

Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Peace Corps Director



Carrie Hessler-Radelet was sworn into office as the 19th Director of the Peace Corps in June 2014. In the years prior, she served as Peace Corps acting Director and deputy director.

Hessler-Radelet began her career in international development as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Western Samoa, teaching secondary school English. From there, she went on to spend over two decades working in public health, focusing on HIV/AIDS and maternal and child health, before returning to the Peace Corps.

As head of the Peace Corps, Hessler-Radelet has led historic reforms to modernize and strengthen the Peace Corps to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. She has spearheaded a sweeping effort to revamp the Peace Corps' Volunteer application and selection process and revitalize recruitment and outreach to field a Volunteer force that represents the best and brightest the U.S. has to offer. As deputy director, she led the rollout of the Focus In/Train Up initiative, which provides targeted technical training to Volunteers to increase their capacity-building abilities.

Under Hessler-Radelet's leadership, the Peace Corps has dramatically improved the support it provides to Volunteers in the field. She has championed the health and safety of Volunteers, leading targeted initiatives to improve resources and reduce risk, as well as overseeing the implementation of requirements codified in the 2011 Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act.

During Hessler-Radelet's tenure, the Peace Corps undertook a comprehensive agency assessment and reform effort—the first of its kind since the agency's founding. Since then, the Peace Corps has strategically targeted its resources and country presence to maximize impact and embraced new technology to create a culture of innovation and excellence. Hessler-Radelet was also instrumental in creating the Peace Corps Office of Global Health and HIV, which expands and strengthens the agency's HIV-education and prevention programs, and the Global Health Service Partnership, which sends physicians and nurses to teach in developing countries.

Previously, Hessler-Radelet served as vice president and director of the Washington, D.C., office of John Snow Inc., a global public-health organization, where she oversaw the management of health programs in more than 85 countries. She was actively involved in the establishment of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and served as a primary author of PEPFAR's first strategic plan. She served as a Johns Hopkins Fellow with USAID in Indonesia, where she assisted the Indonesian government in developing and implementing its first national AIDS strategy, and founded the Special Olympics in The Gambia in 1986, which remains active to this day.

Hessler-Radelet holds a Master of Science in health policy and management from the Harvard School of Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Boston University. She and her husband, Steve Radelet, have two children. Four generations of Hessler-Radelet's family have served as Peace Corps Volunteers.

