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From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General 

Date: May 24, 2012

Subject: Final Report on the Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/China (IG-12-04-E)

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

Management concurred with all eight recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed five recommendations: numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

We wish to acknowledge the timely manner in which the post responded to the report and our recommendations. We also commend the post for the thorough and relevant documentation it provided in response to all eight report recommendations.

Three recommendations, numbers 1, 7, and 8, remain open. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1, 7, and 8 when the documentation reflected in the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. Our comments, which are in the report as Appendix C, address these matters. Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendations within 90 days of receipt of this memorandum.

You may address questions regarding follow-up or documentation to Assistant Inspector General for Evaluation Jim O'Keefe at 202.692.2904 or to Senior Evaluator Reuben Marshall at 202.692.2903.

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

Attachment

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Peace Corps Office of Inspector General



Countryside in Guizhou Province



Flag of China

Final Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/China IG-12-04-E

May 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 700 Peace Corps Volunteers have served the people of China since the program was first launched in June 1993. There is currently one project sector in China: teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). At the onset of this evaluation, 163 Volunteers were serving in China, the highest number since the post's opening.

The evaluation of Peace Corps/China (hereafter PC/China or "the post") revealed a post that was performing well in many key areas. The post's local staff were experienced, capable, and dedicated to the Peace Corps mission. The post's American staff were hard-working and focused on addressing key operational challenges.

A principal challenge for post was the quality of internal office communications. The evaluation identified a number of obstacles to open and effective communications that can be attributed to cultural differences, government monitoring, lack of effective communications infrastructure, and an unusually busy and stressful year. Senior post staff have taken some steps to improve communications and this report recommends additional action to strengthen the quality of inter-office communications.

Volunteers have had success accomplishing the three goals of the Peace Corps mission. They were very satisfied with support from the post's staff and were generally happy with their work sites and assignments. A common area of difficulty for Volunteers was community integration, which was impacted by Chinese government site placement controls. The country director (CD) and director of programming and training (DPT) have worked during the past two years to improve programming and training to facilitate increased community integration and have been pressing for host government support to shift the placement of Volunteers away from larger urban schools towards rural schools with fewer resources. However, Volunteers, particularly those placed at some of the larger schools, still face integration challenges.

Volunteers have adjusted well to a set of unique challenges regarding service in China. Volunteers had envisioned a "mud hut" experience when they applied for Peace Corps service but were living in modern, comfortable apartments. Many Volunteers are posted in urban, well-developed communities, yet they see that their TEFL work benefits students in surrounding poor, rural communities. Volunteer morale in China was high and the rate of Volunteer resignations has remained consistently below regional and global averages. In the larger context of U.S.-China relations, Volunteers believe there are tangible benefits in furthering the second and third goals of the Peace Corps mission.

The report identifies several additional programmatic weaknesses that needed to be addressed, including ineffectiveness of the Volunteer leader program, the need for additional staff support for the peer support network, confusion among Volunteers regarding their emergency consolidation points, and inaccurate site locator forms (SLFs). Our report contains 8 recommendations, which, if implemented, should strengthen programming operations and correct the deficiencies detailed in the accompanying report.

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HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

China, the world's fourth largest country, stretches across Eastern Asia and is home to the world's largest population with over 1.3 billion people. China is the oldest continuous major world civilization, with records dating back about 3,500 years. For centuries China stood as a leading civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in the arts and sciences, but in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the country was beset by civil unrest, major famines, military defeats, and foreign occupation.

After World War II, communists under Mao Zedong broke with the Soviet model and announced a new economic program, the "Great Leap Forward," aimed at rapidly increasing industrial and agricultural production. Within a year, starvation appeared and from 1960 to 1961 a combination of poor planning and bad weather resulted in one of the deadliest famines in human history. The communist party adopted economic policies at odds with Mao's revolutionary vision, and in 1966 Mao launched a movement known as the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," which pitted sections of party leadership against each other and set China on a course of political and social anarchy that lasted the better part of a decade. After 1978, Mao's successor Deng Xiaoping and other leaders focused on market-oriented economic development and by 2000 output had quadrupled.

For much of the population, living standards have improved dramatically, yet over 400 million people remain below the United Nations' poverty line. The 2011 United Nations *Human Development Report* ranks China 101 out of 187 countries, placing it between Fiji and Turkmenistan.¹ Due to a widening gap between China's developed east coast and inland areas, the Chinese government has pushed to increase English language education in rural areas as a prime tool of economic development. Volunteers are placed in western China, where two thirds of China's rural poor are located and qualified teachers are scarce. Volunteers work to address a shortage of over 500,000 English teachers by training future teachers and developing the English skills of students in vocational areas such as medicine and tourism.

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In June 1993, 18 Peace Corps Volunteers arrived at the invitation of the Chinese government to teach English in Sichuan province in China's west-central region. Peace Corps offices were located in Chengdu, the provincial capital. In 1998, after substantial negotiation, a country agreement was signed by the Ministry of Education and the U.S. Ambassador to China. The Peace Corps was officially recognized as the U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers Program and partnered with the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE), an organization under the Ministry of Education. The program expanded to three neighboring

¹ The Human Development Report publishes an annual Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI provides a composite measure of three basic dimensions of human development: health, education and income.

provinces in 1997, 1999, and 2000. In April 2003 the Peace Corps pulled out of China during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome crisis.² Volunteers returned to China in July 2004.

Since opening the program, Volunteers have worked in the TEFL program. TEFL Volunteers have been assigned primarily to four-year teachers colleges and universities to develop the English education and teaching skills of Chinese students and teachers destined to become primary and middle school English teachers in rural areas. Volunteers have also developed the English language skills of students in vocational areas such as medicine and tourism.

From 2002-2006 the post managed an environmental education program that was phased out due to misunderstandings between the Peace Corps and the host country regarding the skills and expertise of environmental education Volunteers. Many Volunteers have continued to address environmental topics in their classes and secondary activities. Secondary projects have focused on areas such as organizing clubs (environmental, film, photography, travel, sports, debate, women's issues), giving campus-wide lectures (U.S. holidays, U.S. elections, women's health issues, environmental protection), and developing English resource centers.

During the past three years the post has proposed moving into new provinces and more rural placements, which led the Ministry of Education in 2010 to request a program review. The review, which was conducted jointly by Peace Corps and the CEAIE, was completed in March 2011 with positive findings, yet at the time of the evaluation, an agreement had not been reached to expand Volunteer placements. The post's on-board Volunteer strength at the onset of the evaluation was 163, the highest ever. Over 700 Volunteers have served in China.

The post's fiscal year (FY) 2011 actual budget was \$1.97 million.³ At the time of the evaluation the post had 24 staff positions, including one temporary position. The post also employed 24 temporary training staff to assist with pre-service training (PST).

EVALUATION RESULTS

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

A key objective of our country program evaluation is to assess the extent to which the post's resources and agency support are effectively aligned with the post's mission and agency priorities. To address these questions, we assess a number of factors, including staffing; staff development; office work environment; collecting and reporting performance data; and the post's strategic planning and budgeting.

In reviewing the post's relationship with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. The post enjoyed good relations with the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulate, which was located near the Peace Corps office in Chengdu. A U.S.

² Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is a viral respiratory illness that was first reported in Asia in February 2003. The illness spread to more than two dozen countries before the outbreak was contained.

³ The post's budget figure does not include U.S. direct hire salaries or readjustment allowances.

Embassy official who recently worked directly with the post was impressed with the program's direction and leadership:

I have no background with Peace Corps and was not involved with them much in the past. I came away after six months being a lot more supportive of the Peace Corps mission than I was previously. The CD was a big help engaging with me, educating me, taking me to see the Volunteers. I'm kind of a convert at the moment and probably will be for the rest of my career. I have a very positive feeling about the program.

The Peace Corps office in Chengdu was a relatively small but capable unit. The Chinese staff were experienced and skilled. In interviews staff expressed pride in their work and dedication to the Peace Corps mission. Staff had confidence in the posts programming, training, and administrative operations and the quality of Volunteer support. The post's FY 2010-2012 Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) identified the local staff as a main strength of its operations. Regional managers described the post as high performing. "The strength is the staff, the host country staff," said one regional manager. An overseas programming and training support specialist reviewing the TEFL project in 2008 said of the program and training unit, "I have never seen a work team that seemed so cohesive and productive!" Six of the program and training staff from 2008 were still working in the unit.

The post's American staff were hard-working and committed to enhancing the program. In the past two years the CD and DPT have worked diligently to implement a number of programming and training improvements, which are detailed later in this report. Local staff were satisfied with programming and training improvements and reported that American staff were dedicated to Volunteers. According to one staff, "the program is as strong as it's ever been and the CD and DPT should get credit for that. It's become more professional in a good way but still responsive to Volunteer needs."

Ongoing post challenges include cramped office space, which has had some negative impacts on office operations. Many of the support staff, including program managers, shared office space which impacted their productivity and made it difficult to have private discussions with Volunteers. The post's conference room shared space with the Volunteer resource library and Volunteer computer room, which reduced the availability of key Volunteer resources. According to the post's FY 2012-2014 IPBS, the office space was designed for fifty percent fewer staff. It would be difficult for the post to expand its staffing without acquiring additional space.

Most Peace Corps posts are connected to a main server at headquarters but PC/China operates with a stand-alone server system due to information and technology (IT) security concerns identified by headquarters staff. The post experienced multiple technical issues following the installation of the stand-alone server in June 2011. Senior staff at post said the IT issues negatively affected morale and productivity, and the post's financial assistant/information and technology specialist (FA/ITS) estimated that the IT portion of his workload increased from 35 percent to 55 percent following the server's installation.

The FA/ITS believed that the post, which is 12 hours ahead of headquarters' time zone, would benefit from 24-hour IT support. Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) staff reported their office does not provide 24-hour IT support to accommodate posts in different time zones. However, following the installation of the stand-alone server an OCIO specialist was designated

to support China and the FA/ITS was satisfied with the quality of support. At the time of the evaluation the post had just installed new wiring in the office and selected a new Internet Service Provider, and in January 2012 the FA/ITS reported the upgrades had improved some of the technical issues. We believe that post IT challenges warrant monitoring by the region and OCIO. Based on recent attention to this issue, we are not issuing a recommendation.

Internal office communications were ineffective.

The critical importance of communications has been emphasized in Peace Corps' *Characteristics and Strategies of a High Performing Post*. This post management resource guide states, "In any assessment of what makes a post work, open and successful communications among staff and the existence and feeling of a team are nearly always among the most critical values cited."

American and local staff expressed a number of dissatisfactions related to internal office communications. One staff commented, "I've been here many years and this year has been the most difficult. Staff morale is the lowest I've ever seen, caused I think by internal communications...lack of transparency and communication." Another staff said, "We need to work on communication within the office. We are all aware of it." There are a number of factors discussed below that contribute to these communication issues, including cultural differences, government monitoring, poor communications infrastructure, as well as an unusually busy and stressful year for the post.

Cultural Differences

In Chinese culture, indirect communications are customary, and direct communications are typically avoided. Local staff acknowledged that for cultural reasons they were reluctant to address issues directly with American staff. One local staff explained, "For Chinese people it is odd for one person to bring up an issue, no one wants to stand [out], it is very dangerous." In previous years the post relied on a local program manager to help bridge the cultural communication gap. "She was brave enough to say things and had good language skills to be appropriate and not offensive," commented one staff. The program manager passed away in 2009. Her loss has resulted in an ongoing cultural communication barrier among staff.

Government Monitoring

In addition to the cultural challenges, inter-office communications at the post were sometimes limited out of necessity. Activities at the Peace Corps office in Chengdu are assumed to be monitored by the Chinese government, whose scrutiny was generally considered a fact of life in China. American staff explained that they were reluctant to discuss certain issues in the office, particularly concerning partner relations. American staff identified this as a significant challenge because they relied on the expertise of local staff regarding host country organizations. Yet the lack of transparency worried local staff that their participation was not valued, which has undermined the existence and feeling of a team in the office.

Communications Infrastructure

Office communications have not been structured to facilitate the regular and open exchange of information between staff and across units. Staff meetings were not regularly held and meeting minutes were not recorded during senior staff meetings. New staff did not receive an orientation

to learn the roles and responsibilities of other staff and units. The layout of the office was not conducive to effective communications. Staff were spread across five floors of a building that had no elevator, with each unit on a different floor.

The absence of regular and open staff interactions has opened the door for speculation and misunderstandings. One staff said, “People are frustrated, people don’t know what other people know...In the end there is speculation and I don’t like that.” Another staff reported, “If a staff is frustrated they should be encouraged to address it with the person rather than talking about it with others... there is unproductive negative communication going on.” Staff believed that more interactions between staff, such as regular staff meetings, would have a positive impact on the quality of internal office communications.

Limited Staff Interactions

Staff were overwhelmed by a series of challenges and events over the course of 2011. An extensive program review was requested by the CEAIE in 2010 and conducted through the spring of 2011. In February, on the first day of in-service training (IST), staff learned that a PC/China Volunteer had passed away in another country. In April, a large United States Senate delegation visited the post. The training input in July brought the number of Volunteers to the highest ever since the post opened. Over the summer the post published a PC/China commemorative book and compact disc to promote the agency’s 50th Anniversary and program managers enrolled in a rigorous 12-week English teaching course. In August, Vice President Joe Biden visited the post. The post hosted this OIG Evaluation in October.

Reflecting back on the year’s events, one staff commented, “I’ve heard consistently from other seasoned staff this has been the most high stress, overworked year people can remember.” Another staff related, “[Staff] want some normalcy...they are understandably tired. I feel that way too. We’ve had a tough year, it’s been one extra thing after another.” Local staff said that during busy times they sought less support from American staff out of concerns they might create additional work. Staff said also that social interactions with American staff declined, such as sharing tea breaks.

Senior post staff have taken some steps to improve internal office communications. Weekly Volunteer issue meetings were implemented in October 2011. Staff reported that the meetings have been useful as opportunities to sit together and share ideas. Regular staff meetings were established when the CD first arrived at the post but not all staff found them useful and they were discontinued. The CD expressed renewed interest in regular staff meetings after attending a country director conference in September 2011.

We recommend:

- 1. That the country director collaborate with host country and American staff to develop strategies that address cultural communications barriers and develop plans to:**
 - (a) ensure regular communications among staff and across units; and, (b) ensure channels of supervision**

between managers and local staff remain active and accessible.

PROGRAMMING

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

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

In reviewing Volunteers' familiarity with their project goals and objectives, Volunteers' ability to accomplish those goals and objectives, counterpart relationships, and Volunteer Assignment Descriptions (VADs), OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. Eighty-eight percent of interviewed Volunteers reported their familiarity with project goals was "average" or better and ninety-one percent reported their success accomplishing primary project objectives was "average" or better.

Volunteers were satisfied with their work activities and their ability to accomplish project objectives, which mirrored data in the agency's Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS). The AVS revealed that 95 percent of the post's Volunteers were personally satisfied with their primary assignments, which was significantly higher than the average global response of 81 percent.⁴ A program review requested by the CEAIE in 2010 and conducted in collaboration with Peace Corps staff determined that Volunteers were effective. The report stated:

The data gathered from all sources indicates that the Volunteer teachers are qualitatively effective in teaching English and in contributing to the students' language proficiency and skills. Additionally, the Volunteers contribute to many other opportunities for formal and informal development of language skills through their activities outside the classroom and through secondary projects.

Volunteers were assigned counterparts by their schools, usually a teacher in the English Department, and 91 percent of interviewed Volunteers characterized their working relationships with counterparts favorably. Ninety-three percent of interviewed Volunteers said their VAD described their activities "moderately well" or better.

Although Volunteers were generally satisfied with their work activities, Volunteers reported challenges adjusting to the contrasts of Peace Corps service in China due to expectations set by recruitment materials or other sources of information. China is perceived as a wealthy, powerful nation, which contrasts with the Peace Corps's standing as a development agency. Volunteers envisioned a "mud hut" experience when they applied for Peace Corps service but Volunteers in

⁴ Data reported from the 2010 AVS. This question did not appear in the 2011 AVS.

China lived in modern, comfortable apartments. Volunteers are posted in urban, well-developed communities, yet TEFL goals benefit rural communities where poverty is more evident by training teachers to become primary and middle school English teachers in those areas. We note that the VADs did include accurate information on living and working conditions.

Volunteers adjusted well to these challenges. Volunteer morale in China was high and the rate of Volunteer resignations, which can be viewed as an indicator of Volunteer satisfaction, has remained consistently below regional and global averages. In the larger context of U.S.-China relations, Volunteers believe there are tangible benefits in furthering the second and third goals of the Peace Corps mission.⁵ Volunteer comments included:

“The American-China relationship is the key relationship in the world now and its marked by misunderstandings. I can do a lot of work towards improving that;”

“I have come to the conclusion that we should be here...for the sole reasons of making the relationships and connections. It is needed between the Americans and Chinese...Americans get lots of misinformation about China and vice versa.”

“I think that PC/China has one of most import and serious jobs due to China-U.S. relations. The most important part of the job in China is the people to people relations.”

The CD and DPT have enhanced training and programming in support of secondary activities to increase cultural exchange activities.⁶ One program managers said, “Kudos to the CD for realizing the importance of secondary activities. We push really hard for that and [senior staff] get it.” One senior staff explained that the second goal of the Peace Corps mission is the true mission of the post. The post’s FY12-14 IPBS stated that:

The push is not just language proficiency but also cultural literacy, a niche that Peace Corps Volunteers are uniquely prepared to fill. With the two nations sharing what might be considered the most important political relationship in the world, that cultural literacy is important for citizens of both countries and is why the 2nd and 3rd goals of Peace Corps are so important for our Volunteers and our programming.

While some challenges remain, the cultural exchange offered by Volunteers has gradually gained acceptance from Chinese partners. A 2001 OIG country program evaluation found that Volunteers were rarely authorized by CEAIE to engage in secondary activities, their classroom presentations and campus activities were closely monitored, and school officials cautioned students and colleagues about establishing close relationships with Volunteers. In a meeting in Beijing, CEAIE officials recalled that during the 1990s Volunteers were housed with other foreign students to reduce their contact with Chinese communities. CEAIE officials indicated that a change in attitude had occurred and they wanted to encourage cultural exchange. A similar attitude was reflected in the program review requested by the CEAIE which interviewed national

⁵ The mission of the Peace Corps is to promote world peace and friendship by: 1) Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women; 2) Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; 3) Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

⁶ Secondary activities are generally described as, “some form of community service that is in addition to activities that support the goals and objectives of their assigned projects and activities that support Peace Corps Goals Two and Three.” Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance, Version: October 2011, pg 63.

and regional CEAIE representatives. The report, published in March 2011, stated that “the first-hand or authentic knowledge of American culture” is one of the things the host country most valued about Volunteers.

Volunteer community integration was impacted by Chinese government site placement controls.

The Volunteers we interviewed stated that they were less integrated with Chinese communities than they expected to be and they identified community integration as a significant challenge during their service. AVS data from 2011 showed that only 33 percent of Volunteers in China interacted daily or several times a week with host country nationals in community and family social events compared to regional and global averages of 58 percent and 59 percent respectively. Seventy one percent of Volunteers in China reported their community integration was “adequate” or better compared to regional and global averages of 86 percent and 90 percent respectively.

The second and third goals of the Peace Corps mission are to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, and to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. Many returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) report that furthering these goals are often seen as the most satisfying aspects of Peace Corps service. While the host government has come to value inter-cultural exchange, many Volunteers do not see these goals being carried out to the extent they could be. We identified a number of constraints that post is addressing and will need to be attentive to over time.

At the time of the evaluation, approximately half of all Volunteer sites were located in four sprawling urban municipalities. Some of the larger schools where Volunteers were placed had sufficient resources to hire a cadre of foreign English teachers, which created integration challenges for Volunteers. Volunteers at these schools reported that they had difficulty integrating with their Chinese colleagues. Volunteers also reported challenges interacting with students because foreign teachers had set behavior norms or expectations that aligned poorly with Peace Corps’s goals for cultural exchange. Many foreign teachers are not inclined or expected to engage in social events or interact with students outside of class. Additionally, since English literacy was more prevalent at the larger schools with more resources, Volunteers found fewer opportunities to practice their Chinese skills, which created a barrier to interaction with Chinese-speaking communities.

Volunteer housing has been selected by the Chinese government through the Office of Foreign Affairs, known locally as the *waiban* office. Volunteers were placed in campus housing that was generally of very good quality and safe. However, for many Volunteers the housing location created work and integration challenges. Eight of the 25 Volunteers we interviewed commuted at least thirty minutes each way between their housing and classes, and some as much as an hour and a half. Commuting Volunteers found it difficult to hold office hours or participate in afterschool activities, which limited integration opportunities with students and teachers. Four other Volunteers lived on campuses that did not have a nearby off-campus community, which limited opportunities to integrate with non-academic Chinese communities, particularly when schools were out of session over the summer and winter breaks. Five Volunteers were placed in

housing reserved for foreign teachers, which made it more difficult for the Volunteers to integrate with on-campus Chinese communities.

According to the 1998 Country Agreement, the CEAIE “has primary responsibility for helping to facilitate and coordinate program operations at the local level.” In effect, the Chinese government has controlled the Volunteer site selection and placement process. Over the past three years post senior staff have pressed for host government support to shift the placement of more Volunteers towards schools with limited resources and fewer in larger urban universities that typically hire more foreign teachers. Senior staff reported some success at reducing Volunteer placements at the largest schools and increasing them in some of the less-resourced, smaller schools. In 2010 a Ministry of Education official indicated that expanded Volunteer placements could be possible following a program review requested by the CEAIE and completed in March 2011 with positive results. The post hoped to gain ground on this proposal during Vice President Joe Biden’s visit in August 2011, unfortunately no progress was made but the post continues to move forward with this initiative.

To address Volunteer integration issues, the post has also implemented both programming and training improvements that aim to increase community integration and local language skills. In 2010 the post initiated a host family program during trainees’ PST site visit. The goal was to develop community connections for Volunteers before they arrived at their sites. The post also implemented cultural leave days, which encouraged Volunteers to travel with Chinese community members returning to their home communities during school breaks. A Continuing Language Study Program was established that provided tuition reimbursements and leave allowances to encourage Volunteers to attend formal Chinese language courses. These measures should enhance Volunteer community integration.

Based on the post’s on-going, concerted attention to these issues and efforts to expand site placement, we are not making a recommendation. However, OIG encourages the post to continue to develop and implement additional strategies and continue efforts to extend Volunteer placements to schools that offer more opportunities to further the Peace Corps’ three goals.

Peace Corps Volunteer leaders were unable to fulfill their job responsibilities.

At the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year, the post implemented three Peace Corps Volunteer leader (PCVL) positions to provide additional technical support to Volunteers. According to the statement of work, the scope of PCVL duties included providing support “both from the office and at [Volunteer] sites.” Prior to implementing the PCVL positions the country director approached CEAIE officials to obtain support for the new roles. Nonetheless, staff encountered difficulties transitioning the three third-year Volunteers into the PCVL positions. Despite requests and communications from staff, the schools where the PCVLs taught refused to reduce class loads to permit the PCVLs to work and travel in support of other Volunteers during the school week.

We determined that communication among post staff contributed to the challenges establishing the PCVL positions. Staff reported that a Volunteer leader position had been successfully implemented in the past, and they were confident that the post could obtain host country support

for PCVLs with the right approach to the complex Chinese bureaucracy and approval process. However, the country director did not learn about the posts' prior experiences with Volunteer leader positions until after the post began implementing the new PCVL positions. A lack of effective information sharing among staff, which has been discussed in a previous finding, precluded past lessons learned from being applied to obtain partner buy-in for the PCVL roles.

Given the lack of support from their schools and the continuing requirement to conduct full course loads, the PCVLs have been unable to travel to Volunteers' sites and fulfill the job responsibilities established in their job description. Additionally, because they carry full schedules of teaching classes, the PCVLs were concerned that a spike in support requests could exceed their support capacity. Unless modified to reflect what can reasonably be accomplished under current constraints, the PCVL job descriptions may create unreasonable expectations regarding their availability for Volunteer support needs.

We recommend:

- 2. That the director of programming and training revise the Peace Corps Volunteer leader job description.**
- 3. That the director of programming and training and Peace Corps Volunteer leaders establish reasonable support expectations with Volunteers.**
- 4. That the country director develop a strategy in collaboration with the programming unit to obtain host country support for the Peace Corps Volunteer leader positions.**

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

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

In reviewing overall staff support, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. Ninety-six percent of interviewed Volunteers were satisfied with overall support from the post's staff. Volunteers were satisfied with communications from support staff. Table 1 shows Volunteer perceptions of staff support in key areas.

Table 1. Volunteer Perceptions of Staff Support⁷

Support Area	Percent of Volunteers Rating “Average Support” or Better	Average Rating for Support
Leadership	92%	4.2
Programming	92%	4.4
Safety and Security	100%	4.7
Medical	100%	4.5
Administrative	100%	3.9

Volunteers were satisfied with the post’s leadership but expressed interest in additional interaction with the CD. To address this interest, the CD has made an effort to interact with individual Volunteers during PST and IST and also obtained a local driving permit to facilitate additional interactions with Volunteers at their sites. Volunteers described the DPT as capable, well-organized, and interested in their work. Volunteers approached the DPT with a variety of support needs and were satisfied with the support provided.

Volunteers reported they were well-supported by the programming unit. Programming staff communicated effectively and provided prompt and thorough support to Volunteers. Volunteers were satisfied with feedback to their quarterly reports and with site visits conducted by programming staff.

Volunteers reported high levels of satisfaction with the quality of safety and security and medical support and their ratings of staff in our survey were high for both support areas. Volunteers were satisfied with the safety and security coordinator’s (SSC) response to crime incidents and reported feeling very safe in their communities. They were confident the SSC would respond quickly and effectively to any safety and security-related issues they brought to his attention. Most of the interviewed Volunteers had not experienced significant health issues. Volunteers commented on and reported positive interactions with the medical unit staff and they expressed confidence that any health-related issues would be addressed effectively and efficiently.

Administrative support received the lowest average rating of staff support. Volunteers explained that they interacted less frequently with the director of management and operations (DMO) than other staff, which is not unusual for the DMO position. Volunteers were satisfied with their living allowance and there were no administrative support issues reported.

The peer support network required additional staff support.

In 2009, the Peace Corps Counseling and Outreach Unit worked with post staff to establish a Volunteer peer support network, which they named Volunteers Supporting Volunteers (VSV).

⁷ Leadership was derived by averaging the country director and DPT scores. Programming was derived by averaging the program manager scores. Safety and Security was derived from the safety and security coordinator score. Medical was derived from an overall score for the medical unit which included a local PCMO, an American PCMO who departed in October 2011, an American back-up PCMO who began full-time duty in October 2011, and a medical assistant. Administrative was derived from the director of management and operations score.

Staff and Volunteers said the VSV network provided valuable support to Volunteers but they also identified needed improvements.

According to a contract signed with the post, VSV members are obliged “to help create a positive volunteer experience in China.” However, some VSV members have contributed to a negative Volunteer experience. VSV workshops conducted at the 2011 PST were inconsistent and Volunteers heard from VSV members that in certain situations it was acceptable to disregard administrative policies, such as leave and travel requirements. Volunteers were dissatisfied with the tone of the VSV workshops which they described as too negative. One VSV member, who was unhappy with the conduct of other VSV members, said “If we don’t agree with a policy we should work to change it rather than break it or ignore it. It upsets me—we are supposed to be examples.” Volunteers also observed that some VSV members had a generally negative outlook on their experience, which they expressed to other Volunteers.

Staff and Volunteers believed that the quality of the peer support network could improve with more effective selection criteria and increased staff support to the group. VSV members were selected according to their interest, their region, and other characteristics such as experience and group diversity. At the time of the evaluation, staff support to the VSV had been limited to budget and logistical support from the DPT and Volunteers were dissatisfied that more staff were not present during the PST workshops to answer policy questions or make presentations. The medical unit had not been involved with VSV support. However a medical officer (PCMO), who began full-time duty in October 2011, had previous experience with a peer support network at a previous Peace Corps post. The DPT and PCMO had met to discuss the VSV and were considering transferring VSV staff support responsibilities to the PCMO.

We recommend:

- 5. That the medical officer provide oversight to the selection of new Volunteers Supporting Volunteers members and on-going support to the group.**
- 6. That the country director ensure that the Volunteers Supporting Volunteers network receives sufficient staff support and oversight.**

Volunteers were unable to identify their consolidation points.

According to the agency’s safety and security policy contained in the *Peace Corps Manual* section (MS) 270.8.2, “The CD will assure that post staff and [Volunteers/Trainees] are trained in the EAP and in individual EAP responsibilities.” As part of China’s EAP, each of the post’s four regions had a designated consolidation point. Volunteers received training on the EAP process and their responsibilities under the plan, including information on consolidation points, yet 13 of the 25 interviewed Volunteers could not correctly identify their consolidation point. Four other Volunteers said they knew the general location but could not name their specific

consolidation point. Volunteers' unfamiliarity with their consolidation points posed a risk to their safety should a consolidation be activated in an emergency.

We recommend:

- 7. That the country director ensure that all Volunteers are familiar with their consolidation points.**

Volunteers could not be located using the site locator forms.

According to the agency's safety and security policy contained in MS270.8.1, "The EAP must contain a mechanism for collecting and maintaining accurate and redundant means for communicating with [Volunteers/Trainees]." The post complied with this policy by requiring that Volunteers submit site locator forms (SLF), which contained information about the Volunteers' sites, including maps and directions to help staff travel quickly to their sites in the event of an emergency.

While traveling to Volunteers' sites, OIG reviewed the SLFs for accuracy. The quality and detail of the maps and directions provided by Volunteers were not sufficient to locate Volunteers⁸. Volunteers developed maps and directions of their campuses but not the surrounding areas due to the large size of their cities. Local drivers, including both an OIG-hired driver and an experienced Peace Corps driver, were unable to locate six of the 20 campuses visited by the evaluator. The Peace Corps vehicle was equipped with a global positioning system (GPS) but not all of the SLFs included GPS coordinates or a street address that the GPS recognized. The inadequacies of the Volunteers' SLFs posed a risk that the post might be unable to travel to a Volunteer site during an emergency should other means of communication be unavailable.

In April 2011 the SSC asked Volunteers to identify their GPS coordinates in order to develop satellite images of their sites using the Google Earth program, which the SSC would attach to the SLFs. At the time of the evaluation Volunteers had not completed this task.

We recommend:

- 8. That the country director and safety and security coordinator ensure that site locator forms include sufficient maps and directions for drivers to locate Volunteers.**

TRAINING

Another objective of the post evaluation is to answer the question, "Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?" To answer this question we considered such factors as:

⁸ The evaluator traveled by car to 20 sites. Five other Volunteers were interviewed at the Peace Corps office in Chengdu due to scheduling restrictions.

- training adequacy;
- planning and development of the training life cycle;
- staffing and related budget.

In reviewing the training goals, competencies, and learning objectives; trainee assessments; training planning and development; and adequacy of training, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. The post had successfully implemented a three-phase training model, which included nine weeks of pre-service training, self-directed learning activities during the Volunteers’ first semester at site, and two-weeks of in-service training. In previous years the post requested Volunteers with scarce skill and experience levels, however since 2009 the training model has been effectively training generalist applicants to become successful TEFL Volunteers.⁹ Volunteers reported high levels of satisfaction with the effectiveness of the Peace Corps training program.

Table 2. Volunteer Perceptions of Training Effectiveness

Area	Moderate (3) / Above average (4) / Very effective (5)	Average Rating
PST:		
Language	100%	4.4
Culture	100%	3.7
Safety & Security	100%	4.3
Medical/Health	100%	4.2
Technical	84%	3.6
IST	94%	3.6
PDM	100%	4.7

Source: OIG Volunteer Interviews, 2011

PST technical training had lower effectiveness ratings than other training areas, although average scores by cohort had increased in each of the last three years. In 2011 PST technical training was improved by hiring four PC/China RPCVs to conduct PST. Volunteers commented that the RPCV trainers’ in-country experience was an effective training resource. The post appeared to have adequate staffing resources to deliver effective Volunteer training. However, staff reported that budget resources will determine their ability to hire RPCV trainers for the 2012 PST. In 2011 the post sought additional resources to hire a full-time lead technical trainer who would also provide Volunteer support, but funds were not available.

The CD and DPT have worked with the training staff to implement additional training improvements, including an increased focus on secondary activities. The DPT implemented a Project Design and Management (PDM) workshop in 2011 that Volunteers rated highly. Volunteers said the workshop inspired their counterparts and helped them successfully implement sustainable secondary projects in their communities.

⁹ The term “generalist” refers to Volunteers with little or no applicable technical expertise or professional experience, typically recent college graduates.

Ninety-two percent of the interviewed Volunteers were satisfied with the host family they lived with during PST. Trainees were also lodged with host families during visits to their sites in week seven of PST. Eighty-one percent of interviewed Volunteers were satisfied with their host family at site, which was in its second year of implementation. Average ratings for host families were higher among first-year Volunteers, which reflected adjustments made by staff following the initiative's launch in 2010. Staff remained committed to further improving this program for the 2012 PST.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

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

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

OIG announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of the post on August 4, 2011. For post evaluations, we use the following researchable questions to guide our work:

- To what extent has post developed and implemented programs to increase host country communities' capacity?
- Does training prepare Volunteers for Peace Corps service?
- Has the post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?
- Are post resources and agency support effectively aligned with the post's mission and agency priorities?

The evaluator conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation August 8-October 7, 2011. This research included review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff; interviews with management staff representing the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia region, the Office of Safety and Security, and the Office of Medical Services; and inquiries to the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Partnerships, and the Office of Private Sector Initiatives. After completing fieldwork, information was gathered from the Office of the Chief Information Officer.

In-country fieldwork occurred from October 13-November 3, 2011, and included interviews with post senior staff in charge of programming, training, and support; the U.S. Embassy First Secretary, Economic/Labor Officer (former acting Consul General in Chengdu); the U.S. Consulate regional security officer in Chengdu; and host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 25 Volunteers (15 percent of

Volunteers serving at the time of our visit) based on their length of service, site location, project focus, gender, age, and ethnicity.

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

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

As part of this post evaluation, interviews were conducted with 25 Volunteers, 14 staff members in-country, and 13 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in China, the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu, and key ministry officials. Volunteer interviews were conducted using a standardized interview questionnaire, and Volunteers were asked to rate many items on a five-point scale (1 = not effective, 3 = average effective, 5 = very effective). The analysis of these ratings provided a quantitative supplement to Volunteers’ comments, which were also analyzed. For the purposes of the data analysis, Volunteer ratings of “3” and above are considered favorable. In addition, 16 out of 25 Volunteer interviews occurred at the Volunteers’ homes, and we inspected 16 of these homes using post-defined site selection criteria. The period of review for a post evaluation is one full Volunteer cycle (typically 27 months).

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

Table 3. Volunteer Demographic Data

Project	Percentage of Volunteers
TEFL	100%
Gender	Percentage of Volunteers
Female	58%
Male	42%
Age	Percentage of Volunteers
25 or younger	49%
26-29	30%
30-49	13%
50 or over	8%

Source: Volunteer roster provided by post in September 2011.

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

At the time of our field visit, PC/China had 24 staff positions. The post also employs temporary staff/contractors to assist with PST. Given the time of our visit, these positions were not staffed. We interviewed 14 staff members.

Table 4. Interviews Conducted with PC/China Staff Members

Position	Status	Interviewed
Country Director	USDH	X
Safety and Security Coordinator	PSC*	X
Executive Assistant	PSC	
Director of Programming and Training	USDH	X
Program Manager (4)	PSC	X
Program Assistant (2)(1 of 2 interviewed)	PSC	X
Training Manager	PSC	X
Language and Cultural Coordinator	PSC	X
Training Assistant	PSC	
Director of Management and Operations	USDH	X
Financial Assistant/Information and Technology Specialist	PSC	X
Cashier	PSC	
General Services Manager	PSC	
General Services Assistant/Driver	PSC	
Driver	PSC	
Administration Assistant	PSC	
Medical Officer (2)	PSC	X
Medical Assistant	PSC	
Medical Clerk	PSC	

Data as of November 2011. *PSC is personal services contractor.

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

Table 5. Interviews Conducted with PC/Headquarters Staff, U.S. Embassy and Consulate Officials, and Ministry Officials

Position	Organization
Regional Director	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Chief of Operations	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Chief Administrative Officer	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Chief of Programming and Training	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Safety and Security Desk Officer	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Country Desk Officer	PC/Headquarters/EMA Region
Director, Office of Medical Services	PC/Headquarters/VS/OMS
Area Peace Corps Medical Officer	PC/Headquarters/VS/RO
Information and Technology Specialist	PC/Headquarters/CIO/POI/OPS
First Secretary-Economic and Labor Officer	U.S. Embassy in Beijing
Regional Security Officer	U.S. Consulate in Chengdu
Deputy Secretary General	China Education Association for International Exchange
Deputy Director, Department of American & African Programs	China Education Association for International Exchange

Data as of November 2011.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the country director collaborate with host country and American staff to develop strategies that address cultural communications barriers and develop plans to: (a) ensure regular communications among staff and across units; and, (b) ensure channels of supervision between managers and local staff remain active and accessible.
2. That the director of programming and training revise the Peace Corps Volunteer leader job description.
3. That the director of programming and training and Peace Corps Volunteer leaders establish reasonable support expectations with Volunteers.
4. That the country director develop a strategy in collaboration with the programming unit to obtain host country support for the Peace Corps Volunteer leader positions.
5. That the medical officer provide oversight to the selection of new Volunteers Supporting Volunteers members and on-going support to the group.
6. That the country director ensure that the Volunteers Supporting Volunteers network receives sufficient staff support and oversight.
7. That the country director ensure that all Volunteers are familiar with their consolidation points.
8. That the country director and safety and security coordinator ensure that site locator forms include sufficient maps and directions for drivers to locate Volunteers.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AVS	Annual Volunteer Survey
CD	Country Director
CEAIE	China Education Association for International Exchange
DMO	Director of Management and Operations
DPT	Director of Programming and Training
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
EMA	Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Operations
FA/ITS	Financial Assistant/Information and Technology Specialist
FY	Fiscal Year
IPBS	Integrated Planning and Budget System
IST	In-Service Training
IT	Information and Technology
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
PCMO	Peace Corps Medical Officer
PDM	Project Design and Management
PST	Pre-Service Training
RPCV	Returned Peace Corps Volunteer
SLF	Site Locator Form
SSC	Safety and Security Coordinator
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
VAD	Volunteer Assignment Description
VSV	Volunteers Supporting Volunteers

AGENCY'S RESPONSE



Since 1961.

MEMORANDUM

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

Through: Daljit Bains, Chief Compliance Officer *[Signature]*

From: *M* Helen Lowman, FMA Regional Director *[Signature]*
Bonnie Thie, Country Director, Peace Corps/China

Date: May 2, 2012

CC: Stacy Rhodes, Chief of Staff/Chief of Operations
Carrie Hessler-Radalet, Deputy Director
Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
Luther Benjamin, Associate Director for Global Operations
David Burgess, Chief of Operations, FMA Region
Maura Fulton, Chief of Programming and Training, FMA Region
Jake Sgambati, Chief Administrative Officer, FMA Region

Subject: Agency Response to the Preliminary Program Evaluation Report of Peace Corps/China, March 2012

Enclosed please find the FMA Region's response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/China, as outlined in the Preliminary Program Evaluation Report sent to the agency in March 2012.

The FMA Region concurs with all eight recommendations provided by the OIG in its Preliminary Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/China. The Post has included documentation as necessary to close five of the eight recommendations. The Post is addressing the other three open recommendations and will provide documentation to resolve them by the set target dates.

The EMA Region will continue to work with Post and the departments identified in the Preliminary Report to ensure closure of these recommendations by the dates included within for outstanding recommendations. The PC/China staff and the EMA Region welcome the opportunity to continue to improve. We appreciate the insight and information provided by the Peace Corps Office of the Inspector General.

Recommendations and Responses

01. That the country director collaborate with host country and American staff to develop strategies that address cultural communications barriers and develop plans to: (a) ensure regular communications among staff and across units; and, (b) ensure channels of supervision between managers and local staff remain active and accessible.

Concur:

The Evaluator's Report noted that Post had begun measures in September 2011 to improve information exchange and coordination within PC/China staff. For example, as a result of best practices shared at the September 2011 CD Conference, Post began weekly Volunteer Issues meeting with cross unit representatives. In addition, based on discussion with all staff, a Local Staff Committee has been formed to facilitate exchange of information and issues between host country and American staff. Opportunities for information exchange, either previously existing or initiated during the last year include:

- Volunteer Issues meetings, weekly, began 2011.
- Local Staff Committee, formed 2012, frequency to be determined.
- Senior Staff – biweekly, began spring 2011.
- All Staff – quarterly, began 2008, frequency increased in 2011.
- Unit staff – weekly (or as needed), began 2010.
- USDH and medical – biweekly or as needed, began 2011.

Documents to be Submitted:

1) Samples of actions and messaging resulting from the meetings listed above.

Status and Timeline for Completion:

July 1, 2012

02. That the director of programming and training revise the Peace Corps Volunteer leader job description.

Concur:

The post revised the Peace Corps China Volunteer Leader position description. The revisions include the elimination of PCVLs' travel to Volunteer sites and time-intensive Volunteer support responsibilities.

Documents Submitted:

1) 2012 PC China Volunteer Leader Statement of Work;
2) Communications to staff and Volunteers announcing these changes to the nature of the PCVL role.

Status and Timeline for Completion:

Fall 2011

03. That the director of programming and training and Peace Corps Volunteer leaders establish reasonable support expectations with Volunteers.

Concur:

Establishing reasonable expectations is an essential ingredient of success in any new effort. As with post's response to Recommendation 2, the revised PCVL Statement of Work, and the post's announcement of this modified set of responsibilities establish reasonable support expectations with Volunteers.

Documents Submitted:

- 1) 2012 PC China Volunteer Leader Statement of Work;
- 2) Communications to staff and Volunteers announcing these changes to the nature of the PCVL role.

Status and Timeline for Completion:

Fall 2011

04. That the country director develop a strategy in collaboration with the programming unit to obtain host country support for the Peace Corps Volunteers leader positions.

Concur:

The revisions to the PCVL Statement of Work reflect the Post's understanding that the host country's governmental liaison (CEAIE) does not wish that the Peace Corps include travel and Volunteer site visits as a part of the PCVLs' role. Because the Peace Corps serves at the invitation of the host government, the post respects the wishes of its counterpart agency in China that travel not be required part of the PCVL position.

Documents Submitted:

- 1) 2012 PC China Volunteer Leader Statement of Work

Status and Timeline for Completion:

Fall 2011

05. That the medical officer provide oversight to the selection of new Volunteers Supporting Volunteers members and on-going support to the group.

Concur:

Post now has a PCMO on staff who has VSV experience. In previous years, when this PCMO served as a part-time medical contractor, she played an active role in supporting the VSV through training and counseling. Since her return to staff as a full time PCMO, she is again playing an active role in providing support and oversight to the VSV network.

Status and Timeline for Completion:

October 31, 2011, start date of PCMO.

06. That the country director ensure that the Volunteers Supporting Volunteers network receives sufficient staff support and oversight.

Concur:

Post has provided staff support and oversight of the VSV. Because the VSV is by definition a Volunteer group, formal staff support by nature should be limited to support and intervention to give guidance, to clarify policies, and to provide training and general oversight. With that in mind, the post has developed a clear process and criteria for selecting members. Post has provided training to those PCVs selected to be members of the VSV network.

Documents Submitted:

- 1) VSV Training Agenda 1-30-12;
- 2) VSV Selection Criteria.

Status and Timeline for Completion:

October 2011

07. That the country director ensures that all Volunteers are familiar with their consolidation points.

Concur:

Post concurs that Volunteers must be familiar with their consolidation points and the Emergency Action Plan (EAP). The post therefore provides training on the post's EAP at PST and IST. Post increased its emphasis on consolidation points at the February 2012 IST, and provided more scenario practice and warden training. As additional measures, Post provided Consolidation and Warden wallet cards (with wardens and consolidation points) at the IST, and e-mailed a copy to all Volunteers. On all site visits and Volunteer trainings, the Country Director reviewed the information with Volunteers and personally delivered new laminated wallet cards. Post conducted a consolidation exercise with the wardens to test Volunteer knowledge of consolidation points.

Documents Submitted:

- 1) Consolidation Refresher Memo;
- 2) Warden and Consolidation Wallet Cards.

Documents to be Submitted:

- 1) Notes on Results of Consolidation Exercise.

Status and Timeline for Completion:

July 1, 2012

08. That the country director and safety and security coordinator ensure that site locator forms include sufficient maps and directions for drivers to locate Volunteers.

Concur:

Post will develop a process to enhance the current quality of Volunteer Site Locator Forms. In an effort led by the Safety and Security Coordinator, post will seek guidance from Region

APPENDIX B

and the headquarters Safety and Security Office, to assure that all Volunteers have completed Site Locator Forms that will permit Post staff to physically locate the Volunteer's residence and work site. Post will also determine whether it is useful and appropriate to use Volunteer GPS coordinates as additional information on Volunteer Site Locator Forms.

Documents to be Submitted:

- 1) Post plan for completing review and return of completed Volunteer Site Locator Forms

Status and Timeline for Completion:

July 1, 2012


OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with all eight recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed five recommendations: numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. In its response, management described actions it is taking or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. We wish to note that in closing recommendations, we are not certifying that the agency has taken these actions or that we have reviewed their effect. Certifying compliance and verifying effectiveness are management's responsibilities. However, when we feel it is warranted, we may conduct a follow-up review to confirm that action has been taken and to evaluate the impact.

We wish to acknowledge the timely manner in which the post responded to the report and our recommendations. We also commend the post for the thorough and relevant documentation it provided in response to all eight report recommendations.

Three recommendations, numbers 1, 7, and 8, remain open. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 1, 7, and 8 when the documentation reflected in the agency's response to the preliminary report is received.

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

<p>PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION</p>	<p>This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Jim O’Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations, and by Senior Evaluator Reuben Marshall. Additional contributions were made by Heather Robinson and Lisa Chesnel.</p>  <p>Jim O’Keefe Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations</p>
<p>OIG CONTACT</p>	<p>Following issuance of the final report, a stakeholder satisfaction survey will be distributed. If you wish to comment on the quality or usefulness of this report to help us improve our products, please e-mail Jim O’Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations and Inspections, at jokeefe@peacecorps.gov, or call (202) 692-2904.</p>

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