

Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Peace Corps Director



Carrie Hessler-Radelet is Director of the Peace Corps as of June 2014. She was initially appointed deputy director of the Peace Corps on June 23, 2010. She is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Western Samoa, 1981–83) with more than two decades of experience in public health focused on HIV/AIDS and maternal and child health.

Since 2010, Hessler-Radelet has spearheaded a comprehensive agency assessment and reform effort, leading the development and implementation of initiatives to improve efficacy and efficiency across the organization—the first such endeavor since its founding in 1961. She has worked with each office to develop individual performance improvement plans and has focused on projects proven to be best development practices. During her time as deputy director, she led the roll-out of the Focus In/Train Up initiative, which provides targeted technical training to Volunteers to increase their capacity-building abilities. In her concurrent role as chief operating officer, she ensured the agency was a vigilant steward of government resources and taxpayer dollars.

Another major initiative Hessler-Radelet has taken on during her tenure is the implementation of new policies and processes to improve the health and safety of Volunteers. In addition to the requirements codified in the 2011 Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act, Hessler-Radelet has overseen the implementation of

key policies and programs aimed at reducing the risk of sexual assault and violent crime, as well as improving medical, mental health, legal, and post-service care for victims.

Since her return to the Peace Corps, Hessler-Radelet has been instrumental in instituting the new Office of Global Health and HIV to expand and strengthen the agency's HIV-education and prevention programs and the Global Health Service Partnership to send physicians and nurses to teach in developing countries. Both initiatives work to meet the medical needs of Peace Corps host countries where the physician-to-population ratio is often woefully inadequate to meet the disease burden. Hessler-Radelet also led an effort to overhaul Volunteer recruiting and engage more Volunteers in post-service public education activities.

Prior to her Senate confirmation as deputy director, Hessler-Radelet was 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 public-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 was a primary author of PEPFAR's first strategic plan. Hessler-Radelet was also a Johns Hopkins Fellow with USAID in Indonesia, where she assisted the Indonesian government in developing and implementing its first national AIDS strategy.

Hessler-Radelet served as a board member of the National Peace Corps Association and on the steering committee for the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival. She was founder of the Special Olympics in The Gambia in 1986, which is still active there. All told, Hessler-Radelet has lived and worked in more than 50 countries.

Four generations of Hessler-Radelet's family have served as Peace Corps Volunteers. Early in her career, Hessler-Radelet served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Western Samoa from 1981–83 with her husband, Steve Radelet. There, she taught high school and helped design a national public awareness campaign on disaster preparedness.

Hessler-Radelet's aunt was the 10,000th Peace Corps Volunteer and served in Turkey (1964–66), her grandparents served in Malaysia (1972–73), and her nephew recently completed his service as an HIV education Volunteer in Mozambique (2007–09).

Hessler-Radelet holds a master's degree 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 have two grown children, Meghan and Sam.

