living allowance surveys and staff agree living costs vary widely depending on site. I don’t know any PCV who can live on our monthly allotment except those who live in communities where rice and beans are the only food options. The 75% return rate required to obtain an increase is outrageous and anyone with any knowledge of statistics knows that this return rate is impossible to obtain. Then, staff go shopping anyway to confirm that a living allowance increase is needed. Again, when will PC start trusting that PCVs are not all manipulative, untrustworthy people?
- Lack of support for projects: Grants are not reviewed for months on end, then alternate directions are given as to how to complete grant forms, only to reverse or change directions once stated changes were made. Available and requested materials are not sent for important PC projects, such as supporting World AIDS Day.” PCV 2008 to present

## 26. Central America

“[My husband and I are] writing to express [our] support to Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff and the Dodd/Kennedy Bill...[With regard to our site during training w]e found out...that a Peace Corps representative has not been in [one of our sites] in over 5 years and no Peace Corps representative had EVER been in [out other site]. For our first month of service we stayed with a host family as Peace Corps policy states. Peace Corps negotiated the contract with the host family including what we would pay and that the host family would cook our meals instead of letting us cook for ourselves, without our input or permission... We started to notice the first week that we both had come down with diarrhea. It persisted every day, unless we were traveling and ate somewhere then our host family’s house. We than began to notice that our “host Mom” would cook our evening meal in the morning, only cover it for the entire day [in the 95 degree heat] and then serve it to us at night... We reported this to our PCMO, who told us that it was Peace Corps policy that we live with a host family for one month and there was nothing she could do to move us...[With regard to our post for our service] we discovered that our sites were *10 hours* apart. When we told this to Peace Corps they responded with “you can see each other on weekends”. We were neither told about this distance in our sites nor did we give our permission to be separated. Peace Corps *contractually obliged* to us that as a married couple we would be located together...The people located at my site did not know who I was or what I was doing there. Nobody offered to help us and when I inquired if someone would take us around the park I was told by [park] employees to rent a guide at my own expense.... We met with a young employee of [the park and] asked the young man if it was safe to stay in the government housing in the park at night (the park closes at 5 pm). The young man said that it was NOT safe but they didn’t have any alternatives...[H]e did not want me to go to [the park] without my husband present. [But at my husband’s site, 10 hours away, the park] staff was adamant that my husband needed to [live there]...I was told [by the Peace Corps] to go to [my park] on a bus [but my husband] was not to go with me. I reminded them that Peace Corps had told us that I was not to go to [my park] without my husband the PCACD told me that “Peace Corps did not say that”...I was left completely abandoned by people I trusted in Peace Corps...The following month it became more and more impossible to get me to my [primary] site without incurring extra costs to be paid out of my pocket and having me stay alone in a place that was not considered safe by local people. I also did not trust the people at my site to make sure I made it home when it was time and not abandon me or be unable to bring me back. I [was told by my] PCCD (country Director)...to “just start working on projects at [my secondary site].” [But people at the second site] refused to work with me because of a fear to spark an internal conflict within the [main park] office. I wrote a long carefully worded letter to the PCACD, PCPM and the PCSO (Security Officer) detailing my safety concerns and questions. My questions were directly related to who was going to escort me into the [primary site] and whose responsibility it was to make sure that I would be safe in the park. In this letter I recalled all of the earlier incidents that had occurred during our stays at the park as evidence that I needed to know the answers to those questions. I received a phone call from the PCACD, where he *demand*ed to know where I was going to work. I told him I was not going to return to [my primary site] until my security questions were answered and I knew who the people were that I would contact. He could not give me those answers and repeatedly told me that “its safe, its fine”. During this conversation I feel I was bullied by the PCACD into staying in the site that he set up, because he did not want the embarrassment of admitting the site was a failure...I told the PCPM that I wanted to make an official complaint against the PCACD, which was ignored and I was told it would go into my file. Seeing no alternative, I sent my security questions to the park director

and cc'd the PCACD. The PCACD then accused me of "poisoning future relationships" with the host country agency. I never received any answers to my security questions... This completed the first 3 months of our Peace Corps service... [Later w]e called Peace Corps and told them about our situation and the new PCACD (the one from earlier had moved on) immediately decided to move us. [T]he PCACD told us that if a new site could not be found we would have to go home. We were put in this situation and this town by Peace Corps, who knew nothing about it when they placed us there, and we were about to be forced to ET because of a Peace Corps mistake. [Then] PCCD emailed us and in no uncertain terms stated that the PCACD had made too quick of a decision and we were given an ultimatum to return to [our site] or to go home... After what we would find out later was a series of emergency meetings, we were granted another ultimatum. They had found us a new site but we would have to extend at least 6 months or we would have to ET. [W]e are determined to see this service to completion and we are flexible. We chose to extend and the good news is that our new site is great... While our story has a happy ending, this is a prime example of gross Peace Corps oversight, lack of planning, and inability and (in some cases) outright refusal to sufficiently support its volunteers. In our situation our treatment on behalf of the Peace Corps [name of country withheld] staff was unethical at best and at worse a breach of contract and knowingly exposing us to dangerous situations." PCVs 2007-present

## 27. Central America

"We are a "50+" married couple, currently serving as Peace Corps Volunteers. While considering whether to apply, we read over 1000 pages of Peace Corps training manuals (including titles such as *Community Economic Development*, *Micro-Enterprise*, *Roles of The Volunteer*, etc.) and were thrilled to find ourselves in complete agreement with the espoused development theory. However, after our experiences..., we could not today in good conscience recommend Peace Corps service to others, until and unless the organization, including its mission, policies, and implementation, has been revisited and modified. How did we get from there to here? Why did we find an organization whose reputation in the States is above reproach, one that is defended each funding cycle by both politicians and former volunteers with a cult-like fervor, one that is so clear in theory, yet so dysfunctional in practice? We ask these questions with a sincere interest in restoring the Peace Corps' potential to reach its goal, to work for 'world peace and friendship,' and perhaps along the way, to restore our own idealism. Although we have had wonderful moments during our service, we have been forced to spend an inordinate amount of time, attention and energy dealing with unnecessary challenges caused by both the contradictions between Peace Corps' theory and practice, and institutionalized dysfunction. Initially we thought it possible that our experiences in Peace Corps might be unique to the country itself and / or our individual circumstances; yet, we have found, through corresponding with numerous other past and present volunteers, that many of the difficulties we have encountered are universally experienced to varying degrees around the globe... Because the majority of recruits are just out of college and most are generalists, the assumption is that nine to twelve weeks of training qualifies a trainee in a given field to spend the next two years transferring their newly acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes to host country partners. The basis for this approach seems questionable in today's world where developing nations have their own college graduates in need of work in their own countries... It is unfortunate that Peace Corps still does not have a successful basic training program in place, but reinvents the wheel with every new group of arriving trainees and trainers... The arduous process of applying for Peace Corps service requires the future volunteer to provide volumes of information on him- or

herself, from high school and college transcripts, to descriptions of skills and life experiences, to extensive records that confirm medical and dental clearance. One might hope that, as a result of this process, a complete picture of the applicant would enable appropriate site and job placement for each accepted volunteer. Unfortunately, by the time records reach the intended country of service, only a resume describes the future volunteer to in-country staff, and they are left with this as a guide in attempting to match a person with an existing request for a PCV. This approach to placement seems to be unique among volunteer agencies in the field of international development, with comparable organizations in Japan (JICA) and the UK (VOS) using a direct job placement model. (These agencies also have a smaller number of volunteers and a lower attrition rate.)...When discussing with our APCD the difficulties of spending nearly half of our service period dealing with poor assignments, we were told, 'Well, didn't that experience make you stronger?' We do not believe, particularly as mature adults, that working under expectations of undue hardship (whether caused by ineptitude, unclear communication or intentional maneuverings,) under the guise of character building, is a useful exercise. Again, clearer trainings, communication, and a large-scale effort to educate host country nationals as to the intended role of Peace Corps volunteers are needed to make the best use of volunteers' time, effort, and goodwill...There has been a chronic pattern of insensitive communication from staff to PCVs that creates low morale. The most disturbing examples of this were communications surrounding the violent assault and robbery of one PCV (and gang rape of his girlfriend,) and a volunteer's death. Both of these incidents were handled throughout with administration's obvious primary concern being to control media coverage of the incidents, rather than to relay clear information and attend to the emotional responses and needs of the remaining PCVs...The myth of the Peace Corps is a powerful one, embedded in the North American psyche after having been built on decades of goodwill and warm, fuzzy anecdotes. Indeed, the myth lies in the moments; but, the hours, weeks, and months tell a fuller story, one worth listening to, and learning from. As we examine Peace Corps' inefficiencies, we see a two-fold problem: the agency's dysfunction, in addition to limiting its effectiveness in achieving its own program goals also creates undue stresses that limit the volunteer's capacity for productivity. With this in mind, it becomes clear that increasing the number of volunteers and / or adding additional funding are not, at this time, the answer to the question of how to improve Peace Corps. Positive changes may begin with the careful consideration of each aspect of the organization, including, but not limited to: pre-service training; host family stays; site placement, job assignment and counterparts; health; staff support and communication; and the Peace Corps culture...Ultimately, changes may be made, resulting in a Peace Corps that fulfills its own theoretical premise and promise, and is worthy of the taxpayer's money, volunteers' time and commitment, and host countries' efforts. It would be at that time that, with the same enthusiasm we had when we began our service, we could unequivocally recommend Peace Corps service to others. To borrow a line from President Obama's inaugural address, 'For the world has changed, and we must change with it.'" PCVs 2007-present

## **28. Central America**

"My wife and I are 1 3/4 years into our service in [name of country withheld]. We are in our early 50s and gave up a beautiful home and very nice careers in order to try and make a contribution to the needs of the world's poor. That was our sole motivation for joining and is probably the reason why, unlike so many of the younger volunteers, we feel like our experience has been a waste. Where they have been able to create positive spins on their time here thru

resume building, personal and romantic relationships, travel, and avoiding the start of a working life (or in most cases grad school), we can only see the wasted tax dollars and completely ineffective manner in which PC operates as a development service to its host countries, and how it fails in supporting the philanthropic motives of its volunteers.

PC doesn't seem to even try to serve as a development tool for host countries. [We] won't speculate as to what PC has as its un-stated purpose, but beyond US public relations, we don't see anything. Yes, a very small percentage of PCVs do accomplish significant things, but they do it with no help or support from PC, only from their own efforts, and usually with money from friends and family thru the PC Partnership program. They are also the lucky ones who are assigned to a site that has a person or organization who wants to work with them. This of course doesn't count the one or two indigenous poster communities that garner money from USAID and the US Embassy and are used as show sites for visiting dignitaries.

What is obvious is that PC is no different than any other government agency with its primary goals being survival and expansion. After 35 years here, PC is still doing the same types of projects it was when it started. There is no effort to coordinate with government agencies or communities and promote self sufficiency. And with the country well developed economically, the office here seems desperate to find new sites to justify its desire to expand. New volunteers are being assigned to highly developed sites, sometimes with a large expate population already present (like our site). Follow up volunteers are assigned to sites when no longer needed or requested. But the strategy is working. [name of country withheld] has been very successful at increasing the number of volunteers and expanding its budget and staff.

PC has no interest in providing the necessary tools for volunteers. We were stunned to find out that, after 45 years in Latin America, there was no "teaching English" program, curriculum, or even notes, that we could get. Virtually every PCV here spends some time teaching English and every one has to try to build a program from scratch. The same applies to information technology, environmental education, and any other activity the typical PCV tries to do in their site. The only definitive program with a complete and comprehensive manual here is Sexual Health. That was done by volunteers with no help from the office and only within this country. Every other country had to make their own, if they have one. Nothing exists to share resources except a new gmail account set up by some volunteers just last year to try to meet that need. Unfortunately, with no one to manage it, it is becoming a disorganized collection of files that few are even trying to use. Last year PC [name of country withheld] initiated a new program to teach English and promote tourism. But for the English part, the volunteers received no books, dictionaries, lesson plans, etc. How can anyone be serious about teaching a language as difficult as English with no resources whatsoever? [We] suspect the purpose is not to actually teach English, but to accomplish the goal of increasing the size of the country operation.

The thing we have found most upsetting is the complete waste of talent we have seen. With 30 years of business experience, my wife and I were assigned as follow up PCVs to a 4 person organic farming group (we know nothing about farming), and nothing else. The group had not even requested another volunteer. Young PCVs with Civil Engineering degrees are assigned to latrine projects involving nothing more than digging holes in the ground. PCVs with theatre arts and political science degrees share the same work. Fluent Spanish speakers are assigned to

indigenous sites where they have to learn another language. For a significant number of volunteers, the projects they end up working on have nothing to do with development at the site or country level. Rather they involve themselves in projects associated with the PC office. When a PCV says they are “busy” they are usually involved with office activities like new group training, planning conferences, or developing new training tools. Others get together to do AIDS presentations. Interestingly though, the actual AIDS and sexual health presentation is done by a Red Cross volunteer. All the PCVs do is plan games to make the day more fun.

The [name of country withheld] office is apparently considered very well managed. They have a high rate of volunteer extensions, have increased their volunteer numbers, and maintained below average ET rates. But lets look at those indicators. First, [name of country withheld] is a developed country with an large international city offering everything one could find in the states. It is home to many expates and so has a large permanent American population. It’s debatable whether PC should even be here. But the main reason most volunteers extend here is because they are involved in a romantic relationship with another PCV or a national. The other reason we hear is that the younger PCVs just aren't ready to start the routine of a life of work. Unlike more undeveloped countries, this is a pretty easy place to stay. But even with that, almost 50% of our group left early due to lack of meaningful work, or were Admin Separated, mostly for incidents related to a lack of work opportunity and boredom.

The Country Director, who had been here for 7 years (he's leaving to head a PC country director training project in DC), constantly bragged about how exceptional the [name of country withheld] operation was. He is a very nice person and very, very protective of his staff. But it is easy to see your operation as successful when you deny the existence of anyone identified as an unhappy or unsuccessful PCV. It doesn't even matter if you’re productive at your site, only that you are loving PC. Once you are identified as unhappy, frustrated, or struggling, you are not helped or counselled. You are blackballed. Our CD visited us one time because our site is located in a vacation area where he was visiting with his family. We had been in site for 3 months and expressed our troubles and frustrations with him then. Instead of getting any support, we eventually learned that we were the only couple not invited to a reception for the PC National Director a few months later, and have never been invited to participate in any office training or activity that would expose us to new volunteers. Other than the mandatory 3 month and 1 year visits by our APCD, we have never seen another staff person at our site or been contacted by one.

[We] won't touch much on the 3 months of our lives we lost doing PC training. That subject has been beat to death, I'm sure. But what does merit mentioning in our case was the complete lack of concern for the training needs and existing qualifications of older volunteers. PC [name of country withheld] knew all about the difficulties our demographic has with language training. They even sent us copies of articles they had substantiating it. Yet they did nothing to support us or offer us alternative training methods. Even now, our language skills are minimal which has obviously hindered our ability to participate in meaningful community activities. It was also ridiculous for us to sit every day thru training sessions conducted by 22 year old volunteers with no knowledge of what they were talking about. All the older volunteers in our group were assigned to developed sites and none have been successful in developing any meaningful projects (ourselves included). For younger volunteers, PC training (and subsequent service) did

nothing to facilitate a transition from college to professional life; just the opposite. The environment encouraged young PCVs to hold on to their college mentality. The atmosphere was designed to emulate summer camp as opposed to an effective training environment. The focus was always on fun and positive reinforcement thru games and activities. The failure of the training was evident by the behaviour of many of the trainees and their struggles afterward.

We have just completed our new reporting form on our activity. The form itself is designed to make PC service sound great, capture cute little "success stories" and overstate PCV contribution. We are teaching a computer class to 3 grades totalling 48 children. We only teach one day a week, an hour each class. If a PCV holds an AIDs presentation for an hour to 25 kids, that goes down, even tho the presentation was done by the Red Cross. If you play baseball with some kids a couple times a month, that goes down as a youth group activity reaching 20 kids building self-esteem and teamwork. It's easy to see how the numbers can be made to look impressive with no substance behind them. Plus, the younger PCVs have every incentive to embellish their numbers as much as possible. Its like having college seniors who are applying to graduate school, grade themselves knowing their grades will never be verified. One PCV we met last year admitted to us that she had a terrible experience and didn't do much of anything in her 2 years. She was the previous volunteer at our site. Today, we understand she is working for PC in the states. Again, young PCVs have a lot to gain or lose from how they present themselves as PCVs and RPCVs. There is no incentive for them to make honest presentations of their service. Also, younger volunteers seem more content with small activities. Many of them express satisfaction with their PC experience, even though they aren't doing much. They seem to be able to enjoy a more balanced lifestyle than older PCVs because they are building career/grad school credentials just by being here, enjoying personal relationships, travelling, and holding on to a college type life style. Also, they do not recognize the sacrifice they make in career and income. If they did, they would also be much more dissatisfied.

Like all volunteers, we can easily put a very positive spin on our service and make it sound like we did a lot. But the reality is we have failed in just about everything we tried to do. We accept that the blame is shared among Peace Corps, the community that did not need or want us, and our own shortcomings and failings. What we cannot accept, is that key factors that contributed to our failure are obvious and therefore, should already have been addressed. We should not have been sent to the site we were assigned and should not have been sent to this country, given its disregard for the needs and qualifications of older volunteers. Most likely, accepting older volunteers and married couples was just another way to bump up the country's PCV numbers. We also feel resentment because our experience does not appear to be the exception, but the norm. PC is content with a 20% or less rate of PCV success, hides or denies its real performance issues, and uses the exaggerated to perpetuate its myth and maintain the status quo.

Like everyone else, we want to see PC succeed. It is one of the few organizations that has the potential to do really good things. But based on what we have seen ourselves and heard from other volunteers in other countries, we do not believe it is accomplishing any of its goals to any significant degree, only thru the individual successes of a very small percentage of its volunteers. We believe the following recommendations would be needed to make PC the kind of agency its recruiting department promotes:



[Recommendation:] The fluff and fake stats generated by today's volunteer reporting tools sound impressive I'm sure, but they are hollow and artificial. Install leadership that wants to build international relationships thru works, not just PR. It would not cost any more to have volunteers involved in legitimate activities than the waste of tax payer \$ to keep most of us in country with no contributions. This would involve reducing, not increasing the number of volunteers and reducing the office with less focus on in-country training (which was the only focus here) and more support for development. After all, that's why most volunteers are joining isn't it?

[Recommendation:] Produce internationally shareable volunteer tools that cover the most basic activities volunteers typically do. Stop making every volunteer reinvent every wheel there is. Stop producing volunteers that, with the best of intentions, do the most basic tasks badly because they have no resources from which to work...

PCs volunteers, in most cases are unqualified for any real development projects. What may have been good enough in the 1960s does not apply in today's environment. What PCVs do that government agencies and NGOs don't, is live among the people and understand what they really need. PCVs can make great liaisons and intermediaries between the community and the agency and this is a role that should be emphasized and developed for those with limited practical or academic skills. With no qualifications, PCVs doing advanced projects can do more harm than good (we have seen this). And with no resources, even the qualified PCVs are handcuffed as to what they can actually accomplish. Meanwhile, NGOs and government agencies with the expertise and resources, are throwing money away on unnecessary or ill conceived projects because they have no one who really understands what the community needs. PCVs would be more successful if they were assigned to a project under the direction of another agency rather than working alone, especially given they receive no help from Peace Corps or the US govt.

[Recommendation:] Provide different types of volunteer service with relevant training based on that type. Maintain the small community PC service where relevant and for volunteers seeking that experience, but provide higher level service options that involve working within agencies, ministries, or school systems. Work within the leadership levels of appropriate organizations instead of around them. The first option preserves the traditional, stereotypical PC experience that many seek and does have true value where the community actually wants the PCV and supports their presence. The second, we understand is being done in some countries already. But give PCVs the option to enter the type most appropriate for them. From what we have seen and heard, PC is terrible at matching sites with PCVs. The criteria used seem to have nothing to do with skills, language, experience, or personal interest.

[Recommendation:] Country and national offices need to stop suppressing failure and start embracing it to see how to make things better. All anyone wants to do is promote the cute stories that makes PC sound so useful and personally fulfilling. Only by working and communicating with volunteers who are struggling can needs be identified and improvements made. Instead of unsuccessful volunteers being vilified and ostracized, they should be the most involved in country and national discussions. No PCV is complaining because they don't care. They are frustrated because they care so much. They want to contribute to their communities, and be "good" PCVs, but what has been presented or provided to them is not working.

[Recommendation:] Loose the cult secrecy manner of assigning volunteers. Why hide information from volunteers as to where they will go and what they will do? Why do volunteers have to go thru a 1 year or longer application process, and then be given one option to either accept or decline? If you decline, you than have to go thru the process all over again. This is impossible to do if your an older person who isn't retired. Give applicants options based on what their skills are and where their interests lie. Maybe the drop out rate would decline significantly if volunteers had a say in selecting sites that they felt most relative instead of finding themselves in sites where they feel they are being under utilized and not getting any of the cultural or personal experiences they sought when joining. For us personally, the program in [name of country withheld], based on what we have read, seems as if it would have been a much better match for us, but we were not told at all about this program and how it differed from any other. We would never have accepted [name of country withheld] had we been given a choice. But as an older, married couple, we were lead to believe there were limited options for us. Let PC offices compete for volunteers by providing meaningful projects and quality support. Let host countries participate in the process and help recruiting PCVs so volunteers are being sent where there is actual work and host country support. If they have a stake in who comes and what they do, they may be more inclined to be better partners for PCVs, something that is not the case in [name of country withheld]. It is ridiculous to think that volunteers would only go to "soft" countries if given the choice. Most PCVs join to go where the need is greatest. We joined expecting 2 years on a dirt floor with no electricity and would have gladly accepted a position in Africa had it been offered. I'm not saying let volunteers choose their countries, but they should be involved in the process and given options as to countries, qualifying programs, and site characteristics. DC office twenty-year-olds decided on our PC fate, probably acting on what they thought were our best interests, but with no input from us, and based only on generic interview questions from another twenty-year-old. They got it wrong, but the consequences have been ours to bare.

[Recommendation:] A huge problem with PC is its staffing. Like General Motors, anyone familiar with the organization knows its problems and what needs to be done to fix them. However, the only way you get into a position to make changes to the agency, is if you don't believe there is anything that needs to be changed. PC is filled with staff who had fun during their service and aren't ready or able to start a career outside the agency. Consequently, they believe that if a volunteer is struggling, it has to be the fault of the volunteer. It could not possibly be a fallacy within PC. It is also filled with staff that have no experience beyond that of a PCV. This means you have an agency of independent offices filled with associates who, even if they think something should be different, have no idea how to change it. In [name of country withheld], all the staff does is work on training activities because that is all they know. We have never been a part of an organization that spends more time and money on training its staff, with so little to show for it. The [name of country withheld] office got its budge increased this year and all it is doing is adding 3 more training positions. Nothing for volunteer support, site/project development, resource management, or anything else that might possibly help a field volunteer be successful. But it will make it easier to justify asking for more volunteers next year.

[Recommendation:] Giving up all we did, we were obviously very serious about trying to be good, productive volunteers doing useful development work. Yet, after a year of trying to do things PC's way we found ourselves frustrated, unneeded, and ready to quit. Only our personal

pride kept us here. Eventually we found our way into a couple of elementary schools and started doing computer classes in one and just hanging around and playing with the kids at another (the teachers there didn't want our help or participation). While it has been fun working with the children, an opportunity we never would have had otherwise, its a terribly small accomplishment given our aspirations, the experience we had to offer, and our sacrifice. We could never recommend PC to anyone in our demographic. But we are certain PC will make sure we won't have to.”

**Appendix B: “Using the Triple Convergence to Listen”  
(Excerpt From Testimony of Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff Before the Subcommittee  
on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, and Narcotics Affairs of the Senate Foreign  
Relations Committee, July 25, 2007)**

Thanks to the Triple Convergence that [Thomas] Friedman described [in *The World is Flat*], it is now possible for Volunteers to lead the Peace Corps from the grassroots. Essentially all Volunteers have email addresses and some access to their emails. And most Volunteers have cell phones for voice and text. And the Volunteers in the field have organized websites and list serves so that they can communicate with each other. Peace Corps itself uses list serves to communicate with Volunteers. In a Peace Corps world that is so connected, the tools for a flat organization already exist. All we need is to instill a culture where managers listen to and respect Volunteers and use the Triple Convergence to consult with and support them...

To these ends, the Peace Corps should consider implementing the following:

- \* Construct and maintain a master website for use by all Volunteers, staff and RPCVs. Also construct websites for each country where Volunteers serve. Hire webmaster and staff in Washington, D.C. and in each country (perhaps third-year Volunteers). Suggested name of website: "Sarge" (The website for the Library of Congress is named "Thomas" after Thomas Jefferson, who founded the Library with donations from his private library.)
- \* Set up an account for all Volunteers and staff with a user name (an ID number or name) and password. Enable account holders to change their user name (to secure anonymity) and password (to prevent third parties from posting information in their name). Open a visitors' account for Peace Corps applicants once they are invited to serve as Volunteers, enabling them to access website and obtain information useful in determining whether to accept the invitation, and upgrade their accounts once they accept the invitation. Enable RPCVs to continue their PCV account. (RPCVs may well be able to contribute valuable content to the websites.) Give all account holders the option to obtain an email address--"(Country)PeaceCorps.gov" under their own name or an alias. Permit webmaster or web monitor in Washington or abroad to rescind an account based on violation of terms of use published on the site. Note: Facebook.com revokes accounts for those who attack a specific person or group of people. University websites typically bar violation of copyrights. Permit account holders to notify the webmaster or web monitor regarding violations of the terms of use.

The Master Peace Corps website should include the following:

- \* A periodic column by the Peace Corps Director
- \* The capacity for the Director and other Peace Corps staff to engage Volunteers in live chat sessions at pre-arranged times, either open-ended or regarding subject specific topics.
- \* The capacity for the Peace Corps to conduct surveys of Volunteers (such as the recent NPCA survey of Volunteers regarding S. 732). Same for Peace Corps Inspector General and House and Senate oversight/legislative committees.
- \* Peace Corps Volunteer Handbook
- \* Peace Corps Manual
- \* Peace Corps official documents and policies
- \* Staff directory for Peace Corps Washington (with phone numbers and email addresses)
- \* Organization chart for Peace Corps Washington

- \* Information regarding the Peace Corps Inspector General and how to file requests for investigations (together with contact information)
- \* History of the Peace Corps. Special sections on JFK and Shriver
- \* In Memoriam section listing staff and Volunteers who have died during their service (with bios, photos and a forum for postings by those who knew them).
- \* Peace Corps annual reports and budget requests to Congress
- \* Information regarding pending legislation affecting the Peace Corps
- \* Peace Corps statistics
- \* Peace Corps news releases
- \* Link to Peace Corps news posted on PeaceCorpsOnLine
- \* Link to the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA)
- \* Link to all Friends (RPCV) groups (through NPCA)
- \* Information regarding the Peace Corps Partnership Program, including relevant forms and manuals.
- \* Basic information on each Peace Corps country program
- \* Link with World Wise Schools program. Permit teachers access to "use" accounts (limited access to website).
- \* List of companies that provide free or discounted cost items to Volunteers (e.g. Chacos and *Christian Science Monitor*). The Peace Corps should actively solicit such donations or discounts for Volunteers (e.g. free mailing of Amazon books, free or discounted subscriptions to the *Economist*, discounts on phone cards and cell phones that accept SIM cards, discounts on solar chargers, cameras, computers, iPods and other music players, laptops and peripherals, hot weather clothing like ExOfficio and Patagonia, camping equipment, posters, etc.), and photography sites (e.g. Snapfish and Shutterly)
- \* The master website should include separate sections on the following development subjects:
  - All ICE publications (technical information published by the Peace Corps)
  - Links to international NGOs that might assist and support Volunteers. (NGOs could post information about their programs, funding opportunities and countries of service.)
  - Links to RPCVs with special expertise in development projects who are available to serve as consultants to current Volunteers.
  - Forum with file/comment posting capacity for Volunteers to search history of conversations for keywords; also permit those who subscribe to the forum to receive automatic updates of new postings. (Use this format for all forums listed below.)
  - Curriculum materials for languages spoken in countries where Volunteers serve. The website should include also downloadable pod casts of language curriculum materials. Include forum as above.
  - Information on sources of financing, especially micro-financing, with forum as above.
  - A bibliography of books and publications on development issues, and sources for seeds and classroom materials (available free or at a discount).
  - Information on each sector in which Volunteers serve, including relevant technical reports and training manuals (e.g. health, education, small enterprise development, agriculture/forestry).
  - Project "cookbooks"/modules for each sector in which Volunteers could post project design, technical specifications, training curriculum, problems and solutions, and outcomes/benefits (with translations into other languages). Site should include a

suggested format for these postings. Include forum for each project as above. Establish an annual award for the best posting by a Volunteer.

- For specific types of projects (e.g. food drying, porridge making, vegetable gardening, beekeeping, etc.), Volunteers should be able to post project cookbook/modules (with translations into other languages). Site should include suggested format for these postings. Forum as above for each type of project. Same award as above.
- Permit Volunteers to post offers to donate their time/services doing translations or providing technical expertise for Volunteers worldwide on specified subjects together with forum as above.
- Permit posting of advertisements (paid or unpaid) by corporations and non-profit organizations describing their development programs, offers of donations of services or materials to PCVs, requests for Volunteer participation in projects, or input from Volunteers on the viability/sustainability of their projects. Forum as above.
- Include a forum as above for discussion of Peace Corps policies, issues of interest to Volunteers and staff, or other subjects.

\* Separate sections on the master website on the following subjects of interest to Volunteers and to connect various Volunteer groups, each with its own forum:

- Volunteer medical issues, including medical manuals and handbooks, information on all the tropical diseases endemic where Volunteers serve.
- Graduate education opportunities, including scholarships. Permit universities to post information about their programs. Permit Volunteers to file applications on line.
- Post-COS employment, information and SF-171 regarding government service, job postings, links to potential employers. Permit employers to post job openings. Link to *Transitions Abroad* (information on opportunities overseas).
- Post-COS housing availability, including apartment/house sharing offers by RPCVs. Permit RPCVs and others to post notices.
- Travel and vacations for Volunteers, including links to State Department bulletins and other resources, with separate capacity for Volunteers to post ISO Traveling Companion notices.
- Volunteer safety and security.
- Domesticity/survival issues focusing on cooking (recipes), US Postal Service "M" bags (cheap book rates), callback services and international phone cards, care packages, and related subjects.
- Packing lists and sources for useful equipment to use during service.
- International calendar of events concerning development issues.
- Software of value to PCVs, available for downloading.
- Issues of interest to the following groups, each with a forum as above:
  - 1) Those struggling with PC service and considering Early Termination (ET). Encourage postings about benefits of completing service, especially by RPCVs
  - 2) Female/male Volunteers
  - 3) Older and minority Volunteers
  - 4) Gay Volunteers
  - 5) Older RPCVs and those serving again
  - 6) Volunteers with religious motivations to serve
  - 7) Couples serving as Volunteers
  - 8) Volunteers contemplating marrying host country nationals
  - 9) Volunteers contemplating adopting host country children

- 10) Peace Corps Volunteer Liaisons (PCVLs) and representatives to Volunteer Advisory Committees (VACs)
- 11) Volunteers wishing to extend their service in a second country
- 12) Volunteer writers, including a link to PCV Writers and Readers, information on copyrights, lists of publishers and agents recommended by RPCVs. Include section for posting PCV articles, fiction and humor. Include section on absurd/humorous PCV stories. Include links to PCV blogs.

\* The master website could do the following:

- Permit account holders to create forums with access limited to users authorized by the forum creator (e.g. forum accessible only to Volunteers, only to Volunteers in one region, only to staff, etc.). New forums can be made open to all account holders as well.
- Provide a section for uploading photos and managing a monthly or quarterly photo contest. Possible monthly themes might include: Volunteers at work, fetes/celebrations, rural/urban scenes, agriculture, small business, education, and healthcare. Peace Corps could solicit corporate sponsors for each theme.
- Sponsor annual "Volunteer of the Year" award for each continent on which Volunteers serve, with nominations from Country Directors, APCDs, and Volunteers.
- Provide forum as above for Country Directors, Admin Officers, PCMOs and APCDs, etc. Set up separate accounts, with separate IDs and passwords to ensure confidentiality.
- Include links to separate websites (or subsets of master website) for each country in which Volunteers serve. (Make these websites accessible to pre-service trainees.)

\* The separate websites for countries (or subsets of the master website) could include:

- Messages from the Country Director and other Peace Corps staff.
- Contact information for all Volunteers in country.
- Phone and email directory of Peace Corps staff in country together with biographical information (similar to Facebook.com).
- List of Volunteers indexed by site and program. Keep list of all Volunteers who have served in a given site, with updated contact information if possible, so that site's work history is not lost.
- Contact information for host country government offices and officials.
- Peace Corps Handbook for that country.
- Peace Corps policies applicable in that country
- Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the country.
- Relevant forms (reimbursement/vacation leave/quarterly reports/medical supplies/work orders/home of record/site locator) with links to submit them on line. Permit Volunteers to "sign" the forms on line. If forms require signature of someone other than Volunteer, permit Volunteers to certify that they've obtained that signature (by mailing copy).
- Transportation schedules for Peace Corps vehicles (so that Volunteers can hitch rides).
- Calendar of Peace Corps events (training, "demyst" village visits and APCD site visits).
- In-country newsletters and notices.
- Training curriculum (including pod casts) for local languages.
- Links/contact information to NGOs operating in that country.
- Links/contact information for all funding sources, including micro-financing, in the country
- Links to news sources about the country.

- Links to blogs maintained by Volunteers serving in that country.
  - All Close of Service reports (indexed by sector and site and searchable by Google desktop).
  - Maps and city guides for use by Volunteers when traveling around the country. Include survival guide for key sites and set up a forum. Similar information on nearby countries.
  - Permit Volunteers to opt out of receiving paper copies of reports and other mailings.
  - Permit each Volunteer to access statements of his/her earnings/deductions (required user name and password).
  - Permit access to record of vacation leave taken and medical supplies requests.
  - Permit country account holders to create forums with access limited to those authorized by the forum creator (e.g. forum accessible only to Volunteers, etc.)
  - Permit Volunteers to post absences from site online without seeking oral approval for the leave with APCD or other country Security Director. (Or permit Volunteers to post site absences to voice mailbox.) Vacation leave, including international travel, would require approval.
  - Permit corporations and non-profit organizations to post advertisements (paid or not paid) describing their development programs in that country, offers of donations of services or materials to PCVs in country, requests for Volunteer participation in projects, or input from Volunteers on viability/sustainability of their projects. Together with forum.
- \* Each country should use the Internet to conduct the surveys mandated in Section 201 of S. 732 (reviews of personnel and programs). Postings would be available to all account holders in that country.
- \* Peace Corps Washington should establish annual award for the best Peace Corps country website.
- \* Each regional/transit house should be considered as a work site, with ample computers and printers, and an Internet connection (high speed if available).
- \* Volunteers should be able to connect personal computers to the Internet wherever Peace Corps supplies connection (country office, regional/transit houses, or training sites) that does not compromise the government computer network (to include wireless connections).
- \* Each country and regional/transit house shall install Skype or other Internet telephony services (including microphones) to eliminate the need for fixed line telephone calls between Peace Corps offices worldwide and headquarters. Also install for calls between regional houses and Peace Corps country office. Potential substantial cost savings.
- \* Peace Corps should be committed to granting Freedom of Speech and immunity for Volunteer postings, other than those that threaten individuals or otherwise violate terms of the site use. No action for Administrative Separation can be based on postings on the site. If postings violate terms of use for the site, the penalty is to forfeit account, not Administrative Separation. This policy is essential to maximize the use and value of the digital Peace Corps vision. Volunteers need to know they can share their views frankly and openly without risking retaliation. (Volunteers can also change their user name to secure anonymity.)



## Appendix C: Robert Strauss Viewpoint on the Peace Corps

The Peace Corps should listen to and respond respectfully to its critics. One of the leading critics of the Peace Corps is Robert Strauss.<sup>129</sup> He is noted for his January 2008 Op-Ed in the *New York Times* “Too Many Innocents Abroad,” April 2008 article in *Foreign Policy* “Think Again: The Peace Corps,” and Fall 2008 article in *WorldView*, “What Peace Corps Could do: A Critic Weighs In.”

In these articles Strauss has argued that “The country directors understand, better than anyone else, Peace Corps' strengths, its weaknesses and what the agency must do to achieve the greatness that was foreseen for it nearly half a century ago. To quote Colin Powell, ‘The commander in the field is always right and the rear echelon is wrong, unless proven otherwise.’” Strauss proposes that the Peace Corps should “stop growth and any discussion of growth for the next five years.” He argues that, “Increasing the number of volunteers without a concomitant increase in resources is irresponsible,” that “support per volunteer has been dropping for years,” and that “pursuing growth with fewer real dollars per volunteer is a formula for ineffectiveness.” Strauss argues that the Peace Corps needs to “start operating as an organization that is serious about efficiency and bang for the buck.” He says that the “first step” would be to consolidate its activities in countries that are stable, that are truly needy and that are truly serious about economic development,” leaving it to operate in 50 “or possibly fewer countries”.

He questions the Peace Corps’ role as an agent of development. He reviews the most recent U.N. Human Development Report and finds that the Peace Corps is active in 10 countries with “high human development,” 49 with “medium human development,” and 11 with “low human development.” He argues for concentrating the Peace Corps’ resources in the world’s poorest countries, where the need is likely greatest. “Granted, half a dozen of those places are either so unstable or dangerous that there’s little hope of achieving much,” he acknowledges, “But even if the Peace Corps didn’t concentrate only on the poorest of the poor, one has to question what it is still doing in Romania and Bulgaria, two countries that have already become members of the European Union.”

He says, that “if the Peace Corps were as successful at development as its literature and many volunteers and staff members attest, one would expect other organizations and scholars to cite it as a model. Yet pick up any of the recently popular books on development by Paul Collier, William Easterly, or Jeffrey Sachs, and you won’t find a single reference to the Peace Corps. Tony Blair’s 464-page Commission for Africa report? Not a word. ‘Beyond Assistance,’ the 215-page report of the HELP Commission on foreign-assistance reform? Just three passing mentions. “

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<sup>129</sup> Robert L. Strauss has been a Peace Corps Country Director (Cameroon 2002-2007), recruiter (Denver 1982), consultant (Fiji, Nepal and Belize 1980s), and Volunteer (Liberia 1978-1980). He is a recipient of the State Department's Meritorious Honor Award and lives in Madagascar, where he runs a management consulting company. He can be reached at [RobertLStrauss@hotmail.com](mailto:RobertLStrauss@hotmail.com).

His experience is that “Many Peace Corps staff and volunteers see development work as a burdensome obligation undertaken only to legitimize the cultural exchange aspects of the agency. But without a focus on economic development and an improvement in standards of living, the Peace Corps is really little more than an extended, government-sponsored semester-abroad program. For applicants, the Peace Corps emphasizes the personal experience, not the volunteer’s development impact. That, of course, is not how the Peace Corps pitches itself to foreign governments, to whom it promises significant technical development assistance—only to provide predominantly recent college graduates who may or may not have any useful skills to offer.”

He says, “The real problem is that the Peace Corps has never done a serious job of evaluating its impact. If it is a world peace and friendship organization designed to ‘help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served,’ then, as a start, it ought to ask the peoples served if they even know which country Peace Corps volunteers come from. If it’s a development agency, then it needs to undertake rigorous measures to assess its impact.” He argues that reducing the number of countries would “free up tens of millions of dollars which would allow Peace Corps to fix the basics.” He sees that “Time, money and good intentions are thrown away as if they have no value.” He doesn’t “see these as the signs of a mature, professionally run organization, but rather of a confused adolescent, albeit an adolescent soon to turn 50.” He says that, “A smaller, more focused Peace Corps will also help get the agency out of its perpetual crisis management mode and build systems focused on getting concrete results in the field. Then, when that is done, Peace Corps will be able to go to Congress and ask for increased funding because it will be able to show that it is using public funds responsibly.”

He proposes that the Peace Corps give Country Directors incentives to run their country programs efficiently.” “Why not promise CDs that they will be able to keep 50% of any cost savings achieved for use in their country programs?” He argues that the Peace Corps has to become much more serious about its impact on development. He says, “Five decades into it, it’s more than time for Peace Corps to be measuring its impact. This is true whether one believes Peace Corps is first and foremost a development agency or first and foremost a good-will and cross-cultural exchange organization.”

He says, “Without solid evidence, it will be impossible for any director to convince Congress that Peace Corps is worth more than a handshake and pat on the back.” He observes, “Without real numbers that demonstrate real impact, Peace Corps will simply remain on life support, getting enough to keep breathing but nowhere near enough to make big, lasting differences in the lives of millions.”

He says that the Peace Corps has “no plans for [exiting] any of the more than 70 countries where it is currently active.” He says, “The Peace Corps is unable to do this because it never has had any benchmarks to signal when the mission has been accomplished” or is one that the agency, because of the failure of the host country to serve as a partner, “is unlikely to fix.” He says, “A serious development organization would either not allow such a situation to persist or would refuse to abet it.”

He says that the Peace Corps relies on “biannual surveys in which volunteers comment on whether they think they are making a difference.” He says this is “a bit like asking a bunch of doctors how they think they are doing without ever talking to the patients—or even checking to see if they are still alive.”

He observes that, “Like many bureaucracies, the Peace Corps operates predominantly on inertia. The agency sends most volunteers to the same places where volunteers have been sent before, often to do the same thing volunteers were doing 20 and 30 years ago—regardless of whether their mission still makes sense.”

He says that the “truth is that so long as applicants meet the minimum standards and are healthy and persistent, the Peace Corps rarely rejects them outright.” This observation contradicts the Peace Corps claim that it has 3 applicants for each trainee.

He argues that to secure these development impacts the Peace Corps must “exponentially” increase support to Volunteers in the field. He argues that “Volunteers have never received adequate support in the field. Sending out predominantly ‘newly minted’ college graduates and then visiting them only two or three times a year - a best case situation in many countries - is irresponsible and a formula for on-going dramas and disasters.” He says that Volunteers “need intensive supervision and on-going, on-the-job training. Regardless of country or program, every volunteer in every country should be able to count on consistent and frequent support in the field.”

He argues for setting a much higher “standard of professionalism” for the agency and that it view the agency’s primary customer is the poor in the developing country. He endorses the Masters International program and proposed that it be expanded significantly. He says that, “To make its expectations clear, the agency must establish clear standards for what constitutes professional performance and behavior.” Finally, he argues for reducing the number of political appointees by 90%. He observes that, “Political appointees at Peace Corps rarely receive their positions because of their passion for the agency but more often because they are ‘owed’ a government job because of party or family connections.”

Strauss argues for eliminating the five-year rule. He observes that the “average staff tenure at Peace Corps is 18 months. Having a constantly churning staff overseen by a constantly churning cadre of political appointees is why Peace Corps has reinvented the wheel more times than Barney Rubble and Fred Flintstone.” He says that “in the 1960s it was a nice idea to think that forcing people to leave would result in a creative, dynamic organization with a constant stream of new ideas and no dead wood.” But, he believes that the five-year rule has “resulted in exactly the opposite.” “No one is around long enough to really understand how things work or to be able to make substantive changes or to even convince anyone that such changes should be made. The result is a stagnant organization with no institutional memory and one that is afraid to give up the status quo, dysfunctional though it may be. And it is one that spends millions of dollars annually needlessly recruiting, training, and deploying new staff while forcing out people just as they finally are mastering the art of understanding how things work and how to get things done.” He believes that the “Peace Corps clings to the five-year rule because it believes the rule is what distinguishes it from other bureaucracies. But hanging on to a rule that doesn't work, and one that

is costly to boot, only leads to the reinvention of wheels destined to spin in place. Peace Corps' forty years of five-year rule experience shows that it is no substitute for meaningful and rigorous performance assessments. The five-year rule causes Peace Corps to throw out the dead wood AND the good wood. This makes the rule much worse than no rule at all."

When the Peace Corps throws out the five-year rule goes, then it would, he argues, begin to value its staff. "In addition to treating its USDH staff better, Peace Corps must recognize that the agency works not because of USDHs or volunteers, but because of local staff. Volunteers come and go. So do USDHs. Local staff stays and makes the machine run. Yet the agency invests virtually no money in them and, by retaining the PSC category, needlessly stigmatizes and antagonizes them. A little money goes a long way in most Peace Corps countries. It's way past time to start investing in staff development."

Strauss states, "[T]he bottom line on change [at the Peace Corps] is that it's a lot easier to continue to pretend that everything is swell than rock the boat. Much easier to leave people with illusions than the cold shower of reality. From a leader's point of view, especially one for whom PC is perhaps only a stepping stone, far more fun to accept the ceremonial robes than to suggest the emperor's wardrobe needs a new tailor."

He concludes that "Despite my criticisms of Peace Corps, I do believe that the agency has the potential to be one of the best and most important things our country has ever done. Over the last three decades I've worked for or with many of the big name, big budget development outfits. I came back to Peace Corps because I believe that its approach is one of the only ones that really has the potential to effect significant change. Unfortunately, that potential has been squandered over and over again. Getting Peace Corps on the right track after so many years of fumbling will not be easy. There are many other issues that need to be addressed. These include but are hardly limited to developing criteria for the selection of partner countries, significantly reducing the economic barriers that prevent many from ever considering service with Peace Corps, implementing creative solutions to the obstacles of a uniform length of service, creating a GI-type bill for RPCVs, establishing a truly independent Inspector General's office focused on malfeasance while creating a truly empowered, credible and competent evaluation division to assess impact objectively."

## **Appendix D: Proposal to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees Regarding Peace Corps Reform and Expansion**

May 31, 2008

### MEMORANDUM

To: House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff

From: Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff

Subject: The Bottom Line: Recommendations Regarding Peace Corps Appropriations

Thank you again for meeting with us last week regarding Peace Corps reform and appropriations issues.

You have seen our draft report on Peace Corps reform. Building on that framework, we would like to present a list of the functions at the Peace Corps for which we believe increased appropriations are justified. Our focus is on improving quality, not just quantity. For far too long, the Peace Corps has focused on a numbers game. It's now time to focus on quality and update the Peace Corps for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Our focus on quality listens to the Volunteers, who have said by a margin of 46% to 20% that they support reform over expansion.

### **Appropriations for Reform**

**1. Early Termination Rates:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$1 million in funds to develop and implement a wide-ranging strategic vision of how to halve the early termination rate (ET) due to non-medical causes. If this reduction is achieved, the number of Peace Corps Volunteers will rise organically by approximately 10%, a cohort of approximately 800 Volunteers. Note: the appropriate measure of the ET rate is the number and percentage of Volunteers who complete their 2+ years of service (the cohort rate), as explained in detail in our report. The only way the Peace Corps will be able to reduce the non-medical ET rate is to implement fundamental reforms such as those proposed here—all of which focus on quality and increasing the effectiveness of the Volunteers in achieving sustainable development and cross-cultural results. Volunteers who feel that they are accomplishing something worthwhile are much less likely to ET. With a worldwide ET rate of approximately 35% (cohort rate), it can be argued that the Peace Corps is wasting a substantial portion of the funds appropriated to it.

**2. Third Year Extensions:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$2.25 million to fully fund third year extensions of Volunteers. The Peace Corps should not zero out one training slot for every Volunteer who extends for a third year, as has been the policy. By fully funding third year extensions the Peace Corps can organically increase the number of Volunteers by a cohort of approximately 500.

**3. Reimbursement of Volunteers for Work-Related Expenses:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$6 million the first year and \$4 million per year thereafter to give each Volunteer a \$1000 account that they may draw on during their service for their work-related expenses. The Dodd/Kennedy Peace Corps Empowerment Act (S. 732)(110<sup>th</sup> Congress) makes this reform a priority.

This proposal and proposals 4-15 will all substantially increase the effectiveness of the Volunteers and help to reduce the ET rate. These proposals are discussed in our reform report.

**4. Connectedness of Volunteers:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$2 million to upgrade its networks to connect Volunteers with one another worldwide. The focus should be on providing Best Practices Guides (providing all the specifics on successful projects) to Volunteers so that they do not have to reinvent the wheel.

**5. Innovation Fund:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$2 million to award competitively for innovative programs of Country Directors, especially those focused on increasing the First Goal (development) accomplishments of the Peace Corps.

**6. Sarge Fund:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$2 million to take to scale the most successful Volunteer programs. These funds should be awarded based on a competition among Volunteers.

**7. Reduction of the APCD and PCMO-to-Volunteer Ratio:** The Peace Corps needs to reduce ratio of APCDs (program officers) and PCMOs (medical officers) to Volunteer to 20-to-1 and 50-to-1, respectively. We are not able to provide an estimate for the cost of this reform.

**8. NGO/AID Partnerships:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$500,000 to launch an initiative to substantially increase its partnerships with NGOs and USAID. Most of this funding should be go to the country posts.

**9. Evaluation of First Goal Results:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$1 million to launch a program for vigorous evaluation of the First Goal (development) results of the Volunteers.

**10. Peace Building:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$250,000 to launch a new initiative to position Volunteers to support peace building programs.

**11. Written Language Materials and Language PodCasts:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$1 million to launch a major program to develop written language materials and language podcasts for Volunteers. Most of this funding should go to the country posts.

**12. Reimbursement for Required Medical Tests:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$5 million to implement the Peace Corps IG recommended reforms of the medical screening process and to provide full reimbursement to applicants for the costs of required medical tests. By providing full reimbursement the Peace Corps can increase the pool of medically qualified applicants so that the Peace Corps can select from among them the most qualified and committed to invite to training. It can also better match the skills of the applicants to the available positions and reduce the extent to which it switches applicants away from the program that the applicant is nominated to serve in (prior to the medical selection process). This increased selectivity and improved matching will be especially helpful in reducing the ET rate. The Dodd/Kennedy Peace Corps Empowerment Act (S. 732)(110<sup>th</sup> Congress) makes reform of the medical selection process a priority.

**13. Volunteer Input on Program and Staffing Decisions:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$1 million to institutionalize 360 degree reviews—where Volunteers provide confidential reviews of the programs in which they serve and their managers. This is the way to hold managers accountable and institute a continuous process of reform and renewal. The results of these reviews, along with evidence from the ET rate, extension rate, and surveys of the Volunteers, must be given substantial weight in considerations of contract extensions for staff. The Dodd/Kennedy Peace Corps Empowerment Act (S. 732)(110<sup>th</sup> Congress) makes this reform a priority.

**14. Raising the Standard of Medical Care:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$2.5 million to raise the standard of medical care. See our report for detailed recommendations. This is a moral imperative for the Peace Corps.

**15. Reconnecting RPCVs:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$500,000 to launch an initiative to reconnect Volunteers to the countries and sites in which they served.

**16. Upgrade Financial Systems:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$2 million to upgrade its financial systems. See our report for specifics.

**17. Staff Incentives:** The Peace Corps needs \$2.5 million to provide additional incentives to Peace Corps staff, including enhanced training and benefits comparable to those of other overseas mission staff. See our report for specifics.

**18. *WorldView* Subscription:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$50,000 to fully fund subscriptions to *WorldView* magazine (NPCA) to distribute it to all currently serving Volunteers.

**19. Mentoring Program:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$100,000 to fully fund the mentoring program it has established with NPCA for Volunteers who have recently completed their service.

**20. Professionalization of Friends Groups:** The Peace Corps needs approximately \$200,000 to fund a program to professionalize the Friends groups (enabling them to provide support, including financial support, to PCVs). The Peace Corps should modify its fundraising rules, a priority in the Dodd/Kennedy Peace Corps Empowerment Act (S. 732)(110<sup>th</sup> Congress).

**Total Appropriations for Reform: \$31.58 million (not counting item 7)**

The Peace Corps can provide more accurate estimates of the implementation costs of these reforms. It should be invited to advance additional reform proposals.

Note: Implementation of these reforms will be possible only if the Peace Corps ends the politicization of the Country Director (CD) selection process and upgrades the quality of these managers. The results of the 2008 Biennial Survey of the Volunteers documents the problems with the quality of the current cohort of CDs. CDs make or break the programs they manage.

## **Appropriations to Cover Shortfalls**

In addition to implementation of these reforms, the Peace Corps needs approximately \$30 million to cover its short-falls—and the reduction in the number of trainees—during the last year. Most of these are due to the devaluation of the dollar, inflation in commodity prices, and other developments beyond the control of the Peace Corps.

## **Appropriations for Expansion**

In terms of expansion of the number of Volunteers, the first priority should be to grow the number of Volunteers organically through an emphasis on quality (see first two reform proposals above).

In addition, the Peace Corps should be appropriated sufficient funds to launch new programs. We note that the Peace Corps has been forced to terminate a number of programs recently (Bolivia, Guinea and Madagascar), so these savings could be applied to fund launching of new programs. We doubt if there are anything like 20 countries where Peace Corps programs can soon be launched.

In terms of expanding existing programs, funds should be appropriated to the Peace Corps for expansion of existing programs only in countries where it is clear that the current Peace Corps program in that country is well managed. This means that expansion should only be funded in countries where the following conditions hold:

- a. The non-medical ET rate is well below the worldwide average.
- b. The extension rate is well above the worldwide average.
- c. The ratings of the managers and programs in the 2008 Biennial Survey of Volunteers is among the top 15%.
- d. The ratio of APCDs and PCMOs to Volunteers is reduced and the other staff slots—AOs—and resources are appropriately increased to accommodate the additional Volunteers.
- e. The Country Director establishes a program for 360 degree confidential reviews of programs and staff and publishes these reviews to Headquarters and the Volunteers currently serving in that program.

## **Appropriations for Volunteers for Prosperity**

The Subcommittee should fully fund the new Volunteers for Prosperity program, which promotes international volunteerism based on the AmeriCorps model. Fully funding the VfP program so that it can compete with the Peace Corps will enhance the prospects for substantial Peace Corps reform. The Peace Corps should be required to submit a report on how the Peace Corps intends to meet the competition from the VfP program, including an explanation for how the Peace Corps can justify expending over four times more per Volunteer.

## **Additional Mandates**

In addition to funding and implementing programs for which appropriated funds are needed, the Peace Corps should be required to take actions that do not carry a cost.



It should publish the results of the 2008 Biennial Survey of Volunteers, with the results presented on a country-by-country basis, and forward the results to those applicants who are invited to training. It should be required to provide information to these invitees about the Early Termination rate in the country in which they are invited to serve (using the cohort rate of accounting). It should also be required to transmit the results of 360 degree reviews to these trainees. Invitees should be given access to the country websites so that they can chat with current Volunteers. This shift towards transparency will institutionalize a process of continuous reform and renewal.

The Peace Corps headquarters staff should be required to submit a plan to reduce the expenses and head count of headquarters by 15% for each of the next two years and transfer these resources to the country posts.

The Peace Corps should be required to transfer back to the Peace Corps Inspector General the authority and responsibility to investigate violent crimes against Volunteers. This issue is discussed in depth in our report.

The Peace Corps should be required to publish on line on an ongoing basis all of the documents that the Peace Corps produces in response to FOIA requests. The posting should include all documents produced since 2005.

### **Legislative Amendments**

Some reforms may need to be enacted into law. The Volunteers should be given standing as Whistle Blowers. The Inspector General for the Peace Corps should be appointed by the President to guarantee his or her independence. (We are active in promoting both proposals as legislation.) And the number of political appointees at the Peace Corps should be reduced to no more than 10.

### **Oversight**

It is crucial that the Appropriations Committees substantially increase their oversight of the Peace Corps and of the reform process.

### **Conclusion**

Our draft reform report and this budget proposal make it clear that we support increased appropriations for the Peace Corps—principally to fund quality improvements.

If the Peace Corps embraces fundamental reform, then it should be rewarded with increased appropriations over the long term.

We are happy to discuss any and all of these recommendations with you. We very much appreciate your support for the Peace Corps.  
Thank you. Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff

**Appendix E: Amendments Proposed to S. 1382  
By Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff (June 30, 2009)**

**AMENDMENTS PROPOSED TO S. 1382,  
THE PEACE CORPS IMPROVEMENT AND  
EXPANSION ACT**

**(Insertions in bold; deletions in brackets)**

111TH CONGRESS

1ST SESSION S. 1382

To improve and expand the Peace Corps for the 21st century, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

On June 25, 2009

Mr. DODD introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To improve and expand the Peace Corps for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Peace Corps Improvement and Expansion Act of 2009”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Firmly established beliefs of the Peace Corps include the following:

(A) The act of volunteering has inherent value.

(B) The foreign policy goals of the United States are advanced by—

(i) contributing to the reduction of poverty; and

(ii) fostering international understanding.

(2) More than 195,000 volunteers have ably served in the Peace Corps in 139 countries by—

(A) working towards economic and social development; and

(B) promoting a better understanding of—

(i) the people of the United States on the part of the peoples served; and

(ii) other peoples on the part of the people of the United States.

(3) Today, the importance and necessity is greater than ever for the Peace Corps—

(A) to promote global economic and social development;

(B) to promote understanding and friendship; and

(C) to foster collaboration with international nongovernmental organizations.

(4) Since 1961, a bi-partisan succession of Presidents and Congresses have endorsed the expansion of the Peace Corps in order—

(A) to meet requests from countries to increase the size of the Peace Corps programs in their countries;

(B) to initiate Peace Corps programs in countries where the Peace Corps does not currently operate;

(C) to provide more opportunities for the people of the United States to engage in volunteer service abroad; and

(D) to renew dormant Peace Corps programs.

(5) The purpose of the Peace Corps, as declared by section 2(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501), is to promote world peace and friendship by helping—

- (A) the people of interested countries in meeting their needs for trained men and women, particularly in meeting the basic needs of those living in the poorest areas of such countries;
- (B) to promote a better understanding of people of the United States on the part of the peoples served; and
- (C) to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the people of the United States.

(6) As the Peace Corps reaches its 50th anniversary in 2010, a new forward-looking strategy should be developed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Peace Corps in pursuing the goals described in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of paragraph (5) by analyzing and accounting for the strengths and weaknesses of the following:

- (A) The program model of the Peace Corps
- (B) The current and planned distribution of Peace Corps volunteers throughout the world.
- (C) Partnership opportunities and operations of the Peace Corps.
- (D) Recruitment and management practices of the Peace Corps with respect to the diversity of Peace Corps volunteers and staff.

### SEC. 3. ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR IMPROVING AND EXPANDING PEACE CORPS.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Peace Corps shall complete the assessment described in paragraph (2) to determine how best—

- (A) to strengthen the management capabilities and program effectiveness of the Peace Corps;
- (B) to expand opportunities for Peace Corps volunteers; and
- (C) to increase the size of the Peace Corps.

(2) ASSESSMENT DESCRIBED.—The assessment described in this paragraph means an assessment of—

(A) how the purpose of the Peace Corps declared under section 2(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501(a)) translates into tangible strategic plans for the Peace Corps;

**(...) strategies to solicit the confidential views of volunteers regarding the design, effectiveness, and continued need for the programs in which they serve, and to give these views substantial weight;**

**(...) strategies to solicit the confidential views of volunteers regarding the support provided by management personnel, and to give these views substantial weight in the decision making with respect to the extension of contracts for such personnel;**

**(...) strategies to solicit the confidential views of volunteers regarding site selection, including the placement of additional or subsequent Peace Corps volunteers at existing sites and the training curriculum for Peace Corps volunteers, and to give substantial weight to these views;**

**(...) strategies to empower and support Volunteers to serve as effective agents of development and cross-cultural communication, including providing sufficient funding and reimbursement to Volunteers for their work-related expenses and enabling Volunteers to engage in appropriate charitable fundraising;**

(B) the distribution of Peace Corps volunteers in country programs, including how and why volunteers are assigned to various countries and jurisdictions of within countries **and standards**

**to be utilized to determine in which countries Peace Corps programs should be established or expanded and in which countries existing programs should be terminated;**

(C) the most effective and efficient methods of improving support for the Peace Corps' goal of promoting a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the people of the United States;

(D) **strategies to deepen and broaden effective relationships and partnerships between volunteers and other government and non-government agencies of economic and social development and cross-cultural communication, including the US Agency for International Development [(D) the prospects for partnerships with international and host country nongovernmental organizations and other entities to achieve the goals of the Peace Corps through development projects];**

(E) the adequacy of the current program model of the Peace Corps and the **comparative effectiveness and cost of feasibility of program models such as the Peace Corps Response Program and the Volunteers for Prosperity program (Title V of the Kennedy Serve America Act, Public Law 111-13, April 21, 2009);**

(F) the effectiveness and efficiency of volunteer recruitment strategies, methods, and re 15 source allocations used by the Peace Corps **and the selectivity of the Peace Corps with regard to applicants who meet the minimum qualification standard for service as a Volunteer;**

(G) **strategies for increasing** the effectiveness of the Peace Corps in recruiting ethnically, socio-economically, and geographically diverse volunteers with wide ranging skills and interests;

**(...) strategies for increasing the recruitment of volunteers with at least 5 years of relevant work experience, including strategies for identifying and reducing the disincentives and barriers to service by such persons;**

**(...) strategies for developing and utilizing substantial written and electronic language curriculum materials designed to facilitate the learning of foreign languages by Peace Corps volunteers;**

(H) the skills and interests of current Peace Corps volunteers;

(I) options for diversification of the skills and interests of Peace Corps volunteers, including volunteers with skills and interests that relate to public health, information technology, urban planning, social services, communications, and community organizing;

(J) the Peace Corps volunteer **pre-service and in-service** training programs;

(K) the options available to volunteers to suspend payment of student loans while serving in the Peace Corps **and secure cancellation of loans upon the completion of service;**

**(...) the rights available to volunteers to suspend premium payments for retiree health insurance while serving in the Peace Corps without losing the right to reinstate such insurance upon the completion of service;**

(L) **Strengthening the standard of** medical care received by volunteers while serving in the Peace Corps **and upon completion of service for service-related health care matters;**

(M) the procedures of the Peace Corps for mandatory medical **and administrative** separation of volunteers serving in the Peace Corps, **including respecting the rights of Volunteers;**

**(...) strategies for strengthening the safety and security of Volunteers;**

**(...) strategies for enabling volunteers to engage in charitable fundraising from non-government organizations and persons personally known to them, including family members, friends, and members of their home community in the United States, and from government and nongovernmental agencies, including but not limited to working through the Peace Corps Partnership Program;**

- (N) the medical screening process for volunteers entering service in the Peace Corps, including—
- (i) **the costs and benefits of providing full reimbursement for the cost of medical tests required by applicants;**
  - (ii) expanded information for applicants including potentially disqualifying medical conditions; and
  - (iii) the cost of extending the medical care **insurance** provided by the Peace Corps to volunteers serving in the Peace Corps to include the 5-month period beginning on the date on which a volunteer completes service in the Peace Corps;
- (O) the causes **and costs of** the early termination of service in the Peace Corps, using the cohort and other statistically appropriate methods and the reasons cited by volunteers terminating their service in the Peace Corps early **and strategies for reducing the early termination rate of volunteers;**
- (...) strategies for increasing the number of volunteers who extend their service;**
- (P) how the Peace Corps can utilize information technology to improve—
- (i) program efficiency, effectiveness, and coordination; and
  - (ii) communication among volunteers;
- [(Q) mechanisms for soliciting the views of volunteers serving in the Peace Corps, on a confidential basis, regarding—
- (i) the support provided to such volunteers by senior staff of the Peace Corps; and
  - (ii) the operations of the Peace Corps, including—
- (I) staffing decisions;
  - (II) site selection;
  - (III) language training;
  - (IV) country programs; and
  - (V) dialogue with host country partners and ministries; and
- (R) mechanisms for incorporating the views solicited in subparagraph (Q) into programming and management decisions of the Peace Corps.]
- (...) strategies to enhance Third Goal opportunities for returned volunteers, including strengthening of the Peace Corps relationship with and financial support of representative of returned Volunteers;**
- (...) strategies to enhance recruitment and retention of professional staff, including a review of the impact of the five-year limiting on employment and proposals for modifying it;**
- (...) strategies to decentralize authority and resources to the country posts and volunteers and to reduce the impact on country posts and volunteers of requirements and paperwork imposed by headquarters; and**
- (...) actions to increase the transparency of the Peace Corps within the Executive Branch, to the Congress, the volunteers, the returned volunteer community, and others.**
- The Peace Corps shall report to the Congress on the organization and effectiveness of investigations of crimes against Volunteers, including an evaluation of whether the Peace Corps Inspector General shall again be given the lead in these investigations.**
- (3) METHOD.—The assessment shall—
- (A) be built on a review of past experiences and studies; and
  - (B) draw on the knowledge of—

- (i) current Peace Corps volunteers and staff, at all levels of seniority;
- (ii) returned Peace Corps volunteers and staff; and
- (iii) host country nationals and officials who have worked closely with Peace Corps volunteers.

**and (iv) officials of government and non-government entities with expertise in managing volunteers and programs for sustainable development and cross-culture exchange.**

**The Peace Corps shall offer these parties the option to submit their views on a confidential or non-confidential basis.**

(b) STRATEGIC PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Peace Corps shall develop, based on the assessment required under subsection

(a), a strategic plan for the Peace Corps that—

(A) encompasses the findings of the Director with respect to the assessment required under subsection (a); and

(B) includes the matters described in paragraph (2).

(2) MATTERS DESCRIBED.—The matters described in this paragraph include the following:

(A) 1-year and 5-year goals and benchmarks for the Peace Corps that address—

(i) each matter included in the assessment required under subsection (a); and

(ii) such other matters as the Director considers appropriate.

(B) Strategies for—

(i) distributing volunteers to countries in which they have maximum value-added for the host country, for the United States, and for the volunteers themselves;

(ii) identifying countries with strategic value to Peace Corps goals, currently not served or dormant, and proposals for starting new country programs or re-activating dormant programs, as well as countries with less strategic relevance to Peace Corps goals, including proposals for reducing or closing such country programs;

(iii) balancing the Peace Corps' independence with its need to remain relevant to broader United States foreign goals; and

(iv) ensuring that Peace Corps operations and goals are not adversely affected in situations where the bi-lateral relationship between the host country and the United States is problematic.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Peace Corps shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that includes—

(A) the findings of the Director with respect to the assessment required under subsection (a); and

(B) the strategic plan developed under subsection (b).

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

**The Peace Corps shall publish the draft strategic plan for a period of public comment and comments by volunteers and Peace Corps staff of not less than 90 days and shall report to the appropriate Congressional Committees its response to these comments.**

SEC. 4. LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS UNDER PEACE CORPS ACT.

The Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 19 the following:

“SEC. 20. LIMITATION ON NUMBER OF POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS.

“Except for appointments made under section 12, the President may not make more than 15 concurrent appointments under this Act.”.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 3(b) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2502(b)) is amended to read as follows:

“(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the purposes of this Act—

“(A) \$450,000,000 for fiscal year 2010;

“(B) \$575,000,000 for fiscal year 2011;

and

“(C) \$700,000,000 for fiscal year 2012 **and such sums thereafter.**

“(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts authorized to be appropriated under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year are authorized to remain available for that fiscal year and the subsequent fiscal year.”.

**(...) WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION**

**The Director of the Peace Corps shall ensure that Peace Corps volunteers and staff reporting the misconduct of Peace Corps staff or advocating for reforms are treated in accordance with the provisions of chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, prohibiting certain personnel practices (commonly referred to as whistleblower protection provisions).**

**(...) INDEPENDENCE OF THE PEACE CORPS INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**The Peace Corps Inspector General shall be appointed by the President subject to confirmation by the Senate.**

**(...) PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS OF RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS TO PROMOTE THE THIRD GOAL OF THE PEACE CORPS.**

**(a) Purpose-** The purpose of this section is to provide support for returned Peace Corps volunteers to develop and carry out programs and projects to promote the third purpose of the Peace Corps Act, as set forth in section 2(a) of that Act (22 U.S.C. 2501(a)), relating to promoting an understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people.

**(b) Grants to Certain Nonprofit Corporations and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers-**

**(1) GRANT AUTHORITY-** The Director of the Peace Corps shall award grants on a competitive basis to private nonprofit corporations and returned Peace Corps volunteers for the purpose of enabling returned Peace Corps volunteers to use their knowledge and expertise to develop programs and projects to carry out the purpose described in subsection (a).

**(2) PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS-** The programs and projects that may receive grant funds under this section include--

**(A) educational programs designed to enrich the knowledge and interest of elementary school and secondary school students in the geography and cultures of other countries where the volunteers have served;**

**(B) projects that involve partnerships with local libraries to enhance community knowledge about other peoples and countries;**

**(C) audiovisual projects that utilize materials collected by the volunteers during their service that would be of educational value to communities;**

**And**

**(D) building the capacity of returned Volunteers and returned volunteer groups to support volunteer projects.**

**(3) ELIGIBILITY-**

**(A) RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS-** To be eligible for a grant under this section, an individual who has served as a Peace Corps volunteer shall have successfully completed all aspects of the volunteer's required Peace Corps service.

**(B) NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS-** To be eligible for a grant under this section, a nonprofit corporation shall have a board of directors composed of one or more returned Peace Corps volunteers with a background in community service, education, or health.

**(C) REGULATIONS-** Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Peace Corps shall promulgate rules and guidelines as to the appropriate accounting and audit standards and other reporting requirements that must be adhered to by an individual or nonprofit corporation as a condition of eligibility to receive grants under this section.

**(c) Status of the Fund-** Nothing in this section shall be construed to make any individual or nonprofit corporation supported under this section an agency or establishment of the Federal Government or to make any member of the board of directors or any officer or employee of such nonprofit corporation an officer or employee of the United States.

**(d) Congressional Oversight-** Grant recipients under this section shall be subject to the appropriate oversight procedures of Congress.

**(e) Funding-**

**(1) IN GENERAL-** In addition to any other funds made available to the Peace Corps under any other provision of law, there is authorized to be appropriated for the Peace Corps for fiscal year 2010 and each fiscal year thereafter \$10,000,000 to carry out this section.

**(2) AVAILABILITY-** Amounts appropriated pursuant to paragraph (1) are authorized to remain available until expended without regard to fiscal year.

[This provision is taken from the Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act, S. 732, introduced by Senators Dodd and Kennedy on March 1, 2007]

**(...) READJUSTMENT ALLOWANCES FOR PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEER LEADERS**

**(a) Volunteers—**Section 5(c) of the Peace Corps Act (22 USC 2504(c)) is amended in the first sentence by striking “\$125” and inserting “\$250.”

**(b) Volunteer Leaders—**Section 6(1) of the Peace Corps Act (22 USC 2505(1)) is amended in the first sentence by striking “\$125” and inserting “\$250.”



## **Appendix F: Biographical and Contact Information for Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff**

### **Chuck Ludlam**

#### ***Peace Corps***

\* Twice served as Peace Corps Volunteer, Nepal (1968-70; Ag Extension) and with Paula in Senegal (2005-07; Agro-Forestry Extension).

\*Co-founded Friends of Nepal

\*Serves on Board of Directors, National Peace Corps Association.

\*Advisor to Obama/Biden Transition Team for Peace Corps.

#### ***Peace Corps Reforms***

\* In June 2008, after five-year effort, secured enactment of Section 110 of H.R. 6081 (P.L. 110-245), providing tax relief to Peace Corps Volunteers and staff on sale of personal residence (first provision of the Dodd/Kennedy Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act (S. 732) (PCVEA) to be enacted into law).

\* In July 2006, published Peace Corps Medical Clearance Guidelines, obtained through Freedom of Information Act request, on *PeaceCorpsOnLine*, together with explanation of guidelines and detailed reform proposals. These proposals were included in PCVEA and largely incorporated in March 2008 *Final Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps' Medical Clearance System* (IG-08-08-E) of Peace Corps Inspector General. Thus, for the most part they are being implemented.

\* In November 2005, persuaded Office of Personnel Management to issue regulations eliminating double payment of health insurance premiums by Federal government retirees who serve as Volunteers. (The PCVEA presses the Peace Corps to extend this victory to retirees of state and local government and corporations.)

\*Active in crafting National Service initiatives to strengthen and expand Peace Corps and establish program to recruit and place overseas 85,000 Prosperity Volunteers (S. 3487 and S. 277) and Global Service Fellows (S. 2609).

#### ***Career Resume***

\* Over forty-year period served as staff and legal counsel to various House and Senate Committees (1965, 1967, 1975-79, 1981-93, and 2001-05) and Carter White House (1979-81); trial attorney at Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection (1972-75); and Vice President and principal lobbyist for the association representing the biotechnology industry (1993-2001).

\* Stanford University (BA 1967) and University of Michigan Law School (JD, 1972).

### **Paula Hirschhoff**

\* Twice served as Volunteer, Kenya (1968-70; Education) and with Chuck in Senegal (2005-07; Small Enterprise Development).

\* Served on board of Friends of Kenya

\*Docent at National Museum of African Art (1989-2009)

\* Worked as English instructor; consultant-advocate for community based natural resource management NGO, writer/editor, congressional aide, journalist (1967-2005).

\* Macalester College (BA 1966); George Washington University (MA in Anthropology, 1996).

### **Chuck Ludlam and Paula Hirschhoff**

\* Testified on behalf of 8,000 current Volunteers before Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Dodd/Kennedy Peace Corps Volunteer Empowerment Act, S. 732 (PCVEA), July 2007, at invitation of Senator Chris Dodd. (Flew in from Senegal where they were still Volunteers).

\* See their oral and written testimony at

[http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/Ludlam\\_HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf](http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/Ludlam_HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf) and <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2007/HirschhoffTestimony070725.pdf>. A video of the hearing can be viewed at <http://foreign.senate.gov/hearings/2007/hrg070725a.html>.

\* Published article, "A Call for Peace Corps Reform," in fall 2008 issue of *WorldView*, magazine of National Peace Corps Association.

### **Contact Information**

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