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Daljit Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General 

Date: March 31, 2015

Subject: Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Lesotho
(IG-15-02-E)

Transmitted for your information is our final report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Lesotho.

Management concurred with all 16 recommendations. All 16 recommendations will remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation identified in management's response has been received. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities.

Our comments, which are in the report as Appendix E, address these matters. Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendation within 90 days of receipt of this memorandum.

You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O'Keefe at 202.692.2904.

Please accept our thanks for your cooperation and assistance in our review.

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Butha-Buthe District, Lesotho



Flag of Lesotho

Final Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Lesotho IG-15-02-E

March 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

More than 2,200 Peace Corps Volunteers have served the people of Lesotho since the program was first launched in 1967. At the time of our evaluation there were three projects in Lesotho: education (ED), healthy youth (HY), and community health and economic development. The community health and economic development project is being phased out when the currently serving group closes their service in 2015. At the onset of this evaluation, there were 84 Volunteers serving in Lesotho.

WHAT WE FOUND

Peace Corps/Lesotho (hereafter referred to as “the post”) has experienced significant upheaval in the last couple of years beginning with the murder of a Volunteer in 2010. Since that time, the post’s focus has been on keeping Volunteers safe and the incidence rates of crimes against Volunteers in most categories have fallen. The post has spent recent years implementing recommendations from a post operations support team visit¹ and an [Office of Inspector General \(OIG\) audit](#), as well as implementing the Focus In/Train Up strategy² and other agency initiatives.

We found that post’s programming was adequate, although some Volunteers reported challenges with their ability to achieve project goals. We also identified some issues with Volunteer work assignments and housing in the post’s site identification and development process. Site history was not consistently used during site development and the system for collecting, filing, and storing the information was not clear to relevant staff. The post only had one national level memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a host country ministry even though there are multiple ministry stakeholders. The post also did not consistently have MOUs with individual organizations where Volunteers are placed.

Lesotho’s training program was working well to prepare Volunteers for most aspects of their Peace Corps service. Language testing scores showed that all trainees from the two most recent pre-service training (PSTs) met the post’s local language requirement of “intermediate low” in Sesotho, the national language of Lesotho. Technical training received the lowest average rating of PST sessions from the Volunteers we interviewed, although scores were in line with the agency’s annual Volunteer survey (AVS) data, which is collected by all posts.

Volunteers were generally satisfied with the support they received from staff. Volunteers and staff were effectively communicating and staff was providing quality feedback in response to their Volunteer reporting forms (VRFs). Volunteers were mostly satisfied with the site visits they received from staff but Volunteers who were placed in more remote locations said that visits

¹ A four-person team from Peace Corps Headquarters went to Lesotho in October 2010 to advise and support the country director, staff, and Volunteers in light of safety and security concerns and staffing issues. The team produced a report with recommendations for consideration by the post and Peace Corps senior staff to ensure effective operations in Lesotho.

² FITU was an agency initiative that sought to focus on a limited number of highly effective projects designed to maximize the skills of generalist Volunteers with limited expertise and/or work experience.

were quick and that post leadership had not visited some areas of the country. We found that some housing criteria was not clear, that Volunteer resource centers offered uneven support, and the post's medical evacuation plan was not complete. We had concerns about the post's ability to evacuate a Volunteer at night in the event of medical emergency.

We found the post's resources and management practices were adequate for effective post operations. Staff appreciated the country director's (CD's) management style and her trust in them to do their jobs. The post has outgrown its current office space, but has not yet budgeted for an office move.

Without a permanent director of management and operations (DMO) since July 2013, the post had been supported by the roving regional DMO and capable local staff with little impact to operations. But, staff with major collateral duties such as monitoring, reporting, and evaluation (MRE) and grants coordination was stretched thin. Most staff said morale was good, but concerns were raised about salaries, which had been frozen since 2010, and per diem rates, especially for those who spend a lot of time in the field supporting Volunteers.

Thirty-five percent of the post's budget for Volunteers, or 23 percent of its overall budget, is funded by Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); after evaluation fieldwork, the post received a decision that the Peace Corps would not receive any new requested funding for the next year. After further negotiations, the new funding was restored. The initial decision on PEPFAR funding highlights the risks of planning for Peace Corps activities with funding that is not within the Peace Corps' control.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

Our report contains 16 recommendations, which, if implemented, should strengthen post operations and correct the deficiencies detailed in the accompanying report.

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Crime is a significant issue for the country, and the Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security rates Lesotho as a critical crime threat post. Most reported incidents are crimes of opportunity, such as simple assault, pick-pocketing, and petty theft. The limited amount of police data available indicates that violent crimes, including armed robberies, sexual assaults, homicides, residential break-ins, and crimes committed at gunpoint, have increased in recent years. Vehicle accidents are also a major safety concern and the embassy has advised personnel not to drive outside of well-lit urban areas at night.

HIV is a considerable health issue in Lesotho that the U.S. government, including the Peace Corps, and the government of Lesotho is trying to combat. Lesotho's HIV prevalence rate among adults is 23 percent, the second highest in the world. Multiple donors have responded to Lesotho's HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Global Fund and PEPFAR program in Lesotho complements a significant HIV/AIDS effort by the government of Lesotho and other donors. PEPFAR's 2014 country operating plan encourages the use of services such as anti-retroviral therapy and voluntary male medical circumcision with behavioral changes like HIV testing and reducing stigma.

Lesotho is completely surrounded by and is economically integrated with South Africa. Lesotho's economy is based on exports of water and electricity sold to South Africa, manufacturing, agriculture, livestock, and remittances. Lesotho also exports items such as diamonds, wool, mohair, and clothing. Most households subsist on farming or migrant labor, primarily miners who remain in South Africa for three to nine months a year. Lesotho falls in the category of low human development and is ranked 158 out of 187 countries and territories according to the 2013 United Nations' Human Development report.³

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Over 2,200 total Volunteers have served in Lesotho since 1967, most having worked in the education and agriculture sectors. Volunteers are geographically distributed throughout all 10 districts of the country and are primarily placed in rural areas. Lesotho has maintained a relatively consistent number of 80 to 100 Volunteers since its inception, although there have been times when the program was temporarily suspended because of political instability. In September 1998, the Peace Corps temporarily withdrew all Volunteers to South Africa due to the civil unrest and prolonged protests against the outcome of parliamentary elections; Peace Corps Lesotho resumed operations in November 1998. In September 2014, Volunteers were again temporarily consolidated to South Africa for a few weeks due to political instability.

The post's fiscal year (FY) 2014 budget was approximately \$1.5 million.⁴ At the time of fieldwork, 27 staff were supporting 84 Volunteers. Once the community health and economic development project is fully phased out, there will be two primary projects in Lesotho: ED and

³ The United Nations Development Program publishes an annual Human Development Index. The Index provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income. Countries are ranked from "very high human development" to "low human development" based on related data.

⁴ This amount does not include the salaries, benefits, and related cost of U.S. direct hires assigned to post and other costs the agency has determined should be centrally-budgeted.

HY. The post receives two trainee inputs per year; the ED trainees arrive in October and HY trainees arrive in June. In 2015, the HY trainees will arrive in April to allow for a longer lapse between training classes. Additionally, 17 Volunteers (20 percent) from the community health and economic development project were still serving at the time of field work, although this project will be phased out when the currently serving group closes their service. The post did not have a Peace Corps Response program at the time of evaluation.

A more detailed explanation of the two project areas are discussed below:

- **Education (ED)**

The ED project in Lesotho began with the first group of teachers in 1967. The Peace Corps serves at the request of the Ministry of Education and Training and seeks to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Lesotho's education system through promoting teacher communities of practice, strengthening school-community relationships and directly instructing learners in the classroom. The project deploys English teachers in primary schools and math teachers in secondary schools. According to the country briefing paper, aspects of the project that are currently being phased out include science and English teaching at the secondary level and teacher coaching and mentoring at the early childhood and primary levels. The project's purpose is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Lesotho's education system and has four goals: to improve learning in English, learning in math, teaching, and HIV mitigation.

- **Healthy Youth (HY)**

The HY project has roots in nutrition, small business development, and HIV/AIDS awareness. In 2013, the community health and economic development project, which was formed in 2004, was renamed HY. The project was re-focused on preventing the spread of HIV among youth through health education and by mitigating the impact of HIV by preparing youth for the world of work.

The purpose of the HY project is to prepare Basotho children and youth, aged 10-24, for their adult roles as healthy, productive and active community members. The project has three goals: prevention and sexual health, care and treatment for HIV positive youth and HIV mitigation for affected youth. Volunteers are placed with youth groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community based organizations, host ministry partners, U.S. government-funded partners, and vocational and farmer training centers. The HY project collaborates with the following ministries: health; gender, youth, sports and recreation; and social development. The post's PEPFAR budget funds 80 percent of the HY Volunteers.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the post has developed and implemented programs intended to increase the capacity of host country communities to meet their own technical needs. To determine this, we analyzed the following:

- the coordination between the Peace Corps and the host country in determining development priorities and Peace Corps program areas;
- whether post is meeting its project objectives;
- counterpart selection and quality of counterpart relationships with Volunteers;
- site development policies and practices.

The overall condition of programming was adequate, although the evaluation did uncover some areas for improvement. While post had focused both of its project frameworks through the (FITU) initiative, we could not determine that it had reaped the intended benefits, particularly for the HY project. Volunteers in this sector reported challenges in their ability to achieve their project goals; these challenges are discussed below. Despite the challenges, most interviewed Volunteers were satisfied with their sites as a part of their overall experience.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation. MRE was evolving at post, as it is throughout the Peace Corps worldwide. Because of the transition from old project frameworks to newly focused frameworks, activities conducted under the new framework were reported against the old one in 2013 project status reports. As a result, region senior staff recognized that that the 2013 project status reports did not paint an accurate picture of programming, training and evaluation efforts at post. Additionally, a new version of the Volunteer Reporting Tool (VRT) distributed to posts lacked the capability of generating summary reports and did not allow staff to copy other staff when sending feedback to Volunteers. The reporting challenges created extra work for staff. Because post was required to report to PEPFAR quarterly, staff had to manually go through VRFs to aggregate information for PEPFAR reports. An additional challenge was that post did not have a full time MRE coordinator. The ED associate Peace Corps director (APCD) was filling that role in addition to his primary responsibilities. He commented

I have seen the quality of reporting has improved tremendously. We are beginning to see something out of this. We are now grappling with fine tuning our data collection tools. That's a challenge. With the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) we have been working on it; some of the Volunteers on PAC have been working tirelessly.

Volunteers commented that they appreciated the data collection tools that had recently been rolled out but had not had a chance to fully use them. When asked the question “how reliable is the information in your trimester or quarterly reports,” 79 percent of Volunteers responded favorably, and the remaining 21 percent said that it was neither reliable nor unreliable.⁵ They were hoping for more tools that would help them measure behavior change in areas such as “critical thinking.”

The post's MRE were causes for concern. Because efforts were underway at headquarters to improve the functionality of the VRT, we are not developing findings or issuing recommendations specific to Lesotho and will continue to monitor how headquarters supports this area of post operations.

⁵ Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (1 = not effective, 3 = neutral, 5 = very effective).” The percentage of Volunteers who gave a favorable rating includes those who gave ratings of “4” or “5”.

Counterpart Relationships. Among Volunteers who had counterparts, most (9 of 14) reported that they had favorable working relationships with them. Volunteers choose their own counterparts after their first three months at site. Upon arrival at site, Volunteers' hosting organizations select a supervisor and an introductory liaison, who introduces them and helps them get established in the community. Seventy-nine percent of Volunteers interviewed (15 of 19) stated they had at least one community member whom they considered a counterpart.

Site Development. On paper, the post's site identification and development process seemed solid. The post had adapted its site identification and development process based on the Africa Region guidance and it has been approved by the region. All of the required elements are included in the site selection criteria. Programming and safety and security staff were actively involved in the process. Neither of the two new Peace Corps medical officers (PCMOs) had yet been involved but had been oriented to the type of input they would be expected to give. Staff felt positive about the process and attributed the decrease in crimes against Volunteers to the attention post dedicated to site development. Community meetings during the initial visits seem to establish proper expectations about the community's role in keeping a Volunteer safe.

In practice, we saw issues with work assignments and housing for CHED and HY sites that could have been alleviated with better site development. We additionally found that site history information was not consistently used during site development. The system and location for filing the information collected during site development was not clear to all staff involved. Staff raised questions about Volunteer privacy and to whom information should be accessible.

All staff involved in the site development for the first group of HY Volunteers (HY 13) recognized challenges with this iteration of site development. We believe this is a cause for Volunteers being unable to meet their project objectives, a topic that is discussed below.

While the post has many fundamental programming elements in place, the evaluation did uncover some areas that require management attention. The remainder of this section provides more information about these topics.

Volunteers reported challenges with their ability to achieve their project goals.

Although Volunteers in Lesotho were satisfied with their assigned sites, only 32 percent of interviewed Volunteers (four ED and two HY) rated favorably their ability to achieve project goals. Some Volunteers were placed in sites where their partner organizations did not have a clear understanding of the Peace Corps or the ability to accomplish project goals was not realistic within the job assignment. Some CHED and HY Volunteers said that they had to find their own work because their organizations did not have jobs for them or expected something different than what they were able to provide. For three of the Volunteers we interviewed, the challenges they faced related to work and security issues were so significant that they requested and were authorized a change in their sites. Volunteers faced challenges such as the following:

- Job assignment was not viable (e.g., the school's construction was not complete)

- Project goals were not realistic within job assignment (e.g., HIV prevention activities, other than abstinence, were not allowed because the organization was faith-based)
- The project goals or the role of Volunteer was not understood by the host organization, which wanted funding instead of skills transfer
- Host organization based in the capital city wanted a Volunteer, but the regional branch where Volunteer was placed did not.

To avoid these kinds of issues, the Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance: Project Design and Evaluation section E.1.4 advises post staff to use a site selection strategy:

Each Post and APCD/PM should establish and document criteria for selecting communities, partner agencies, and housing for Volunteers...In addition to Peace Corps post health and safety criteria, project criteria should be established for determining which sites to explore and select for Volunteer placement.

The guidance advises staff to take into account numerous factors, including “demonstrated needs that are consistent with project goals and objectives” and finding organizations with a strong interest in hosting a Volunteer; both of these elements were lacking in some of Lesotho’s Volunteer sites.

All staff involved in the site development for HY13 recognized challenges with site development for this cohort. The contributing factors follow.

- The APCD for the HY project, the programming and training specialist (PTS) for the HY project and the director of programming and training (DPT) were new to their positions. There was some confusion about roles and working relationships had not yet been solidly established.
- The process was behind schedule.
- The HY project had no clear government structure to work through to develop jobs for Volunteer sites; most Volunteers are placed with individual organizations with varying knowledge of the Peace Corps. This requires extra effort to find, develop, and maintain relationships with these organizations.

Inadequate site selection negatively impacts Volunteer success in achieving their project goals. Volunteers had to shift their focus and find their own jobs. While Volunteers in Lesotho seemed resourceful in their ability to identify community needs to be addressed, they were not aligned with project goals and objectives.

We recommend:

- 1. That the country director and director of programming and training clarify the role of the director of programming and training in site development.**
- 2. That the country director and director of programming and training explore ways to further develop relationships with appropriate stakeholders.**

3. **That programming staff develop indicators for viable host organizations for Volunteer placements and incorporate them into the site identification and development process.**
4. **That the country director and director of programming and training ensure that site history information is used as part of the post's process for selecting sites for Volunteers.**
5. **That the director of programming and training ensure that site development is guided by the focused-in framework for the HY project.**

The post does not have viable MOUs with stakeholder partners.

The country program works with stakeholders and partners at all levels of government, many of whom often have multiple interests. At the project level, the post works with partners including government ministries, international and local NGOs and local communities. The post has had an active country agreement with the government of Lesotho since 1967.

Coordination with the government of Lesotho was strong in some areas but could use improvement in others. In the ED project, the Peace Corps works with ministry partners at the national level and through the decentralized government with the senior education officer at the district level. The Peace Corps does not have a national level MOU with the Ministry of Education, though there are individual MOUs with schools.

In the HY projects, there is room for improvement in coordination at the national and local levels. The post had recently established a national level MOU with the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports, and Recreation for the HY project. Both the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development have interests in the goals of the HY project, but the post does not have MOUs with either. Furthermore, the post does not consistently have MOUs with individual organizations where Volunteers are placed for the HY project.

The Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance: Project Design and Evaluation section B.3.2 highly recommends that every project have a current national/ministry level MOU:

Each Peace Corps project should ideally operate under an agreement signed at the national level with the host country government.... Memoranda of Understanding that establish a clear understanding of the goals, objectives, and working relationship between the Peace Corps and host ministries help to manage expectations and affirm the host government's support of the Peace Corps' work in the country....

Further, the Peace Corps Manual section 103, "Procedures for In-Country Strategic Partnerships" section on Agreements Regarding Volunteer Placement states an agreement should be signed between the Peace Corps post and the hosting organization to ensure that roles and responsibilities, expectations and other terms and conditions of the placement of Volunteers are

clearly understood and documented. The specific documentation that is required differs depending on the Peace Corps' broader institutional relationship with the organization. At a minimum, the post must have a discussion and come to agreement with the hosting organization regarding the terms and conditions of the Volunteer's assignment and make a record of such exchanges with the hosting organization (for example, through a letter to the organization, a memorandum to the file, or similar means) and place such documentation in the appropriate post file.

The decentralized nature of the Lesotho government and the country's political instability contribute to the challenge establishing MOUs at the national level. Additionally for the HY project, the project framework and programming staff are new. Volunteers have been primarily placed in community based organizations, rather than through governmental structures such as health clinics. The HY project is cross-cutting and has multiple interested stakeholders.

Typically, the post's APCDs have the primary responsibility for developing and managing relationships with government ministry stakeholders for project work. In the new HY project, programming staff believe that it would be beneficial for the country program if there was an established relationship between post leadership and ministry officials so that a commitment to work with and support the Peace Corps was established at the highest levels. We assessed that the lack of MOUs exacerbated challenges that staff was having with site development. An MOU could establish a clear understanding of the goals, objectives and working relationships among the Peace Corps and the host ministries and organizations at which Volunteers are placed. These tools could help ensure that all stakeholders have appropriate expectations for Peace Corps' projects, and that project efforts are focused.

We recommend:

6. That the country director establish memoranda of understanding with appropriate stakeholders.

The post's small grants process is not efficient.

Volunteers reported that the grants application process takes a long time and the application must be submitted through the Internet. Staff also reported that the process is lengthy because there are multiple informal reviews by the grants coordinator and APCDs before the committee receives the application. Staff also echoed the concerns voiced by Volunteers about needing Internet access to submit a grant application in the Peace Corps Grants Online (PC/GO) system.

The Peace Corps' Small Grants Program Staff Handbook requires that each post establish a small grants committee to review and approve applications for grants. Each post has discretion as to how its committee will be structured, the approval process the committee will follow and the specific functions and responsibilities to be assumed by the committee.

A possible contributing factor to the lengthy process is that the small grants committee does not have a set schedule. It meets on a rolling basis, whenever the grants coordinator deems that a

sufficient number of applications have been received. Another challenge is that all of the committee members are not often in the office at the same time. An additional challenge is that the grants coordinator duties are collateral duties to the staff member's full time responsibilities of being the HIV/AIDS coordinator.

Some Volunteers have chosen not to participate in the grants program because the process is drawn-out. One Volunteer commented, "I've stayed away from grants because I was afraid of the process and people go weeks without hearing anything. It seems like a long drawn out process when it seems like it could be streamlined." Staff was overburdened with the requirements as well.

We recommend:

- 7. That the country director review the small grants committee organization and process, consider approval timelines, committee composition, and resource needs for the grant program and make adjustments where necessary.**

TRAINING

Another objective of the post evaluation is to answer the question, "Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?" To answer this question we considered such factors as training adequacy and planning and development of the training life cycle.

The post's training program was working well to prepare Volunteers for most aspects of their Peace Corps service. The post had established learning objectives that applied to all Volunteers as well as sector-specific learning objectives. In the June 2014 PST, the post had adopted the global learning standards and Trainee Assessment Portfolio to assess core competencies.⁶ The post also employed its own assessments, which included written tests for safety and security and medical topics and "practicals" or observations of practice teaching or facilitation with community members.

Language testing scores showed that all trainees from the two most recent PSTs met the post's local language requirement of "intermediate low" in Sesotho. Lesotho's training manager commented that the agency's effort under FITU made the training design and evaluation process easier and more meaningful with standardization and concentration on Learning Objectives.

⁶ According to a December 2013 decision memo, Peace Corps posts will adopt global learning standards as a means to guide high quality training. Having global learning standards ensures that all posts measure achievement of a standard set of learning objectives through a standard set of methods. The Trainee Assessment Portfolio functions as a formative assessment throughout PST and summative evaluation of a trainee's knowledge, skills and abilities at the end of PST.

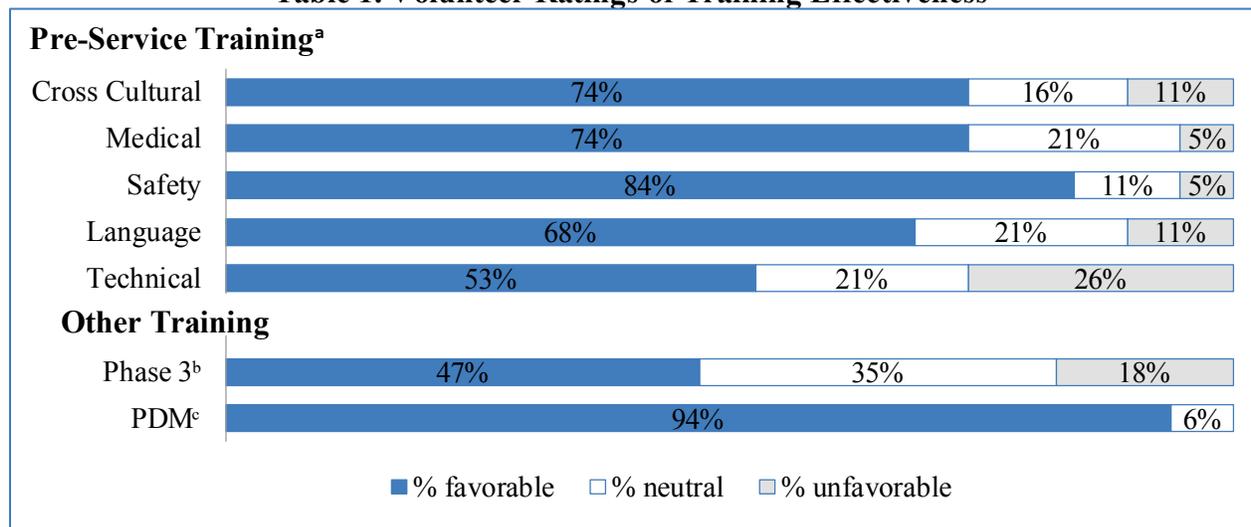
In reviewing the post’s training objectives, how trainees are assessed, and how the staff evaluate and adjust training each year, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Trainee Assessment. Training staff used different methods to assess trainees. During PST the training staff observed and assessed trainees on particular aspects of their service. These assessments included presentations on the role of the Volunteer in development and host Volunteer visits, written tests on technical and core learning objectives, feedback on practice teaching or community facilitation and language testing. Language testing scores were maintained and all Volunteers had passed the language requirement at the end of PST.

Staff Evaluation of Training. The post used training evaluation information to improve its training program. Staff had made a number of adjustments to PST based on evaluations and feedback from Volunteers. The regional programming and training advisor and Volunteers are involved in the TDE process. During PST feedback is sought from trainees mid-PST and at the end. Programming and training staff used the evaluation comments from Volunteers to revise trainings in a collaborative manner.

Volunteer Views of Training. Volunteers generally had positive views about the effectiveness of PST training.

Table 1. Volunteer Ratings of Training Effectiveness



Source: Volunteer interviews conducted by OIG evaluators. Every Volunteer did not answer every question.

^aN= 19, ^bN= 17, ^cN= 16.

Volunteers believed cross-cultural and safety and security training sessions were effective, though a few Volunteers commented that safety and security sessions employed scare tactics. Volunteers reported that medical and health sessions were also effective but wanted more information on what to look for and how to take precautions for poisonous snakes and spiders they could encounter in their homes or latrines. Volunteers overwhelmingly agreed that project design and management training was effective.

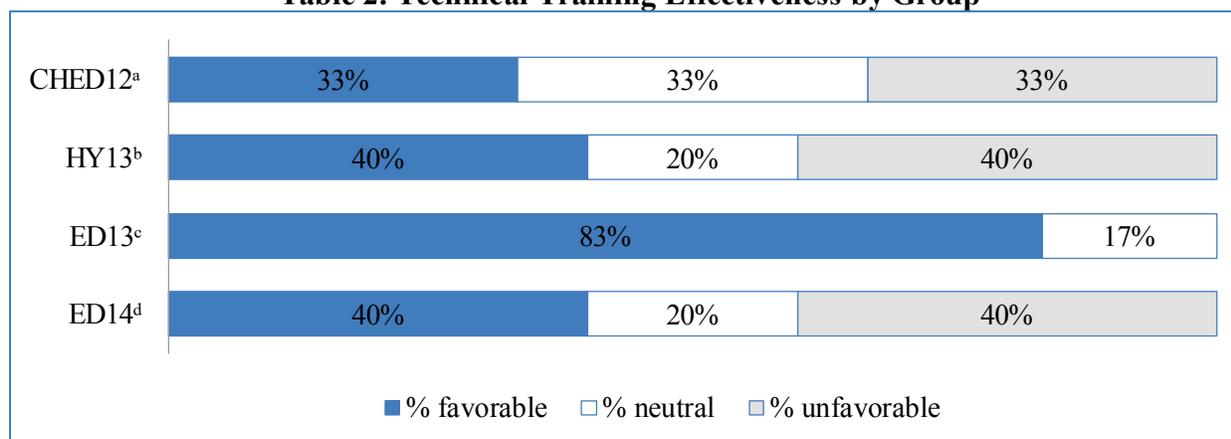
Volunteers reported PST language training to be mixed in terms of its effectiveness, though language testing scores showed that all Volunteers had achieved the local language requirement by the end of PST. Some Volunteers voiced challenges with mixed level classes or being shuffled from teacher to teacher.

We found the post’s approach to language training to be reasonable. Since June 2011, the post has used an entirely community based training model; upon arrival to country, trainees go directly to their training villages for 10 weeks and are immersed in language and culture. All trainees received instruction in Sesotho for the entirety of PST. Language workshops are held at subsequent in-service trainings. The post encourages Volunteers to find local tutors at site and will reimburse for local language tutoring. Given the balanced approach at the post to local language training, and the generally positive results and viewpoints of Volunteers, we determined the post had provided Volunteers with sufficient opportunity and resources for their local language acquisition.

Phase 3 training needs improvement.

Technical training received the lowest average rating of PST sessions from the Volunteers we interviewed. However this score is in line with 2013 AVS global averages (44 percent favorable, 35 percent adequate, and 20 percent unfavorable). The HY Volunteers who rated technical training as ineffective did so because they said they were limited in what they could effectively initiate or engage in at their sites and that only a minimal portion of training was applicable. Technical training scores in ED inexplicably fell from one cohort to the next. Many ED Volunteers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to practice teaching as part of their technical training, but noted that other technical training sessions were less relevant in their sites.

Table 2. Technical Training Effectiveness by Group



Source: Volunteer interviews conducted by OIG evaluators. Every Volunteer did not answer every question.

^aN= 3, ^bN= 5, ^cN= 6 ^dN=5.

Only 47 percent (8 of 17) of interviewed Volunteers rated Phase 3 training as effective. Some Volunteers commented that it was a low point in their service. Some said that more technical training would have been useful. Others said that there was not enough information to warrant five days of training. Many Volunteers commented that the language training component was good and they enjoyed seeing other Volunteers in their cohort.

We believe that the issues observed could be related to challenges with poorly developed sites, the time period lapse between when projects are “focused-in” and change becomes evident or the Volunteer cohort’s time in service. A more thorough needs assessment could help align the interests and needs of Volunteers and the objectives of training.

We recommend:

- 8. That the director of programming and training ensure that future Phase 3 trainings are designed to achieve learning objectives that have been identified through a needs assessment process.**

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Our country program evaluation attempts to answer the question, “Has post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?” To determine this, we assessed numerous factors, including staff-Volunteer communications; project and status report feedback; medical support; safety and security support including staff visits to Volunteer work sites, the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), and the handling of crime incidents; and the adequacy of the Volunteer living allowance.

The post has developed a solid Volunteer support structure and Volunteers are generally satisfied with the support they received. Volunteers rated almost all staff high on the quality of their support, although some dissatisfaction was expressed with programming staff support. The post had been promoting resiliency and had started using a coaching approach to address Volunteer challenges. In reviewing staff-Volunteer communications, responding to Volunteer work reports, site visits, the Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC), allowances, and overall staff support, we found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post.

Staff-Volunteer Communications. Generally, Volunteers and staff were effectively communicating with one another. Volunteers provide feedback to staff through various means such as training evaluations, the VAC and personal communications. Volunteers communicate with staff by phone and email. Volunteers said the timeliness of email responses had improved. Many Volunteers requested that they be able to communicate with staff via data messaging applications such as “WhatsApp” or “Viber” as data rates are cheaper than text message rates. Some Volunteers raised concerns that the Peace Corps was not informing them of important information such as the political situation in the country, or crimes that happened close to their sites.

Responding to Volunteer Work Reports. In general, staff were providing quality feedback to Volunteers in response to their VRFs. All interviewed Volunteers reported that they “always” or “most of the time” received feedback on their VRFs. Fourteen of 18 Volunteers said that the quality of feedback from staff was either “good” or “very good.”

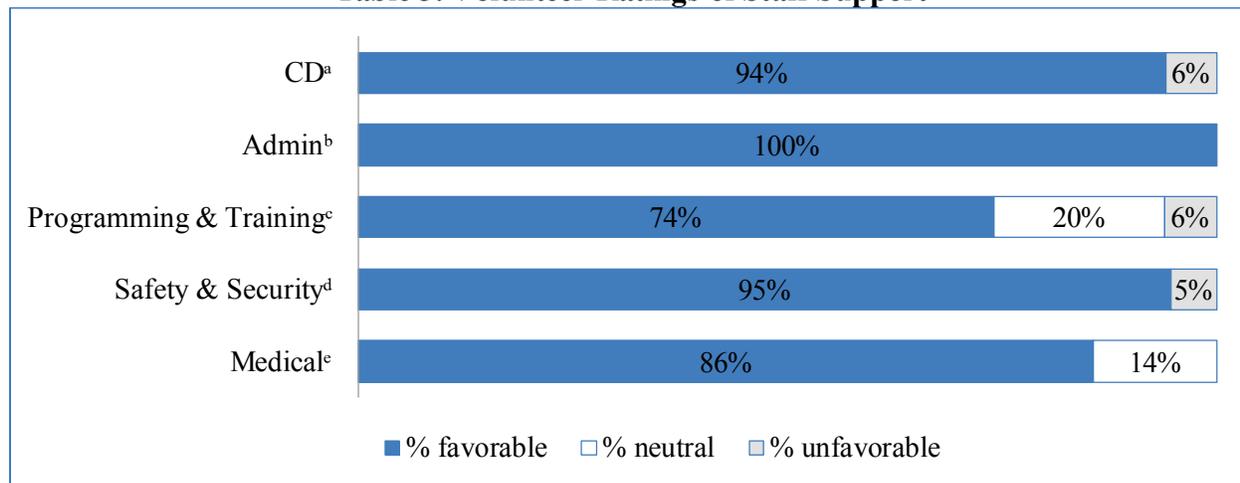
Site Visits. Generally, Volunteers were satisfied with the site visits they received from staff. Seventy-nine percent (15 of 19) of interviewed Volunteers thought the number of site visits they had received was adequate. Seventy-four percent of interviewed Volunteers rated the quality of site visits favorably, although Volunteers who were placed in more remote locations said that visits from staff were quick and that post leadership had not visited certain areas of the country like Qacha’s Nek. Site visit forms were completed by staff and information was entered into the Volunteer Information Database Application (VIDA), which provided a record of these site visits.

VAC. Fifty percent of Volunteers (6 of 12) favorably rated the VAC in terms of effectiveness. Forty-two percent rated it neutrally and eight percent rated it unfavorably. Seven Volunteers chose to give a “no-basis” rating. Some Volunteers raised concerns about not being informed of what transpired at VAC meetings or resolution to issues that were raised.

Volunteer Allowances. Generally, Volunteers were satisfied with the adequacy and timeliness of their settling-in and living allowances. Eighty-nine percent (17 of 19) of Volunteers reported that their settling-in allowance was sufficient or more than sufficient. Seventy-eight (14 of 18) percent of Volunteers reported that their monthly living allowance was sufficient or more than sufficient. A living allowance increase of approximately nine percent was granted in January 2014.

Overall Staff Support. Overall, Volunteers rated the quality of support from staff very favorably. The lowest support score rating was given to programming, and in particular, the programming and training specialist role. Leadership at the post had plans in place to address the PTS role and improve support.

Table 3. Volunteer Ratings of Staff Support



Source: Volunteer interviews conducted by OIG evaluators. Every Volunteer did not answer every question.

^aN= 17, ^bN= 9, ^cScores combine scores for the DPT, APCDs, PTSs, TM, and HIV/AIDS coordinator ^dN=19. ^eN=14

Medical Support. Recent staff changes in the post’s health unit appear to have contributed to improved medical and health support for Volunteers. In the 2013 AVS, 35 percent of Volunteers said they were minimally or not at all satisfied with the healthcare they received from their PCMOs; 29 percent said that their expectations about the health care provided by Peace Corps

were minimally or not at being met. Two new PCMOs were hired in 2014. All Volunteers interviewed during fieldwork provided a favorable or neutral response to medical support, indicating that medical support has improved since the new PCMOs were hired. Volunteers commented:

[The new PCMO] is doing a good job and has turned the office around.

I've seen a huge improvement...before we had trouble getting medications or getting in touch, but since [the new PCMO has] been here, things are organized. I've gone from being critical and unhappy to being happy with it for the past few months.

Crime Incident Response. The post adequately responded to crimes against Volunteers. Of the Volunteers we interviewed, five were the victim of a crime. Two of them were reported to Peace Corps and three were not. For the two that were reported, the Peace Corps' handling of the situation was given the highest rating of a five. For those not reported, reasons included the following: the Volunteer did not feel personally threatened; the Volunteer was able to stop the crime; that the Volunteer was afraid that the Peace Corps would "make a scene" or "take action and not think about the consequences [to the Volunteer]" because the Peace Corps takes safety so seriously.

The incidence rates of crime against Volunteers in most categories have fallen since FY 2010. Staff attribute this to post's strong stance on safety and security being a top priority in site identification and development. The safety and security manager (SSM) said that sensitizing and educating community members on the collective responsibility to ensure that Volunteers are safe is a key piece of the process. Community meetings during site assessment visits to explain the role of the Volunteer and the role of the community are now regularly held as part of the process and are conducted with a police presence. Police also advise staff on which areas are safe to place Volunteers.

Emergency Preparedness. The post is generally doing well with emergency action planning. Of the nine Volunteers interviewed at their homes, six had a copy of their Emergency Action Plan (EAP).⁷ All Volunteers knew where their consolidation points were although the post's EAP listed the wrong consolidation point for two Volunteers.⁸ In the January 2014 consolidation tests, 80 of Volunteers were contacted within four hours and 100 percent within seven hours. The post additionally conducts a weekly mini-communications activity requiring Volunteers to respond to their district security representative. The post's duty officer system seems to function well. Eight staff members serve as duty officers. Although emergency preparedness is generally going well, we have a concern with post's ability to evacuate a remote Volunteer at night in the event of a medical emergency. This is discussed in more detail in the next section of the report.

While Volunteers were generally satisfied with the support they received, the evaluation uncovered some areas that require management attention. The remainder of this section provides more information about these topics.

⁷ We interviewed 12 Volunteers at site – nine at home and three at their worksite or Volunteer Resource Center. We interviewed seven additional Volunteers at regional training events.

⁸ The SSM explained that EAPs are only updated when a new training class arrives. Current information is kept in VIDA.

The post had not completed its medical evacuation plan.

MS 264 “Medical Evacuation” requires each post to prepare a country-specific medical evacuation plan. Section 3g of this policy states:

Each post must prepare a country-specific Medical Evacuation Plan (Plan), keep it current, and adjust it according to changes available in commercial transportation or conditions at the medevac locations that could impede or prevent medevac to such locations. The Plan is intended to be a comprehensive, country-specific reference guide designed to assist the Post with the safe and efficient medical evacuation of Volunteers, in individual cases and/or as a group. The Plan should be prepared by the PCMO in consultation with embassy medical personnel as appropriate, and approved by the Country Director (CD).

Medical Technical Guideline (TG) 380 on Medical Evacuation requires that medical evacuation plans contain specific information and TG 385 on Medical Emergency Evacuation outlines how to prepare for an Emergency Medical Evacuation. There is no requirement for the medical evacuation information to be organized into sections on routine medical evacuations and emergency evacuations so that what is needed in an emergency situation is readily accessible.

The post did not have a complete medical evacuation plan at the time of the evaluation. The post provided a set of six documents that contained required contact information, however some information required by TG 385 such as emergency supplies and equipment, and emergency transfusion procedures were not included.

The procedures for MS 264.4.2 requires that the CD must ensure that all staff members are familiar with the medical evacuation plan, that periodic drills are held to ensure that staff can perform their assignments and that each staff member is provided with information listing immediate steps to be taken in case of life-threatening emergencies.

The post had significant turnover in the medical unit and had numerous items to resolve from the 2013 Office of Health Services (OHS) site visit.⁹ That assessment determined that the post was not performing a monthly check of emergency equipment and emergency drugs and supplies. The health unit assessment tool does not assess the adequacy of the complete medical evacuation plan, whether periodic drills are held, or that each staff member has a listing of immediate steps to be taken in case of life-threatening emergencies.

In our discussion with the regional Peace Corps safety and security officer, he highlighted the issue of personnel recovery because of the heavy snow and mountainous geography of the country. While OHS, post leadership and Volunteers expressed confidence in the new medical officers, the lack of a comprehensive medical evacuation plan represents an area of weakness in medical operations in Lesotho. It raised the level of risk that a Volunteer’s needs would not be properly addressed in a medical emergency if the PCMO or other experienced staff were not available.

⁹ OHS conducts health unit assessments every three years.

We recommend:

- 9. That the Peace Corps medical officer complete the medical evacuation plan.**
- 10. That the Office of Health Services review the post's medical evacuation plan to ensure its completeness.**
- 11. That the Office of Health Services add elements to the health unit assessment tool to ensure that posts are prepared to respond in the case of a medical emergency.**
- 12. The Office of Health Services require medical evacuation information to be organized into sections on routine medical evacuations and emergency evacuations so that what is needed in an emergency situation is readily accessible.**

The post did not maintain sufficient safety and security related documentation in site history files.

The Office of Safety and Security's "Standard Operating Procedure: Site History Files" specifies that certain procedures need to be followed in order "to ensure that relevant, site specific, safety and security information is being collected, stored and made readily available to programming staff with an active role in the site development and site selection process." These procedures include identifying what kind of information needs to be centrally maintained in an electronic format, periodically reviewing site history files to ensure that the right information is being collected on each site, and reviewing each potential site for any security concerns. The procedure also specifies the sort of information that should be included in site history files: site development reports, notes of any security concerns or incidents that have occurred at the site, and other relevant reports from the media or other sources.

Additionally, MS 270.6.7, "Site History Documentation," requires

Each post must maintain a system for recording the history of a site from the time that initial evaluation begins. The site history must also capture security issues that could affect future Volunteer placements in particular areas. Information should include Volunteer concerns about a location, safety or security incidents that occur in the community, and other conditions that could otherwise affect a future decision to place a Volunteer in that location.

The post did not maintain sufficient site history files in accordance with the standards set out by the Office of Safety and Security. Information was not consolidated or organized in a manner that could be easily used. Staff rather relied on the SSM to provide input when they asked about particular sites. The post used VIDA and an electronic folder on the office share to capture more recent site history information. Older paper site history files were kept in a storage facility and

were not used. Some information related to site history was kept with the SSM, some with programming staff and some with the executive secretary.

Staff reported that site history files were not consistently used during site development and that there has not been a collective effort to determine what information to include and where to store it. Programming staff said they either minimally used them or did not use them because “Lesotho is a small country” or because the data was not easily accessible. Concerns about how privacy requirements impacted storage and access were also raised.

The lack of site-specific safety and security documentation means that staff who play an active role in identifying and developing new sites are operating without important information, and may inadvertently recommend sites that are inappropriate for Volunteers. We encountered several Volunteers who reported serious safety and security episodes at their sites. These incidents are the sorts of safety and security concerns that should be captured in site history files and referred to in site development.

We recommend:

- 13. That the country director lead a collaborative staff effort to establish and implement a system for the collection and maintenance of site history files including where this information should be located and to whom it should be accessible.**

Volunteer Resource Centers offer uneven support for Volunteers.

Many Volunteer sites in Lesotho are rural and remote. Volunteers come into their closest “camp town” to do business such as banking, shopping and accessing the internet. The post has set up Volunteer resource centers (VRCs) to provide support to Volunteers. There are five Volunteer VRCs located in major camp towns throughout the country: Maseru, Mohale’s Hoek, Mokhotlong, Qacha’s Nek and Quthing. Two of the most remote VRCs, Mokhotlong and Qacha’s Nek, are a hybrid of traditional resource centers, with resources like books and computers, printers and Internet access, and transit houses with overnight accommodation.

Some Peace Corps countries, particularly those with poor infrastructure, have “transit/regional houses” that provide short-term, safe accommodation to Volunteers when they are away from their sites. It is not a common occurrence because as Peace Corps policy states:

It is the policy of the Peace Corps that Volunteers participate fully in the culture of their host communities. Accordingly, they are expected to be at their sites unless they are on official Peace Corps business or on leave. Experience has shown that Volunteer use of transit/regional houses can be at cross-purposes with this policy.

MS 218.6.3, “Volunteer Use of Transit/Regional Houses” clearly states that all transit/regional houses must be established and managed by the post and may only be established/approved when

certain conditions are met and that the SSM and other staff will continually review the use of the house.

1. The CD has determined that the transit/regional house is or will be safe and well-managed;
2. The CD is committed to the strict enforcement of this policy and those policies governing a Volunteer's travel away from his or her site;
3. The CD and the Volunteer Advisory Council will closely monitor occupancy and behavior at the transit/regional house; and
4. Lists must be maintained detailing names of Volunteers and the length of each Volunteer's stay (If the lists are not maintained, the CD must send warning notes to applicable Volunteers and, if that fails, approval for use of the transit/regional house must be withdrawn).

Africa regional management said that Lesotho did not have transit houses and that Volunteers were not allowed to stay in VRCs. There used to be a transit house located in Maseru however the post closed it in January 2011 on recommendation from the post operations support team assessment following the Volunteer murder in 2010. The Volunteer handbook does allow Volunteers to use post's VRCs as transit houses. The handbook specifically prohibits Volunteers from spending the night in a VRC:

Volunteers are not permitted to stay past 5:00 pm Friday through Saturday or spend the night in the VRC.

We visited the VRCs in Mohale's Hoek and Mokhotlong during fieldwork and found that each VRC does not offer the same resources to Volunteers. The VRC in Mohale's Hoek was located in a small room inside a hotel. While the hotel had wireless Internet access, the VRC did not have a computer with a printer. The VRC in Mokhotlong had a computer and printer, but no working Internet. It also had books and evidence that Volunteers were staying overnight, such as sleeping pads and toiletries. Volunteers told us that each Volunteer in the district was given a key to the VRC. Volunteers also expressed the need for a place to do Peace Corps required office work.

...My frustration is that there is not a place that is convenient for me to get to that gives me time to do what I need to do in my camp town. It's hard for me to do paperwork and there are a lot of things that the Peace corps requires that require Internet. I am not able to do it at my site and I have a short amount of time in my camp town. It would be very helpful to have a place to do office work. According to our handbook, there is a VRC. According to a Volunteer who used to live in site recently, there is a VRC. According to Peace Corps, there is no VRC. We've heard it's a closet in the Ministry of Education but they haven't given us keys because they are trying to phase it out

This remains an ongoing issue for the post. The post's 2013 request for authorization to operate a transit house justifies the need for a transit house because some Volunteers cannot return to their site in one day, either on a trip to the camp town for shopping or to the capital for Peace Corps business. The PCSSO reported that he had recommended that the post standardize VRCs and develop a policy to maintain them or to close them. Post was in the process of reviewing this issue with the Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC). The CD said that the most commonly voiced need for VRCs was for overnight accommodation. Similar needs were expressed to us during Volunteer interviews:

I love everything about where I'm at but the transportation is kind of limited... It just takes a long time to get to the camp town. In the mornings it takes 4 to 5 hours and to come back it can take 5 to 7 hours... The

last stretch is rough conditions. There is a VRC in town that we stay at... I know they are talking about taking the VRCs away and if that happens I don't know what I will do.

I really need it... I cannot make it to Maseru in one day... I need that VRC. They say, "stay with a Volunteer" and that is not fair. He has a really small place... It's necessary and we have nowhere else to stay. The VRCs have been a tremendous help....

We've been putting Volunteers in more and more remote sites in Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek. They cannot make it home in one day, but they are told that they can't stay at the VRC because they are not transit houses.... For right now, you have Volunteers in a position of failure... the Peace Corps is placing the Volunteers in the super remote sites....

As noted in Volunteer comments, travel from remote sites to camp towns is often long and it is difficult to make it to and from in one day safely. For the Volunteers placed in camp towns there has been an implicit expectation for these Volunteers to host those who travel in from remote sites which has caused friction between some Volunteers. With the status of VRC transit houses in flux, Volunteers face a situation of breaking Peace Corps rules and staying in the VRC, staying in a place that has not been vetted by Peace Corps, or taking transportation to their site after dark.

We recommend:

14. That the post and region determine whether transit houses are needed and can be supported. If so, establish and manage them in accordance with the Peace Corps Manual section 218. If not, provide options for safe overnight accommodations for remote Volunteers who travel to their camp town to conduct business.

15. That the post communicate to Volunteers the resources available in volunteer resource centers and maintain them.

Some housing criteria were not clear.

MS 270.6.4 "Housing Standards" requires, "All V/T [Volunteer/trainee] housing or host family arrangements must be inspected by post staff (or a trained designee) prior to occupancy to ensure each house and/or homestay arrangement meets all minimum standards as established by the Peace Corps and the post. Reports of the inspections must be documented and maintained by the post." Although Volunteers' houses were generally in compliance with items on the post's housing checklist, some criteria require judgment that exceeds a physical inspection and requires familiarity with the site. Acceptable parameters for "clean, reliable water source" and "a reasonable walking distance to work site" need clarification. Multiple Volunteers reported that they did not have water during the winter. One Volunteer reported having little water (five liters per week) for a 10 month period. Additionally, more than one Volunteer reported having to walk over an hour to their work site.

Another element on the post's housing checklist that could be difficult for someone unfamiliar with the site to approve is "reputation of the neighborhood." When discussing this element as part of our housing compliance check, we heard troubling stories from Volunteers about the reputations of neighborhoods in which they are placed.

The neighborhood is supposedly safe, but a 20 minute drive from here there was a murder of three people in October for traditional medicine... In 2010 there was another murder for traditional medicine. Peace Corps knows, I heard it from the police here.

My host family told me that the neighborhood used to be unsafe, but "all of those people were killed."

Students strike and will beat teachers almost to the point of death. All the students ganged up and tried to kill the principal because they weren't getting meat with meals. It happens.

One Volunteer described feeling unsafe because on her first night at site her house was tagged with graffiti and there were threats made against her host family. When these concerns were raised to Peace Corps, the SSM immediately evacuated her.

The lack of clear criteria places the post at risk of having different staff members evaluate the sites in different ways and may place Volunteers at risk if critical housing criteria are not understood.

We recommend:

- 16. That the post assess the clarity of the housing criteria and site review and approval process, and update the housing checklist and site approval process, as necessary.**

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Another key objective of our country program evaluation is to assess the extent to which the post's resources and management practices are adequate for effective post operations. To address this question, we assess a number of factors, including staffing; staff development; office work environment; collecting and reporting performance data; and the post's strategic planning and budgeting.

The post has experienced significant upheaval in the last couple of years starting with the murder of a Volunteer in 2010. Since, the post's focus has been on keeping Volunteers safe; agency attention was given to whether or not the post would remain open. The post leadership's vision for the post is for Volunteers to be safe, for their service to matter and for everyone to be aware of the Peace Corps' impact in Lesotho.

We found the post's resources and management practices were adequate for effective post operations. The U.S. direct hire management team was supportive and encouraging of staff professional development and training opportunities. Staff appreciated the CD's management style and her trust in them to do their jobs. Staff found the working environment to be generally

positive though some concerns were raised about salaries which had been frozen since 2010; we heard from administrative staff at post that this freeze had recently been lifted. Some staff felt overworked but believe Peace Corps is an interesting and unique place to work.

With headquarters support, the post was managing the vacancy of key positions well. The post had been without a permanent DMO since July 2013, but has been supported by the regional roving regional DMO and capable local staff with little impact to operations. Temporary duty PCMOs had also back-filled the medical office while post hired new PCMOs. In its budget request, the post proposed adding a MRE coordinator, a Volunteer support coordinator, and a program assistant/grants coordinator in the Programming Unit.

Programming and Training staff raised some questions about the role and responsibilities of the DPT and how the other programming and training roles fit together. In 2012, the DPT role was introduced in Lesotho and the former program assistant role was upgraded to a PTS role with added technical training responsibilities. The reporting structure for PTSs was different for each project.

We found positive levels of mutual understanding, respect, communication, and support existed between post and headquarters. Post leadership felt that when they raised a concern to headquarters staff, it was listened to and addressed. Representatives we spoke to at headquarters expressed high regard for the jobs being done by staff and management in Lesotho. The post also had a positive working relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Maseru. Post leadership regularly participated in embassy meetings. The embassy's regional security officer has worked closely with post to support the Volunteer murder case which is ongoing in Lesotho's legal system. The post is working with general counsel and the embassy to explore replacing or amending the country agreement with the government of Lesotho.

While it was not budgeted for in the post's most recent budget proposal, the post has outgrown its office space in Maseru. Since the 2010 post assessment, there has been an open recommendation to move the office because of the crime environment of the neighborhood. There is less urgency about moving for safety reasons.¹⁰ However, the office space is insufficient. The post has been resourceful in converting hallways into additional staff offices, but the office also has structural problems and a leaky roof. The post is continuing to look at different spaces, but appropriate office space is difficult to obtain in Maseru.

¹⁰ The PCSSO believes that the relocation should be given some attention because the crime climate in Maseru hasn't changed, although the regional security officer said that the area where the office is currently located has less crime activity.

OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN

We noted the following additional area that could be improved to enhance efficiency at the post.

Significant PEPFAR funding for the post was unexpectedly cut.

PEPFAR provides funding to the Peace Corps posts to help expand and enhance their response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Approximately 23 percent of post's overall budget and 35 percent of Volunteer-years are funded by PEPFAR. This amount includes funding for two staff members, 46 HY Volunteers, all HIV/AIDS workshops and some portion of PST and other trainings.

The U.S. Mission PEPFAR coordinator in Lesotho reported that during an extensive technical review in 2013, the Peace Corps was designated the lead implementer for youth prevention on a recommendation from the Office of the U.S Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) at the Department of State. He reported that while the post's budget is small, Volunteers play an important role in connecting the needs of local communities to implementing partners who offer goods and services. Thirteen Volunteers are placed with PEPFAR implementing partner organizations. He also noted that budget pipeline has been a global issue. This has been a challenge for Peace Corps, and other U.S. government agencies, to manage. One reason for this is because agency specific financial systems don't easily allow for the information needed by OGAC.

Staff at post echoed this sentiment. The Peace Corps' financial systems and Volunteer performance reporting systems cannot easily provide the information needed by OGAC. Peace Corps staff have used multiple time-consuming workarounds to provide financial and performance reports.

After evaluation fieldwork, the post learned that its Country Operating Plan FY14 was approved, but that the Peace Corps would receive no new funding. The CD reported that this decision was a surprise to the entire Lesotho PEPFAR team. Peace Corps staff explained to OGAC that without the new funding post cannot receive new Volunteers nor do the planned activities in the implementation plan. In reviewing Peace Corps' budget, it might appear that there are a lot of pipeline funds, but funds must cover a Volunteer's entire 27-month service; the post cannot accept a Volunteer without the assurance the whole service can be supported.

After further explanations and negotiations, the new funding was restored. However, we wanted to highlight our concern about planning for Peace Corps activities with funding that is not within the Peace Corps' control. Budgetary dependence on an outside entity could put post's ability to carry out its mission at risk if the funding is unexpectedly cut.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the country director and director of programming and training clarify the role of the director of programming and training in site development.
2. That the country director and director of programming and training explore ways to further develop relationships with appropriate stakeholders.
3. That programming staff develop indicators for viable host organizations for Volunteer placements and incorporate them into the site identification and development process.
4. That the country director and director of programming and training ensure that site history information is used as part of the post's process for selecting sites for Volunteers.
5. That the director of programming and training ensure that site development is guided by the focused-in framework for the HY project.
6. That the country director establish memoranda of understanding with appropriate stakeholders.
7. That the country director review the small grants committee organization and process, consider approval timelines, committee composition, and resource needs for the grant program and make adjustments where necessary.
8. That the director of programming and training ensure that future Phase 3 trainings are designed to achieve learning objectives that have been identified through a needs assessment process.
9. That the Peace Corps medical officer complete the medical evacuation plan.
10. That the Office of Health Services review the post's medical evacuation plan to ensure its completeness.
11. That the Office of Health Services add elements to the health unit assessment tool to ensure that posts are prepared to respond in the case of a medical emergency.

12. The Office of Health Services require medical evacuation information to be organized into sections on routine medical evacuations and emergency evacuations so that what is needed in an emergency situation is readily accessible.
13. That the country director lead a collaborative staff effort to establish and implement a system for the collection and maintenance of site history files including where this information should be located and to whom it should be accessible.
14. That the post and region determine whether transit houses are needed and can be supported. If so, establish and manage them in accordance with the Peace Corps Manual section 218. If not, provide options for safe overnight accommodations for remote Volunteers who travel to their camp town to conduct business.
15. That the post communicate to Volunteers the resources available in volunteer resource centers and maintain them.
16. That the post assess the clarity of the housing criteria and site review and approval process, and update the housing checklist and site approval process, as necessary.

APPENDIX A: OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In 1989, OIG was established under the Inspector General Act of 1978 and is an independent entity within the Peace Corps. The purpose of OIG is to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and to promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency in government. The Inspector General is under the general supervision of the Peace Corps Director and reports both to the Director and Congress.

The Evaluation Unit provides senior management with independent evaluations of all management and operations of the Peace Corps, including overseas posts and domestic offices. OIG evaluators identify best practices and recommend program improvements to comply with Peace Corps policies.

The Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of the post on April 17, 2014. For post evaluations, we use the following researchable questions to guide our work:

- To what extent has post developed and implemented programs to increase host country communities' capacity?
- Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?
- Has the post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?
- Are post resources and management practices adequate for effective post operations?

The evaluator conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation April 18 – June 13, 2014. This research included review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff; interviews with management staff representing Africa region, Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Victim Advocacy, OHS, Overseas Programming and Training Support, Office of Safety and Security, General Counsel, OGHH; and inquiries to Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Global Partnerships.

In-country fieldwork occurred from June 16–July 3, 2014, and included interviews with post senior staff in charge of programming, training, and support; the U.S. charge d'affaires; the U.S. Embassy's regional security officer; and host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 19 Volunteers (23 percent of Volunteers serving at the time of our visit) based on their length of service, site location, project focus, gender, age, and ethnicity. The post modified its housing checklist when adopting its new site identification and development process. We used the former checklist to verify compliance as the sites we visited had been developed before the new checklist went into effect.

This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The evidence, findings, and recommendations provided in this report have been reviewed by agency stakeholders affected by this review.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, interviews were conducted with 19 Volunteers, 17 staff in-country, and 22 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in Lesotho, and key ministry officials. Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (1 = not effective, 3 = neutral, 5 = very effective). The analysis of these ratings provided a quantitative supplement to Volunteers' comments, which were also analyzed. For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of "4" and above are considered favorable. We interviewed 12 Volunteers at site, nine at their homes and three at their worksite or VRC; we inspected nine of these homes using post-defined site selection criteria. We interviewed and additional seven Volunteers at two different regional training events. The period of review for a post evaluation is one full Volunteer cycle (typically 27 months).

The following table provides demographic information that represents the entire Volunteer population in Lesotho; the Volunteer sample was selected to reflect these demographics.

Table 5. Volunteer Demographic Data

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
CHED	20%
ED	58%
HY	21%
Gender	Percentage of Volunteers
Female	63%
Male	37%
Age	Percentage of Volunteers
25 or younger	60%
26-29	25%
30-49	10%
50 and over	5%

Source: Volunteer Information Database Application for PC/Lesotho (4/28/2014).

Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

At the time of our field visit, the post had 28 staff positions. The post also employed six temporary training staff to assist with PST. We interviewed 17 staff. The staffing configuration of posts often varies and staff may hold additional responsibilities relevant to the evaluation in addition to their official job title. We conduct interviews with sexual assault response liaisons; grants coordinators; monitoring, reporting, and evaluation champions; and Peace Corps Response coordinators as necessary and when appropriate for the post.

Table 6. Interviews Conducted with Post Staff

Position	Status	Interviewed
Country Director	USDH	X
Director of Programming and Training	USDH	X
Acting Director of Management and Operations	PSC*	X
Program Manager	PSC	X
Program Manager	FSN*	X
Programming and Training Specialist (2)	PSC	X
HIV/AIDS Coordinator	PSC	X
PEPFAR Administrative Assistant	PSC	X
Safety and Security Manager	PSC	X
Regional IT Specialist	PSC	X
Training Manager	PSC	X
Language, Cultural and Homestay Coordinator	PSC	X
Medical Officer (2)	PSC	X
Executive Secretary	PSC	
P&T Secretary	PSC	X
General Services Officer	PSC	
Financial Assistant	PSC	X
Cashier	PSC	
Receptionist	PSC	
General Services Assistant	PSC	
Driver/PST Logistician	PSC	
Driver/Mechanic	PSC	
Training Center Manager	PSC	
Gardner	PSC	
Custodian	PSC	

Data as of July 2014. *PSC is personal services contractor; FSN is foreign service national.

Twenty-two additional interviews were conducted during the preliminary research phase of the evaluation, in-country fieldwork and follow-up work upon return to Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Table 7. Interviews Conducted with Peace Corps Headquarters Staff, Embassy Officials and Key Ministry Officials

Position	Organization
Regional Director	PC Headquarters/Africa Region
Chief of Operations	PC Headquarters/Africa Region
Chief Administrative Officer	PC Headquarters/Africa Region
Chief of Programming and Training	PC Headquarters/Africa Region
Country Desk Officer	PC Headquarters/Africa Region
Regional Security Advisor	PC Headquarters/Africa Region

Programming and Training Specialist	PC Headquarters/Africa Region
Director, Office of Victim Advocacy	PC Headquarters/Office of Victim Advocacy
Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer	PC Headquarters/Office of Safety and Security
Senior Advisor on Orphans and Vulnerable Children	PC Headquarters/Office of Global Health and HIV
Programming & Training Gender Specialist, Overseas Programming and Training Support	PC Headquarters/Office of Programming and Training Support
U.S. Charge d'Affairs	U.S. Embassy/Lesotho
Regional Security Officer	U.S. Embassy/Lesotho
PEPFAR Coordinator	U.S. Embassy/Lesotho
Representatives (4)	Ministry of Education
Representatives (2)	Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation

Data as of July 2014.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS

APCD	Associate Peace Corps Director
AVS	Annual Volunteer Survey
CD	Country Director
DMO	Director of Management and Operations
DPT	Director of Programming and Training
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
ED	Education Project
FY	Fiscal Year
FITU	Focus In/Train Up
HY	Healthy Youth Project
OHS	Office of Health Services
OIG	Office of Inspector General
MER	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
MS	Peace Corps Manual Section
OGAC	Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator
PCSSO	Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PST	Pre-service Training
SSM	Safety and Security Manager
VRC	Volunteer Resource Center
VRF	Volunteer Reporting Form
VRT	Volunteer Reporting Tool

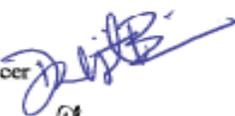
APPENDIX D: AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT



Since 1961.

MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Daljit K. Bains, Chief Compliance Officer 

From: Dick Day, Regional Director, Africa Region 
Wendy Van Damme, Country Director, Peace Corps/Lesotho

Date: March 26, 2015

CC: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Director
Laura Chambers, Chief of Staff
Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
Jim O'Keefe, Assistant Inspector General, Evaluations
Carlos Torres, Associate Director, Global Operations
Carl Swartz, Chief of Operations, Africa Region
Debra Pinkney, Director of Programming and Training, Peace Corps/Lesotho
Paul Jung, Associate Director, Office of Health Services

Subject: Agency Response to the Preliminary Report of Peace Corps/Lesotho (Project, No. 14-Eval-04), January 2015

Enclosed please find the agency's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Lesotho as outlined in the Preliminary Report of the Office of Inspector General Evaluation sent to the Agency on January 28, 2015.

The Region and the Post have addressed and provided supporting documentation for 8 of the 16 recommendations provided by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in its Preliminary Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Lesotho and will work to address the remaining recommendations by the set target dates.

The Region will continue to work with Post and the departments identified in the Preliminary Report to ensure closure of these recommendations by the dates included within for outstanding recommendations. The agency would like to thank the OIG for their collaboration in addressing these recommendations.

Recommendation 1

That the country director and director of programming and training clarify the role of the director of programming and training in site development.

Concur:

Response: In response to the OIG Evaluation, the director of programming and training (DPT) will now lead and coordinate the process and timeline for site identification, incorporating the steps added in 2015 to the Peace Corps/Lesotho Site Identification Manual, March 2015 Version. In addition, the DPT will set specific dates for two new meetings of the team involved in the site identification process: 1) a preliminary review of sites under consideration three (3) months before the beginning of pre-service training (PST), and 2) a housing review one month before the beginning of PST to validate readiness of Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) housing.

Documents Submitted:

- Date of next Preliminary Site Review Meeting, led by DPT
- Date of next Housing Review Meeting, led by DPT
- Peace Corps/Lesotho Site Identification Manual, March 2015 Version

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, March 2015

Recommendation 2

That the country director and director of programming and training explore ways to further develop relationships with appropriate stakeholders.

Concur:

Response: There have been several major staffing changes at post since the visit of the OIG program evaluator. The DPT and the Healthy Youth associate Peace Corps director (HY APCD), are new to their positions, and are eager to develop stronger relationships with the stakeholders in the HY project. The HY project has experienced more shortcomings in developing relationships with appropriate stakeholders than the Education project, which collaborates closely and consistently with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET).

A draft that further focuses the HY project framework will be refined by the HY APCD, DPT, Peace Corps Headquarters, and stakeholders through the next Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. Like the Education project, the HY project collaboration will be with only one ministry, the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sport and Recreation (GYSR). Host agencies, including some PEPFAR implementing partners, will be part of the validation of the project framework.

In order to further develop relationships with stakeholders, post will take three actions:

1. The PAC for each project previously was made up of more Peace Corps staff and Volunteers than outside stakeholders. PAC membership will be expanded to include more representation of outside stakeholders.
2. The annual report, which was only produced and shared electronically in the past, will now be printed to share with stakeholders at PAC and district stakeholder meetings.
3. During site visits, programming staff will hold individual meetings with stakeholders in the districts. They will share a copy of post's annual report, the current project framework, and will ask for their input using post's newly developed stakeholder survey.

Documents Submitted:

- List of current ED PAC members
- List of current and invited ED PAC members
- List of current HY PAC members
- List of invited HY PAC members
- 2015 PAC meeting schedule
- Peace Corps/Lesotho Annual Report
- Stakeholder survey

Documents to be Submitted:

- Approved focused HY framework

Status and Timeline for Completion: July 31, 2015

Recommendation 3

That programming staff develop indicators for viable host organizations for Volunteer placement and incorporate them into the site identification and development process.

Concur:

Response: A new tool, the HY Programming Site Criteria Checklist, is now being used as an additional step in the site identification process for the Healthy Youth project. This tool ensures that in order to qualify as an HY host organization, the organization has goals that match the HY project goals and has at least one counterpart ready to work with a Volunteer on activities that fall within the HY project framework. The Education project already has a process that begins with recommendations from the Ministry of Education and Training for schools that request the support of a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher. They will now add a Programming Site Criteria Checklist to document the indicators that signal that there is viable work for a Volunteer at each school.

Documents Submitted:

- HY Programming Site Criteria Checklist
- ED Programming Site Criteria Checklist
- 3 sample completed HY Programming Site Criteria Checklists (2 sites continued in the process, 1 was not viable)

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, March 2015

Recommendation 4

That the country director and director of programming and training ensure that site history information is used as part of the post's process for selecting sites for Volunteers.

Concur:

Response: To ensure that site history information is used as part of the site selection process, an additional criterion has been added to the Site Selection Criteria Checklist, 'Appendix B in the PC/Lesotho Site Identification Manual', which ensures that site history information has been considered as part of the process for selecting sites for Volunteers. Now that PC/Lesotho is maintaining the site history files folder in electronic format, saved centrally in the office shared folder, all staff can view the files. The information that constitutes the file for each site is used during the site identification process.

Documents Submitted:

- Site History Files summary
- Peace Corps/Lesotho Site Identification Manual, March 2015 Version

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, March 2015

Recommendation 5

That the director of programming and training ensure that site development is guided by the focused-in framework for the HY project.

Concur:

Response: Both the OIG and post leadership have determined that the Healthy Youth project needs to be more focused. A draft of the newly focused framework is being used to place the April 2015 Volunteer cohort. This framework is being refined by the DPT and new HY APCD through discussions with the Africa region and OPATS/OGHH and will then be submitted for approval. Additionally, a new tool, the HY Programming Site Criteria Checklist, is now being used as an additional step in the site identification process. This tool ensures that in order to qualify as an HY host organization, the organization has goals that match the HY project goals and at least one counterpart ready to work with a Volunteer on activities that fall within the HY project framework.

Documents Submitted:

- HY Programming Site Criteria Checklist
- Peace Corps/Lesotho Site Identification Manual, March 2015 Version
- 3 sample completed HY Programming Site Criteria Checklists

Documents to be Submitted:

- Approved focused HY framework

Status and Timeline for Completion: July 31, 2015

Recommendation 6

That the country director establish memoranda of understanding with appropriate stakeholders.

Concur:

Response: Site level MOUs are signed and in place with all currently serving Volunteers. Future site level agreements will all follow the model of the Education project agreement.

The Education project has been working closely with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), and through the new focus in the HY project it is clear that the best ministry match for HY is the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sport and Recreation (GYSR). These ministries have demonstrated their ongoing support for the work of Peace Corps as the Ministers have consistently participated as the guests of honor at the respective swearing in ceremonies, despite the rural locations and long ceremonies. PC/Lesotho is now working to document this ministry level support and recognition of Peace Corps with MOU signed between each project with its respective ministry.

With regard to the Country Agreement, civil unrest in 2014 led to snap elections in 2015, resulting in a new government that assumed leadership of Lesotho in March 2015. Peace Corps Lesotho expects to be able to propose and present a new Country Agreement and ministry level MOUs to the government of Lesotho in May 2015. Due to the new government, obtaining signatures will depend on the workload of the government.

Documents Submitted:

- ED Site Level Agreement (sample)
- HY Site Level Agreement (sample)
- Model Country Agreement

Documents to be Submitted:

- Signed MOU with MOET
- Signed MOU with GYSR

Status and Timeline for Completion: August 31, 2015

Recommendation 7

That the country director review the small grants committee organization and process, consider approval timelines, committee composition, and resource needs for the grant program and make adjustments where necessary.

Concur:

Response: Previously, post had assigned the duties of grants coordinator to the PEPFAR-funded position of HIV coordinator. Small grants were reviewed by the HIV coordinator as they were received from Volunteers. The approval process was lengthy and unclear to Volunteers.

Post has now restructured the management of small grants in order to align Peace Corps/Lesotho fully with Peace Corps Grants Online (PCGO) and support the work of Volunteers. Post has developed and is in the process of filling a new MRE and Grants Coordinator position. Meanwhile, the DPT has organized a grants committee composed of representatives from the programming and administrative units that meets twice a month to review and approve grants. The grants committee maintains a shared folder where members can view the proposals before the meetings and centralize feedback to Volunteers. The aim is to provide a compiled version of this feedback to PCVs within one week of the grants committee meeting.

The DPT has also focused on providing consistent and timely information, training, and support to Volunteers in order to guide them in making an impact with small grants in their communities. This information is provided through the following:

- Improvement to training sessions on the Peace Corps small grants program and PCGO at Phase 3 in-service training (IST) and project design and management (PDM) workshops;
- Distribution of articles about the grants process with guidance, tips, and strategies for writing strong small grant proposals in the monthly newsletter from March through December 2015;
- Emails from the DPT; and
- A one-page summary of the grants application, review and approval process, and timeline that is shared with PCVs at Phase 3 and PDM ISTs, and is added to the April 2015 version of the Peace Corps/Lesotho Volunteer Handbook.

Documents Submitted:

- List of Grants Committee members
- March newsletter
- Emails to Volunteers about small grants process from DPT
 - Small Grants Process for PC/Lesotho
 - DPT Update

Documents to be Submitted:

- Summary of grants process and timeline for PCVs

Status and Timeline for Completion: April 30, 2015

Recommendation 8

That the director of programming and training ensure that future trainings are designed to achieve learning objectives that have been identified through a needs assessment process.

Concur:

Response: Volunteers have commented on or responded to the end of IST surveys, the All-Volunteer Survey (AVS), and the OIG evaluator indicating that they enjoyed Phase 3 trainings because of the opportunity to be with their fellow Volunteers, but noting that they thought the topics covered during the trainings were not necessarily relevant. In both projects, post will now use improved needs assessment tools, has added a phone survey, conducted by a PCVL or a second year PCV, to the IST planning process; made holistic updates to the IST agendas; and created a new PCV self-assessment tool, which will demonstrate to PCVs and staff that through the Phase 3 IST sessions, specific learning objectives have been achieved.

Documents Submitted:

- Sample email responses to needs assessment surveys
 - Phase III Suggestions 1
 - Phase III Suggestions 2
- Training Needs – Phase II Assignments (refers to needs for Phase 3)
- Draft agenda for upcoming ED Phase 3 IST
- Phase 3 Evaluation – Math Education
- Phase 3 Evaluation – English Education

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, March 2015

Recommendation 9

That the Peace Corps medical officer complete the medical evacuation plan.

Concur:

Response: The Peace Corps medical officers (PCMOs) were notified by OHS/QI via email on February 18, 2015 to develop the plan in accordance with MS 264, TG 380, and TG 385 and submit to OHS no later than July 31, 2015. OHS is fully prepared to support and guide the PCMOs in development of the plan.

Documents Submitted:

- Sample Site Locator Forms

Documents to be Submitted

- Approved Medical Evacuation Plan

Status and Timeline for Completion: July 31, 2015

Recommendation 10

That the Office of Health Services review the post's medical evacuation plan to ensure its completeness.

Concur:

Response: The Plan is to be submitted to OHS/QI for review by July 15, 2015.

Documents to be Submitted:

- Approved Medical Evacuation Plan
- Correspondence from OHS indicating approval of Medical Evacuation Plan

Status and Timeline for Completion: July 31, 2015

Recommendation 11

That the Office of Health Services add elements to the health unit assessment tool to ensure that posts are prepared to respond in the case of a medical emergency.

Concur:

Response: This element previously existed on the site assessment toll in Section 11 “Safety and Security” and was inadvertently dropped on the December 2012 update of the tool. The Site Assessment Tool was updated February 19, 2015 to include language in Section 12:

- A. *A country-specific Medical Evaluation Plan (TG 380 and 385; MS 264 section 3.0g) is current. Periodic drills are held. Date of last drill: _____.*

Documents Submitted:

- Site Assessment Tool: February 2015

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, February 2015

Recommendation 12

That the Office of Health Services require medical evacuation information to be organized into sections on routine medical evacuations and emergency evacuations so that what is needed in an emergency situation is readily accessible.

Concur:

Response: OMS agrees that the medical evacuation information be organized in such a manner that emergency information is readily available; however, this guidance currently exists in TG 380 section 5. It is the intent of OHS that TG 385 Emergency Evacuation be incorporated in to the emergency section of the Medical Evacuation Plan. Lesotho PCMOs were notified on Feb 18, 2015 to prepare their Plan in accordance with TGs 380/385 in such a manner that the information is organized and easily accessible in an emergency (see TG 380 section 5).

Documents Submitted:

TG 380 April 2013 and TG 385 July 2010

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, March 2015

Recommendation 13

That the country director lead a collaborative staff effort to establish and implement a system for the collection and maintenance of site history files including where this information should be located and to whom it should be accessible.

Concur:

Response: At the time of the Program Evaluation, parts of the site history files were saved in VIDA, while COS reports were kept within the completed COS files in the administrative unit, and the site identification documentation within each project's records. Now, the site history files folder is electronic and saved centrally in the office's share folder so all staff can view the files. The comprehensive information that constitutes each file is gathered during the site identification process, site visits, from reports on safety and security incidents, and upon the COS of outgoing Volunteers. The use, maintenance, and review of the files are coordinated across programming and security. The system and contents are outlined in the site history files summary document.

Documents Submitted:

- Site History Files summary

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, March 2015

Recommendation 14

That the post and region determine whether transit houses are needed and can be supported. If so, establish and manage them in accordance with the Peace Corps Manual section 218. If not, provide options for safe overnight accommodations for remote Volunteers who travel to their camptown to conduct business.

Concur:

Response: Support is needed for Volunteers who live far from the Peace Corps Office and need to travel more than a day, round-trip, to camptowns for business. Because of this need, Volunteers in two remote districts have been using the remote Volunteer Resource Centers (VRCs) as transit houses. To support safe PCV travel and lodging when needed, sites that require more than one day, round-trip, of travel to reach the VRC, at the PC office in Maser or the VRC in a camptown, will now be supported by an agreement that Post signs with a hotel that provides affordable and safe lodging. Sites that require this support will be noted during the site identification process with a new question on the Site Survey.

- A new monthly travel stipend will be paid to each PCV assigned to a site that cannot access the VRC as a day trip. This stipend will cover one monthly trip for two nights in the camptown lodging.
- Post will also budget for a night of lodging whenever a PCV is on official travel approved by Peace Corps for medical, work, or training reasons.

Documents to be Submitted:

- List of hostels in camptowns with signed agreements with Peace Corps
- Budget proposal to Region for increased funds

Status and Timeline for Completion: May 30, 2015

Recommendation 15

That the post communicate to Volunteers the resources available in volunteer resources centers and maintain them.

Concur:

Response: PC/Lesotho is currently finalizing agreements with consolidation point hostels/hotels and partner organizations in each district that are located more than a day trip from the VRC at the Peace Corps office. These locations will each house a small VRC that provides a computer, a printer, electricity, books, and a safe place for staff to deliver resources and mail to Volunteers. The country director will send an email to Volunteers informing them of the locations of the VRCs and the resources available in the VRCs and the Peace Corps/Lesotho Volunteer Handbook will also be updated to inform Volunteers of the locations and the resources available in the VRCs. The Volunteer Handbook for the October Education Volunteers will be the first version to include this information. All Volunteers already in service will be notified about the VRCs and available resources via an email from the country director.

Documents Submitted:

- Planned and current VRCs in district camptowns

Documents to be Submitted:

- List of current VRCs in district camptowns
- Draft Volunteer Handbook for October 2015 Education Volunteers
- Email from the country director to the Volunteers regarding VRCs

Status and Timeline for Completion: June 30, 2015

Recommendation 16

That the post assess the clarity of the housing criteria and site review and approval process, and update the housing checklist and site approval process, as necessary.

Concur:

Response: The DPT will now lead and coordinate the process and the timeline for site identification, incorporating the steps added in 2015. Additionally, since the OIG evaluation, the documentation and the site approval process have been clarified and a criterion has been added to the Site Criteria Checklist which confirms that Site History Files have been reviewed. The Site Identification Manual includes the updated housing checklist and the programming site criteria checklist. The Housing Checklist now does the following:

- Defines the distance to a water source,
- Specifies that interviews with community members will elicit local perceptions of the safety and suitability of the neighborhood, and
- Includes a Housing Requirement Agreement, to be signed by the host organization, which defines what is to be considered a reasonable walking distance from the house to the work site.

Documents Submitted:

- Date of next Preliminary Site Review Meeting, led by DPT
- Date of next Housing Review Meeting, led by DPT
- Peace Corps/Lesotho Site Identification Manual, March 2015 Version

Status and Timeline for Completion: Completed, March 2015

APPENDIX E: OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with all 16 recommendations. All recommendations remain open. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We will review and consider closing recommendations all recommendations when the documentation reflected in the agency's response to the preliminary report is received.

We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

APPENDIX F: PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION

This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O'Keefe, by Senior Evaluator Susan Gasper. Additional contributions were made by Senior Evaluator Jerry Black.



Jim O'Keefe
Assistant Inspector for Evaluations

OIG CONTACT

Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed to agency stakeholders. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please contact Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations Jim O'Keefe and at jokeefe@peacecorps.gov or 202.692.2904.

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