VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

Indonesia

Since 1961.

Program: English Teaching and Teacher Training

Job Title: English Teacher

Dates of Service: 30 May 2017 – 29 May 2019

Staging Date (in the US): 17 March 2017

Pre-Service Training (in Indonesia) : 20 March 2017 – 29 May 2017

*dates subject to change

AA171 = 4054BR

AA191 = 4055BR

This document is intended to give an overview of the project you are invited to work on in the Peace Corps. For more detailed information about Indonesia and living there, please read the Welcome Book via the link included with your invitation and check out the related Web sites referenced in the Welcome Book.

For further information about serving as an English Teacher in Indonesia, call the Country Desk Officer for Indonesia at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C., (9AM to 5PM, EST):

Toll-free: 1-855-855-1961, press 1, then extension 1879;

or directly at (202) 692-1879

or via email at Indonesia@peacecorps.gov.

A NOTE FROM THE REGIONAL MANAGERS

Selamat Datang! Welcome to Peace Corps Indonesia and to what promises to be a challenging and rewarding two years of service.

Indonesia has a long, rich, and complicated history. We have more than 240 million people, more than 17,000 islands, more than 3,000 local languages, and many different local cultures. Openness to diversity – which is a source of pride for Indonesians – helps ensure you will have a warm welcome by your school and community. Students and teachers and neighbors will be eager to meet you and learn in what ways you are the same as them, and in what ways you are different. You will find that most Indonesians share an enthusiasm for improving themselves as much as possible, especially through learning English. Peace Corps Indonesia Volunteers both benefit from and nurture this enthusiasm.

As you will read in the pages that follow, the Peace Corps Indonesia program was reestablished in 2010. The first group of Volunteers arrived in March and started their service in June 2010.

Peace Corps Indonesia staff members have created strong ties with Republic of Indonesia partners and have introduced the Peace Corps program and its goals to many local communities, but as a young program we anticipate much more work ahead as we grow and expand our reach. In weighing this assignment, you need to consider the reality that a young country program demands Volunteers who can tolerate and thrive in an environment of uncertainty and flux. Flexibility and adaptability – useful for any Peace Corps Volunteer – are critical in a young country program.

As part of the preparation for your assignment, we will be providing you with ten weeks of rigorous training. The focus of that training will be three-fold: *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian language), Indonesian culture, and technical orientation for teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). Throughout training, we will assess your capacity to be a positive influence at your school and within your community. Our standards will be high in determining your suitability to swear in as a Peace Corps Volunteer. We will place particular importance on your acquisition of language and your understanding of and adaptability to the culture. Bahasa Indonesia is actively used by most educated Indonesians, but depending on your placement, you may be expected to begin learning a secondary local language during pre-service training (PST) (e.g., Javanese, Madurese and Sundanese) to assist in your community integration. It is also critical that you demonstrate clearly a respect for the culture.

Living and working in Indonesia may require significant behavioral adaptation on your part to gain the trust of your Indonesian community. You will be living with a host family during your PST and throughout your service. You will learn to live with significantly less privacy than you may be used to in the United States, but the benefits are many: You will quickly increase your language skills, understand traditional Indonesian culture more thoroughly, and will join a household which has a strong relationship with your school. By integrating into the local community, your ability to be an effective Peace Corps Volunteer will improve dramatically.

At the same time, you may also experience feelings of isolation. Many of the sites where you will be assigned are in remote areas that may have very limited access to public transport.

We are confident that if you come to Indonesia with an open mind and an open heart, you can adapt and do well here. The opportunity to be a bridge between two cultures – the second and third goals of Peace Corps – is one of the most important aspects of your service and will no doubt be an incredibly rewarding part of your experience here. The professional opportunity to contribute to your community within and outside of the Indonesian classroom will likewise be considerable.

As staff members, we view our own roles as your professional colleagues in developing the capacity of our Indonesian partners. We look forward to working with you and supporting you during your two years in Indonesia. We are excited about the opportunity of developing a strong and vibrant Peace Corps TEFL program in Indonesia with you.

Sincerely,

Peace Corps Indonesia Regional Managers

PEACE CORPS INDONESIA HISTORY

Forty-five physical education Volunteers and one English education Volunteer served in Indonesia from 1963-1965, working with Indonesians in advancing their sports programs. The program was brought to a close in 1965 as a result of political upheaval and concerns for the safety and security of the Volunteers.

After a span of 45 years, our respective Governments signed a new agreement regarding the re-establishment of a Peace Corps program in December 2009.

Our Steering Committee, which consists of representatives from the relevant Indonesian government ministries and Peace Corps Indonesia, and which oversees our program, agreed to launch the program by assigning Volunteers to co-teach English at the secondary school level. Schools in Indonesia are under the direction of either the Ministry of Culture and Primary and Secondary Education (MoEC) or the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). There are many similarities between schools under MoEC and under MoRA: Both are co-educational with a Monday-through-Saturday schedule, both cover the same national curriculum (including religion as a subject area), and all graduating 9th and 12th grade students are expected to take the same national exam. Differences include how the schools are managed (i.e., centralized versus decentralized) and the quantity of religious instruction.

During the first two years of the program, Volunteers were assigned exclusively to East Java Province. In 2012, Peace Corps Indonesia expanded placements into West Java Province. In 2013, we began to assign Volunteers to middle schools under MoRA to teach 7th to 9th grade students. Assignments to middle schools under MoRA in West Java started in 2014, and Volunteer placement in MoEC middle schools in East and West Java started in 2015. Peace Corps currently has over 100 Volunteers assigned to schools and *madrasahs* (Islamic schools) in East and West Java.

As of December 2015, Peace Corps Indonesia has received provisional approval for a pilot project to place third-year Volunteers who wish to extend their service to the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) in eastern Indonesia. Pending successful outcomes of the pilot, Peace Corps Indonesia plans to develop two-year placements for future Volunteer groups.

Volunteer Comment: *I arrived to my village, after a long 10-week training period, eyes filled with apprehension, and to a bare house full of strangers and chickens. Two years later, I left that very house; tears had replaced the apprehension in my eyes and those strangers were no longer strangers, but they were friends. They were family. I was assigned to teach English at a small Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic high school) in the village. My school of roughly 300 was made up of 80 percent girls who lived in my village and the surrounding ones, as generally the boys were sent into the cities to bigger schools. I was very fortunate to be placed at an incredibly supportive school with eager Indonesian counterparts to work with. English was much more difficult to teach than I had anticipated, but through creative and unique collaboration with my Indonesian counterparts, we were able to develop programming that produced and that we could be proud of. Where teaching English is an important role that Volunteers play, it certainly*

doesn't define what a Peace Corps Volunteer is. What enriched my experience the most was everything that I was able to do outside of teaching; everything ranging from sitting in the mosque and conversing with students about my life and their lives, to fasting for Ramadan alongside my neighbors, to building a village radio station. It was those experiences and countless more that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. When I look back at my experience, I don't view it as my experience in the Peace Corps, but I view it as my experience in Indonesia, as it's unique for everyone. I laugh at all the awkward moments, I grow from the difficult ones, and I cherish all the friendships that were built during my time in Indonesia. When I look back on my experience I can't help but smile to think about how a foreign country became a home and how strangers grew to become family. It was certainly difficult and trying at times, but I never once regretted my decision to go to Indonesia and I look forward to the day I can return. Good luck!

- Truong M. Nguyen (2010-2012)

YOUR PRIMARY DUTIES

After successful completion of Pre-Service Training (PST), you will be assigned to work at a high school or middle school as a member of the English faculty. The goal of your work will be to improve the quality of English teaching and learning at your school through close collaboration with the faculty.

Your first few months will be an important time to gain classroom experience and credibility, and to begin to understand the needs of students and teachers. You will observe and seek to understand the Indonesian classroom environment and English-teaching methods and work with counterparts to identify priority areas on which they would like to focus. Relationships are very important in Indonesia, so you will need to concentrate on the development of social and professional relationships within your school and community in order to establish effective partnerships. As a professional, you will be held to the same standards and expectations of your teaching colleagues.

The direct teaching load in the classroom will vary based upon the needs of your particular school; typically, this will be 20-24 hours for the 7th up to the 12th grades. No matter what amount of time you spend teaching, the remainder of your time will be spent at school with counterpart teachers in creating lesson plans, developing educational materials (visual aids, lesson or activity books, and more), facilitating after-school clubs and programs, and participating in teachers' meetings or other school-related activities.

You will be responsible for teaching and motivating children in the classroom nearly every day. You will also be expected to assist counterpart teachers to effectively practice and incorporate participatory "active" learning approaches in the classroom. Promoting participatory learning where teachers become guides and mentors in helping students access, interpret, and organize knowledge and explore and solve authentic problems is new to Indonesian teachers and students and will require a patient and collaborative approach on your part. To this end, you

will assist your co-teachers to design and implement lessons in which students work individually and in groups to learn content through discovery, inquiry, and problem solving.

You and your Indonesian counterparts will work together to co-plan and co-teach lessons in order to foster a productive exchange of skills in the English classroom. You will also work with your counterpart teachers to introduce community topics and issues into lessons and effectively integrate other content areas (such as health, environment, and life skills). Volunteers will be trained to engage school and local communities in strategies to reduce school-related gender-based violence. You will cooperate with your counterparts to design and implement activities that focus on the learner's relationship with society in order to draw upon and apply authentic experiences and life skills.

For example, you may have the opportunity to participate in educational workshops and to collaborate with fellow Volunteers and their counterparts on activities that support project goals, such as teacher trainings, teacher community of practice meetings, and English camps. With support from your school, you may choose to participate in extracurricular activities in sports, arts, environmental issues, life skills, or other areas where there is both a need and an interest. School clean-ups and refurbishments, "International Day" events, library development, theater and film productions, and sports tournaments are a few of the many possibilities. These types of activities offer educational enrichment as well as opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and cross-cultural understanding.

Please note that co-teaching with your Indonesian counterparts can be both rewarding and frustrating. It will take some time for you and your counterpart to determine how you will share responsibilities and work together to teach truly as a team. While "active learning" is identified as part of the Indonesian national curriculum, the implementation of this approach has led to several challenges owing to both professional and cultural factors. You may find an English teacher with years of teaching experience, but having relatively poor English language proficiency, who is not well-equipped with proper knowledge on how to use this approach in real classroom contexts. Many teachers will be new to this approach and may be either uncomfortable at first or simply unsure of how to use the skills you bring. They commonly employ traditional teaching approaches, spending most of the time in class on memorization technique, drilling, or translating English texts. However, you will also find teachers who are open and willing to embrace new ideas and practices wholeheartedly. You will need patience and flexibility to be able to build and maintain a mutually beneficial partnership with your co-teachers. It is also worth remembering as you adapt to your working environment that you are not expected to, nor will you be able change the education system in Indonesia. Rather, you have been invited to serve in Indonesia to work collaboratively and in partnership with Indonesian teachers, to exchange ideas and methodologies that will enhance your students' learning.

While teaching English and teacher training are the first and second goals of Peace Corps Indonesia Project Framework, respectively, the third one is youth development. Working with students at the ages of 13 to 15 or 16 to 18, you will have the opportunity to enhance life skills, leadership skills, and volunteerism both inside and outside the classroom. The focus does not

have to be related to English, and your English teacher counterparts will not always be your counterparts for these activities. Many Volunteers find youth development activities channel their passions outside of teaching English, though collaboration may be as challenging as it is in teaching.

One of the exciting parts of your professional work is to participate in the Peace Corps monitoring, reporting, and evaluation (MRE) process. All Volunteers receive training on the Peace Corps MRE tracking and reporting system. Each Volunteer regularly reports MRE information, and this information is summarized to describe overall progress of the project. This important MRE system helps Peace Corps improve its programming and report its accomplishments. This is especially meaningful to Peace Corps Indonesia. As a newer Peace Corps post, we value the opportunity to capture the accomplishments of our Volunteers and their counterparts and partners from the start of the program in 2010. Beyond that, the opportunity to learn and practice professional monitoring and evaluation skills are some of the many valued benefits of Peace Corps service.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Community projects are activities that you and your Indonesian colleagues and friends may launch in order to address identified community needs. MoRA and MoEC, as well as host schools, have signaled their openness to having Peace Corps Volunteers participate in these secondary activities in their host communities. While the first few months of your service, as you would imagine, should focus on learning about and understanding your school environment and your role in the community, there will be opportunities to develop special activities that make use of your unique skill set.

Where the community is very close, you might find groups of women or men with regular activities who meet once a week or once a month. Community clean-up, cooking class, sports tournament or exercise, independence day celebrations, weddings, and other ceremonies are some occasions where you can voluntarily participate. Previous Volunteers have used these as opportunities to share information about going green, healthy eating, or Peace Corps' Second Goal of improving Indonesians' understanding of Americans.

Volunteer Comment: *Indonesia's Constitution states that each and every citizen has the fundamental right to education (Article 31, Section 1), and laws enacted over the past twenty years (Law 4, 1997; Law 23, 2002; Law 20, 2003) have further stated that children with disabilities have a right to an education that accommodates their own particular learning style. To meet this need, Indonesians have the option of enrolling their differently abled children in one of Indonesia's over 1,300 special education schools, or Sekolah Luar Biasa (SLB), spread throughout the archipelago, many of which are located near volunteer sites in Java. Even though there exists a legal charge to educate and serve Indonesia's children with disabilities, many of these schools, particularly those in more rural sites, find themselves both understaffed and underfunded, leaving many students at SLBs incapable of attaining the same level of education available to their peers in non-SLB schools.*

This presented a rich opportunity for me as a Volunteer to serve a marginalized, oft-misunderstood community. In late 2011, I began spending time with the students at my local SLB, and in particular the school's deaf population. Reaction from the faculty and students at the SLBs were universally positive. Aided by a counterpart from my primary assignment and the SLB itself, I have worked with the students on activities involving nutrition, arts and crafts, and storytelling, among others. But perhaps the most common activity is having me become the student, learning Indonesia's visual language, a role my students (now teachers) are all-too-pleased to take on. Furthermore, beginning in 2012, an effort has been underway to create an online forum where, through multimedia exchanges, its members and participants — hearing and deaf, from diverse geographic, socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds — can explore what it means to grow up in this world deaf. By spending our free time volunteering at Indonesia's SLBs, we hope to show the students that being deaf – or blind, or autistic, or physically disabled – is nothing to be ashamed of, that they are a part of a rich and vibrant community, whole, and wholly capable of reaching their life goals, whatever they might be.

- Jonathan Fujiwara (2011-2013)

WORKING CONDITIONS

Available Resources:

Many Indonesian schools lack certain basic resources, while others have access to some technology such as computer labs or audio-visual equipment for language instruction. Most classes are larger than the average American class, often having more than 30 students per class. It is very likely that the classes are very crowded and poorly maintained with limited teaching equipment. One school may share the same buildings with another school. Students' abilities range widely, and you will likely have 'false beginners' (students who have taken English for a few years, but have failed to master basic concepts) in the same classroom as a student with higher level skills. Teachers' skills – and motivation for improvement – will also vary.

You and your colleagues will be teaching from books that are selected by local schools and approved by the relevant Ministry. A national curriculum exists for English teaching, and it is expected that your instruction addresses the competencies this curriculum outlines. You will likely feel frustrated that the levels of the books don't align with the levels of the students, and that the books don't necessarily align neatly with the curriculum. Additionally, Indonesia has implemented a number of revisions to its national curricula in recent decades. Rollout and adoption of these materials has been uneven, so while some schools may be using the most recent curriculum, other schools may have retained or reverted to an older one. A new revision of the national curriculum is also currently on the horizon. Your key task is to discover practical ideas and innovative ways, making this resource useful to both motivate students and create an enjoyable learning atmosphere. As you and your teaching colleagues work together, you will find ways to teach according to the needs of your students, with a participatory, active learning approach, while at the same time respecting the requirements of the national curriculum.

Not all schools have libraries, especially those that are located in rural areas. A school may have a library, but they find it hard to keep their library materials current. Peace Corps Indonesia has a growing library of books and materials available for your use; however, you may want to bring materials which you feel will contribute to your teaching. While many English textbooks and other materials are available in some of the more modernized bookstores, you might consider bringing some books of interactive games and teaching ideas, materials about U.S. holidays and everyday life, picture flashcards, CDs with very simple songs for kids, maps, and posters. A good definitive grammar text will help when you're asked to explain unusual (or even common) aspects of the English language. Many Volunteers will also have Internet access on a regular basis, and there are myriad resources online which you might want to review and bookmark prior to arrival.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer you will be asked to demonstrate that quality teaching is possible even in the most under-resourced school. Learning to make do with less-than-satisfactory books, working with teachers and students to create hand-made teaching aids, and above all, making creative use of the tangible and intangible assets of your individual school are some of the ways you will achieve success.

Location of Job:

You and members of your training class will be placed in schools which will be identified with the assistance of our partner Ministries. Many of the schools will be in rural areas, while many will be in larger towns. Peace Corps identifies schools based on the greatest needs for the skills of Peace Corps Volunteers. This means that some sites may be located in remote or rural areas. You may be walking, riding a bike, or taking public transportation to school. In all cases, Volunteers will have reasonable transportation options to access larger towns to obtain necessary supplies.

Volunteer Comment: *My village is unique in that I am close to Surabaya, and yet I find myself to be the one with the most difficulties getting to and from my site when I am able to leave. My village is located on a mountain about 25km from the nearest major city, the locals like to joke that we live in the hutan, or forest. The road from that city to my village is ridden with potholes so deep and wide, you'd think that a meteor strike had recently wreaked havoc. The potholes make the ride very bumpy, and I like to make jokes about how we're bergoyang-goyang, or shaking, as if it's a unique dance or rite of passage for those coming in and out of my village. There is no public transportation offered in my village, but this doesn't stop me from exploring my community and the surrounding areas. If I need to get out, I can usually tag along with a teacher, or I call an angkot [public transport van] driver whom I've made friends with. I live about one kilometer away from my school every morning and every afternoon I hop on my bike, greeting ibus and bapaks (women and men) as I cruise and ascend small hills. There's always this one very old man sitting in front of his house, cheering me on every morning as I climb a medium hill. I look forward to seeing him. Even though I live in one of the more rural villages, it still feels just as crowded and populated as a small city, as there are people nearly everywhere. Every week it seems like a new house is being built. Rural, in this case, means not having easy access to air-conditioned mini-marts, big traditional markets, or transportation. I still have*

access to high-speed Wi-Fi, Oreos, the post office, an ATM machine, and basic amenities. When I have free time and need an escape, there are several small routes I take that wind between quiet reservoirs and stunning fertile fields harvesting sugarcane, chili peppers, corn, eucalyptus, and of course rice] I admire the serene beauty of these areas, and occasionally I'll see the tops of farmers' colorful wide hats peering out from the fields. Sights like this make me appreciate my time here and help me reflect on how lucky I am to be here even when I am homesick. Barely anyone walks around by foot, as everyone has a motorcycle. My bicycle has become an extension of my legs, and I find cycling to be a great way not only to relax and stay fit but also to bond with my community and students. Since I have no other choice but to bike to get around, people think I am incredibly kuat, or tough. I like that.

- Elle Chang (2011-2013)

Working Hours:

Indonesian schools operate year-round. There is a two-to-three week "summer break" during the month of June, and schools typically open their doors again during the second week of July for orientation. Formal classes typically begin in late July. Other break periods are at the beginning and end of Ramadan, and between semesters at the end of December. Exams take place between May and June.

Most schools have classes Monday through Saturday; however, Fridays may have a shortened schedule, to give the chance for male Muslim staff and male students to attend mandatory Friday prayer service. Saturdays may be reserved for extra-curricular activities. As a member of the teaching faculty, you will be expected to be at school a minimum of five days per week. The school day begins very early – sometimes as early as 6:30 AM – and continues until late in the afternoon. Often after formal classroom teaching and learning activities end, students are required to return to school for a couple of hours to participate in extra-curricular activities after class. Your particular class schedule will be arranged with your principal and counterparts after you arrive at your site. It may take some weeks for your school to settle on the appropriate ways to use your skills. You will be expected to fully participate in school activities along with your local counterparts. You may also participate in or initiate after-school or weekend activities which require working beyond normal school hours.

There will be many demands on your time – including requests from other schools to guest teach and from parents for special tutoring. It may be challenging for you to determine how many hours to devote to your assigned school and how many to your community activities. As a rule of thumb, you can expect to work at your school approximately 80 percent of the time and to work on community activities approximately 20 percent of the time. In these situations it helps to be flexible, ready for last-minute changes, and above all, open to discussing your activities with your counterparts and principal, who, after all, know the community best.

Volunteer Comment: *My school starts at 6:55 AM and runs until just after 3:00 PM. After classes end, I almost always stay at the school for another few hours. There are meetings of different sub-groups of my English Speaking Club every day after school, so I stay to facilitate the meetings or observe my teaching counterparts facilitating. This gives me a great opportunity to really get to know my students as individuals. Additionally, all my students are assigned to have a conversation outside of class in English with their English teacher for half an hour during the semester. So students often make appointments with me to have one-on-one conversations at the school or my house. Last semester this gave me around 50 extra hours of activity after school, which is as much time as I'd spend in the classroom over the course of three weeks. While this was a significant amount of extra work, it wasn't a problem accommodating the time requirement, considering how much free time there is over the course of a semester. Even if I'm not tending to my Speaking Club or having one-on-one conversation assignments with my students, I like to be around the school to use the Internet and hang out with the kids who live in the school's boarding house. When I head home in the early evening, I just like to relax at home, chat with my host family, and keep in touch with other PCVs.*

- Timothy Curtin (2011-2013)

Volunteer Comment: *I teach at an Islamic high school called a madrasah. Every day school starts at 6:30 AM, and then the students begin Quran recitation for about 15 minutes. Students have a midday snack break and a prayer break during the day. School usually ends at 1:15 PM unless there is a special event that warrants an early release. This semester I am working with three of the seven English teachers. I co-teach 19 hours a week. My counterparts and I usually sit down for about 30-45 minutes a week to lesson plan for the next week. It's important to make a lesson planning schedule that works for you and your counterpart. For example, I lesson plan at one of my counterpart's houses. She has a young daughter and cannot really stay after school, so I come to her. This not only gives me a chance to lesson plan, but an opportunity to interact with her and her family in a personal way. In addition to my teaching duties I co-teach an English club held after school twice a week. I also help with the drama club. I was worried about not being able to handle such an early morning, but my body quickly adjusted. Also the most important characteristic of being a volunteer is flexibility. Every day will be different. Learn to go with the flow and life will be less stressful.*

- Vanika Spencer (2014-2016)

<u>Cultural Attitudes and Customs in the Workplace</u>:

Indonesia is a large country with multiple cultures and languages. Customs vary from province to province, and from school to school. Generally speaking, you will find that Indonesians have a tolerance, curiosity, and sense of humor regarding behaviors and customs that are different than their own. That said, most Volunteers are placed at schools and in communities with conservative Muslim values, and the importance of respect for local religious practices and cultural mores cannot be overstated. Modest dress, by both men and women, is expected. Learning appropriate ways of interacting with members of the opposite sex will be critical to your integration. Physical contact is largely taboo, and pre-marital sex can result in social

sanctions and legal charges being brought against those so accused. Alcohol use is also often taboo, and you may be expected to refrain from alcohol consumption at your site.

Respect tends to come with age, experience, and certification in Indonesia. Teachers are held in particular esteem as models for appropriate dress and behavior. The belief that the old know all, as well as the teacher can do no wrong, is the norm to be upheld. Accordingly, in many Indonesian classrooms, it is common to find students who rarely challenge or do not critically respond to teacher's debatable statements or arguments. From the cultural perspective, challenging a statement or argument of someone who is older may be perceived as disrespectful and an act of showing off. Younger Volunteers or those without considerable teaching experience may encounter initial difficulty in gaining respect from counterparts, supervisors, and co-workers. No matter your age or experience, your professional behavior—attendance, punctuality, appearance, and seriousness about teaching—will be essential in earning respect in the school and wider community.

Volunteer Comment: *Education is at least as much about "building character" as it is about transferring knowledge or skills. Character, as it's defined here, is largely about relationships. Individual traits are not considered as important as being a good neighbor, friend, husband, mother, etc. Classes are frequently canceled for "socialization;" students are routinely excused from required classes to participate in extra-curricular activities, and teachers are evaluated more on whether they are setting a good moral example for their students than on how much their students are learning. As a Volunteer this can be incredibly frustrating. Great lesson plans get postponed or thrown out. Students miss what I consider important material. My counterparts seem to care more about visiting a new baby during school hours than going to our class. I think this ultimately comes down to a conflict of values. Several of my counterparts feel the pull of both value systems. They believe it's important to come to class, but they also believe it's important to be a good neighbor by visiting new babies. Even though the choice seems clear to me, I can see that it's a struggle for them, and I have to accept that sometimes they will choose social obligations over "professional" ones. I've found that I'm more successful when I acknowledge that they have legitimate conflicting commitments, and I work with them to accommodate those commitments without sacrificing quality team teaching.*

- Natasha Wright (2011-2013)

<u>Dress Code</u>:

Indonesian teachers, including Volunteers, are expected to wear neat, modest, "business-casual" attire. Some schools require teachers to wear uniforms. If that is the case, you will also be expected to wear the uniform, and in some cases these are provided to the Volunteer by the school. While in training, you will receive advice and feedback as needed regarding appropriate dress, but ultimately your principal and counterparts will provide specific guidance about what you should and shouldn't wear to school.

Shirts and other clothing made of local *batik* dyed cloth are fashionable for both men and women and are particularly well appreciated. These shirts and tunics are readily available all

over the country at inexpensive prices (generally no more than US$15). Many Volunteers buy beautiful *batik* fabric and have clothes made by a local tailor.

Shorts are never worn to any work setting, and are rarely worn on casual occasions, either by men or women. Short-shorts are absolutely not appropriate in any situation. Jeans and athletic shoes are considered casual, as are yoga pants, and would only on very rare occasions be worn by a teacher at school. If you wear yoga pants or leggings, you should also wear a shirt or sweater that falls to your mid-thigh. As shoes are removed before entering a home, slip-on shoes are recommended.

For women, dressing modestly will be particularly important to achieving integration and earning respect from colleagues, students, and neighbors. You should assume that long or ¾ length sleeves are required in professional settings, as are modest necklines. It is very rare for women to wear tank tops – shoulder coverings are a must at all times. Pants are perfectly acceptable and common. Skirts and dresses must be long enough to amply cover the knees. Generally, women wear closed-toed flat shoes in professional settings. Female Volunteers are not required to wear headscarves.

For men, short sleeved, button-down shirts are perfect for normal workdays, while long sleeves are expected for formal occasions. Polo shirts are not appropriate for the classroom, as they are considered sports attire in Indonesia. Ties are rare, but having one for special events will be appreciated. Long pants that are well-fitted and neatly pressed are appropriate. Closed toe shoes are a must for all work occasions.

Volunteer Comment: *I teach in a madrasah, and four out of the six days of teaching, I wear a uniform that my school had made for me. I wake up at about 5:30 AM, take a bucket bath, and I slip on my long-sleeve, heavy, polyester shirt and pants and black, close-toed flats I bought here. The uniforms are not extremely breathable, and they certainly won't win me any beauty pageants. It is pretty hot at my site, so after some time here, I am now oddly thankful to have such a durable fabric that doesn't reveal exactly how much I am sweating underneath and can hold up under the frequent hand washing. Two days out of the week, I wear a batik shirt and black pants I brought from home. It is good to note that the dress of the volunteers varies from school to school. Some don't wear uniforms at all and just wear button-down shirts and pants every day, and some females in other madrasahs wear short-sleeves. Volunteers may get special exception to dress codes as negotiated with their principal.*

- Erin Fitzgerald (2011-2013)

Volunteer Comment: *I teach in a public high school, and our school uses a combination of the dress codes that most schools in Indonesia follow. We have a uniform that we wear Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday that holds up surprisingly well in the heat, although some other volunteers haven't been as lucky. On Thursday and Friday, we wear batik shirts and dress slacks. On Saturday, all students and teachers in my region wear Boy Scout uniforms. Seriously. This seems to be rarer, though, across East Java. My school provided the material for my school and Boy Scout uniform and I purchased the batik fabric and tailoring for the additional shirts. Every*

school seems to have a different take on dress codes here, so you may not receive a uniform, or may not be required to wear one. The one universal trait of school dress codes in East Java is that everyone is very clean and professional. Clothes are never wrinkled and, unless a classroom is carpeted, male teachers are generally expected to wear dress shoes and socks. Physical appearance is often commented on by fellow teachers, so your clothing, shoes, hair, and facial hair are fair-game in the teachers' office for comment, praise, and criticism. In your early months at your school, you will learn your school's specific culture and have a better idea of what is acceptable.

- Will Glasscock (2012-2014)

TRAINING FOR YOUR JOB

Pre-Service Training (PST), which begins immediately upon arrival in Indonesia, spans approximately 10 weeks. Peace Corps Indonesia uses a community-based model for training, which means that trainees are clustered in villages and study in small groups. Upon successful completion of PST, trainees are sworn in as Volunteers.

You will stay with an Indonesian family throughout PST, fully participating in traditional daily life and activities. An emphasis is placed on experiential learning, with opportunities to ask questions and process observations with Indonesian trainers. This introduction to Indonesian culture will include an overview of Islam.

Language training is intensive – approximately four to eight hours each day – throughout PST. The focus is on *Bahasa Indonesia*; however, you may also receive training in the local language of the part of the country where you will be assigned. Instruction typically takes place in small groups, using communicative methods, and includes both classroom work and experiential exercises outside the classroom.

Technical training prepares you for your job as a teacher in an Indonesian school. You will attend small- and large-group sessions on the basics of TEFL taught by Peace Corps staff and Volunteer colleagues, and receive an introduction to the Indonesian curriculum. You will also complete a multi-week practicum at a local school, where you can observe Indonesian teachers, interact with the principal and other officials, and practice teaching groups of students.

Health and safety training is extensive. Health training is presented by our Medical Officers and will include a review of medical issues specific to Indonesia, as well as basic self-care topics. Safety sessions are presented by our Safety and Security Manager, as well as guest speakers, and cover ways to prevent or mitigate problems while in Indonesia.

Further training in each of these areas will be provided at subsequent training events, including an In-Service Training approximately four months after completing PST, Mid-Service Training approximately 12 months after completing PST, and a Close-of-Service Conference which takes place three months prior to completing your service.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Volunteers live with Indonesian host families throughout their two years of service.

Prior to the Volunteer's arrival, the host family is identified by the assigned school and is visited by Peace Corps staff in order to ensure accommodations meet all criteria. Criteria include assignment of one private room to the Volunteer, and access to a basic (typically squat-type) toilet, bathing, and cooking facilities. Accommodations also must meet Peace Corps health, safety, and security criteria. Peace Corps Indonesia requires all Volunteers to contribute a minimum payment per month to the host family from their monthly living allowance provided by Peace Corps. You will learn more about this in PST.

As in the U.S., "families" in Indonesia take many forms: You may live with a mother, father, and children, or simply with one other adult. Living with a host family, while not without its challenges, is often a highlight for Peace Corps Volunteers around the world. Host families provide an immediate entry into the community, daily language practice and cultural exchange, and contribute to a Volunteer's safety. Most importantly, they usually become an invaluable source of emotional support, so that your site quickly feels like home. As a newcomer you will be expected to make an effort to get to know your community, and not to wait for people to come to you. Relationships are the "coin of the realm" in Indonesia and the responsibility for initiating, building, and nurturing them will fall to you. As such, host families can be an instrumental part of linking Volunteers to their new communities.

Indonesian families typically prepare a meal early in the morning, and those dishes remain available throughout the day. A wide variety of food is available, and you will be encouraged to discuss any dietary preferences with your host family, as well as contribute to the cooking for the household. Food is a big thing in the community; for many Indonesians, their hospitality and respect is represented by offering food constantly. Laundry may be done by hand or with a small machine, and is typically hung to dry and then ironed thoroughly to eliminate dampness.

Some communities have well-organized infrastructure, and many of the aspects of modern living, but you should come prepared to leave behind many of the comforts of home. Peace Corps Indonesia's intention is that housing is modest, similar to the housing of other teachers at your school. You are certain to have some access to electricity and running water, but these services may frequently be interrupted at your particular site. Internet service is generally available throughout much of West and East Java, and you will most likely have access either at your school or at your home, sometimes both, but it will not be as reliable or as fast as what you may be accustomed to in the U.S.

Volunteer Comment: *During PST, my host mom did everything for me. She cooked my meals, washed and folded my laundry, and cleaned my room. I was treated like royalty in that household. I assumed all Indonesian households were going to be this way. I thought that my host mom at my permanent site would also do all of my chores for me. The first night I slept at my site, my host family was very kind. They helped me set up my room and showed me where everything in the house was. On the second day, however, my host mother knocked on my*

bedroom door. I opened it to found her on the other side holding a broom. "Everyone must sweep their room every night at 5:00 PM." She smiled, handed me the broom, and walked away. It shocked me that she was not treating me like a guest. Later I found out that she didn't want to treat me like a guest. She wanted to treat me like family.

- Kruti Patel (2014-2016)

Volunteer Comment: *My host family is a perfect fit for me. I have host parents and a 12-year-old host sister. My host mom is a midwife, and my host dad is a teacher. I'm treated more like a sibling versus their child, so I have my independence but am still included in all family functions. We have a ton of family living around us, including my best friend and host niece Kayla, who's four years old and adorable. We also have family in Bandung, Bogor, and Jakarta, so family trips are awesome and such an advantage of living with a host family. I feel extremely safe living with my family and my surrounding neighbors. Some of my fondest memories thus far are sitting on our porch chatting away with family and neighbors. I eat their delicious (vegetarian) food and have the opportunity to learn how to make everything. If I'm really craving food from home, I have freedom in the kitchen. They don't judge me when I have super lazy days at home and let me meander to the city solo when I want or need to. My house is nice and I quickly became comfortable with it; it's home.*

- Lindsey Powell (2014-2016)

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES & REWARDS

Please reference the Welcome Book for more detailed information regarding diversity and cross-cultural issues, and safety and security in the Peace Corps.

Development is a slow process. Volunteers must possess the self-confidence, patience, and vision to continue working toward long-term goals without seeing immediate results. You must practice humility and graciousness, and not think that you are here to fix things. You are here to partner and work collaboratively with your counterparts and community and to share and exchange ideas.

It may take you a few months or more to feel integrated, to make connections, and to find your own niche within your community, and these feelings are likely to change over time. Indonesians are hospitable people, always willing to make you feel welcome. Nevertheless, it may take some time before you obtain the cultural and linguistic skills necessary to start feeling true connections to your Indonesian neighbors and colleagues. While Peace Corps staff is always available to you by phone and will make occasional visits, you are expected to manage day-to-day challenges independently, or with the assistance of your host family, counterparts, and principal, who will be eager to help. Resiliency and self-care are two skills that you will develop and cultivate during your service.

Working with limited resources will force you to make use of all your creativity and resourcefulness. Lack of space and working with students and teachers with varying levels of

English will be a challenge, particularly in the beginning as you are developing your *Bahasa Indonesia* skills. It will be important to keep in mind that your colleagues and students will also go through an adjustment period of working with a foreigner (and native English speaker); this transition may be challenging to all. Diplomacy, persistence, creativity, and patience will be necessary as you negotiate schedules with co-workers, attempt to motivate yourself and counterparts, work with little supervision, and persevere for what may seem like ages without seeing any visible impact or without receiving feedback on your work. You will need to be comfortable with ambiguity and awkwardness.

You will discover that Indonesia is a country of contrasts. In large cities, you will find prosperous neighborhoods with high-class restaurants, fancy cars, and stores overflowing with the latest technology. In small villages and less fortunate sections of cities, however, you will encounter poverty. This division between rich and poor can be disconcerting. Indonesia is an interesting mixture of old and new, modern and archaic. It will take time to discover that behind a surface of Asian modernity, there are many traditional and conservative values at play. You will need to keep your eyes open and ask questions in order to understand the subtleties and seeming paradoxes.

If you are able to make the commitment to integrate into your school and community and work hard, you will be a successful Volunteer. The language barrier, different customs and work habits, feelings of homesickness, lack of privacy, the challenge of integrating into a new culture, and isolation are a few of the challenges that you will need to overcome through maturity, flexibility, open-mindedness, and resourcefulness. You can expect your Indonesian community members to be curious about your religious beliefs and practices. Volunteers with belief systems that fall outside the recognized religions in Indonesia (Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Catholic, Protestantism, and Confucianism) will need to learn strategies for responding to, and coping with, questions about this topic. Indonesians are also largely unaware of American diversity and are often curious about racial and ethnic minority Volunteers' nationalities. Minority Volunteers should be prepared to answer a large number of questions on this topic. On a more personal level, you may develop and acquire new communication and negotiation skills. You will learn and be exposed to the reality that communicating with people in Indonesia is less direct, since most Indonesians, especially the dominant Javanese ethic, values indirectness when expressing ideas or requests. At the end of your service, you will remember the challenges, but most of all you will realize that you have made an impact and you have changed some people's lives—not only by teaching English, but by demonstrating a different way of doing things and a different way of thinking. The rewards are numerous and many times unexpected. Understanding a new language and culture is priceless. Feeling that you have made a difference is very fulfilling. Probably the most striking reward, though, will be the friends that you will make in Indonesia, some of whom will remain friends for a lifetime.

Volunteer Comment: *The potential challenges in Indonesia are numerous. Just the simple fact of never being able to "blend in" is enough to drive you crazy. But slowly but surely, it gets better. Part of the trick is learning to embrace your role and go with not being "normal" anymore. Another big challenge is for Volunteers who are very private or not very social or outgoing. Indonesian life, especially in the villages, is very close and community-based. So going*

to social events is a must. I've made it easier on myself and consider being more social than I would be at home part of my "job" as a PCV. It's a pain at times, but it's crucial for your integration in the community, keeping you happy as a PCV, and making your life in and outside school easier.

- John Hoban (2011-2013)

REFLECTIONS FROM PEACE CORPS INDONESIA VOLUNTEERS

Even though school culture has been a source of "culture shock," and sometimes frustration, my school is also one of my greatest allies and supporters. Despite their many obligations outside of our shared classrooms, my counterparts are all genuinely excited and committed to working with me to improve our classes, our teaching materials, and themselves as educators. It's pretty amazing. I'm grateful to all of them for taking on a new, demanding, and sometimes uncomfortable role as counterparts.

Students, teachers, and school staff also play a large role in supporting me personally. They are friends, and they take that seriously. I've never before had the pleasure of working with people who take such a personal interest in my well-being. I found that my school wants me to succeed just as much as I do. They are unfailingly helpful, and they continually let me know that I am part of the "big family."

- Natasha Wright (2011-2013)

Here's the bad news: You will be a rock star here. You will be stared at. Constantly. You will be shouted at. People will stand in lines to get a picture taken with you; some might even ask you for your autograph. And while this doesn't sound so bad at all, think of dealing with this every day for months, maybe even years. And think that, while they might treat you like a rock star, you cannot behave like one. Your appearance and your behavior must be modest. That means no smoking, drinking, or partying publicly. That means answering the same five questions thousands of times, and being polite even though you are beyond tired and so incredibly hot. If you are a girl, that means covering your shoulders and knees and being nice to the middle-aged men who smile and ask why you are not yet married.

Here's the good news: I wake up most mornings by 5:30 and am on my bike pedaling to school by 6:15. It's still cool at that time and the sun is touching the mountains in the distance and the farmers are already in the rice paddies, walking through mud and mist with their pointed straw hats hung across their backs. I pass women washing clothes in the river, and school children in their bright uniforms being brought to school on the backs of bikes and motorcycles, in horse carriages, or in becaks (pedicabs). My students don't know much English, but they are beyond eager to learn. Before I leave class, they stand in line to bring my hand to their cheeks.

Here's the great news: I play soccer with some of my students and fellow teachers twice a week after school. I'm the only girl for now, but that's okay. It's hot and it's fun, but my favorite part is what comes after we play. The boys will go into the cane fields with their machetes and cut

down stalks of sugar cane, strip them, and pass them around. And we will sit there, sweating, happy, chewing on the sugar. Before I ride my bike home, they cut down more and put it in my front basket. I never thought I would bond with my students over soccer, sugar cane, and machetes. Welcome to Indonesia.

- Sarah Sheffield (2010-2012)