

**FINAL REPORT
on the Program Evaluation of
Peace Corps/Cameroon
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INTRODUCTION

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted a program evaluation of Peace Corps/Cameroon March 2 - March 24, 2006. The program evaluation was performed by evaluators Carlos Torres and Lynn Khadiagala. In preparation for this visit, the post distributed the OIG Volunteer Questionnaire to 82 Peace Corps Volunteers. Seventy-one (87%) of the questionnaires were completed and returned to us.¹ We interviewed 40 Volunteers, 12 post staff, and nine headquarters staff. Twenty of the post's administrative staff responded to a short questionnaire.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Many Volunteers do not have full-time primary assignments to keep them productively occupied at their sites. Weak site development, mismatches between training competencies and site needs, and ineffective staff support are some of the causes. We trace these weaknesses, in part, to the management style of the country director, to poor project and Volunteer assignment development, and inadequate staff in the Grand North.² These weaknesses amplify the challenges for Volunteers and staff in the Grand North.

Management

The staff reported that the country director micromanages staff and makes decisions unilaterally, frequently against the advice of his senior staff. According to staff and Volunteers, the country director has made an effort to improve PC/Cameroon, but he does not always implement his changes in a constructive manner. Low staff morale and poor communication between the staff and the country director diminish support for Volunteers.

Programming

Staffing and management issues have negatively affected the education project and the small enterprise development (SED) project. Changes in the design of the education project, from teaching English, math, and science, to computer literacy were made prematurely. The result has been a high early termination rate (ET) among education Volunteers for two consecutive years.

The SED project went almost two years without an Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD). As a result, SED Volunteers have been inappropriately and knowingly placed at micro-credit banks that are plagued by corruption. The level of corruption among bank management and staff has made it difficult for SED Volunteers to meet goal one of the project plan, and many of them have significantly scaled back their time at the banks.

¹ This response rate gives us a margin of error of 4.1 at a 95.5% confidence level. Eighteen Volunteers who completed the OIG Volunteer Questionnaires had completed their service before our visit.

² The Grand North refers to the provinces of Adamaoua, North, and Extreme North.

Many of the Volunteers who are recruited for the agroforestry and health projects do not have the requisite skills and experience. Staff assert that their projects require a higher level of technical competency and experience. However, this requires that the post not accept placements who do not meet the skill codes or provide longer and better technical training. On the contrary, the duration of pre-service training has been shortened. Without requisite skills, Volunteers are frustrated and less invested in their work.

PC/Cameroon has experienced a rash of unbecoming conduct by Volunteers and numerous violations of the out-of-site policy. The country director has been tough in response. This is needed, but in our view it fails to address the underlying cause which is that Volunteers are placed in assignments that have little work for them or work that they are unable to do, either because they do not have the requisite skills or because the host institution is not prepared to use their skills. In some cases, the host institutions do not appear to know why the Volunteer is there or are not eager to have them.

Site Selection and Development

The quality of selection and preparation of Volunteer sites is frequently inadequate. Based on our interviews with staff and Volunteers, the program staff do not research sites thoroughly enough to determine the appropriateness and capacity of host organizations to work with the Volunteers. In a few cases, host organizations were unaware that they were receiving a Volunteer. Volunteers also complained that staff do not adequately prepare host organizations and counterparts, who are frequently confused about their roles and responsibilities, do not understand the mission of the Peace Corps, and are unsure how to use a Volunteer effectively. The result is that Volunteers do not always have meaningful assignments that keep them occupied and at their sites.

While the majority of Volunteers reported that housing was ready for them, there were a few notable exceptions.

Volunteer Support

According to the responses to our OIG Questionnaire and our Volunteer interviews, the staff do not adequately monitor and support the work of the Volunteers. Many Volunteers told us that they do not submit their quarterly reports because their APCDs rarely provided them with feedback. Volunteers, with the exception of those in the health project, complained that site visits by APCDs are short and perfunctory. A substantial number of Volunteers reported that they do not receive adequate technical support. This complaint was most common among the SED Volunteers (who were without an APCD for almost two years) and the agroforestry Volunteers in the Grand North.

Volunteers do not receive their living allowances on time, and they frequently are not sure that the money they receive at the bank is the correct amount. Many travel long distances to the towns where their banks are located. When the allowances are not deposited on time, they wait until they are deposited or return at another time. This keeps Volunteers away from their sites and work.

Training

Volunteers speak highly of the French language training they receive during pre-service training. Volunteers feel strongly, though, that they need additional preparation in local languages and more hands-on technical training. Volunteers in some projects commented that the technical competencies they achieved in pre-service training were insufficient. This was especially true for agroforestry Volunteers in the Grand North; they felt that technical training was too abstract and not always appropriate to conditions in the Sahel.

The Grand North

Safety and Security

Volunteers in the Grand North raised several safety and security issues. First, they reported widespread and frequent abuse of the out-of-site policy. Second, Volunteers, especially in the North and Extreme North provinces, expressed concern about the unreliability of cell phone signals in their sites. They often have to walk a fair distance or find a higher location to get cell phone coverage. In the event of an emergency, staff may not be able to reach the Volunteers by cell phone.

Third, while Volunteers feel safe in their homes, communities, and at their workplace, they are fully aware of the dangerous conditions of Cameroon's roads. In addition to a high incidence of road accidents, highway assaults by gangs of armed bandits have been an ongoing problem, especially in the northern provinces.

Volunteer Support

The Grand North poses extra challenges to PC/Cameroon, especially for Volunteer support. At the time of our evaluation, only one program assistant was assigned to the northern office. Although there were only 28 Volunteers in the Grand North, they are spread across widespread territory and feel the need for extensive technical support to make up for ill-defined assignments and weak PST. Agroforestry Volunteers in particular are not given adequate technical support.

Volunteers in the Grand North may also be without adequate medical support. Those with serious conditions or in need of having to take post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) were asked to travel to Yaounde. The trip from Volunteer sites in the north to the Peace Corps office can take up to 24 hours by bus and train. Air transport is unreliable.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Our protocol for reviews of any aspect of an overseas post is as follows: We review documents available at headquarters that relate to the review. This includes, but is not limited to: the post's Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) submission, the

Emergency Action Plan, project plans, project status reports, Volunteer assignment descriptions, the Planning, Policy and Analysis (PPA) Annual Surveys of the Peace Corps Volunteer, the Health and Safety of the Volunteer reports, various reports obtained from the agency's financial management system, and general reference materials. We meet with the regional director and other staff in the regional office knowledgeable on the review topic. We consult with other headquarters offices that have information about the subject of the review, such as the Office of Special Services, the Office of Medical Services, the Office of Volunteer Safety and Overseas Security, the Office of Volunteer Support, the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, and other headquarters staff.

While at the post, we interview key staff: the country director and other staff responsible for the areas under review. We also meet with the ambassador and the embassy security officer. In our interviews and discussions, we seek to balance the perspectives of the staff with those of Volunteers. Regardless of the specific discussions with staff and Volunteers on the aspect of the post being reviewed, we make ourselves available for Volunteers and staff to present information on all aspects of the program.

Our assessment criteria are derived from the following sources: the Peace Corps Manual, the Country Director Handbook, the Overseas Financial Management Handbook, guidance from the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, the Annual Survey of Peace Corps Volunteers, and Technical Guidelines, MS 270 documents, and Health and Safety of the Volunteer from the Office of Medical Services. We also review compliance against other federal regulations and against agency policies and initiatives.

At the end of our review, we brief the country director and other staff responsible for the area of review. At headquarters, we conduct a general debriefing for the regional staff. We also brief the Office of Medical Services, the Office of Special Services, the Office of Volunteer Safety and Overseas Security, the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, and the International Finance Office on findings pertaining to their respective areas of responsibility.

We reviewed the following aspects of PC/Cameroon: project design; site selection, preparation, and development procedures; technical, cross-cultural, and language training; safety and security; and Volunteer support, including medical, technical, and administrative.

Our recommendations are based on information gathered from four sources: (1) staff and Volunteer interviews, (2) document analysis, (3) OIG Volunteer Questionnaires, and (4) direct observation. All Volunteers received a questionnaire to complete on recruitment, training, housing, work sites, staff support; safety and security; and their overall experience. The responses from the Volunteers provide a quantitative supplement to qualitative interviews and observations. While in Cameroon, we interviewed a stratified sample of Volunteers to represent project assignments, geographic distribution, and Volunteers' time in country and demographic characteristics. We met with Volunteers in

every province in Cameroon. Due to the travel times involved in reaching the Volunteers, we were not able to meet with counterparts and supervisors.

BACKGROUND

The Peace Corps has had a continuous presence in Cameroon since 1962, focusing initially on education and rural development. The program subsequently expanded into small enterprise development, health education, and agroforestry.

Cameroon is one of the most culturally and geographically diverse countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to having both French-speaking and English-speaking provinces, there are more than 130 ethnic groups and over 200 local languages among its population of 13 million. Its geography varies from rain forests in the east, desert (Sahel) in the north, mountains in the northwest, and beaches along the Atlantic coast. The economy is dependent on agricultural production, over half of the population is under 25 years old, and HIV/AIDS and maternal and infant mortality rates are significant health issues.

Cameroon's diversity presents some challenges to the Peace Corps. The country is in several ways "two countries in one" with distinct cultural and geographical characteristics. In the Grand North, the Muslim population struggles to survive in the harsh climate of the Sahel. In the mostly Christian Grand South, the climate ranges from forest to humid highlands.

Cameroon's diversity affects Peace Corps programming in several ways. For Volunteers working on agricultural projects in the north, the lack of rain, the need to dig in the sandy dry river beds for water, the short growing season, and the extreme poverty pose special challenges. Health Volunteers are able to access women in the southern provinces more easily than in the north. There is a longer tradition of self-organization and community initiative in the south. Generally, there is a cultural divide between Francophone and Anglophone Cameroonians. Cameroonians living in the south tend to be better educated and prosperous.

Projects

There were 82 Volunteers in country at the time of our evaluation working in the areas of education, agroforestry, health, and small enterprise development.³

³ One Volunteer terminated service shortly after the post distributed the OIG survey.

Table 1: Volunteer statistics

Project	Number of Volunteers
Education	17
Agroforestry	28
Community Health and Sanitation	25
Small Enterprise Development	12
Gender	Percentage of Volunteers (%)
Male	47
Female	53
Age	Number of Volunteers
Below 25	39
25 < 30	30
31 < 35	8
Over 35	5

Source: PC/Cameroon Roster, 2006

Education

Education Volunteers have, until 2004, taught English, math, and science in secondary schools. During the 2004 project review with the stakeholders, Ministry of Education officials indicated that Cameroon could benefit from Volunteers teaching computer literacy. PC/Cameroon received their first group of information and communication technology (ICT) Volunteers in 2005.

Agroforestry

Volunteers in the agroforestry project work with farmers' groups to introduce environmentally sound farming practices. Population growth and competition for land has resulted in farming on steep hillsides and cultivation in forest areas. The result is soil erosion, degradation of existing farmland, and desertification. The placement of Volunteers alternates every year between the humid highlands of the South and the dry Sahel region of the North.

Community Health and Sanitation

Volunteers assigned to the community health and sanitation project work on health education and prevention activities in villages, schools, and health centers and with community and youth groups.

Small Enterprise Development

The small enterprise development (SED) project has been in place since June 1999. The Volunteers are placed in micro-credit banks where they help to improve the banks' operating efficiency. Volunteers also work with small business entrepreneurs.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Leadership and Management

The management style of the country director undermines his ability to lead and manage the staff effectively.

While staff appreciated the country director's efforts to improve PC/Cameroon, they reported that his confrontational and abrupt management style has created an environment of mistrust and fear that is undermining his ability to lead the staff. Staff stated that the country director often has the right intention but implements decisions too quickly, sometimes without consulting the post's senior staff, and at other times against their advice. To staff, this feels threatening. Examples cited by staff included the country director's decision to begin an ICT project with Volunteers who had been recruited to teach English, math, and science and the decision to conduct PST training in the Grand North.⁴ These decisions, we were told, were made against the advice of staff and implemented without the resources and time needed to make their implementation effective. Our review corroborated this viewpoint.

The Volunteers also gave the country director mixed reviews. In the OIG survey, 37% of the Volunteers felt that the country director's effectiveness was satisfactory, while 48% of the Volunteers rated his effectiveness as good or excellent. Many said they liked him as a person but felt that he sometimes behaved unprofessionally. They applauded him for cracking down on Volunteer misbehavior, and they perceive that he takes an interest in their work and well-being, but said that he wastes the Volunteers' goodwill by how he interacts with the Volunteers and how he implements his decisions. For example, staff and Volunteers told us that a speech on safe behavior he delivers at pre-service training – known as the “shock and awe” speech – was culturally offensive to Americans and Cameroonians alike. Staff also commented that the country director is culturally insensitive to the stature, age, and experience of some of the local staff.

We feel that the country director's confrontational and abrasive management style has negatively affected staff morale, the quality of programming, and the motivation of some of the staff.

- Staff morale was visibly low; other Peace Corps staff who have spent time in the PC/Cameroon office have made similar observations.⁵ We observed a noticeable improvement in staff morale during our visit when a TDY acting country director arrived.
- Many of the staff expressed fear of being fired. The country director did not renew the contracts of two staff members – a lab technician and a secretary. Many people are not clear why these decisions were made nor do they appreciate the abrupt manner in which they were taken.

⁴ For a full discussion of these issues and their ramifications see pp. 17-21.

⁵ See PCSSO Report, February 2006.

- The staff believed that the country director does not trust them. Volunteers and staff told us that the country director behaved as though all Cameroonians are corrupt.

We recommend:

- 1. That the region stipulate corrective actions to address the problems with the country director.**
- 2. That the region require the country director to submit quarterly reports on the corrective actions.**

Programming

The ICT education project was implemented prematurely.

In October 2004, PC/Cameroon initiated a review of the education project plan. Under the auspices of the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research, PC/Cameroon held a stakeholders' workshop with representatives of the Ministry of Education, Peace Corps staff and Volunteers, pedagogic inspectors, and parents and teachers association representatives. The participants determined that the Peace Corps could best support, in order of priority, computer literacy, upgrading of teacher skills, math, science, vocational subjects, and TEFL/AIDS.

Based on these recommendations, the country director decided to move forward with the ICT project but before adequate preparations were in place. We identified several missteps: First, the country director had not built a consensus among staff, including the APCD/Education. While the proposed program changes may have been reasonable, any decision is more easily implemented if management devotes time to building staff consensus and planning an appropriate timeframe for making changes.

The conflict between the country director and the APCD/Education over the program changes is particularly disturbing to the Volunteers. In February 2006, the conflict between the country director and APCD/Education surfaced in front of the Volunteers at an education in-service training (IST). Every education Volunteer whom we interviewed raised this conflict as a problem for the Volunteers, their host organizations, and the reputation of the Peace Corps. They expressed frustration and confusion over the goals of the education project "and what Peace Corps wants us as Volunteers to accomplish."

Second, the rush to shift the project's focus to computer literacy led to Volunteers -- originally recruited as English, math, and science teachers -- being placed with host organizations that expected them to conduct computer training. Thirty-six percent of the Volunteers in this first group terminated their service early. In 2005, the Peace Corps recruited 10 ICT Trainees (AA 143s) who turned out to be overqualified to teach

computer literacy classes. Fifty-four percent of the Volunteers in this second group also terminated their service.

Third, inadequate site development procedures resulted in Volunteers being placed in ill-equipped or defunct Teacher Resource Centers. According to a Ministry of Education official, the ministry would not be ready to accept Volunteers until March 2007. Many of the education Volunteers whom we interviewed have scaled back or abandoned their work in IT. Several Education Volunteers found teaching jobs at nearby schools where they teach English and intermittent computer classes where possible.

Following this experience, the country director requested a new training class that included TEFL, math, and science teachers, as well as ICT Volunteers. The next intake of 31 Trainees in October 2006 will have 21 TEFL teachers, six science/math teachers, and four computer science teachers.

We recommend:

- 3. That the post develop a strategic plan for implementing the ICT project in consultation with the Ministry of Education.**
- 4. That the post only assign ICT Volunteers to computer centers and teaching resource centers that are adequately equipped and staffed to host a Volunteer.**
- 5. That the post revise the VAD for the ICT program to reflect the actual responsibilities and activities of the Volunteers.**
- 6. That the post effect a memorandum of understanding, or other mechanism, with the ICT host organizations clarifying the project goals and the expectations for the ICT program.**

Corruption within the micro-credit banks impedes the ability of SED Volunteers to meet goal one of the project plan.

The majority of SED Volunteers are assigned to micro-credit banks, where their assignment is to “improve the overall efficiency of financial institutions through training and technical assistance in management and business skill transfer.”⁶ The micro-credit banks provide financial services to small entrepreneurs who are unable to obtain credit from commercial banks. A smaller number of SED Volunteers work with umbrella organizations, such as auditing firms that oversee the micro-credit banks.

According to the Volunteers whom we interviewed, the level of corruption among bank management and staff limits their effectiveness in meeting the goals of the project and may put them at risk. One Volunteer spoke about the manager at her bank who stole

⁶ SED Project Plan, February 11, 2001, p. 12.

seven million CFA francs over a six-month period before he disappeared. According to the Volunteer, people at the bank knew that the manager was stealing funds but would not take action, because he is the brother of the bank president. Another Volunteer said that a bank colleague was putting in false expense claims under her name. Two Volunteers told us that Peace Corps staff knowingly placed them at banks where corruption was so rampant that previous Volunteers had ceased working with the banks.

PC/Cameroon acknowledged the problem of widespread corruption in the 2005 project status report:

A larger challenge still is the universal corruption within financial institutions. The corruption makes it difficult to trust key members working with Volunteers, creates moral conflicts, and reduces the effectiveness of the Volunteer. Although it is difficult, we will try to find and filter appropriate and less corrupted posts for Volunteers.⁷

Volunteers have, instead, focused their skills and energy on the second goal of the SED project plan – identifying and developing the business skills of organizations, individuals, and participants of the informal sector.”⁸ The Volunteers work one-on-one with small business owners to teach them new business skills and concepts. A few teach business seminars to community members or help to organize business projects in the community.

The arrival of a new APCD (in February 2006), after an almost two-year vacancy, is an opportunity for PC/Cameroon to review the viability of the SED project design and make the necessary changes to enable Volunteers to be placed where they can be productive and effective. Of the 13 Volunteers who completed the OIG Survey, nine felt that the project fills an important need in Cameroon. The SED Volunteers have an impressive array of business skills that can benefit Cameroonians.

We recommend:

- 7. That staff develop new site selection criteria for micro-credit banks, including corruption criteria, to ensure that Volunteers will have viable work assignments.**
- 8. That the post prepare memoranda of understanding with every host organization to set clear expectations of the host organization and the Volunteers.**
- 9. That PC/Cameroon develop training modules to help the Volunteers cope with corruption at their work sites.**
- 10. That staff identify another host organization that can be a partner in Volunteers’ work with small business entrepreneurs.**

⁷ SED Project Status Report, FY 2005, p. 10.

⁸ SED Project Plan, February 11, 2001, p. 13.

As designed, the agroforestry and health projects require Volunteers with more skills and experience than the Peace Corps can recruit.

PC/Cameroon staff complained that they received too many unqualified and inappropriately placed Trainees. The APCDs for agroforestry and health, two projects that require a level of technical facility, expressed the greatest concern and frustration over the quality of Trainees being sent to Cameroon.

Many of the Trainees sent to Cameroon lack the requisite experience for their assignments. Pre-service training in Cameroon is not long enough for most of the Trainees to reach the required competencies in technical subjects, language, and culture.

Volunteers who lack the technical competence are likely to feel less effective in the field and probably less invested in the work. When they cannot find alternative activities to keep themselves occupied, some Volunteers terminate their service early. Others are just frustrated. This situation can lead to violations of policy and conduct unbecoming.

We recommend:

11. That the post revise the health and agroforestry projects to require and accept more skilled Volunteers and significantly increase the length of PST, e.g., 12 weeks, the time within PST devoted to technical training, and improve the quality of technical training.

Site Development

Site selection and preparation are inadequate.

- 1. The program staff do not research sites thoroughly enough to determine the appropriateness and capacity of organizations to host a Volunteer.*

According to many Volunteers and some staff members, the program staff do not always research host organizations or interview potential supervisors and counterparts thoroughly. This is especially a problem in the Grand North. One person told us that “the APCDs meet with one person at a school or organization and then they leave. Sometimes they just leave a form. You really need to find out if there is a job for the Volunteer.”⁹ A Volunteer told us that the burden of developing sites had been placed on the shoulders of the Volunteers: “I was expected to find my own job.... I do not have a problem with that, but finding my own work leads to not having anything to do at times.”

- 2. Host organizations and counterparts are not prepared for the Volunteers when they arrive.*

⁹ Interview, Cameroon, March 2006.

According to their questionnaire responses, over half of the Volunteers felt that their hosts were not at all (19%) or only slightly (33%) prepared for them when they arrived at site. (See Table 3.) One Volunteer told us that her school principal was unaware that he was receiving another Volunteer until she showed up at the school during her PST site visit.

Table 2: Level of preparation of host organizations for Volunteer arrivals (in percentage)

Answer choice	Education %	Health %	Agroforestry %	SED %	Average %
Not at all	14	27	10	23	19
Slightly well	21	32	43	30	33
Moderately well	43	27	19	31	29
Substantially	21	14	19	8	16
N/A	0	0	10	8	4

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, Cameroon
 Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

3. *The roles and responsibilities of host organizations, counterparts, and Volunteers are not clear.*

Volunteers complained about the lack of clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the host organizations, counterparts, and Volunteers. Except for Education Volunteers, who have clear job descriptions, many Volunteers felt that host organizations and counterparts did not have clear expectations and were unsure about what Volunteers could do for them. Volunteers are also unclear about the responsibilities of their host organizations and supervisors. Forty-seven percent of the Volunteers said that the responsibilities of their host organizations are not clear (25%) or only slightly clear (22%). The problem is most acute among agroforestry Volunteers: 81% of the Volunteers rated the clarity of host organization responsibilities as not clear (52%) or only slightly clear (29%).¹⁰

Several Volunteers suggested that their work productivity and relationships with their supervisors and counterparts improved when their APCD visited their sites and explained the role of the Volunteer and the mission of Peace Corps to their host organization.

4. *Some Volunteers reported that housing was not ready when they arrived at site.*

While the majority of Volunteers reported in the OIG Questionnaire that housing was available immediately or within the first three months at site, there were some notable and disturbing exceptions. Of the 70 Volunteers who responded to questions about their housing, nine reported that they had to make their own living arrangements.¹¹

Based on interviews with Volunteers, it appears that staff are not always as thorough as they need to be. One Volunteer was assigned to live with a married couple; when he arrived for his

¹⁰ OIG Questionnaire, March 2006.

¹¹ Four health Volunteers, three SED Volunteers, and two education Volunteers reported they had to make their own living arrangements.

PST site visit, the couple was unaware that they were acquiring a roommate and strongly opposed the arrangement. In another case, a Volunteer was placed in a house that was still under construction. She reluctantly moved into the house, after being told that a nearby alternative house was unsafe. Shortly after she moved into the house, a male relative of the landlord acquired a key and moved in. After complaining to the country director, she received permission to move. In a third case, a Volunteer was asked by the Peace Corps office to relocate after his roommate transferred to a different site. After searching for a new apartment for several weeks, he appealed to the APCD, the safety and security coordinator, and the country director for help. According to the Volunteer, staff never responded to his emails or phone messages.

5. *The Volunteers partly attribute their lack of meaningful assignments to the ineffectiveness of counterpart workshops at PST.*

Volunteers and their counterparts spend two to three days during PST together developing a work plan for a Volunteer’s first three months at site. The training staff provide exercises that are supposed to help the Volunteer and counterpart design a set of goals and related activities. Many Volunteers felt that the exercises “were useless” and resulted in work plans that were “too vague.”

Volunteers were unanimous in concluding that staff needed to be more involved in the workshops for them to generate useful work plans. Under the current format, the Volunteers and counterparts work mostly in pairs without staff supervision. The Volunteers suggested that staff hold separate sessions for the counterparts where they explain the mission of Peace Corps and the role of the Volunteers before bringing in the Volunteers.

As a consequence, many Volunteers do not have jobs that keep them occupied and at their sites. Many Volunteers work less than 20 hours per week on their primary assignments (see Table 3). Agroforestry and SED Volunteers work the fewest number of hours per week, followed by health and education Volunteers.

Table 3: Hours spent on primary assignment per project

Number of hours per week	Education %	Health %	Agroforestry %	SED %	Average %
1- 19	36	47	57	54	50
20-29	28	29	19	38	27
30 or more	36	24	24	8	23

Source: OIG Volunteer Questionnaire, Cameroon 2006

Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%.

The lack of meaningful assignments is cited by some Volunteers as contributing to a handful of Volunteers spending their weekends in the nearest provincial capital and engaging in inappropriate behavior. Several Volunteers complained that a handful of Volunteers spend too much time in the provincial capitals. The Volunteers who live in the provincial cities feel that they are tarnished by the inappropriate behavior of these Volunteers. They pointed out that Volunteers who congregate in French-speaking provincial cities assume that nearby Cameroonians do not understand English; the Volunteers use their time together to complain about the Cameroonian culture, sometimes in loud and vulgar language. The Volunteers who

live in these cities told us that they then have to spend time repairing relationships and the reputation of Peace Corps.

We recommend:

12. That staff develop new criteria and procedures for selecting sites and preparing host organizations and housing. The criteria and preparation procedures should ensure the following elements:

- **Host organizations are sufficiently active in their area of work to provide a Volunteer with meaningful work.**
- **Host organizations have good reputations in their community and among their peer group.**
- **Supervisors have demonstrated a clear need for a Volunteer and provided a work plan for a Volunteer.**
- **A memorandum of understanding, or other mechanism, that defines the host organization's and Volunteer's role and responsibilities has been prepared.**
- **Housing is ready before a Volunteer is sent to site.**

Volunteer Support

The staff does not adequately monitor and support the work of the Volunteers.

The Volunteers feel that staff show little interest in the work of the Volunteers. They cited the handling of quarterly reports and short site visits as two examples of a low level of interest in Volunteers' efforts. The Volunteers told us that the APCDs do not respond to their quarterly reports on a regular basis; when they do respond, the comments are superficial and unhelpful. Volunteers, as a result, view the report as "one more bureaucratic document that serves the interests of PC/Washington rather than PC/Cameroon." They feel they could write anything on the report, or not do them at all, with few or no consequences. Many told us that they had stopped filing their reports.

In interviews, Volunteers widely complained that site visits are short and perfunctory, leaving little time for the APCDs to check the Volunteers' work and discuss issues. In the OIG Questionnaires, 31% of the respondents said that they were unsatisfied with site visits.

The result is that a substantial number of Volunteers feel that they are not receiving the technical support that they need. Sixty-two percent of the SED Volunteers who responded to the OIG Questionnaire stated that they were not satisfied with technical support, followed by 43% of the education Volunteers, 33% of the agroforestry Volunteers, and 5% of the health Volunteers.

We recommend:

- 13. That the post provide regular and constructive feedback to Volunteers' quarterly reports.**
- 14. That the country director work with the APCDs to set guidelines and goals for site visits and technical support, and articulate these guidelines to the Volunteers.**

The post's system for distributing living allowances is not effective.

Thirty-seven percent of the Volunteers responding to the OIG Volunteer questionnaire indicated that their allowances do not come on time. In interviews, the Volunteers complained that they are never sure when their allowances will arrive and what the amount will be; in the OIG Questionnaires, 16% said that they were not sure if they received their allowances on time. Sometimes they receive allowances every three months, and sometimes they receive them every two months. In one case, a Volunteer claimed that he never received one month's living allowance. If payments are late, Volunteers can find themselves without enough money to take care of basic expenditures. They are likely to hang around until the money arrives.

The uncertainty involved with living allowances is especially difficult for Volunteers who travel long distances to reach their banks. If Volunteer housing is not available, the Volunteers must pay for a hotel. Every day that they spend in town waiting for their living allowances is a day that they are not at site.

According to the post, the banking system in Cameroon is weak. Some banks refuse to sign agreements with the Peace Corps, while other banks do not cooperate with Peace Corps to ensure that the Volunteers receive their allowances on time. In some parts of Cameroon, the Peace Corps has a very limited choice of banks.

According to section Peace Corps Manual (PCM) section 221.4.0, Peace Corps Volunteers are entitled to a living allowance in order that they may serve effectively and safely overseas. PCM section 4.3.1 states:

The living allowance shall be calculated and paid on a monthly basis unless an exception to this policy is approved in advance by the Regional Director. The Country Director and staff should review the living allowance at least annually to ensure that the intent of the living allowance as set forth in the Peace Corps Act is being met.

We recommend:

15. That the post take corrective action to assure that Volunteers receive their allowances on time.

Training

Training in local languages is inadequate.

Nearly sixty percent of the respondents to the OIG Volunteer questionnaire indicated that local language training is “not effective.” Agroforestry and health Volunteers expressed the most dissatisfaction with local language training. They work more with people who are less likely to speak English or French, such as rural farmers, women and children, and people without formal education.

Only Volunteers who reach the intermediate proficiency level in French before the end of PST are given the option of studying Fulfulde if they are going to the Grand North and Pidgin English if they are being placed in an Anglophone province. Volunteers who study Fulfulde receive a manual and a book with strategies for studying the language at their sites. The program and training assistant who runs the office in the Grand North offers an IST in Fulfulde that receives high marks from the Volunteers.

Several factors contribute to inadequate local language learning:

- PST is too short to devote time to local languages. The number of weeks for PST has declined from 12 to 9 for education and SED Trainees and ten for agroforestry and health Trainees. According to the training staff, the time allocated to training is effectively seven weeks: week six is consumed by site visits, and the final week is dedicated to administrative matters, such as living allowances, training evaluations, and final language tests.
- The Volunteers receive their site assignments in the sixth week of PST when it is too late to acquire sufficient training in a local language.

The inability to speak the local language hurts the ability of Volunteers to integrate into their communities, gain the trust of the community members, and work productively with them. Without a basic facility in the local language, Volunteers find it difficult to get to know people, communicate ideas, and transfer skills. Volunteers perceive that they have a short window after their arrival to gain the trust of people in their local community. That trust is attained, in part, by an ability to interact with people in their language. One Volunteer summarized the comments of many of them: “Volunteers could be three or five times more effective after PST if they speak the local language... I give my animations in Fulfulde but it takes me a day or two to translate it and memorize it. Even

if you can give the presentation, we cannot answer their questions. I need someone to translate questions before I can respond.”

The post’s agroforestry project plan states: “Volunteers can be provided with training and support to complete their assignments. Volunteers are provided with a 12-week pre-service training to prepare them in language, technical, cross-cultural, and personal health/safety requirements...” This plan is not being implemented.¹²

We recommend:

- 16. That the post determine sites earlier in PST so that Volunteers with intermediate French skills can begin studying the appropriate local language.**
- 17. That the post hire additional language trainers to teach local languages that will be the most useful to the greatest number of Volunteers.**

Grand North Issues

Safety and Security

Volunteers generally feel safe, except when traveling. Highway assaults by gangs of armed bandits have been an ongoing problem, especially in the Grand North.¹³ The bandits target vehicles on the main commercial routes and on market days when they know that people are carrying more cash than usual. These bandits operate out of areas close to the borders of Chad, Central African Republic, and Nigeria. According to the report filed by the PCSSO, “the government of Cameroon has been somewhat successful in breaking up these gangs using paramilitary forces stationed in close proximity to the borders.” Peace Corps vehicles have not yet been targets of the bandits, but one Volunteer was in a commercial vehicle that was hijacked near the Nigerian border.

Volunteers are violating the out-of-site policy.

Volunteers reported widespread and frequent abuse of the out-of-site policy, including several incidents of extended and unreported absences. The Volunteers told us that they can easily leave their sites for long periods of time without detection. When we queried staff, they acknowledged that this was possible.

The country director has attempted to reduce out-of-site policy violations by announcing a zero-tolerance policy and then enforcing it by administratively separating several Volunteers who were caught out-of-site without authorization. According to PC/Cameroon’s Volunteer Leave Policy, “Volunteers must apply for leave from site for ANY [emphasis added] day which is a normal Cameroon workday.” Volunteers are also

¹² We address the length of PST in Recommendation no. 11.

¹³ PCSSO trip report, February 2006

required to get the permission of their site supervisors. The Policy and Procedures Handbook is distributed to every Volunteer during PST, and the out-of-site policy is specifically mentioned by trainers during PST. Volunteers can notify staff by telephone, e-mail, or SMS message; they can call the duty phone, their program staff, the safety and security coordinator, the country director, or Peace Corps Medical Officer (PCMO).

Although the post has tried to clamp down, the problem persists. Volunteers said that they understood and accepted the need for the policy, but did not always comply. We find that out-of-site violations are most common when Volunteers have unstructured assignments in which neither they nor their host are clear about they are expected to do.

PC/Cameroon is overly reliant on cell phones as their primary means of communicating with Volunteers.

Volunteers, especially in the North and Extreme North provinces, expressed concern about the unreliability of cell phone signals in their sites. They often have to walk a fair distance or move to a higher location to find cell phone coverage. The regional Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer (PCSSO) noted a similar concern over the ability of Volunteers and staff to communicate via cell phone during an emergency.¹⁴

The post's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) procedures include a back-up system of land lines and messages via bush taxis. This system, however, has not been tested. The potential risk of an emergency in this region is high: Chad and Central African Republic are located to the east, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea are to the south and southwest, and Nigeria flanks its western border. Volunteers were evacuated from Chad in April 2006 after rebels advanced on N'Djamena, the capital.

We recommend:

- 18. That the post clarify in an memorandum of understanding with all host organizations their responsibility for Volunteers' assignments, their responsibility to report absences from site, and their responsibility to show a need for the presence of a Volunteer as a requisite for placement.**
- 19. That the post conduct the next EAP communication test using only fixed landlines, high frequency radios, and bush taxis, as outlined in the EAP.**
- 20. That the post provide Volunteers in remote areas with alternative communication systems, such as global satellite positioning telephones.**

¹⁴ PCSSO Trip report, February 2006.

Volunteers in the Grand North do not have prompt access to post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

In the absence of a PCMO, the regional office in the Grand North cannot stock or dispense the PEP. Volunteers who believe they are at risk of HIV transmission have 72 hours to begin taking the PEP. According to the PCMO, they ask the Volunteers to call them immediately and describe why they think they are at risk. At that point, the PCMO instructs the Volunteer to travel to Yaounde and calls the Office of Medical Services (OMS) in Washington for permission to administer the PEP. By the time the Volunteers have arrived in Yaounde, the PCMO has a response from OMS and can begin the treatment. Volunteers usually remain in Yaounde for a few days of monitoring by the medical staff.

The window of 72 hours should be sufficient for all Volunteers in Cameroon to reach the Peace Corps office in Yaounde. In reality, though, travel for many Volunteers in the Grand North may put them at unnecessary risk. Air service between Yaounde and the Grand North is unreliable. Volunteers must take a combination of bush taxis and a train. The train ride takes at least 17 hours on a good day and some Volunteers reported that they were stuck on the train for over 25 hours. Given the nature of the circumstances under which Volunteers may be exposed to HIV, not every Volunteer will seek treatment immediately. Some may delay before deciding to acknowledge exposure. Any delay for Volunteers in the Grand North can put them at risk of exceeding the 72-hour window for treatment.

Having in place a health services system that meets the Volunteers' basic health care needs is one of the most fundamental requirements of a Peace Corps country program. Volunteers must feel confident that their PCMO and staff are providing them with the essential tools to maintain their health and will take care of them in a medical or other emergency.¹⁵

We recommend:

21. That the post address the concerns of the Volunteers in the Grand North over their access to the PEP by ensuring that Volunteers in the Grand North do not have to travel to obtain the PEP medication.

Agroforestry Volunteers in the Grand North feel they need more practical skills training.

While 85% of the Volunteers who responded to the OIG survey rated their PST technical training as effective or very effective, several of the agroforestry Volunteers whom we interviewed in the Grand North felt that the training did not provide them with the skills necessary to work effectively with their farmers. They felt that the technical sessions

¹⁵ Indicators of a High Performing Post, p. 264.

were too abstract and did not include enough hands-on experience and practical knowledge.

For example, a lesson on composting was “a good activity but it was something where people could have participated more. When we went to a local nursery, the trainer showed us how to graft a tree, but we never had the opportunity to do it ourselves. We needed more hands-on experience with transplanting and working with income-generating species such as Senegalese acacia.”

Volunteers were critical of the teaching ability of the principal trainer; they felt that he was more suitable for a university classroom than the hands-on nature of Peace Corps technical training. The Volunteers were also critical of the Volunteers who assisted with pre-service training (PST). They did not know the material well enough and lacked teaching skills to be helpful. One Volunteer described PST as the “blind leading the blind.”

The APCD/Agroforestry did not conduct many sessions at PST. PST occurs at a time when he is finalizing sites. He reported that he had limited input into the content and format of the technical sessions, and when he wants to give the training staff feedback and suggestions, he must pass his comments through the country director. He has a larger role in IST which the Volunteers rated more favorably. The Volunteers reported that the technical sessions were hands-on, thereby giving the Volunteers techniques that they could use with the farmers. Second, they appreciated the APCD/Agroforestry’s mastery of the topics and his ability to teach.

When asked to respond to the comments of the Volunteers, the APCD/Agroforestry explained that the opportunities for hands-on training at the training site in the North are limited. PC/Cameroon has not been training in the North long enough to have developed the demonstration farms such as those PC/Cameroon uses in the south. The Trainees also arrive for PST in September when there is not much agricultural activity because of the dry season. They do this so that Volunteers arrive at their sites in January when the rains begin.

If Volunteers are not adequately prepared to work with farmers, they may miss opportunities in their first year and have to wait until the second rainy season to accomplish their goals. One Volunteer commented that “the first year is horrible. I think the majority of us are lost. I feel more efficient in my second year, but it has taken 1 ½ years to get here.”

Technical support to agroforestry Volunteers in the Grand North is inadequate.

Thirty-six percent of agroforestry Volunteers in the Grand North responding to the OIG Volunteer survey indicated that they are “not satisfied” with technical advice or feedback about their work. The programming and training assistant (PTA) assigned to the Grand North does not have the time or technical expertise to meet the technical demands of the agroforestry Volunteers. The Volunteers regard the agroforestry Associate Peace Corps

Director (APCD) as technically proficient but too far away to provide effective technical support to Volunteers in the Grand North. Volunteers have turned to fellow Volunteers for support, but have found this an unsatisfactory solution, because “the problems [technical inadequacies] tend to perpetuate themselves.”

Technical support is especially important to Volunteers when they lack confidence in their pre-service technical training.

We recommend:

- 22. That the post complete all site development before PST begins.**
- 23. That the APCD/Agroforestry be responsible for agroforestry technical training at PST.**
- 24. That the post modify the agroforestry PST curriculum to include more hands-on training and techniques applicable to conditions in the Grand North.**
- 25. That the post place staff in the Grand North who can provide technical support to agroforestry Volunteers in the region.**

POST STAFFING

At the time of our review, there were thirty-four full time staff positions at the post. The country director was on medical leave for most of our visit.

Table 4: Staff Listing as of March 2006

Position	Status
Country director	USDH
APCD/SED	USDH
APCD/Health	USDH
Admin Officer	FSN
Cashier	FSN
APCD/TEFL	FSN
APCD/Math-Science	FSN
APCD/Agriculture	FSN
Property Manager	PSC
Training Officer	PSC
PTA	PSC
Admin Assistant	PSC
Admin Clerk	PSC
General Services Officer	PSC
Supply Clerk	PSC
Mailroom Clerk	PSC
Volunteer Records	PSC
Receptionist	PSC
Medical Officer	PSC
Medical Officer	PSC/TCN
Nurse	PSC
Medical Secretary	PSC
Lab Technician	PSC
P&T Assistant	PSC
P&T Assistant	PSC
Executive Secretary	PSC
Program Secretary	PSC
Admin Logistics	PSC
Driver	PSC
Janitor	PSC
Janitor	PSC
Janitor	PSC

Source: PC/Cameroon, 2006

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the region stipulate corrective actions to address the problems with the country director.
2. That the region require the country director to submit quarterly reports on the corrective actions.
3. That the post develop a strategic plan for implementing the ICT project in consultation with the Ministry of Education.
4. That the post only assign ICT Volunteers to computer centers and teaching resource centers that are adequately equipped and staffed to host a Volunteer.
5. That the post revise the VAD for the ICT program to reflect the actual responsibilities and activities of the Volunteers.
6. That the post effect a memorandum of understanding, or other mechanism, with the ICT host organizations clarifying the project goals and the expectations for the ICT program.
7. That staff develop new site selection criteria for micro-credit banks, including corruption criteria, to ensure that Volunteers will have viable work assignments.
8. That the post prepare memoranda of understanding with every host organization to set clear expectations of the host organization and the Volunteers.
9. That PC/Cameroon develop training modules to help the Volunteers cope with corruption at their work sites.
10. That staff identify another host organization that can be a partner in Volunteers' work with small business entrepreneurs.
11. That the post revise the health and agroforestry projects to require and accept more skilled Volunteers and significantly increase the length of PST, e.g., 12 weeks, the time within PST devoted to technical training, and the quality of technical training.
12. That staff develop new criteria and procedures for selecting sites and preparing host organizations and housing. The criteria and preparation procedures should ensure the following elements:
 - Host organizations are sufficiently active in their area of work to provide a Volunteer with meaningful work.
 - Host organizations have good reputations in their community and among their peer group.
 - Supervisors have demonstrated a clear need for a Volunteer and provided a work plan for a Volunteer.

- A memorandum of understanding or other mechanism that defines the host organization's and Volunteer's role and responsibilities has been prepared.
 - Housing is ready before a Volunteer is sent to site.
13. That the post provide regular and constructive feedback to Volunteers' quarterly reports.
 14. That the country director work with the APCDs to set guidelines and goals for site visits and technical support, and articulate these guidelines to the Volunteers.
 15. That the post take corrective action to assure that Volunteers receive their allowances on time.
 16. That the post determine sites earlier in PST so that Volunteers with intermediate French skills can begin studying the appropriate local language.
 17. That the post hire additional language trainers to teach local languages that will be the most useful to the greatest number of Volunteers.
 18. That the post clarify in an memorandum of understanding with all host organizations their responsibility for Volunteers' assignments, their responsibility to report absences from site, and their responsibility to show a need for the presence of a Volunteer as a requisite for placement.
 19. That the post conduct the next EAP communication test using only fixed landlines, high frequency radios, and bush taxis, as outlined in the EAP.
 20. That the post provide Volunteers in remote areas with alternative communication systems, such as global satellite positioning telephones.
 21. That the post address the concerns of the Volunteers in the Grand North over their access to the PEP by ensuring that Volunteers in the Grand North do not have to travel to obtain the PEP medication.
 22. That the post complete all site development before PST begins.
 23. That the APCD/Agroforestry be responsible for agroforestry technical training at PST.
 24. That the post modify the agroforestry PST curriculum to include more hands-on training and techniques applicable to conditions in the Grand North.
 25. That the post place staff in the Grand North who can provide technical support to agroforestry Volunteers in the region.

Appendix A

Region's Response to the Preliminary Report



DATE: September 15, 2006

TO: David Kotz, IG

FROM: Henry McKoy, RD/AF *Henry McKoy*

CC: David Liner, Acting Chief of Staff
Robert Strauss, CD Cameroon
Courtney Santonicola, CCO
Lynn Foden, CRO/AF
Julie Bohn, CDO/CDU

SUBJECT: Africa Region's Response to the OIG Preliminary Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Cameroon

The following responses reflect the consensus of the Africa Region.

Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That the region stipulates corrective action to address the problems with the country director.

Response: **Concur.**

The Regional Director has conferred with the Country Director to address the issue of low staff morale and their concerns regarding being fired without cause. The Regional Director has instructed the Country Director that he needs to work with local staff to improve morale at post, and that no staff members should fear being fired.

The Regional Director met earlier with Cameroon Peace Corps staff while the Country Director was on leave. He assured them that no staff member would be terminated. The Regional Director will continue to work with the Country Director to monitor improvements in staff morale, with the goal of making improvements in relationships between the CD and his staff.

Region will continue to monitor this situation throughout the remaining months of the Country Directors five year tour, which ends in February 2007.

Recommendation 2: That the region require the country director to submit quarterly reports on the corrective actions.

Response: Concur.

Post has conferred with region on this recommendation; as a result the Country Director will submit quarterly reports to the Regional Director updating him on the progress in areas identified in recommendation 1.

Recommendation 3: That the post develop a strategic plan for implementing the ICT project in consultation with the Ministry of Education.

Response: Concur

Consultations have been ongoing with the Ministries of Education (MoE) and the Education Steering Committee (ESC) since the project plan review meeting held in October 2004. It is expected that a plan will be completed and agreed to by December 2006.

Recommendation 4: That the post only assign ICT Volunteers to computer centers and teaching resource centers that are adequately equipped and staffed to host a Volunteer.

Response: Partially Concur

Requiring Post to place PCVs only at centers that are, in a western sense, adequately equipped and staffed would dramatically reduce the number of potential sites for education volunteers. Indeed, establishing such a standard in all Peace Corps/Cameroon projects would result in a significantly reduced program.

Peace Corps/Cameroon's goal is to post volunteers where there is the greatest need, and where they are likely to have a productive experience. Facilities that are "adequately staffed" by local staff do not, de facto, meet this important criteria. "Adequately equipped" is a relative term, one that could mean a cutting edge facility (in a urban environment) or one with erratic power and a handful of aging computers (in a rural setting). We believe that Peace Corps/Cameroon's criteria for post selection is currently adequate and representative of the realities in Cameroon.

Additionally, experience has shown that the vast majority of education volunteers desire to be placed where their work is truly valued and needed. They seek this type of challenge.

If Post were to alter its current direction, volunteers will feel undervalued, underutilized and that they are taking jobs from qualified yet unemployed Cameroonians. Schools that have extensive computer labs and are fully staffed have no need for volunteers. Currently, most schools are just acquiring computers. The MoE looks to Peace Corps to help with the training of the ICT teachers. Even the few

well-equipped institutions can be short-staffed and find volunteer input extremely valuable because of the PCVs' hands-on experience and enthusiasm.

Recommendation 5: That the Post revise the VAD for the ICT program to reflect the actual responsibilities and activities of the volunteers.

Response: Concur

VADS have already been revised accordingly based on the draft education project plan. The Education Steering Committee will review them at the IST in mid-December 2006.

Recommendation 6: That the Post effect an MOU, or other mechanism with the ICT host organizations clarifying the project goals and the expectations for the ICT program.

Response: Concur

A revised MoU is being prepared by the APCD, the MoE, and the Education Steering Committee. This will be discussed at the next ESC meeting in mid-December.

Recommendation 7: That staff develop new site selection for micro-credit banks, including corruption criteria, to ensure that volunteers will have viable work assignments

Response: Concur

The new SED APCD has made it a priority to reduce problems with corrupt staff at partner institutions and to strengthen partner relations. The SED project currently has an extensive site selection process for micro-credit banks and other partner institutions.

When selecting sites for the SED program, Peace Corps/Cameroon requires the partner institution (usually a community bank or credit union) to submit a formal request for a volunteer that details institutional and community needs, demonstrates an understanding of the role of the volunteer, and provides a detailed list of work that the PCV can do. Each site is visited by the APCD before posting to observe the work environment, interview staff, and to talk to people in the community. The APCD, in turn, explains the role of the volunteer and clarifies expectations. Any history between the host institution and previous PCVs is also carefully considered when selecting sites. Post will ensure PCVs will not be placed with host institutions with a proven corruption history. Finally, the APCD consults with the parent institution that provides oversight to the bank or credit union to verify that there are no known corruption issues.

Community banking in Cameroon is and will continue to be a challenge. Cameroon is regularly cited as one of the world's most corrupt business environments with corrupt practices affecting virtually every aspect of daily life. Corrupt practices and corrupt individuals regularly evade detection by professional oversight and regulatory bodies. Peace Corps/Cameroon does not have the capacity to discover corruption where such organizations cannot. Peace Corps will however monitor the work environment of Volunteers. Often, it is only after a volunteer has been at post for a lengthy period that unacceptable practices are discovered.

Peace Corps Cameroon strives to place PCVs in situations where staff are motivated, transparent, and open to collaboration. Peace Corps' major partners are the two largest MFI networks in Cameroon, one of which was created in the 1960s with the assistance of USAID and Peace Corps. PC/Cameroon strives to collaborate with structures that have been able to persist over time through legitimate and effective business practices.

As listed above, Peace Corps Cameroon has appropriate practices in place to select effective partners and viable work opportunities for SED PCVs. However, more can be done to carry out these practices to their fullest extent. Even when there are problems, PCVs can serve effectively as ethical role models in their workplaces and communities. Peace Corps Cameroon will continue to work attentively to prepare volunteers with appropriate expectations for the realities that they will certainly face during their service. SED PCTs have been provided with a copy of *Greaseless, How to Thrive without Bribes in Developing Countries*. In future PST/ISTs we will use this book in conjunction with sessions that have been developed by the EMA region.

Recommendation 8: That the Post prepare memoranda of understanding with every host organization to set clear expectations of the host organizations and the volunteers

Response: **Concur**

Peace Corps/Cameroon has a long-standing policy of establishing MoUs with every partner organization. Currently these include:

1. Ten MoUs with organizations collaborating in the agroforestry project covering all 27 agro PCVs.
2. Seven MoUs with organizations collaborating in the health project covering all 26 health PCVs (including one Crisis Corps volunteer)¹
3. 14 MoUs with organizations collaborating in the SED project covering all 21 SED PCV/Ts.
4. A blanket MoU with the Government of Cameroon (MoE) that covers all PCV/Ts working in education. This MoU will be revised in FY 07 to include greater specificity regarding teaching hours and absences from work.

Even though in existing MoUs roles and expectations are clearly spelled out, it is true that collaborating organizations do not always abide by their agreements. Post will continue to impress upon partners the importance of their fulfilling their obligations.

¹ Two of the seven MoUs are with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Given that Peace Corps/Cameroon has existing MoUs with all collaborators, we see no need to prepare new ones (with the exception of the one covering education PCVs) as this would entail significant time and expense with little demonstrably different outcome from the status quo.

Recommendation 9: That PC/Cameroon develop training modules to help the volunteers cope with corruption at their work sites

Response: Concur

This was implemented prior to the evaluation team visit.

PCTs are given two formal sessions on corruption with practical input from volunteers and staff. Copies of the training modules were shared with the evaluation team.

Recommendation 10: That staff identify another host organization that can be a partner in volunteers' work with small business entrepreneurs.

Response: Concur

Since its inception in 1999, the SED project has worked with a variety of partners. These include: Solidarity Savings and Loans Limited (SSL), Cameroon Cooperative Credit Union League Limited (CamCCUL), Micro-Finance and Development (MIFED), Appropriate Development for Africa Foundation (ADAF), *Caisse Populaire pour L'Agriculture et le Commerce* (CPAC), National Investment and Savings Cameroon (NIS,) and *Mutuelle Communautaires de Croissance* (MC2). We continue to work with CamCCUL, MC2, ADAF, and MIFED. CamCCUL's start was facilitated by USAID and the Peace Corps, and has been in existence since the early 1960s. It is the largest association of credit unions and community banks in Cameroon. ADAF is the regulatory NGO that supervises and audits MC2 branches. As a regulatory body, ADAF has been deeply involved in recommending posts for volunteer placement. ADAF's position of oversight and diligence has arguably made the MC2 system one of the most successful in all of Africa. The majority of SED volunteers in Cameroon are posted with MC2 community banks, which is sponsored by the Afriland Bank, headed by Dr. Paul Fokam, who, in 2005, was the first businessman ever to be honored with Germany's Africa Prize for his sponsorship of MC2.

Recently Post has explored the possibility of partnering with local and international NGOs that share a similar mission of community economic development. One of our new trainees will be assigned to a local NGO, *Centre pour l'Education, la Formation, et l'Appui aux Initiatives de Développement au Cameroun* (CEFAID). SED volunteers have also been collaborating in the field with the Gatsby Foundation, Plan International, and CARE. In the future, we may create more official partnerships with these organizations. Peace Corps is familiar with almost all SED organizations of any

standing in Cameroon and will continue to explore the possibility of partnering with others as they develop.

Recommendation 11: That Post revise the health and agroforestry projects to require and accept more skilled volunteers and significantly increase the length of PST, e.g., 12 weeks, the time within PST devoted to technical training, and the quality of technical training.

Response: **Partially Concur**

The quality of technical training in the health project, is undergoing continuous modification for improvement. The health APCD works closely with the technical trainers, volunteer steering committees and PST training design teams to incorporate volunteer feedback provided at the end of PST. During IST and COS workshops feedback is again solicited to ensure that each PST builds on the experiences and lessons learned from previous years. Additionally each year the Training Officer, assisted by the APCD, reassesses the trainers' capacities and brings on board new trainers when necessary. Preparation of the AF/HE October-December 2006 PSTs is already underway. We expect that the quality of this year's PST will surpass that of last year's technical training as has been the case for several years running.

We concur that post will require and accept more skilled volunteers, but will do so within the approved 11 week PST period. The health and agroforestry PST is currently 11 weeks long. Operating Plan guidance does not allow for PSTs of 12 weeks.² PST final evaluations and follow-up evaluations (conducted during IST three to four months after swearing-in) consistently confirm that the 11-week PST is appropriate. In fact, many PCT/PCV evaluations indicate that PST could be reduced as "absorption" of information diminishes in direct relationship to the length of PST.

Even if there were a provision for a 12-week PST, Post would not be able to concur with this recommendation for several reasons:

Adding an additional week to PST will not rectify the problem of Post being asked to accept under-skilled, under-experienced and immature invitees.

Post currently does not receive adequate numbers of invitees to fill PSTs under current skill requirements, let alone increased ones. Post accepts these underskilled, inexperienced invitees out of concern that if it does not, it will be perceived as uncooperative.³ More specifically, in FY 06, even the limited number of skilled health and agroforestry PCTs (four 154s and seven 100s) requested cannot be met. Post has therefore been asked to accept greater numbers of less skilled PCTs.

² Current guidance is 11 weeks in non-Anglophone countries and 10 weeks in Anglophone countries. As French and English are official languages in Cameroon, both guidelines apply here.

³ The average age of the current Q4 invitees is under 24. Removing the one middle aged invitee lowers the average age to less than 23. Such a young group, de facto, cannot possess the skills required in Cameroon for professional credibility.

Additionally, experience shows that PCTs' technical experience is not the most important indicator of subsequent successful service. Openness, motivation, enthusiasm, optimism, and the ability to self-start and self-manage are much stronger predictors of productive service.

Post would be very pleased to receive more skilled PCTs. The reality is that they are not being offered to Post. If the recommendation intends that Post should not accept less skilled PCTs, Post is willing to do so with the understanding that TI will not be met.

Post acknowledges this is a recruitment issue and will work closely with them to achieve higher skilled Volunteers.

For more on the quality of the agroforestry technical training, please see the response to recommendation 23.

Recommendation 12: That staff develop new criteria and procedures for selecting sites and preparing host organizations and housing. The criteria and preparation procedures should ensure the following elements:

- Host organizations are sufficiently active in their area of work to provide a volunteer with meaningful work;
- Host organizations have good reputations in their community and among their peer group;
- Supervisors have demonstrated a clear need for a volunteer and provided a work plan for a volunteer;
- A memorandum of understanding, or other mechanism, that defines the host organization's and volunteer's role and responsibilities has been prepared;
- Housing is ready before a volunteer is sent to site.

Response: **Concur**

Over the course of the past year, the PC/Cameroon staff has been working to improve and standardize site development criteria across projects. The following actions have been or are being taken to ensure enhanced site selection and development practices – including all five elements recommended by the OIG.

- As an initial step in site selection, Post requires a formal letter of request from the community and host organization that includes a community needs and resources and a proposed volunteer work description. Each project has a specific request letter format that is issued to interested communities and organizations. [In practice.]
- Staff visits viable interested posts and conducts a formal site prospection. As part of this visit, staff interviews local administrators and proposed collaborators to ensure that the host organization is a credible one. [Now in practice.]

- Each host organization is required to submit a detailed scope of work for the incoming volunteer that is reviewed and approved by the APCD. In addition, action plans are submitted every three months over the course of the volunteer's service. [Implemented across projects, June 2006.]
- A memorandum of understanding, or other mechanism, that defines the host organization's and the volunteer's role and responsibilities exists for all posts – either with the local host organization or with the Government Ministry encompassing the work. [In practice.]
- Housing is ready before a volunteer is sent to site. APCDs collect keys at least two weeks before the PCV is sent to site. [Implemented June 2006 for SED/ED Swearing-In August 2006.] For additional information, see Post response to recommendation 22.

Recommendation 13: That the Post provide regular and constructive feedback to volunteers' quarterly reports.

Response: **Concur**

Post will establish a monitoring system to track receipt of and response to volunteer quarterly reports. The Country Director will instruct APCDs to copy him on each response. To be implemented by September 1, 2006

Recommendation 14: That the Country Director work with the APCDs to set the guidelines and goals for site visits and technical support, and articulate these guidelines to the volunteers

Response: **Concur**

This has been and will remain a key responsibility for each APCD. The Country Director has drawn APCDs' attention to this matter on numerous occasions over the last four years. Our site visit policy, last revised in March 2006, is included at the end of this memo.

Recommendation 15:

That the Post take corrective action to assure that volunteers receive their allowances on time.

Response: **Concur**

The following steps are being taken by Post to ensure the timely deposit of payments to volunteers:

- Post submits payment requests to IFO at least two months before payment is due, usually right after the quarterly budget upload is actually transferred
- It takes an average of one month for a single global check to be cut by Standard Chartered in the US and sent to Post
- It takes three to four working days for Standard Chartered/Cameroon to cut separate checks to the various banks where volunteers have their accounts
- Post then deposits those checks at the volunteers' respective banks with lists of volunteers and their account numbers at those banks. It then takes local banks a minimum of five working days to credit each volunteer's account.
- Three days after checks are deposited, Post makes a follow up visit to the banks to check on the status of transfers.
- When there is any change in the payment schedule, which is included in detail in the *Peace Corps/Cameroon Volunteer Handbook*, volunteers are informed well in advance so they can avoid unnecessary travel to their banks

On occasion, PCVs change their banks or bank accounts without informing Peace Corps/Cameroon. When that occurs, checks are held at the Yaoundé office until the PCV provides the needed information. It also happens that due to local bank errors, a volunteer may not receive his/her allowances at the same time as others. In all such cases, the local bank is contacted to identify problems/solutions. When informed by a PCV of a delayed payment problem, Post can and does wire funds to help tide the PCV over.⁴

Post believes that this system is as good as can be devised given Peace Corps' current financial system and the banking infrastructure that exists in Cameroon. EFT payments direct from the USA would, of course, speed up the entire process by removing many of the steps that now exist.

⁴ It is Post's experience that almost all financial problems experienced by PCVs are the result of poor personal financial planning and/or the PCV's failure to advise the Yaoundé office of a problem.

Recommendation 16: That Post determine sites earlier in PST so that volunteers with intermediate French skills can begin studying the local appropriate language.

Response: **Do Not Concur**

While we recognize the importance of site development in a timely manner this recommendation would affect very few PCTs and would result in significant expense in annually recruiting and training local language instructors whose instruction may be of no ultimate benefit to the PCV. We agree that the best possible language training be provided to the PCTs; however we disagree about the best time to introduce this training.

A very small number of PCTs qualify for local language training early in PST. Most Cameroon PCTs do not make the French language level (intermediate mid for Anglophone posts, intermediate high for Francophone posts) until the last weeks of PST. (Approximately 10% of every training class must be held behind after swearing-in for additional instruction.⁵)

Post is constrained in the teaching of local languages at several levels including the following:

Cameroon has over 240 different local languages.

There is no single *lingua franca*⁶ spoken in Cameroon as in some other African nations.

OpsPlan guidance limits the ratio of language trainers to PCTs to 1:4. (Under FY 07 guidance the ratio falls to 1:5.) This limitation makes it difficult to engage enough French language instructors even before any consideration is given to local languages.

As noted above, very few PCTs arrive with any functional French.

Many local populations in Cameroon are highly heterogeneous, making it less than clear which would be the appropriate local language to teach. One could teach Fulfulde in PST only to find that six months down the line, the PCV really needs Chadian Arabic.

Finding and training local language instructors is highly problematic given the huge number of distinct local languages. Post does not have the resources to train different individuals each year as instructors or to provide the one-on-one instruction that would be required as virtually all sites in Cameroon have their own local language. Even if Post could provide this level of training, doing so would be an inefficient use of resources as PCTs often ET during the PST

⁵ In FY 04, 27 members of a training group of 32 arrived with no French skills at all.

⁶ *Lingua franca* - Language spoken across the country. The preliminary report reflects a view that languages such as Pidgin and Fulfulde are standardized and widely spoken in Cameroon without regional variation. That view is incorrect.

time period and PCVs often find themselves using languages different from those that might be anticipated in PST.

Because of these constraints, advancing site selection will not allow for additional local language instruction.

Peace Corps/Cameroon emphasizes French because a strong conversational use of French is necessary for a PCV to be safe and self-sufficient no matter where s/he is posted as the vast majority of local authorities and law enforcement officials in Cameroon are French speakers. Substituting resources for local language versus French instruction will diminish PCT/PCV's ability to live and travel safely in Cameroon.

See response to Recommendation 17 for additional information.

Recommendation 17: That Post hire additional language trainers to teach local languages that will be the most useful to the greatest number of volunteers

Response: **Concur**

Post follows Regions, FY 07 guidance, which limits the instructor to trainee ratio at 1:5, a 25% increase in the teaching load for each instructor vis-à-vis years past. Post would like to hire an additional language instructor and will request additional funding from the Region.

Were additional funding made available, Post would first use such funding to increase the number of French instructors which would help the majority of PCTs reach the French level earlier in PST.

Instead of studying local languages prematurely during PST, volunteers are encouraged to hire a local language tutor as soon as they get to their sites. Volunteers currently receive reimbursement of up to 15,000 CFA per month during the first 12 months of PCV service for language instruction; however, experience shows that very few PCVs avail themselves of this resource.⁷ To the contrary the vast majority of volunteers who continue language instruction do so to advance their ability in French, not to learn a local language. Additionally, experience shows that the linguistically adept easily acquire local language on their own (or with some instruction) while those who struggle with language will struggle even when extensive one-to-one instruction is provided.

Cameroon is one of the most linguistically diverse nations in Africa. Finding, training and retaining local language instructors would be extraordinary cost-ineffective and time-consuming.

⁷ Since 2003, only one out of five PCVs has availed themselves of this continuing education opportunity. Of those, extremely few continued their instruction for more than a few weeks.

Recommendation 18:

That the Post clarify in an memorandum of understanding with all host organizations their responsibility for volunteers' assignments, their responsibility to report absences from site, and their responsibility to show a need for the presence of a volunteer as a requisite for placement.

Response: Concur

Post currently has 32 MoUs in effect with counterpart organizations that cover this recommendation's points with the exception of reporting absences from site, which Post will add to future MoUs.⁸

During the past many years, PC/Cameroon has developed and improved MoUs with host institutions. Steps taken include:

- Reviewing requests for volunteers from institutions and visiting those institutions to understand their profile.
- Assessing the volunteer niche in the institution and agreeing on volunteer tasks
- Developing an MoU that defines the individual roles and responsibilities of the volunteer and the host institution as well as the mutually shared roles and responsibilities of PC/Cameroon and the host institution.

To insure that all parties abide by the MoUs, volunteers and host institution staff revisit them during PSTs, ISTs and site visits.

The entire process could be improved if additional funding were made available to increase the length and frequency of workshops with counterparts, which would increase and reinforce their understanding of Peace Corps making it possible for them to more objectively report on volunteer performance. To address this Post will ask Region to fund an additional counterpart workshop.

Recommendation 19:

That the Post conduct the next EAP communication test using only fixed landlines, high frequency radios and bush taxis as outlined in the EAP.

Response: Concur

This recommendation was implemented during the EAP test conducted May 2-8, 2006.

⁸ Given the deference that is accorded to foreigners in Cameroon, it is highly unlikely that many counterpart organizations will honor this provision. Post believes it is more effective and realistic for APCDs to contact their PCVs and their counterparts monthly as a way of making sure that PCVs are at their sites and on duty. This is current Peace Corps/Cameroon policy.

Recommendation 20:

That the Post provide volunteers in remote area with alternative communication systems, such as global satellite positioning telephones.

Response: **Concur**

Peace Corps/Cameroon would like to implement this recommendation. Since 2002, Post has repeatedly requested additional GPS sat phones, however they have not been provided in adequate numbers.⁹

To implement this recommendation will require as many as 20 sat phones. Implementation will occur as soon as funding is made available and a general policy is provided for the issuance of sat phones to volunteers.

Recommendation 21:

That the Post address the concerns of the volunteers in the Grand North over their access to the PEP by ensuring that volunteers in the Grand North do not have to travel to obtain the PEP medication.

Response: **Concur**

It will not be possible to avoid travel in conjunction with PEP until Post is authorized to issue PEP to each PCV for self-administration as is allowed with malaria medications. However, it could be possible to reduce the amount of travel a Grand North PCV would need to undertake to receive PEP. This would entail provisioning trusted local medical providers in the Grand North with PEP as well as training on how to administer it. This will require guidance from the Office of Medical Services.

Assuming such permission is granted, protocols will be developed with trusted medical providers in the Grand North. Use of PEP would be allowed only upon approval by a PCMO.

A proposed timeline for implementation of this action is:

September 2006 - seek permission from OMS to leave PEP with trusted medical providers in the Grand North.

October 2006 - hold formal discussions and training with the same individuals and institutions in the Grand North before distribution of PEP.

⁹ The four sat phones provided to Post by HQ in 2005 did not include GPS technology.

Recommendation 22: That the Post complete all site development before PST begins.

Response: Do Not Concur

The policy recommended by the IG was implemented at the direction of the Country Director several years ago. The policy was unsuccessful due to ETs that occurred during PST that resulted in unnecessary expenditure of government resources readying homes that were ultimately not used. The policy also led to disappointment at the community level when no PCV was placed due to a PCT ET.

Additionally, some sites are selected and are made available by the community within a timeframe that makes it economically viable for them. Communities cannot be expected to rent or make housing available 6-8 weeks before PCVs are to arrive. Such a requirement would cause financial hardship on communities and may cause Post to turn down very good sites.

Post's current policy is that site development should be complete by the PST site visit which typically takes place between weeks four and six of PST. This policy also enables PCTs to provide feedback to training, program and administrative staff if preparations have not yet been finalized. Post believes this policy to be adequate and appropriate.¹⁰

Recommendation 23: That the APCD agroforestry be responsible for agroforestry technical training at PST.

Response: Partially Concur

Using the APCD/Agro solely for this purpose would remove the APCD from PCV support and other functions for up to five months a year. Post will however utilize the APCD in PST to the extent that they can use him.

The technical trainer for agroforestry for the last six years holds a PhD in agroforestry from the University of Illinois and lived in the USA for ten years. He is a practicing farmer with extensive experience in humid highlands agriculture as well as Sahelian agriculture and is a highly regarded researcher.

The incumbent technical trainer's farm is one of the best locations in the country for hands-on Sahelian agroforestry training. Over the last six years he has received uniformly outstanding evaluations from PCTs. He is a dynamic teacher and innovator who created and implemented a "Kirkpatrick"-like feedback and assessment tool long before Peace Corps adopted it. For Peace Corps purposes, his qualifications are unequalled in Cameroon and probably in all of Central Africa.¹¹

¹⁰ The preliminary report noted that some PCVs homes were not ready for them upon arrival at site. This has happened rarely. What has happened and what was not clarified in the preliminary report is that sometimes a PCV doesn't like his/her house even though it meets Peace Corps/Cameroon criteria. That is not the same, however, as a suitable home not being ready.

¹¹ The evaluation team did not meet with the tech trainer for agroforestry.

The APCD/Agro, while an expert in his field, is more specialized in "humid highlands" agroforestry than in Sahelian agroforestry whereas the tech trainer has an encyclopedic knowledge of both.

Because his PCVs are remotely located and work in two entirely different climatic zones, the APCD/Agro has the greatest challenges of all Cameroon APCDs. Removing him from direct program responsibility for up to half a year each year will dramatically reduce the effectiveness of his PCV supervision.

Peace Corps/Cameroon is in fact enormously fortunate to have two such talented individuals cooperating within one program.¹²

Recommendation 24: That Post modify the agroforestry PST curriculum to include more hands-on training and techniques applicable to the conditions in the Grand North.

Response: **Concur**

The agroforestry training currently focuses predominantly on hands-on activities including demo-plots and individual nurseries set-up by trainees under the guidance of the technical trainer. These nurseries are closely monitored and evaluated throughout PST.¹³

Whereas Post would like to include still more hands-on activities, time constraints, including those taken up by other mandatory, non-technical PST activities (language, x-culture, safety, etc.), as well as the time it takes to reach some locations appropriate for hands-on activities, prevent Post from doing so. Additionally, while the timing of the agroforestry PST is currently optimized, it takes place during only one part of the growing season making it impossible to give PCTs hands-on exposure to all the conditions they will face during a full growing season.

¹² APCD Agro George Yebit received a Meritorious Honor Award from the State Department in 2005 for his outstanding work, one of very few FSN APCDs to be so honored in Cameroon. He has continued his notable contributions by planning and overseeing highly successful trainings in aulocode domestication and medicinal plants cultivation in 2006. These trainings have received excellent reviews and are supported by CARPE and the Center. APCD Yebit also conducted a program consultation/evaluation for Peace Corps/Benin that was extremely well received. His most recent Sahelian agroforestry class is the most productive in the history of the Cameroon agroforestry program (and has the lowest ET rate of any group in many, many years). His project plan was one of the first to be "green-lighted" under the new project plan evaluation system.

It is interesting to note that one of Cameroon's most professional, highly respected and knowledgeable APCDs was singled out for particularly harsh criticism in the IG's preliminary report. Similar observations can be made about the criticism of the training program headed by David Tiomajou who, in his work in Cameroon and in his consultations with other PC/AF countries, is regularly regarded as an exceptional trainer and administrator.

¹³ Curiously, in previous PST evaluations, PCTs complained that there was "too much" hands-on training that entailed too much physical exertion, which made it difficult for them to complete their non-technical training.

Within these limitations, Post will continue to incorporate as much hands-on training as is possible. The agroforestry training curriculum is a living document. Over the years, the focus has changed as individual, community and national priorities have changed. Trees take time to establish in the Grand North. Since the commencement of agroforestry in the Grand North just five year ago, there are already viable demonstration plots on farmers' fields that are used for hands-on training. Given the harshness of the growing and climatic conditions, this is a remarkable achievement.

Recommendation 25: That the Post place staff in the Grand North who can provide technical support to agroforestry volunteers in the region.

Response: **Concur**

Post has repeatedly suggested this in its IPBS submissions and in communication with region. Post awaits funding for implementation.

PEACE CORPS/CAMEROON
Policy and/or Procedure Memorandum

This memorandum when signed by the Country Director updates PC/Cameroon's in-country administrative policies, procedures, and practices.

Date: _____ Country Director Signature _____

Subject: Site Visit Policy

1. **Purpose:** This policy establishes the criteria for APCDs, PCMOs, SSC, P & T Assistants and the Country Director visiting volunteers during their service. It should serve as a guideline for Peace Corps staff and volunteers.
2. **Introduction:** Sites visits offer a unique opportunity for PCVs and senior staff to come together in the familiar surroundings in which the volunteer lives and works. This gives the volunteer a chance to highlight accomplishments first hand and explains both successes and shortfalls as they relate to volunteer service. And while the purpose of each site visit is not judgmental, it nonetheless allows the staff member an opportunity to evaluate how well the PCV is integrating into his/her community, the degree of independence in taking care of oneself and that basic hygienic and health concerns are being met.
3. **Policy:** In order to provide support to volunteers, it will be necessary for Peace Corps staff to visit each volunteer during their service. The nature of each visit by staff may determine who actually visits the volunteer and the frequency of such visits. The SSC will visit all volunteers at new sites during their first three months at post. APCDs are required to develop a list of tasks for new PCVs to accomplish at post during the first three months and results are to be presented at IST. Therefore, APCDs will make a visit to the first year volunteers before IST to ensure that they are settling in properly and understand their tasks for the first three months. Moreover, a volunteer can request a visit from his or her APCD at any moment during their service. Other types of visits that may not be directly related to specific programs are medical, which may be routine or emergency in nature, safety and security. These visits may not be time constrained. As a general rule programming related visits may last for one full day, while other types of visit may last for a half day or less. Peace Corps staff will make every effort to inform the volunteer of any visit in advance, but reserves the right to make unannounced visits if the need arises. As a general rule, new volunteers receive two program visits during the first year and second year volunteers receive one program visit.

A. PRE-VISIT PREPARATIONS

All visits with the exception of emergency visits will be required to prepare and pre departure action plan that will include things like, purpose, task to be accomplished, location of visit and the name of the PCV. Other prior departure items follows:

- Send out itinerary to inform PCVs & host supervisors.
- Gather materials and resources that may be requested by PCV obtainable in Yaoundé
- Review previous site visit notes.
- Pick up mail, packages & other goodies.

B. EXPECTATIONS DURING VISITS

Associate Peace Corps Director

APCD's visits will center on work related activities within the community and the host institution. Nonetheless, the general well-being of the PCV is equally the concern of the APCD and efforts to address any item affecting volunteer service will be undertaken. Below is a list of activities or actions that should occur during site visits by the APCD:

- Review the goals and objectives of the project with emphasis on accomplishments, constraints and failures.
- Observe the PCV in his/her work environment and the performance of his/her duty.
- Assess the level of support being given by host institution and counterparts/ HCN supervisors in community and at work.
- Take action to reinforce or foster counterpart collaboration when appropriate.
- Is the volunteer fully integrated into the community?
- Make some degree of determination of job satisfaction and overall happiness of volunteer.
- Volunteer health – personal hygiene-cleanliness of the house and surroundings, mosquito net, boiling of water, prophylaxis are being taken, etc.
- Volunteer safety – house is secure with safe havens, how safe the volunteer feels, general safety in the community?
- Review general safety at post and note any incidents of crime or other activities that might affect the volunteer.
- How do the people perceive the volunteer in the community?
- Review and provide clarification on Peace Corps policy issues when needed.
- PC/Property
- Review post book entries
- To provide instant feedback & note follow up actions to be carried out in Yaounde after the visit
- Protocol, make visits to officials, community leaders and other individuals directly implicated in the project and or associated with the Volunteers' integration in the community and host institution.

Medical, P & T Assistant and others

Other types of site visits that may occur are visits to PCVs by trainees during PST. This type of visit may occur twice during the volunteers service and is basically designed to assist the trainees understand the life and job of a Peace

Corps volunteer. Conditions and logistics are usually worked out by the training Officer during PST.

PCMO Site Visits

Each PCV should be visited by a PCMO, once during their service. The purpose of this visit is to:

- Appraise the health and safety of the PCVs living conditions
- Identify any potential health or security threats
- Recommend changes or improvements to the above two items
- Reinforce PC medical policies especially in respect to prevention of HIV, Malaria, Filariasis, Schistosomiasis, and safe drinking water
- See the PCVs in their homes and communities
- Address any perceived mental health issues
- Address current health concerns
- Visit and identify health facilities that meet approval for use by PCVs
- Visit and liaise with health facilities that are already recommended for use by PCVs
- Familiarize PCMO with local resources to enable efficient response to PCV health needs
- Collect information to enable the development of a needs lead health care program for PCVs

Peace Corps Volunteers

Each Peace Corps volunteer should undergo the following task before and during visits from Peace Corps staff:

- To be available at post.
- To be ready to discuss the above questions with the visitor.
- To inform HCN Supervisors of impending visits from Yaounde.
- To complete relevant site visit forms and sign them.
- To put on the table all problems being faced at post.
- To remind the Visitor of follow-up actions promised.
- Report all safety and security issues, i.e. crime or criminal activities at post.

C. Site Visit Tools

- Action Plan – Itinerary.
- PCV and Counterpart Site Visit Evaluation Forms.
- Site Visit Report at the completion of visit to be submitted to CD.

D. Things not to do during site visits

Site visit should be carried out with specific purpose and efforts should be made not to deviate from the nature of each visit. PCVs should understand that Peace Corps vehicles are to be used to effectuate such visit and not for their specific needs. While the Visitor will make efforts to accommodate the PCV he or she will not deviate from their normal plan in order to transport PCVs/ HCNs or property to satisfy the PCV's needs. Therefore the use of Peace Corps property during site visit should be restricted and carried out only when it fits within travel plans of visiting staff member.

All senior staff is required to report violation of policy observed during site visit regardless of the program in which the violator might be assigned. Additionally the APCD or staff member should confront the PCV if he or she suspects an abuse of Peace Corps travel policy has occurred or if the PCV's conduct or actions might in any manner undermine the Peace Corps mission in Cameroon.

E. Coordination of visits with medical, P & T and APCDs

The frequency of visits by Peace Corps staff dictates that planning and coordination be an essential element of all visits to PCVs. Senior staff including Programmers, medical and the P& T assistants should make every effort to schedule visits conjointly and avoid over visits or site visit burn-out to PCVs.

Appendix B
OIG Comments

OIG Comments

The region concurred with 20 of our 25 recommendations, partially concurred with three recommendations, and did not concur with two recommendations. We closed recommendation nos. 9, 14, and 20. Recommendation nos. 1 – 8, 10 - 13, and 15 - 25 remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the following has been received:

- For recommendation no. 1, documentation that the region has undertaken corrective actions to address all issues identified in the report, including a description of the corrective actions taken.
- For recommendation no. 2, copies of the country director's quarterly reports to the regional director.
- For recommendation no. 3, a copy of the new ICT project plan.
- For recommendation no. 4, documentation showing that the post has demonstrated a capacity to place ICT Volunteers in sites where they are productive. We note that although the response indicates that it has partially concurred with the recommendation, we see no area in which there is any concurrence. The response failed to acknowledge that Volunteers need to be in sites where they can be productive. If part or all of their assignment is to teach computer skills, then Volunteers need to have the requisite equipment on hand. Three of the nine ICT Volunteers whom we interviewed said that they were unable to implement their work assignments because of the lack of computer equipment. In addition, a high level official at the Ministry of Secondary Education confirmed that the ICT project was prematurely implemented given the lack of readiness of the government-sponsored computer centers.
- For recommendation no. 5, a copy of the revised Volunteer Assignment Description.
- For recommendation no. 6, a copy of the revised memorandum of understanding that spells out the project goals and expectations for the ICT program.
- For recommendation no. 7, a copy of the revised site selection procedures and criteria for SED Volunteers. We note that although the response concurred with the recommendation, it is unclear from the response whether the post believes it already has appropriate site selection procedures and criteria, or intends to prepare revised or new procedures and criteria. Our evaluation disclosed that the current site selection procedures and criteria are not effective, and need to be revised substantially in accordance with our report.
- For recommendation no. 8, copies of memoranda of understanding with host organizations that set clear expectations of the host organizations and Volunteers.

We note that although the response concurred with the recommendation, the response states that the post “sees no need to prepare new [MOUs]” and makes clear that the post does not intend to implement the recommendation.

- For recommendation no. 10, documentation showing that a new SED partner organization(s) has been identified, including copies of any memoranda of understanding with such SED partner organization.
- For recommendation no. 11, evidence that the length of PST has been significantly increased, or, in the alternative, the results of a survey of the health and agroforestry Volunteers showing that the technical training meets the needs of those Volunteers.
- For recommendation no. 12, a copy of the post’s new site development criteria.
- For recommendation no. 13, evidence that the monitoring system to track and respond to Volunteer quarterly reports has been implemented, by providing copies of policy statements, guidelines, and/or a sampling of Volunteer quarterly reports and staff responses.
- For recommendation no. 15, documentation showing that Volunteers’ living allowances are being deposited in their bank accounts on time.
- For recommendation no. 16, documentation showing that sites are chosen earlier in PST. We note that the Africa Region established in its FY 2006—FY 2008 IPBS Strategic Plan that “the percentage of site assignments made early during PST” is an indicator of “sound site identification and development procedures” (see Goal One, objective one, p. 4).
- For recommendation no. 17, documentation showing that Volunteers have the language skills necessary to performing their work assignments. While we acknowledge that Cameroon has over 240 different local languages in Cameroon, as described in the response, independent and reliable sources confirm that there is one version of Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE), which is widely understood throughout the Anglophone provinces.
- For recommendation no. 18, copies of Memoranda of Understanding that include references to Volunteers’ assignments, reporting absences from site, and the need for the presence of a Volunteer as a requisite for placement.
- For recommendation no. 19, a copy of the report for Emergency Action Plan test conducted May 2-8, 2006.
- For recommendation no. 21, copies of documents indicating that PEP has been made available to Volunteers in the Grand North.

- For recommendation no. 22, evidence that the post has completed all site development before PST begins. We note that the concerns expressed in the response about this recommendation are not unique to Cameroon and that our study of high-performing posts includes numerous examples of posts (including Mauritania) that dealt with similar circumstances but successfully completed all site development before PST began. As noted above (see recommendation 16), the Region established in its FY 2006—FY 2008 IPBS Strategic Plan that one indicator of “sound site identification and development procedures” is the percentage of site assignments made early during PST.
- For recommendation no. 23, evidence that the APCD agroforestry has become responsible for agroforestry technical training at PST, or, in the alternative, results of a survey showing that Volunteers perceive agroforestry technical training to be effective and meeting their technical needs. We note that although the response indicates that it has partially concurred with the recommendation, the response states that implementing the recommendation would not be appropriate and makes clear that the post does not intend to increase the presence of the APCD agroforestry at pre-service training.
- For recommendation no. 24, evidence that the post has modified the agroforestry PST curriculum to include more hands-on training and techniques applicable to the conditions in the Grand North.
- For recommendation no. 25, evidence that the post has placed staff in the Grand North who can provide technical support to agroforestry Volunteers.

In closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the actions have, in fact, been taken nor that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management’s responsibilities. We may perform a follow-up review to determine if actions were taken and if they were effective in improving performance.