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Office of Inspector General

To: Aaron S. Williams, Director
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From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General 

Date: March 26, 2011

Subject: Final Report on the Country Program Evaluation of Peace Corps/Peru
(IG-12-03-E)

Transmitted for your information is our final report on the country program evaluation of Peace Corps/Peru.

Management concurred with all 16 recommendations. We closed eight recommendations based on a review of corrective actions and supporting documentation. Recommendations 2-5, 12, and 14-16 will remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation identified in management's response has been received. Our comments are in the report as Appendix C. Please respond with documentation to close the remaining open recommendations according to the timelines indicated in your response.

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.

We wish to acknowledge the comprehensive manner in which the post responded to the report and our recommendations. Immediately after we completed fieldwork, we requested that the post assess the year-round accessibility of each Volunteer and identify measures to mitigate heightened seasonal travel risks. In response, the post took aggressive and systematic steps to identify Volunteer sites with limited year-round access issues and put in place measures to mitigate risks associated with the sites. We also commend the post for the detailed and thorough documentation it provided in response to all 16 report recommendations.

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 Jerry Black at 202.692.2912 or to Senior Evaluator Heather Robinson at 202.692.2913.

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

Attachment

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Peace Corps Office of Inspector General



PC/Peru Staff in Traditional Peruvian Clothing



Mountain Village



Flag of Peru

Final Program Evaluation Report: Peace Corps/Peru

March 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over 3,300 Peace Corps Volunteers have served the people of Peru since the program was first launched in 1962. The program was closed in 1975 due to political and economic instability but re-opened in 2002. There are currently five project sectors in Peru: (1) community health and HIV/AIDS, (2) environmental management, (3) small business development, (4) water and sanitation, and (5) youth development. At the onset of this evaluation, 235 Volunteers were serving in Peru and an additional 64 trainees were participating in pre-service training (PST).

PC/Peru (hereafter, “the post”) experienced considerable growth in Volunteer numbers since re-opening in 2002. This put a strain on staff who had to work increasing hours to fulfill their job responsibilities. Despite the challenges associated with growth, the evaluation uncovered a generally well-run post with satisfied Volunteers. The post’s resignation rate has consistently been lower than global averages.

The post has a unique Volunteer support structure that appeared to contribute to its strong Volunteer support. The regional coordinators (RCs) located throughout the country carried out a wide range of support functions and were able to provide on-the-ground support to Volunteers more quickly than staff in Lima. The post also benefited from 15 third-year Peace Corps volunteer coordinators (PCVCs) and volunteer leaders (PCVLs). Volunteers appreciated the support provided by the RCs, PCVCs, and PCVLs, and the post benefits from their work. Volunteers also spoke very highly of the Peace Corps medical officers (PCMOs), and the evaluation identified several notable practices that enabled the PCMOs to build good, trusting relationships with Volunteers.

The post also had successes in helping Volunteers build positive counterpart relationships and in using host families to increase community integration and Volunteer safety. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) believes these program elements have contributed to the post’s effectiveness and are practices that might benefit other posts.

The evaluation did uncover some areas for improvement. With five projects in a large, diverse country, the post has a wide variety of programming goals and Volunteer sites to balance during site development. The post’s site selection criteria were not well-defined, and some Volunteers were placed in sites where it was difficult for them to achieve their primary assignment goals. The post’s programming complexity affected its ability to deliver effective training, and the timing of Volunteer site assignments made it difficult for Volunteers to receive technical and language training specific to their site.

There were also several safety and security weaknesses that need to be addressed, such as lack of awareness among Volunteers of their consolidation points, inaccurate and incomplete site locator forms, lack of Volunteer compliance with the post’s whereabouts policy, and lack of adherence to the post’s housing criteria. Furthermore, the post does not sufficiently consider travel-related risks for Volunteers during the site selection process.

Despite the benefits of the RC and PCVC positions to Volunteers, some improvements need to be made. RC workloads varied and were not being actively managed, and PCVCs were not engaged in substantive Volunteer activities.

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

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HOST COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Peru is located in western South America and borders Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, and the Pacific Ocean. Ancient Peru was the seat of several prominent Andean civilizations, most notably that of the Incas. The Incan empire was conquered by Spain in 1533, and the area remained under Spanish control until Peru declared its independence in 1821. The military has been prominent in Peruvian history with coups repeatedly interrupting civilian constitutional government. The most recent period of military rule was in 1968-1980. Peru returned to democratic leadership in 1980.

Peru has a population of about 28 million people, 70 percent of whom live in urban or semi-urban areas. Income growth has not been spread evenly among the population; wealth and economic activity are concentrated in Lima and other major cities, with many rural areas suffering extreme poverty. The country has two official languages, Spanish and Quechua.

Peru is a large and diverse country that has numerous ecosystems and climate zones, including the coastal desert, the Andean mountains and valleys, and the Amazonian tropical forests. The country has suffered through historical cycles of flooding and drought, and is subject to tremors and earthquakes.

Peru is listed as “high human development” and ranks 63 out of 169 countries in the 2010 “United Nations Human Development Report.”¹ The country's estimated HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in 2009 was 0.4 percent. The Peruvian economy has experienced growth in the past decade and the national poverty rate has been in decline. However, poor infrastructure and other factors have hindered economic growth in Peru's non-coastal areas, and underemployment remains high. The country has abundant mineral resources and rich fishing grounds. Peru is also one of the world's largest coca leaf producers. Peru is a major transit point of cocaine, and the U.S. and Peruvian governments are working together to limit the cultivation and trafficking of illegal narcotics.

PEACE CORPS PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Peace Corps first opened the program in Peru in 1962. More than 2,600 Volunteers served until the post was closed in 1975 due to political and economic instability. Over 750 Volunteers have served in the country since the post was re-opened in 2002. The post has experienced steady growth in recent years; from 2008-2012, the number of Volunteers grew by 79 percent, increasing from 131 to 235.²

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. Countries receive a ranking that ranges from “very high human development” to “low human development” based on related data.

² The Volunteer population fluctuates throughout the year as trainees arrive and other Volunteers complete their service. To more accurately compare Volunteer/trainee numbers across years, the agency often uses

Volunteers in Peru work in the following five program areas:

- **Community Health and HIV/AIDS**

This project (hereafter “health”) addresses the multiple health needs of some of the country’s poorest communities, particularly in rural areas. Volunteers work with local health posts, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), local educational institutions, and various community groups to strengthen family health, especially nutrition and hygiene practices. Particular emphasis is placed on the health of women and children, with the goal of reducing infant and maternal mortality, as well as HIV/AIDS education and prevention.

- **Environmental Management**

Volunteers help to build sustained environmental awareness and practices in rural and small urban communities. In cooperation with the public sector and NGOs, Volunteers give classroom sessions; form environmental youth clubs; encourage community members to engage in environmentally sound income-generating activities; train residents in proper forestry and water use techniques; work with authorities on appropriate trash disposal activities; and promote ecotourism.

- **Small Business Development**

Volunteers address poverty and underemployment by helping farmer associations, artisan associations, and other small businesses improve their income and profitability through new marketing approaches, and better administrative and organizational practices. Volunteers are also engaged in linking these small businesses to world markets through information and communication technology.

- **Water and Sanitation**

Volunteers assist communities, mostly in arid coastal areas, in the construction and maintenance of water systems, and in the construction, proper use, and maintenance of latrines. Volunteers also train community members on health and sanitation issues.

- **Youth Development**

This project addresses the fundamental challenges of preparing low income adolescents to lead productive, fulfilling lives. Volunteers work with government agencies, NGOs, schools, health posts, youth centers, churches and other community groups to build the confidence and self-esteem of vulnerable teens and youth. They work with teen youth groups to provide vocational training, leadership skills and other vital life skills. Some Volunteers also focus on working with youth special needs.

At the onset of this evaluation there were 235 Volunteers serving in Peru as well as 64 trainees who were participating in PST. The post welcomes two groups of trainees each

Volunteer/trainee years (VT years). VT years take into account both the number of Volunteers and the length of time each Volunteer served. Since Volunteers may serve less than a full calendar year, counting VT years is more accurate than counting individual Volunteers.

year. In August 2011, 51 trainees swore in as Volunteers in small business development and youth development. On November 25, 62 trainees swore in as Volunteers in the environmental management, health, and water and sanitation programs. At the time of the evaluation, the post had one Peace Corps Response (PCR) Volunteer working in the environmental management program.³ Three additional PCR positions were waiting to be filled at the time of the evaluation.

The post's FY 2012 budget was \$4.8 million. At the time of the evaluation the post had 45 staff positions, including one short-term staff member. The post also employed 21 temporary training staff to assist with PST.

EVALUATION RESULTS

PROGRAMMING

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

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

In reviewing Volunteers' familiarity with their project goals and objectives, Volunteer Assignment Descriptions (VADs), grant activities, and the post's PCR program, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. Ninety-four percent of interviewed Volunteers rated their familiarity with their project goals favorably and 77 percent of interviewed Volunteers stated that their VAD described their activities "moderately well" or better.

Over half of the interviewed Volunteers were involved in grant activities supported by the Peace Corps. The post has an organized process for reviewing and approving grants that includes participation from administrative and programming staff and PCVCs. Volunteers did not raise any significant concerns related to grants aside from the timing of the project design and management workshop, which some Volunteers stated occurred too late in their service.

The post has a small PCR program that is limited to one Volunteer in the environment program. The Volunteer was having a positive experience and no concerns were raised related to the PCR program.

³ Peace Corps Response provides opportunities for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to undertake short-term assignments in various program areas around the world.

Volunteers are developing productive counterpart relationships.

The *Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance: Project Design and Evaluation* section E.2 states, “posts have found that Volunteers are usually more productive and effective when Volunteers are assigned to (or encouraged to seek) more than one project partner.” At the post most Volunteers were given the names of multiple potential counterparts, typically one lead counterpart and at least two back-up counterparts. Volunteers also networked in their sites and built additional counterpart relationships.

The multiple counterpart model appears to result in productive relationships between Volunteers and their counterparts. Ninety-seven percent (35 of 36) of the interviewed Volunteers had at least one counterpart they met with regularly, and 90 percent (27 of 30) of the interviewed Volunteers stated that it was beneficial to receive multiple counterpart contacts.⁴ By connecting Volunteers to multiple community members, it was easier for them to find people in their community they could work with, and it provided Volunteers with the freedom to develop closer relationships with people who were supportive of their work. It also provided greater continuity and decreased the chance that the Volunteer’s work would stall if an individual counterpart could no longer continue working with them.

OIG believes the post’s multiple counterpart model contributes to the post’s effectiveness and is a practice that should be considered by other posts.

Although Volunteers’ overall site satisfaction is high, some Volunteers are placed in sites where it is difficult for them to achieve their primary assignment goals.

Although Volunteers in Peru are generally satisfied with their assigned sites, 25 percent of the interviewed Volunteers raised concerns about their ability to achieve the project goals due to challenges associated with their site location. Some Volunteers were placed in sites where community needs did not align well with Peace Corps programming, making it difficult for them to implement some of their project objectives. For example, some Volunteers were placed in large, well-developed cities that could not benefit from programming activities directed towards rural sites, such as improved cook stoves and latrines. Other Volunteers were placed in communities that were very small and dependent on subsistence farming activities, making it difficult for Volunteers to find enough community members willing to participate in activities unrelated to agriculture. Other Volunteers were placed in sites where the area’s climate and development priorities did not align with the programming goals, such as planting trees in the desert. These concerns were raised most often by Volunteers in the health and environment sectors.

The *Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance: Project Design and Evaluation* section E.1.4 advises post staff to use a site selection strategy:

⁴ Some of the interviewed Volunteers stated that they were not provided multiple counterpart names and therefore declined to rate this question.

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

The guidance advises staff to take into account numerous factors, including “demonstrated needs that are consistent with project goals and objectives,” an element that is lacking in some of Peru’s Volunteer sites.

Site selection criteria have not been documented for Peru’s projects and do not appear to be used during site development. Having documented site selection criteria is essential because a lot of staff members play a role in site development in Peru, including associate Peace Corps directors (APCDs), program specialists and assistants, RCs, PCVLs, and PCVCs. Not all of these staff members have insight into the programming strategy. Therefore, it is important that the programming staff clearly articulate their strategy and document critical site selection criteria to assist staff members in identifying and developing sites that are aligned with the program’s goals.

Inadequate site selection not only negatively impacts Volunteer success in achieving their project goals, but it also impacts their productivity. Data from the 2011 Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS) shows that PC/Peru Volunteers spend less time on their primary assignment than Volunteers in other country programs. In 2011, 58 percent of the Volunteers in Peru reported spending 20 hours or less on their primary assignment compared to 46 percent globally. Improving site selection will help Volunteers be more productive and increase the chance they can succeed in achieving their primary goals.

We recommend:

- 1. That the programming staff document the post’s programmatic site selection criteria and communicate the criteria to all staff involved in site development.**

Project partners requested more communication from staff and increased involvement in project decisions.

We interviewed eight project partners at the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, National Parks Service, and the Ministry of Health. Overall, project partners who were interviewed as part of the evaluation were satisfied with the Volunteers’ work and believe they are helping address Peru’s development needs. However, most of them requested more information about the program and asked for greater involvement in the post’s project decisions. The interviewed representatives had questions about the process used to select Volunteers and place them in specific sites. They also had suggestions on ways the ministries and Peace Corps could work together

and think more strategically about Volunteer placements and the support provided to targeted communities.

The *Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance: Project Design and Evaluation* section B2 instructs posts to include host country partners in multiple phases of programming, including project design, implementation, and evaluation. The guidance recommends the use of project advisory committees to engage partners. Although the post maintains relationships with its project partners, this is done through one-on-one communications, not structured committees. Furthermore, project partners are not involved in reviewing and updating the post's project plans, and the post does not have a formal way to communicate project results and Volunteer achievements to its major project partners. Without a formalized, structured way to work with project partners, the post is not able to take full advantage of the partners' expertise and ensure their interests, needs, and goals are accounted for in the Peace Corps' programming goals.

We recommend:

- 2. That the director of programming and training develop and implement a plan to improve communication with project partners to gather their input and provide feedback on project results.**

TRAINING

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

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

In reviewing the post's process for planning and developing training and the sufficiency of the post's training resources, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. The training program in Peru is generally effective at helping Volunteers prepare for service and be productive at their sites. The post includes an appropriate mix of staff and Volunteers to plan and deliver training. Volunteers rated the effectiveness of their pre-service Spanish language, cross-cultural, medical, and safety training highly. Spanish language testing scores showed that ninety-eight percent of Volunteers achieved the minimal Spanish language requirement by the end of their 10-week PST.

In terms of its training resources, some post staff reported that the lack of a year-round language coordinator was an impediment to providing local (Quechua) language training; otherwise the post appears to have adequate staffing resources to deliver Volunteer training.

Many Volunteers reported that technical training is not practical or relevant to their sites.

The *Peace Corps Manual* section (MS) 201 “Eligibility and Standards for Peace Corps Volunteer Service” states that a trainee must demonstrate technical competence, which is defined as “proficiency in the technical skills needed to carry out the assignment” by the end of training. The post’s calendar of training events indicates that trainees receive over 100 hours of sector-specific training over the 10 week PST period⁵.

Overall, 64 percent (23 of 36) of interviewed Volunteers stated that their technical training lacked relevance or applicability to their sites, and some felt unprepared to be productive in their primary assignment. For some sectors, technical training was too theoretical and did not provide Volunteers with concrete or practical skills; for other sectors technical training was irrelevant to the needs at some Volunteer sites. Some Volunteers also stated that the technical training was too basic for those joining Peace Corps with advanced skills. Unlike Spanish language instruction, technical training is not differentiated based on the trainee’s knowledge-level. Comments from Volunteers reflect their concerns:

“There were times it was a waste. They don’t train you to be a Volunteer. It was an overview of issues in Peru and things to get you involved with. But it doesn’t prepare you to be a Volunteer .”

“There was too much theory and talking about best practices. I would have preferred to be out there teaching classes or organizing our own lesson plans.”

“These were things that any professional in my field does not need to spend two days doing. It was a waste of time... The training was very fundamental and I did not learn a lot of new things. They did not differentiate the technical training.”

“It aims to cover everything but you just can’t.”

“I think the problem is getting a group of people ready to go do different places. So sometimes the specific technical training is irrelevant if the issues don’t pertain to your site. In retrospect, some of the things they did don’t really apply very well to the sierra. If [site assignments] were given earlier on, they could have segmented the technical training by sierra and coast.”

Three main factors affect the post’s ability to provide relevant and practical training to Volunteers in Peru:

- the variety of programming goals and corresponding technical learning objectives that must be trained to because the post has five program areas;

- the variety of sites within Peru; in particular, differences between coastal and sierra communities as well as between urban areas and small rural towns; and
- the timing of post's site assignment decision during PST.

The first two factors—variations in programming and sites—reflect strategic decisions the post has made in order to address Peru's diverse development priorities. The third factor – post communicates site assignment decisions to trainees during week seven or week eight of PST – has a less compelling rationale. Staff provided various reasons why they wait until nearly the end of PST to communicate their site assignment decisions to trainees. Some post staff said it was because they did not have all the sites identified until then; other staff said it was because they wanted to get to know the trainee in order to match them to a site where they believed the Volunteer would be successful. Not all staff agreed that site assignment should happen as late as it does in PST, and some APCDs were unofficially informing trainees of their likely site assignment earlier in PST.

Post's current process of waiting so long to inform trainees of their sites makes it impractical to deliver technical training during PST with a particular focus or emphasis on Peru's different local development needs and opportunities. As a result, trainees' time during PST is not always used effectively and they attend sessions that have little or no practical relevance to their sites.

We recommend:

- 3. That the country director and programming and training staff provide technical training that is more practical and relevant to Volunteer site assignments.**

The post is not adequately preparing Volunteers with the language skills needed to integrate into Quechua-speaking communities.

Approximately 20 percent of Volunteers in Peru are placed in Ancash and Arequipa, two geographic regions where Quechua is the primary language spoken by many community members. The post acknowledges the importance of Quechua language ability and has made efforts to ensure that Volunteers in Ancash and Arequipa receive Quechua language instruction during their service. The post's Volunteer handbook states that the post will provide regional Quechua language training as funds permit, and that Volunteers should achieve an "intermediate low" language ability level in Quechua by the end of their first year of service.

Proficiency in the dominant language spoken in the host community is fundamental to the success of the Volunteer, a fact established in The Peace Corps Act, which states:

No person shall be assigned duty as a volunteer under this chapter in any foreign country or area unless at the time of such assignment he possesses such reasonable proficiency as

his assignment requires in speaking the language of the country or area to which he is assigned

Yet trainees in Peru, including those with advanced Spanish skills well beyond the swearing-in requirement, do not receive any Quechua language instruction during PST and arrive at their sites without the basic Quechua language skills they need to integrate into their host communities. Lack of Quechua language slows the integration process for these Volunteers and diminishes their potential productivity.

The post delays communicating site assignment decisions to trainees until the seventh or eighth week of PST, after which there is insufficient time to provide Quechua language instruction. In addition, the post requires all trainees—including those who arrive at PST with advanced Spanish language skills--to spend an average of four hours each day of PST on improving their Spanish.

Volunteers interviewed in Quechua-speaking regions emphasized the importance of knowing Quechua and affirmed that they could have integrated more effectively in host communities if they had received more Quechua instruction during PST. Volunteer reporting forms (VRFs), as well as APCD or PCVC feedback on those reports and site visit forms, all confirm that Quechua is valuable for community integration and in encouraging more community involvement in primary assignment activities. Comments from Volunteers in Quechua-speaking regions reflect their need for Quechua:

“Quechua is important to understand what people are saying...It's hard to make friends, especially with women.”

“Quechua is important to integrate here.”

“Community meetings are in Quechua and so I miss that.”

“There should have been some Quechua in PST. It's a special case here [in Ancash], it's not as if Quechua is everywhere [in Peru]. I would have been able to make more friends with women if I had had Quechua.”

Providing a way for Volunteers to arrive at site with increased Quechua language skills could improve their community integration and effectiveness in primary assignment activities.

We recommend:

- 4. That the training manager review the post's language training program and make necessary changes to ensure that trainees assigned to Quechua-speaking communities have the language skills needed to integrate and be productive at their sites.**

Post lacks a reliable method for tracking and analyzing Volunteer progress on core competencies and learning objectives.

The *Peace Corps Programming and Training Guidance: Training Design and Evaluation* advises posts to develop, update, and revise Volunteer training based on input from stakeholders, data from assessments, and recommendations developed through training evaluations. This guidance stresses the important role that data plays in allowing posts to know the extent to which learning objectives have been accomplished. It states, “it is best to make changes to training based first and foremost on data about performance and not just on opinions.” The agency’s *Indicators of a High Performing Post* notes the importance of having “systems in place to both monitor and evaluate the country program in its various aspects. The information gathered is used to improve the program.”

Post staff reported that they used multiple methods to assess the extent to which trainees met learning objectives in major elements of its training program. However, only data related to Volunteer progress in Spanish language acquisition was tested and tracked systematically enough to be analyzed. Training staff reported that post lacked an adequate system for tracking and analyzing Volunteer-level progress on their learning objectives, and available documentation did not allow us to review the extent to which Volunteers had met or demonstrated competencies in areas other than Spanish language acquisition. The lack of a monitoring and evaluation system compromises the post’s ability to accurately assess the effectiveness of its training program. This in turn makes the post more susceptible to changing its training program based on how the latest training group felt about its training rather than on the demonstrated results of the training program.

We recommend:

- 5. That the training manager develop and implement a system to better monitor and analyze trainee and Volunteer achievement of their learning objectives.**

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

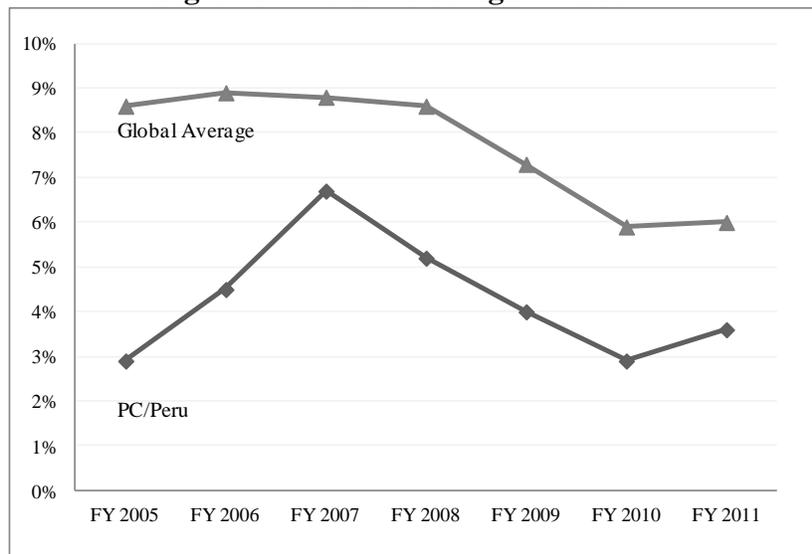
Our country program evaluation attempts to answer the question, “Has post provided adequate support and oversight to Volunteers?” To determine this, we assessed numerous factors, including staff-Volunteer communications; project and status report feedback; medical support; safety and security support 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 staff-Volunteer communications, feedback from staff on Volunteer reports, the quality of site visits, Volunteer medical support, the adequacy of Volunteer living

allowances, and the handling of crime incidents, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. All interviewed Volunteers rated the quality of staff feedback on their work reports favorably. When asked how well site visits from staff met their support needs, 88 percent of Volunteers provided a favorable rating. Eighty-six percent of interviewed Volunteers said that their living allowance was adequate. And of the 16 interviewed Volunteers who had reported being the victim of a crime, 75 percent rated the post’s response to their incident favorably.

One measure of the quality of the Volunteer experience is the early termination rate which the agency tracks at all posts. Peru’s Volunteer resignation rate is lower than global averages as the graph below demonstrates:

Figure 1. Volunteer Resignation Rates



The post has a support structure that results in strong Volunteer support overall. In particular, Volunteers expressed a high degree of appreciation for the quality of support and encouragement they receive from their RCs, the PCMOs, the training staff, and third year PCVLs and PCVCs. Senior leadership at the post generally received very high marks from Volunteers for their supportiveness as well.

The main unique feature of the post’s support structure is the RC, a staff position that few Peace Corps posts have. Peru is a large country and Volunteers are often placed in communities far from the main office in Lima that might require a full day’s travel or more to reach. In response to this challenge, the post based five RCs in regions throughout Peru where they can provide a wide range of support functions to Volunteers in their region. Instead of being located in regional houses or offices, the RCs have vehicles, laptops, and cell phones that enable them to visit Volunteers at their sites and perform a mix of duties. RCs assist with site identification and development, including host family identification and orientation, and act as regional representatives with local and municipal project partners. RCs are often the first staff member to visit a Volunteer who has been the victim of a crime. Although this report identifies some improvements

that can be made, the quality of Volunteer support in Peru clearly benefits from the work of the RCs.

The post also assigns third-year extension Volunteers to fill PCVC and PCVL positions. At the time of the evaluation, eight PCVCs were working in the main office in Lima and seven PCVLs were based in regional capitals around the country. Interviewed Volunteers and staff appreciated the support provided by the PCVCs and PCVLs, and it was clear that they contribute positively to the post’s Volunteer support.

Volunteers’ ratings for support in specific areas were as follows:

Table 1: Responses on Perception of Volunteer Support⁵

| Support Area | Percent of Volunteers Rating “Average Support” or Better | Average Rating for Support |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Leadership | 91% | 4.2 |
| Programming | 85% | 4.0 |
| Training | 100% | 4.6 |
| Safety and Security | 78% | 3.7 |
| Medical | 100% | 4.8 |
| Regional Coordinators | 86% | 4.0 |
| Administrative | 100% | 4.3 |
| PCVL/PCVC | 98% | 4.7 |

Another notable feature of the program is the post’s 27-month homestay model in which Volunteers live with a host family during PST and throughout their service at their permanent site. Most Volunteers spoke favorably about their homestay experiences and stated that it contributed to a high level of community integration and cross-cultural understanding. Ninety-seven percent of interviewed Volunteers (35 of 36) rated their PST host family experience as “average” or better. Ninety-four percent of interviewed Volunteers (34 of 36) rated their in-site living accommodations and host family experience as “average” or better.

The post’s medical unit provides exemplary Volunteer support.

Although the data demonstrates that many staff members are providing good Volunteer support, the post’s medical team was highly regarded by Volunteers and warrants noting.

⁵ Leadership was derived from the country director score. Programming was derived by averaging the scores of the APCDs. The director of programming and training (DPT) was too new in her position to be rated by most Volunteers and is excluded from this calculation. Training was derived by averaging the ratings for the training manager and senior trainer. Safety and Security was derived from the safety and security coordinator score. Medical was derived from the collective PCMO scores. Regional Coordinators and PCVL/PCVC scores were derived from the average scores for individuals in those positions.

Volunteers rated the PCMOs the highest among the staff positions surveyed (100 percent favorable, 4.8 average), and had many positive things to say about them:

“The PCMO takes a very personal interest in the Volunteers... [the PCMO] has visited them, not for medical reasons but to get to know them.”

“The PCMO especially reached out...the first day at the office and tried to get to know me.”

“They're all extremely nice. They're full of information. And if I need medicine they're quick to get it to me. Even if it's not a medical issue and I just need to vent they're there for me.”

“They care. They learn our names and this is good. [I] feel friendship with them.”

Support provided by the post's medical unit included practices that deserve special note. The post's PCMOs take special steps to get to know Volunteers and gain their trust. Examples noted by interviewed Volunteers include: meeting Volunteers at the airport when they first arrive in country; taking them to lunch when they visit Lima; visiting them at their sites, and when appropriate, staying overnight with their host families. The PCMOs reported that they attempt to call every Volunteer by phone at least once a month to check in and make sure the Volunteer is okay. Interviewed Volunteers sensed that the PCMOs love their jobs and care about each of them as individuals. These extra efforts establish a bond of confidence between the Volunteer and PCMO. The PCMOs reported that this trust improves the quality of the information Volunteers share concerning their health and well-being, and, in turn, permits the PCMOs to provide higher quality medical support.

Post does not sufficiently consider travel-related risks for Volunteers during the site selection process.

Travelling along Peru's roads can be dangerous, particularly in mountainous regions where narrow, steep, winding dirt roads without guardrails skirt the edges of high, precipitous cliffs. Some Volunteers are in sites that can only be accessed by dirt roads which, when wet, become slippery and hazardous and may be effectively impassable for long periods of time during the rainy season. Drivers, Volunteers, and RCs raised concerns that some Volunteers are placed in sites that can become too risky to travel to when road conditions are bad.

MS 270.6.2, “Site Selection Criteria”, states that “Each post must develop and apply criteria for the selection and approval of sites”, including vulnerability to natural disasters and transportation. MS 270 also states that “evaluation of the site and satisfaction of site selection criteria must be documented by the post.” In addition, MS 264.5.0 “Post Medical Evacuation Plan” requires each post to prepare a country-specific Medical Evacuation Plan “to assist the post with the safe and efficient medical evacuation of Volunteers.”

We were not able to find evidence that the post takes these heightened seasonal road risks into consideration during its site identification and selection process. Site identification in Peru is done by many different individuals, and there is not a standard site identification and selection process that staff follows. Site identification and selection forms do not contain information regarding the condition of the roads or the accessibility of the site when dirt roads are wet and muddy. In addition, the post has not developed a medical evacuation plan as required by MS 264. As a result, the post may have placed some Volunteers in seasonably inaccessible locations that would make their or staff's travel to or departure from the site overly dangerous for periods of time.

Because of the importance of this issue related to Volunteer safety, OIG took action before issuing the preliminary report. On December 8, 2011, OIG sent a memo to the country director (CD) of PC/Peru as well as the regional director of the Inter-America and the Pacific (IAP) region requesting that the post take action by implementing the recommendations below. Post responded to this memo on December 30, 2011 outlining steps that were being taken to address OIG concerns and its plans to mitigate and manage associated travel risks. See Appendix B for the OIG's memo and Appendix C for the agency's response.

We recommend:

- 6. That the country director assess the year-round accessibility of each Volunteer, paying particular attention to those sites where dirt roads become so muddy and slippery when wet (i.e., rainy season) that Volunteers are effectively inaccessible by car.**
- 7. That the country director identify measures post can take to mitigate heightened seasonal travel risks in order to safely access Volunteers in these areas.**

Weaknesses in the post's safety and security program could compromise its response to an emergency and place Volunteers in unsafe situations.

According to the agency's safety and security policy, MS 270, the agency's safety and security program depends on "having plans in place to respond promptly and effectively to threats or events." MS 270.8.1 states that "each post must develop and maintain a detailed EAP that addresses the most likely emergency situations that would impact Peace Corps personnel and operations."

The evaluation uncovered deficiencies in the post's emergency preparedness, including Volunteers who could not identify their consolidation points, incomplete site locator

forms, poor compliance with the post's whereabouts policy, and Volunteer housing that did not conform with the post's housing criteria.

Consolidation points

Half of the interviewed Volunteers could not correctly identify their consolidation point. This is an on-going issue for the post that the regional Peace Corps safety and security officer (PCSSO) previously noted in a July 2010 MS 270 review. In addition, some Volunteers expressed doubts that the location of their consolidation point--in the middle of a crime-prone area of a large city--was an appropriate one.

Site Locator Forms

Site locator forms (SLFs) contain information about the Volunteer's site, including communication and logistical information to help staff support Volunteers or travel quickly to their site during a crisis. We found that SLFs were not being adequately completed by Volunteers or checked by staff, something the PCSSO also noted in a July 2010 report. The post did not have file copies of many Volunteers' SLFs prior to the OIG evaluation announcement. SLFs that were on file had incomplete information; many sections were missing information, including police and medical contact information, directions to consolidation points, or directions to Volunteer sites. In addition, some Volunteers complete the SLF in English. The drivers cannot read these SLFs, making it difficult for them to follow the directions to Volunteer houses. The post was aware of deficiencies in its SLFs and hired a temporary worker to improve the Volunteer files.

Whereabouts policy

All posts are required to collect Volunteer whereabouts when they travel away from their communities. This system better enables staff to reach Volunteers during an emergency. Although the post has a whereabouts system, Volunteers' compliance with the post's whereabouts policy is low. Just 37 percent of interviewed Volunteers said they report "always" or "most of the time." Volunteers reported that several factors contribute to their low level of compliance with the whereabouts policy, including forgetfulness, confusion over what has to be reported, concerns that the policy is not reasonable, and a belief that staff do not take whereabouts reporting seriously. The low level of adherence to this policy could make it difficult for staff to reach Volunteers who are not at their site during an emergency.

Housing checks

Fifty-nine percent of the houses we visited did not meet all the items on the post's list of minimal criteria for Volunteer housing. Common areas of noncompliance included missing or inadequate locks on bedroom doors and external doors and houses that can be accessed through the roof. There is no documentation to show that housing checklists have been completed and reviewed by staff. MS 270.6.3, Housing Standards, requires that:

All housing or host family arrangements must be inspected by post staff (or a trained designee) prior to occupancy to ensure each house and/or homestay arrangement meets all minimum standards as established by the Peace Corps and the post. Reports of the inspections must be documented and maintained by the post.

Because many people, including RCs and PCVLs, are involved in identifying Volunteer houses, the post needs a way to verify that everyone involved understands the minimal housing criteria, completes the housing check, and verifies housing safety before the Volunteer arrives.

We recommend:

- 8. That the country director ensure that all Volunteers know the location of their consolidation point.**
- 9. That the country director require the appropriate staff members to review the accuracy and completeness of every Volunteer's site locator form.**
- 10. That the country director develop and implement a plan to promote a higher level of compliance among Volunteers with the post's whereabouts policy.**
- 11. That the country director ensure that staff inspect Volunteer housing and the post's minimum standards are met prior to occupancy.**
- 12. That the country director ensure that the post is maintaining accurate housing inspection reports.**

Settling-in allowances are inadequate for Volunteers moving into unfurnished rooms.

MS 221 section 4 states, "Upon initial site assignment, Volunteers are provided a settling-in allowance to purchase necessary housing supplies and equipment. This allows them to be involved immediately in their communities and gives them freedom to manage their own affairs." In addition, *Characteristics of a High Performing Post*, section 4.10 states that insufficient or out-of-date settling-in allowances should be quickly corrected.

Overall, 69 percent of interviewed Volunteers rated the adequacy of their settling-in allowance as "average" or better. However, eleven Volunteers stated that their settling-in allowance was inadequate to cover the expenses they incurred when moving into their room. This was most often an issue for Volunteers who moved into unfurnished rooms and did not have enough money to buy the necessary items, such as a bed, mattress, desk, and chair.

The post does not provide Volunteer settling-in allowances based on the extent to which the Volunteer's room is furnished. As a result, Volunteers who moved into unfurnished bedrooms often spent personal funds to purchase the furniture and other minimal items they needed.

We recommend:

- 13. That the country director review the settling-in allowance and ensure that it is adequate to cover reasonable expenses Volunteers incur.**

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Another 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 relationships with headquarters and the U.S. Embassy in Peru; performance reporting; strategic planning and budgeting; office work environment and employee morale; and office staffing, OIG found no significant areas of concern that would necessitate action by the post. Post staff stated that they are well supported by Peace Corps headquarters. Post staff members also participate in embassy meetings and maintain effective working relationships with embassy staff, including the RSO, while still maintaining the necessary independence of Peace Corps.

Volunteers are submitting their VRFs and reported that the information they provide is reliable. Most interviewed Volunteers stated that the training they received was adequate, and the PCVCs were available to provide more guidance, if needed.

The post uses an inclusive strategic planning process that represents all of the office's units – programming, training, administrative, safety and security, and medical. In general, staff reported that morale was high. Although some staff reported a heavy workload due to increasing Volunteer numbers, our analysis revealed that the post's staffing levels increased as the number of Volunteers grew. From 2008-2011, the post added fifteen staff members, and the ratio of staff to Volunteers increased only slightly in that same timeframe. Some headquarters staff raised concerns that the post was only operating with two United States Direct Hire (USDH) positions.⁶ Although the absence

⁶ The agency does not have a policy mandating the number of USDH positions at each post, but it has been standard practice for posts to have three USDH positions. This provides enough staff to perform inherently governmental activities while also providing back-up for USDH staff who need to leave the office for in-country travel or for annual leave, medical treatment, etc.

of a third USDH staff member placed some constraints on the country director and director of programming and training, it did not appear to negatively impact post operations in the short-term.

Uneven workload distribution impacted the effectiveness of Regional Coordinator support.

The post employs five RCs. The RCs are located throughout the country in areas of Peru that have larger Volunteer numbers, enabling them to provide on-the-ground support more quickly than staff in Lima. According to the staff and Volunteer handbooks, RCs have a wide range of responsibilities that includes coordinating with local project partners, conducting site visits, helping to resolve issues Volunteers have with their host families or counterparts, organizing monthly meetings for Volunteers, sharing information and best practices among Volunteers, identifying new sites and host families, and promoting healthy, safe Volunteer behavior.

In general, the post's RC model appeared to be effective at providing Volunteer support, as previously discussed in the Volunteer Support section of this report. However, RC support varied, and 31 percent (11 of 36) of interviewed Volunteers raised concerns that their RC was too busy or too far away to provide adequate support.

There was variability in the number of Volunteers each RC was required to support, ranging from 32 to 55 Volunteers. Some RCs also had to support Volunteers who were spread over a wide geographic area, making it difficult for them to spend time with Volunteers in more distant communities. Furthermore, the RCs' workload was not well-managed. Staff members from multiple units delegated work directly to individual RCs. The post did not have a way to oversee the RCs' work and make sure individuals were not overworked or assigned responsibility for tasks that were outside the scope of their training and experience.

As a result, there are areas where RC support was inadequate. RCs did not consistently carry out all of the proper groundwork to select host families, and housing checks were not being properly completed and documented. Some Volunteers also stated that it was difficult to get support from their RC with counterpart issues, identifying language tutors, and finding new housing and host families.

We recommend:

- 14. That the director of programming and training develop and implement a method to manage and provide oversight of regional coordinators' workload distribution.**

PCVCs were not participating in substantive Volunteer activities with an assigned counterpart.

According to MS 202 section 3.0, “a Volunteer Leader is first and foremost a Volunteer... Accordingly, Volunteer Leaders must, in addition to their special Volunteer Leader services, be involved in at least one substantive Volunteer program or activity with an assigned counterpart.” The post’s *Volunteer Handbook* states, “PCVCs and PCVLs may spend 75% of their time in Volunteer Support but must spend 25% of their time in projects and roles directly impacting the host community or in strengthening community organizations.”

At the time of the evaluation the post had fifteen Volunteers who filled PCVL positions. Seven of these Volunteers were field-based PCVLs and the other eight Volunteers supported the Peace Corps office in Lima and were referred to as PCVCs. No concerns were raised about the work being performed by the field-based PCVLs; however, the OIG discovered that some of the PCVCs were spending little or no time on Volunteer activities and did not have an assigned counterpart. PCVCs interviewed as part of the evaluation were spending almost all of their time assisting in office-related activities, such as assisting with site development, reviewing Volunteer grant applications, assisting with training, reviewing and providing feedback on VRFs.

The post does not have a way to monitor the Volunteer work being performed by PCVCs. Many PCVCs were not required to document their Volunteer activities on an ongoing basis or submit a VRF, and the post had not established a method of ensuring that PCVCs are spending at least 25 percent of their time on substantive Volunteer activities. Furthermore, some PCVCs reported that a Volunteer assignment had not been arranged prior to them taking the position, and they have had difficulty setting up productive volunteer assignments while in Lima.

Although the work being performed by the PCVCs is highly valued by staff and Volunteers, the post needs to ensure that the PCVCs have Volunteer assignments that comply with agency policy.

We recommend:

- 15. That the associate Peace Corps directors ensure Peace Corps volunteer coordinators are involved in at least one substantive Volunteer program or activity with an assigned counterpart.**
- 16. That the director of programming and training develop and implement a method for staff to monitor Peace Corps volunteer coordinators’ Volunteer work to make sure there is an**

**appropriate balance, consistent with agency policy,
between their staff and Volunteer responsibilities.**

PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF (PEPFAR)

Another objective of this post evaluation is to answer the question “is the post able to adequately administer the PEPFAR program, support Volunteers, and meet its PEPFAR objectives?” To answer this question, we evaluate:

- Whether the post is implementing its PEPFAR objectives as laid out in the annual implementation plan.
- Relationships between the post and coordinating partners.
- Whether Volunteers are fulfilling HIV/AIDS-related assignments and handling related challenges.

The post has a small PEPFAR budget of only \$50,000 for fiscal year 2011. In reviewing the post's PEPFAR program, OIG learned of concerns related to the post's 2012 PEPFAR budget amount and funding delays for 2011; however, these cannot be addressed by the agency.

The post appears to have a well-run PEPFAR program. Fifty-eight percent of interviewed Volunteers reported some level of involvement in HIV/AIDS activities, and representatives from Peace Corps' Office of Global Health and HIV commented favorably about the post's ability to use its PEPFAR money and engage in meaningful work. Despite these positive results, the post's 2012 PEPFAR funding request for \$100,000 was not approved so the post will not be receiving money for the fiscal year. It was reported that this was a decision made by the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, and the Peace Corps is unable to reverse the decision.

Furthermore, the post has not received \$50,000 in fiscal year 2011 PEPFAR funding, which has prevented Volunteers from engaging in activities that rely on this money. Interviewed Volunteers reported that this impacted their ability to participate in World AIDS Day activities and receive Volunteer activities support and training grant funding. A representative from Peace Corps' OGHH reported that the post is not expected to receive this money from the Department of State until sometime in 2012, months after the end of the fiscal year for which the money was intended.

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.

The OIG Evaluation Unit announced its intent to conduct an evaluation of PC/Peru on September 7, 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?
- Is the post able to adequately administer the PEPFAR program, support Volunteers, and meet its PEPFAR objectives?

The evaluation team conducted the preliminary research portion of the evaluation September 8-October 28, 2011. This research included a review of agency documents provided by headquarters and post staff; interviews with management staff representing the IAP region, the office of overseas programming and training support (OPATS), PCR, Office of Global Health and HIV, and the Office of Safety and Security (SS); and inquiries to the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS), Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Partnerships, the Office of Private Sector Initiatives, and the office of Volunteer Support (VS). After completing fieldwork, information was gathered from Masters International and Counseling and Outreach Unit staff.

In-country fieldwork occurred from October 31-November 18, 2011, and included interviews with post senior staff in charge of programming, training, and support; the embassy Chargé D'Affaires; the embassy regional security officer (RSO), Deputy RSO, and Assistant RSO; and host country government ministry officials. In addition, we interviewed a stratified judgmental sample of 36 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 36 Volunteers, 20 staff members in-country, and 30 representatives from Peace Corps headquarters in Washington D.C., the U.S. Embassy in Peru, 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, 27 out of 36 Volunteer interviews occurred at the Volunteers’ homes, and we inspected 26 homes using post-defined site selection criteria.⁷ 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 Peru at the time of the evaluation fieldwork; the Volunteer sample was selected to reflect these demographics.

Table 2: Volunteer Demographic Data

| Project | Percentage of Volunteers |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Community Health and HIV/AIDS | 21% |
| Environmental Management | 17% ⁸ |
| Small Business Development | 16% |
| Water and Sanitation | 17% |
| Youth Development | 29% |
| Gender | Percentage of Volunteers |
| Female | 60% |
| Male | 40% |
| Age | Percentage of Volunteers |
| 25 or younger | 63% |
| 26-29 | 30% |

⁷ Nine interviews did not occur at the Volunteer’s residence. A married couple was included in the Volunteer sample but their residence and associated housing check was only counted once in our analysis to avoid double-counting.

⁸ The environmental management project includes one PCR.V.

| | |
|------------|----|
| 30-49 | 6% |
| 50 or over | 1% |

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, the post had 44 full-time staff positions. The post also employed 22 temporary training staff to assist with PST. We interviewed 20 staff members.

Table 3: Interviews Conducted with PC/Peru Staff Members

| Position | Status | Interviewed |
|---|--------|-------------|
| Country Director | USDH | X |
| Director of Programming and Training | USDH | X |
| APCD (5) | PSC* | X |
| Program Specialist (2) | PSC | |
| Program Assistant (3) | PSC | |
| Regional Coordinator (5) | PSC | X |
| Resource Center Manager | PSC | |
| Training Manager | FSN* | X |
| Senior Trainer | PSC | X |
| Year Round Tech Trainer | PSC | |
| Language Coordinator ⁹ | PSC | |
| Training Secretary | PSC | |
| Training Administrative Assistant | PSC | |
| PCMO (3) | PSC | X |
| Medical Assistant (2) | PSC | |
| Safety and Security Coordinator | PSC | X |
| Director of Management and Operations | FSN | X |
| IT Specialist | PSC | |
| Cashier/Administrative Assistant | FSN | |
| Financial Specialist | FSN | |
| Financial Assistant | PSC | X |
| Administrative Assistant/Human Resources – Voucher Examiner | PSC | |
| Administrative Assistant/General Services Officer | PSC | |
| Administrative Assistant/Travel | PSC | |
| Voucher Examiner/Receptionist | PSC | |
| Driver/General Services | PSC | |
| Driver (2) | PSC | |
| Janitor (3) | PSC | |

Data as of November 2011. *PSC is personal services contractor; FSN is foreign service national.

Thirty 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.

⁹ The Language Coordinator is not a full-time position year-round.

**Table 4: Interviews Conducted with PC/Headquarters Staff,
Embassy Officials and Key Ministry Officials**

| Position | Organization |
|--|--|
| Regional Director | PC/Headquarters/ IAP Region |
| Chief of Operations | PC/Headquarters/ IAP Region |
| Chief of Programming and Training | PC/Headquarters/ IAP Region |
| Country Desk Officer | PC/Headquarters/ IAP Region |
| Roving Administrative Officer | PC/Headquarters/ IAP Region |
| Regional Security Advisor | PC/Headquarters/ IAP Region |
| Director | PC/Headquarters/PCR |
| Programming Specialist | PC/Headquarters/PCR |
| Director, Office of Global Health and HIV | PC/Headquarters/OGHH |
| Chief of Programming and Training | PC/Headquarters/OGHH |
| Administrative Specialist | PC/Headquarters/OGHH |
| Program and Training Specialist/ Environment and Agriculture | PC/Headquarters/OPATS |
| Programming & Training Specialist/ Small Enterprise Development | PC/Headquarters/OPATS |
| Programming & Training Specialist/ Youth Development and Education | PC/Headquarters/OPATS |
| Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer - Peru | PC/Headquarters/SS |
| Deputy Director, Counseling and Outreach Unit | PC/Headquarters/VS |
| Assistant Program Manager, Master's International | PC/Headquarters/VRS |
| Program Support Assistant | PC/Headquarters/VRS |
| Chargé D'Affaires | U.S. Embassy in Peru |
| Regional Security Officer | U.S. Embassy in Peru |
| Deputy Regional Security Officer | U.S. Embassy in Peru |
| Assistant Regional Security Officer | U.S. Embassy in Peru |
| Director | Peru's Ministry of Education, Special Education Department |
| Assistant | Peru's Ministry of Education, Special Education Department |
| National Director of Artisanry | Peru's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR) |
| Director of Innovation Centers | Peru's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR) |
| Director of Protected Areas Management | National Parks Service |
| Tourism Specialist | National Parks Service |
| Advisor | National Parks Service |
| Healthy Schools Coordinator | Ministry of Health |

Data as of December 2011.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. That the programming staff document the post's programmatic site selection criteria and communicate the criteria to all staff involved in site development.
2. That the director of programming and training develop and implement a plan to improve communication with project partners to gather their input and provide feedback on project results.
3. That the country director and programming and training staff provide technical training that is more practical and relevant to Volunteer site assignments.
4. That the training manager review the post's language training program and make necessary changes to ensure that trainees assigned to Quechua-speaking communities have the language skills needed to integrate and be productive at their sites.
5. That the training manager develop and implement a system to better monitor and analyze trainee and Volunteer achievement of their learning objectives.
6. That the country director assess the year-round accessibility of each Volunteer, paying particular attention to those sites where dirt roads become so muddy and slippery when wet (i.e., rainy season) that Volunteers are effectively inaccessible by car.
7. That the country director identify measures post can take to mitigate heightened seasonal travel risks in order to safely access Volunteers in these areas.
8. That the country director ensure that all Volunteers know the location of their consolidation point.
9. That the country director require the appropriate staff members to review the accuracy and completeness of every Volunteer's site locator form.
10. That the country director develop and implement a plan to promote a higher level of compliance among Volunteers with the post's whereabouts policy.
11. That the country director ensure that staff inspect Volunteer housing and the post's minimum standards are met prior to occupancy.
12. That the country director ensure that the post is maintaining accurate housing inspection reports.

13. That the country director review the settling-in allowance and ensure that it is adequate to cover reasonable expenses Volunteers incur.
14. That the director of programming and training develop and implement a method to manage and provide oversight of regional coordinators' workload distribution.
15. That the associate Peace Corps directors ensure Peace Corps volunteer coordinators are involved in at least one substantive Volunteer program or activity with an assigned counterpart.
16. That the director of programming and training develop and implement a method for staff to monitor Peace Corps volunteer coordinators' Volunteer work to make sure there is an appropriate balance, consistent with agency policy, between their staff and Volunteer responsibilities.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| APCD | Associate Peace Corps Director |
| AVS | Annual Volunteer Survey |
| CD | Country Director |
| DPT | Director of Programming and Training |
| EAP | Emergency Action Plan |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| IAP | Inter-America & the Pacific |
| MS | Manual Section |
| NGO | Nongovernmental organization |
| OIG | Office of Inspector General |
| OGHH | Office of Global Health and HIV |
| OPATS | Overseas Programming and Training Support |
| PCMO | Peace Corps Medical Officer |
| PCR | Peace Corps Response |
| PCSSO | Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer |
| PCVC | Peace Corps Volunteer Coordinator |
| PCVL | Peace Corps Volunteer Leader |
| PEPFAR | President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief |
| PST | Pre-service training |
| RC | Regional Coordinator |
| RSO | Regional Security Officer |
| SLF | Site locator form |
| SS | Office of Safety and Security |
| USDH | United States direct hire |
| VAD | Volunteer Assignment Description |
| VRF | Volunteer Reporting Form |
| VRS | Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection |
| VS | Office of Volunteer Support |

AGENCY'S RESPONSE



Since 1961.

Memorandum

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General
Through: Daljit K. Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

From: Carlos J. Torres, Regional Director, Inter-America and Pacific
Sanjay Mathur, Country Director, Peru

Date: March 15, 2012

CC: Carrie Hessler-Radelet, Deputy Director
Stacy Rhodes, Chief of Staff
Joaquin Ferrao, Deputy Inspector General
Jim O'Keefe, AIG/Evaluations
Esther Benjamin, Associate Director, Global Operations
Nancy Miller, General Counsel
Ed Hobson, Associate Director of Safety and Security
Howard Lyon, Chief of Operations Advisor, Inter-America and Pacific
Amy Johnson, Chief of Programming and Training, Inter-America and Pacific

Subject: Aimee Cooper, Country Desk Officer
Response to the Preliminary Report on the Evaluation of Peace Corps/Peru

Enclosed please find the Inter-America and Pacific Region's (IAP) response to the recommendations made by the Inspector General for Peace Corps/Peru, as outlined in the Preliminary Report of the IG Evaluation sent to the agency on January 31, 2012. The evaluation was conducted from October 31st through November 18th, 2011.

The IAP Region concurs with all 16 recommendations.

Response to the January 2012 Preliminary Report of the Office of Inspector General
Program evaluation of Peace Corps/Peru.

1. That the programming staff document the post's programmatic site selection criteria and communicate the criteria to all staff involved in site development.

Concur: Specific programmatic site selection criteria for each of the post's five projects are documented and found on pages 5-7 of the new Site Development Manual. These project-specific site criteria address: area and population, local government presence, the presence of other key institutions and collaborating organizations, and the work potential of the site. This Site Development Manual will be in use until the IAP Region creates comprehensive regional guidelines for site development and monitoring, at which time Peru's Site Development Manual may be revised to reflect additional regional guidelines as required.

Documents Submitted:

- Site development manual, pages 5-7
- Copy of e-mail sent by Country Director to all staff on March 9, 2012 containing the new Site Development Manual

Status and Timeline for Completion: March 9, 2012 and ongoing

2. That the Director of Programming and Training develop and implement a plan to improve communication with project partners to gather their input and provide feedback on project results.

Concur: Post concurs yet wishes to emphasize, as acknowledged in the report, the active involvement of Peace Corps/Peru with partner agencies in all projects. Given that Peru is so geographically large, the impact of collaboration between Volunteers and partners is felt more at the local and regional level. The local offices and regional representatives of government ministries, such as the national parks service (SERNANP) and the health ministry (MINSA), as well as municipalities, are Peace Corps' most vested partners. These partners help identify sites for Volunteers and post staff regularly share results, including the post's annual report, in both group meetings and one-on-one meetings with them. Interaction with partners is not presently structured as in a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) or similar committee of stakeholders that could engage in project plan updates, decisions relating to Peru's development priorities, and Focus In/Train Up strategies. However, working with the decentralized nature of actual partner operations and the feasibility factors of time, distance, and budget, the Director of Programming and Training will develop with each APCD on a project-specific plan to communicate information with partners, to solicit their feedback on results, and to solicit their input in project planning. Whether this results in the formation of a PAC or a decentralized committee of stakeholders will be determined. By June 29, 2012, each APCD will have developed a written communications plan, identifying key project stakeholders, with whom project outcomes and results will be formally shared and whose input will be solicited on project plan updates and plans.

Documents to be submitted:

- Communications plan from each APCD

Status and timeline for completion: June 29, 2012 and ongoing

3. That the Country Director and programming and training staff provide technical training that is more practical and relevant to Volunteer site assignments.

Concur: As one strategy for making technical training as relevant and practical as possible in relation to Volunteer site assignments, post will advance assignment of Trainees to a specific department of Peru and a specific geography (coast or sierra) to week five of the current ten-week Pre-Service Training (PST). Assignments to a specific community within the departments will be made by week seven. Given the variety of sites due to Peru's geographical diversity, this will enable Trainees earlier in PST to pay particular attention to technical training information and activities applicable to their future site. It will also allow them to establish earlier communication with an outgoing Volunteer if they are replacing a Volunteer. It will enable programming and training staff to provide a degree of technical training information that is specific to the areas where these Trainees will serve earlier in PST.

Documents submitted:

- Site Development Manual, site development timeline on page 11
- Copy of e-mail sent by Country Director on March 9, 2012 to all staff containing the new Site Development Manual and highlighting earlier site assignments, as per the timeline on page 11

Documents to be submitted:

- COTE for Peru 19

Status and timeline for completion: July 9, 2012 and ongoing

4. That the Training Manager review the post's language training program and make necessary changes to ensure that trainees assigned to Quechua-speaking communities have the language skills needed to integrate and be productive at their sites.

Concur: Assignment of Trainees to departments and a geography (coast/sierra) within departments will occur in week five of PST, making it possible to begin some Quechua training during PST depending on site assignments in each project. Post will:

- 1) Identify tutors to begin Quechua sessions during PST, with the amount of instruction to be determined based on Trainee progress towards minimum required Spanish level of Intermediate Mid;
- 2) Purchase Quechua language learning materials for Trainee and Volunteer self-study;
- 3) Identify regional Quechua tutors and organize Quechua courses of one to two weeks after Swearing-In to take place in regions of Ancash, Huancavelica, or Arequipa;

- 4) Provide opportunities for additional language tutoring as requested by Volunteers who need more Quechua;

Post fully supports goals of local language learning but wishes to note that Quechua-speaking areas are also Spanish-speaking areas and PCVs are not placed in any areas that are monolingual Quechua-speaking areas. In addition, the dialects of Quechua vary widely between the departments of Ancash, Arequipa, and Huancavelica. Different tutors and classes will be required for Volunteers going to Quechua-speaking areas in each of these departments.

Documents to be submitted:

- List of Quechua tutors
- COTE for Peru 19
- List of newly acquired Quechua language material

Status and timeline for completion: August 2012 and ongoing

5. That the Training Manager develop and implement a system to better monitor and analyze trainee and Volunteer achievement of their learning objectives.

Concur: The Training Manager is currently adapting a tracking tool from another post that will be adapted to local context and used in PST and Early IST to monitor Trainee and Volunteer achievement of their learning objectives. In order to measure achievement of the learning objectives, the Training Manager will create an assessment packet, including criterion reference tests, questionnaires, and observation check lists for PST and Early IST. The DPT and Training Manager will train the staff on how to use and implement the tracking tool in preparation for the next PST in June.

Documents submitted:

- Tracking Tool

Documents to be submitted:

- Assessment packet

Status and timeline for completion: June 2012 and ongoing

6. That the Country Director assess the year-round accessibility of each Volunteer, paying particular attention to those sites where dirt roads become so muddy and slippery when wet (i.e., rainy season) that Volunteers are effectively inaccessible by car.

Concur: Post has completed the actions identified in the December 29, 2011 memo to OIG. As a result, a total of sixteen current sites (affecting seventeen PCVs) in four different departments will not be replaced specifically due to travel concerns. None of these sites requires an immediate withdrawal. The rainy season ends in April and Volunteers currently serving in these sites will be withdrawn by December 15, 2012 and

the start of the new rainy season. Regarding future site selection, post now has a Site Selection Criteria Checklist and a written site identification and selection process as outlined in the new Site Development Manual. The first item in the new Site Criteria Checklist specifically addresses year-round accessibility, with additional items and precautions related to access issues including emergency transportation, medical facilities, and regular public transportation.

Documents submitted:

- Site Development Manual, accessibility criteria on page 4 and Site Criteria Checklist on page 20
- Country Director e-mail sent on March 9, 2012 to all staff and containing the new Site Development Manual
- List of sites that will not be replaced and dates that all current PCVs will have COSed from sites
- EAP (updated February 2012)

Status and timeline for completion: December 15, 2012 and ongoing

7. That the Country Director identify measures post can take to mitigate heightened seasonal travel risks in order to safely access Volunteers in these areas.

Concur: Post completed its annual Transportation Policy update, approved by the Region, and communicated it to all Volunteers on February 24, 2012. The update specifically identifies steps Volunteers can take to mitigate travel risks in the rainy season. The process of consulting with Volunteers and applying the new Site Criteria Checklist has also raised Volunteer awareness of medical facilities and vehicles in or near site for evacuation purposes. In addition, as of March 5, 2012, post has developed a medical evacuation plan for each Volunteer. The detailed information on emergency medical contacts and transportation options has been made available to all staff and a copy has been sent to OMS.

Documents submitted:

- Transportation policy (updated February 2012)
- Country Director e-mail sent on February 24, 2012 to all PCVs and staff containing Transportation Policy update and advising that discussion of transportation policy will be an agenda item in future regional meetings
- Medical Evacuation Plan, 2012
- PCMO e-mail sent on March 5, 2012 to all staff containing Medical Evacuation Plan
- EAP (updated February 2012)

Status and timeline for completion: March 5, 2012 and ongoing

8. That the Country Director ensure that all Volunteers know the location of their consolidation point.

Concur: Post recently changed its consolidation points from less familiar, more expensive hotels in regional capitals to the more familiar hostels often used by Volunteers. None of the new consolidation points are in crime-prone areas. Post also performed the annual update of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), with approval of the PCSSO. New consolidation points are in the EAP. A summary guide of the EAP, that includes the new consolidation points, was sent out by the Country Director to all PCVs on March 2, 2012. The SSC also sent an e-mail to Regional Coordinators, PCVLs, and wardens to remind Volunteers of the new consolidation points at future regional meetings.

Documents submitted:

- List of consolidation points
- Country Director e-mail sent on March 2, 2012 to all Volunteers informing them of new consolidation points and attaching list of Consolidation Points and EAP Quick Reference Guide
- Safety & Security Coordinator e-mail sent on March 5, 2012 to Regional Coordinators, PCVLs, and wardens to remind Volunteers of the new consolidation points at future regional meetings
- EAP quick reference guide

Status and timeline for completion: March 5, 2012 and ongoing

9. That the Country Director requires the appropriate staff members to review the accuracy and completeness of every Volunteer's site locator form.

Concur: The post developed and implemented new procedures on collecting site locator forms with the Peru 18 Training Group that swore in on November 25, 2011. To date, post has all initial Site Locator Forms for Peru 18 Volunteers and final Site Locator Forms for all other Volunteers.

Documents submitted:

- Country Director memo sent to P&T staff and others on March 1, 2012 regarding policy and procedures on site locator forms
- Country Director e-mail containing memo sent to P&T staff and others on March 1, 2012 regarding policy and procedures on site locator forms
- Sampling of three completed Volunteer site locator forms

Status and timeline for completion: March 1, 2012 and ongoing

10. That the Country Director develop and implement a plan to promote a higher level of compliance among Volunteers with the post's whereabouts policy.

Concur: Post made changes to the policy in June 2011 that have increased whereabouts reporting, but much still needs to be done. Per the recommendation made in the MS 270 review of post operations in July 2010, the current policy treats whereabouts as a safety

and security issue and not a programming issue. PCVs no longer report to their Program Assistant or supervisory chain of command but to an offsite line monitored by the SSC and an administrative assistant. This has helped to increase whereabouts reporting, to build trust between Volunteers and staff, and to counter a perception that Volunteers are treated like children and not adults. Post will now implement a sustained education program focused on training PCVLs and other warden PCVs, with the support of Regional Coordinators, to conduct tri-annual sessions at regional meetings with all PCVs on a variety of scenarios highlighting the broader importance of emergency preparedness, the EAP and consolidation points, and whereabouts reporting in every case. Post will also conduct EAP drills at least twice annually instead of once annually as at present. Post will continue to take disciplinary action, up to and including administrative separation, with Volunteers who have not complied with the whereabouts policy. Post will also explore an acceptable incentive system to reward PCVs who consistently report their whereabouts over a sustained period of time.

Documents submitted:

- E-mail sent on March 14, 2012 from CD to all Volunteers and staff containing a reminder of the whereabouts policy
- Whereabouts Reporting Policy
- EAP (updated February 2012)

Status and timeline for completion: March 13, 2012 and ongoing

11. That the Country Director ensure that staff inspect Volunteer housing and the post's minimum standards are met prior to occupancy.

Concur: The Host Family and Housing Survey has been revised and is part of the new Site Development Manual. The Site Development Manual was e-mailed by the Country Director to all staff on March 9, 2012. The DPT will oversee the site development process that will ensure that staff inspect Volunteer housing prior to occupancy and that compliance with the post's own minimum standards are met prior to occupancy. Ensuring that upgrades are made prior to Volunteer arrival may require changes that result in advance payments to some host families for carrying out upgrades such as a door or window that meets post minimum criteria.

Documents submitted:

- Site development manual, host family and housing survey on pages 27-29
- Country Director e-mail sent on March 9, 2012 to all staff and containing the new Site Development Manual and highlighting new housing minimum criteria

Status and timeline for completion: March 9, 2012 and ongoing

12. That the Country Director ensure that the post is maintaining accurate housing inspection reports.

Concur: Hard copies of the Host Family and Housing Surveys filled out by staff and PCVLs will be kept in PCV files in the office. Staff and PCVLs will e-mail photos to the SSC for approval demonstrating that necessary upgrades have been made in advance of Volunteer arrival. As with site locator forms, both the SSC and the DPT will make spot checks to ensure timely and accurate documentation on file.

Documents submitted:

- Country Director e-mail sent on March 9, 2012 to all P&T staff and others regarding policy and procedures on maintaining PCV files

Documents to be submitted:

- Sampling of three host family and housing surveys

Status and timeline for completion: March 9, 2012 and ongoing

13. That the Country Director review the settling-in allowance and ensure that it is adequate to cover reasonable expenses that Volunteers incur.

Concur: At time of the evaluation conducted by OIG, all PCVs received \$200. In January and February 2012, post conducted a settling-in allowance survey, obtaining responses from 78% of the 108 active PCVs who swore in as Volunteers in August and November 2011. Volunteers moving into furnished rooms (30% of respondents) spent an average of \$163 in settling-in costs while Volunteers moving into unfurnished rooms (70% of respondents) spent an average of \$287. Post has changed the policy on settling-in allowances so that Volunteers moving into furnished rooms will receive an allowance of approximately \$165 in local currency and Volunteers moving into unfurnished rooms will receive an allowance of approximately \$290 in local currency. This policy is currently implemented for Volunteers who require host family or site changes and will be fully implemented with the arrival of the June training class.

Documents submitted:

- Settling-in allowance survey, January-February 2012
- New settling-in allowance policy, for inclusion in the June 2012 version of the Volunteer Handbook

Status and timeline for completion: March 1, 2012 and ongoing

14. That the Director of Programming and Training develop and implement a method to manage and provide oversight of regional coordinators' workload distribution.

Concur: Recent hiring of a sixth Regional Coordinator has helped even out the ratio of PCVs to Regional Coordinators (RCs), who now manage between 27 and 42 Volunteers per RC. Post finds this to be an acceptable variation, with RCs in coastal areas, where Volunteers are more accessible, having more PCVs to support. In regards to RCs being contacted for items at short notice by Lima staff of different units, the DPT has analyzed

the position and communicated RC priorities to all staff and Volunteers. Staff has been instructed to communicate non-emergency requests one month in advance, copying the DPT, and taking into consideration the RC travel calendar that has been set up on MS Outlook and that will be maintained by the DPT and Executive Assistant. In addition, post has recently purchased Blackberrys to enable RCs to read and respond to e-mail more regularly during travel and to increase communication and efficiency. The DPT has also reminded Volunteers of RC's multiple responsibilities so that they may have realistic expectations of timely support.

Documents submitted:

- List of RCs and their PCV numbers
- DPT e-mail sent on March 14, 2012 to staff outlining the RCs priorities and instructions to communicate non-emergency request one month in advance
- DPT e-mail sent on March 14, 2012 to Volunteers outlining realistic expectations for support

Status and timeline for completion: March 9, 2012 and ongoing

15. That the Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs) ensure Peace Corps Volunteer Coordinators are involved in at least one substantive Volunteer program or activity with an assigned counterpart.

Concur: At present, all PCVCs have at least one substantive direct service assignment with a counterpart and host country agency. For 2012 and the next selection of PCVCs, the DPT and APCDs have begun implementing changes to assure that these assignments are developed as part of the PCVC selection process and at least one month before PCVC assignments begin. This includes timely receipt of the Request for Volunteer letter from the host country agency and processing of the Concurrence memos with the IAP Region. Volunteers will report their community assignment activities using the Volunteer Reporting Form (VRF). Reporting will be monitored by their APCDs.

Documents submitted:

- New PCVL/C position description and responsibilities
- DPT e-mail sent on February 23, 2012 to Volunteers and staff announcing new positions and containing the new PCVL/C position description and responsibilities

Status and timeline for completion: February 23, 2012 and ongoing

16. That the Director of Programming and Training (DPT) develop and implement a method for staff to monitor Peace Corps' Volunteer Coordinators' volunteer work to make sure there is an appropriate balance, consistent with agency policy, between their staff and Volunteer responsibilities.

Concur: At present, all PCVCs have a substantive assignment and are using the VRF for reporting purposes. Post has announced upcoming positions and shared the new position

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description, which identifies a 40% PCVC time commitment to their direct service community assignments. The DPT will work with APCDs to ensure that both Volunteers and staff understand the PCVC's commitment to their host agencies and obtain an appropriate balance of workload. APCDs will schedule an average of two days weekly that PCVCs will work with their host agencies. APCDs will also use the VRF to monitor PCVC productivity, outcomes, and results in their community assignments. The DPT will also solicit feedback from PCVCs.

Documents submitted:

- DPT e-mail sent on February 23, 2012 to Volunteers and staff announcing new positions and containing the new PCVL/C position description and responsibilities

Status and timeline for completion: February 23, 2012 and ongoing

OIG COMMENTS

Management concurred with all 16 recommendations. Based on the documentation provided, we closed 8 recommendations: 1, 6-11, and 13. In its response, management described actions it has taken or intends to take to address the issues that prompted each of our recommendations. 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. If we determine 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 comprehensive manner in which the post responded to the report and our recommendations. Immediately after we completed fieldwork, we requested that the post assess the year-round accessibility of each Volunteer and identify measures to mitigate heightened seasonal travel risks. In response, the post took aggressive and systematic steps to identify Volunteer sites with limited year-round access issues and put in place measures to mitigate risks associated with the sites. We also commend the post for the detailed and thorough documentation it provided in response to all 16 report recommendations.

Eight recommendations, numbers 2-5, 12, and 14-16 remain open. OIG will review and consider closing recommendations 2-5 and 12 when the documentation reflected in the agency's response to the preliminary report is received. For recommendations 14-16 additional documentation is requested. These recommendations remain open pending confirmation from the chief compliance officer that the documentation reflected in OIG Analysis below is received.

14: That the Director of Programming and Training develop and implement a method to manage and provide oversight of regional coordinators' workload distribution.

Concur: Recent hiring of a sixth Regional Coordinator has helped even out the ratio of PCVs to Regional Coordinators (RCs), who now manage between 27 and 42 Volunteers per RC. Post finds this to be an acceptable variation, with RCs in coastal areas, where Volunteers are more accessible, having more PCVs to support. In regards to RCs being contacted for items at short notice by Lima staff of different units, the DPT has analyzed the position and communicated RC priorities to all staff and Volunteers. Staff has been instructed to communicate non-emergency requests one month in advance, copying the DPT, and taking into consideration the RC travel calendar that has been set up on MS Outlook and that will be maintained by the DPT and Executive Assistant. In addition, post has recently purchased Blackberrys to enable RCs to read and respond to e-mail more regularly during travel and to increase communication and efficiency. The DPT has also reminded Volunteers of RC's multiple responsibilities so that they may have realistic expectations of timely support.

Documents submitted:

- List of RCs and their PCV numbers
- DPT e-mail sent on March 14, 2012 to staff outlining the RCs priorities and instructions to communicate non-emergency request one month in advance
- DPT e-mail sent on March 14, 2012 to Volunteers outlining realistic expectations for support

Status and timeline for completion: March 9, 2012 and ongoing

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation by hiring a 6th Regional Coordinator, providing Blackberries to RCs, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of RCs, and instructing staff to copy the DPT on non-emergency requests for RC assistance. However we were unable to determine from the documents submitted how the director of programming and training intends to actively manage and oversee the regional coordinators' workload distribution. Please provide documentation that describes the regular steps (e.g., weekly phone calls, standing senior staff agenda item) the DPT will take to ensure that RC workload is prioritized and manageable so that key RC tasks are accomplished on schedule.

15: That the Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs) ensure Peace Corps Volunteer Coordinators are involved in at least one substantive Volunteer program or activity with an assigned counterpart.

Concur: At present, all PCVCs have at least one substantive direct service assignment with a counterpart and host country agency. For 2012 and the next selection of PCVCs, the DPT and APCDs have begun implementing changes to assure that these assignments are developed as part of the PCVC selection process and at least one month before PCVC assignments begin. This includes timely receipt of the Request for Volunteer letter from the host country agency and processing of the Concurrence memos with the IAP Region. Volunteers will report their community assignment activities using the Volunteer Reporting Form (VRF). Reporting will be monitored by their APCDs.

Documents submitted:

- New PCVL/C position description and responsibilities
- DPT e-mail sent on February 23, 2012 to Volunteers and staff announcing new positions and containing the new PCVL/C position description and responsibilities

Status and timeline for completion: February 23, 2012 and ongoing

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation by clarifying a new PCVL/PCVC position description. In order

for us to close this recommendation please provide us with a sample of 50% of PCVCs' Volunteer Report Forms for the next reporting period.

16: That the Director of Programming and Training (DPT) develop and implement a method for staff to monitor Peace Corps' Volunteer Coordinators' volunteer work to make sure there is an appropriate balance, consistent with agency policy, between their staff and Volunteer responsibilities.

Concur: At present, all PCVCs have a substantive assignment and are using the VRF for reporting purposes. Post has announced upcoming positions and shared the new position description, which identifies a 40% PCVC time commitment to their direct service community assignments. The DPT will work with APCDs to ensure that both Volunteers and staff understand the PCVC's commitment to their host agencies and obtain an appropriate balance of workload. APCDs will schedule an average of two days weekly that PCVCs will work with their host agencies. APCDs will also use the VRF to monitor PCVC productivity, outcomes, and results in their community assignments. The DPT will also solicit feedback from PCVCs.

Documents submitted:

- DPT e-mail sent on February 23, 2012 to Volunteers and staff announcing new positions and containing the new PCVL/C position description and responsibilities

Status and timeline for completion: February 23, 2012 and ongoing

OIG Analysis: We acknowledge the agency's efforts to address this recommendation by clarifying a new PCVL/PCVC position description. In order for us to close this recommendation please provide us with a sample of 50% of PCVCs' Volunteer Report Forms for the next reporting period.

OIG MEMO – ACCESSIBILITY OF VOLUNTEER SITES IN PERU

To: Sanjay Mathur, Country Director PC/Peru
Carlos Torres, Regional Director, IAP

From: Kathy A. Buller, Inspector General 

Subject: Accessibility of Peace Corps Volunteer Sites in Peru

Date: December 8, 2011

The Office of Inspector General recently conducted an evaluation of Peace Corps/Peru and we are in the process of developing our preliminary report. While Senior Evaluators Heather Robinson and Jeremy Black report that the post is generally functioning well with an effective management team and productive Volunteers, the purpose of this memo is to focus attention on a Volunteer safety concern related to the post's ability to safely access throughout the year all the sites where Volunteers live and work.

During the course of the evaluation we learned that there are some Volunteer sites that can only be accessed by dirt roads which, when wet, become slippery and dangerous, and roads to some sites may be effectively impassable for long periods of time during the rainy season. We were not able to find evidence that Peace Corps/Peru takes these heightened seasonal road risks into consideration during its site development process. As a result, Peace Corps/Peru may have placed some Volunteers in seasonably inaccessible locations that would make their or staff's travel to or departure from the site impossible for periods of time. We are concerned that these conditions pose a safety or security risk to those Volunteers.

Because our final evaluation report will not be issued for a few more months, we are issuing this memo now in order to recommend that Peace Corps/Peru:

1. Immediately assess the year-round accessibility of each Volunteer, paying particular attention to those sites that can only be accessed by driving through mountainous regions along narrow dirt roads with sharp turns and steep cliffs. Post should identify all sites where dirt roads become so muddy and slippery when wet (i.e. rainy season) that Volunteers are effectively inaccessible by car.
2. Identify measures post can take to mitigate risks associated with travelling along the most treacherous roads to and from Volunteer sites. Steps post can take to access Volunteers in these areas, especially during the rainy season, should be identified.

These issues will be included in our written country program evaluation report along with our formal recommendations to address these concerns. In the meantime, we would appreciate an update from the post within 30 days on actions taken or planned to address these issues.

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cc: Ed Hobson, Associate Director for Safety and Security
Esther Benjamin, Associate Director, Global Operations

AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO OIG MEMO – ACCESSIBILITY OF VOLUNTEER SITES IN PERU

To: Kathy Buller, Inspector General

From: Carlos Torres, Regional Director, IAP
Sanjay Mathur, Country Director, Peru

CC: Esther Benjamin, Associate Director, Global Operations
Ed Hobson, Associate Director for Safety and Security
Daljit Bains, Chief Compliance Officer

Date: December 30, 2011

Subject: Response to “Accessibility of PCV Sites in Peru” memorandum dated
December 8, 2011

The subject memorandum made two recommendations that required a response from Peace Corps/Peru within thirty days. These were:

1. “Immediately assess year-round accessibility of each PCV... paying particular attention to those sites that can only be accessed by driving through mountainous regions along narrow dirt roads with sharp turns and steep cliffs... post should identify all sites where dirt roads become so muddy and slippery when wet that PCVs are effectively inaccessible by car.”
2. “Identify measures post can take to mitigate risks associated with traveling along the most treacherous roads to and from PCV sites. Steps post can take to access Volunteers in these areas, especially during the rainy season, should be identified.”

The memo also noted that these issues will be included in the final post evaluation report along with OIG’s formal recommendations.

Response:

Post has taken immediate action towards addressing the two recommendations. Actions already taken as well as those planned for short term implementation by post are as follows:

- 1) Consultation with PCVs:
 - a) Post has already started the process of consulting PCVs by initiating an anonymous electronic survey on various aspects of site development, including accessibility. This survey was initiated on December 9, 2011 and will conclude on January 12, 2012.

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- b) By January 31, 2012, post staff will have spoken by telephone or in person with *all* 240+ Volunteers in the field regarding year-round accessibility to their sites with a special focus on emergency transportation for evacuation purposes. Site Locator Forms and Site Survey Forms will be updated appropriately. Given that the rainy season is currently underway, lasting approximately from December through April in the mountainous areas of Peru, staff will prioritize contacts with Volunteers in mountainous areas and take advantage of these telephone or in person consultations to provide initial advice on transportation issues should PCVs express any concerns in this area.
- 2) Staff assessment.
 - a) Upon completion of conversations with PCVs, post staff will identify a “short list” of high-risk sites.
 - b) The identification of high-risk sites will also be informed by current staff knowledge, as well as inquiries regarding road accidents in areas of Volunteer placement, road maintenance and construction, and the accident history and driver practices of bus services utilized by PCVs in high-risk areas.
 - 3) Communication to PCVs of additional precautions.
 - a) Staff will then identify any additional measures that may be taken to ensure or improve accessibility of current PCV sites.
 - b) Post will update its **Transportation Policy** by February 15, 2012 and disseminate it to all PCVs electronically. The new precautions will also be communicated at PCV regional meetings, beginning in February 2012, by Regional Coordinators and PCVLs.
 - c) Post will draft a post **Medical Evacuation Plan**, in accordance with OMS guidelines, to be completed by February 28, 2012.
 - 4) Evaluation of site changes (remedial actions).
 - a) Based on the interviews with PCVs in high-risk sites and on the case-by-case assessment by the staff, any PCVs in sites that are not accessible year-round will be evaluated for a possible site change. PCVs who express serious safety concerns related to transportation and site accessibility will be given special consideration.

In addition to the above, by February 28, 2012, post intends to have completed an update to its **Site Selection Criteria Checklist**, subject to Region’s approval and in accordance with MS 270, Section 6.0, *Site Development and Monitoring*, specifically addressing the OIG’s concerns regarding the accessibility of sites.

Based on this plan of action, post looks forwards to responding to issuance to the OIG’s preliminary report.

In conclusion, Region and post recognize the factors that complicate accessibility to sites in Peru. Acting prior to the OIG evaluation, post has already started the process of improving, standardizing, and documenting its site development processes. The OIG evaluation findings have helped sharpen the focus of this effort. At the same time, in

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keeping with Peace Corps' mission and development niche in general, Region and post remain committed to serving the Andes, where poverty and human development indicators are most compelling and where property crime and violent crime is also the least prevalent. In conclusion, Region and post are committed to finding the right set of conditions to assure safe and productive Volunteer service.

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION AND OIG CONTACT

PROGRAM EVALUATION COMPLETION

This program evaluation was conducted under the direction of Jim O’Keefe, Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations, and by Senior Evaluator Jeremy Black and Senior Evaluator Heather Robinson. Additional contributions were made by April Miller and Lisa Chesnel.



Jim O’Keefe
Assistant Inspector General for Evaluations

OIG CONTACT

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.

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