



PEACE CORPS

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



SEMIANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

APRIL 1, 2006 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2006

Cover: Peace Corps Volunteer Callie Sorensen with deaf students in Kenya.

PEACE CORPS

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Vision

To conduct audits, evaluations, and investigations that uphold the effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity of the agency in achieving the goals set forth in the Peace Corps Act that Peace Corps Volunteers experience a service that meets the needs of the people in their countries of service, return to the U.S. with knowledge and respect for the people and customs of those countries, and share their knowledge and caring with those they touch in their lives as citizens of the United States.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS REPORTING PERIOD

MESSAGE FROM THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

This is my first full reporting period since being appointed Inspector General for the Peace Corps on February 5, 2006. It has been a very eventful six months with numerous noteworthy accomplishments.

Our work during this reporting period has resulted in significant operational benefit to the Peace Corps. Our efforts have been directed at increasing the efficiency and quality of Peace Corps' operations and combating actual or potential occurrences of waste, fraud, and abuse of Government funds and other contributed resources.

Our auditors completed audits of six Peace Corps posts: Benin, Dominican Republic, the Federated States of Micronesia, Romania, Turkmenistan, and East Timor. In addition, we audited the management and operations of the Mid-Atlantic Recruitment Office, the first in a series of audits of the Peace Corps Regional Recruitment Offices that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) intends to perform. We also audited the agency's travel policies and procedures, finding significant vulnerabilities and concerns, which has led to a revamping of the Peace Corps' travel regulations and guidelines. Further, during this reporting period, we initiated the annual audit of Peace Corps' financial statements as required by the Accountability of Tax Dollars Act, and intend to issue the report on November 15, 2006 as mandated by the Office of Management and Budget.

During this reporting period, our evaluators concluded their landmark programming study in which they traveled to high performing Peace Corps posts to assess how some of the agency's best programs are designed, managed, and implemented. This office issued 10 reports to the agency. Nine of the reports focused on the following countries – Niger, Malawi, Mauritania, Panama, Paraguay, Honduras, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Philippines – and the tenth report reviewed Peace Corps' relationship with Volunteers' counterparts in Honduras, Panama, and Paraguay.

The evaluators also conducted program evaluations at Peace Corps posts in two African countries, Zambia and Botswana. The reports identified opportunities for improvement in programming and training and offered recommendations to address concerns found at the posts.

During the upcoming reporting period, the evaluators will begin a comprehensive survey of the safety and security measures implemented in the agency over the past few years. This survey will involve trips to ten overseas posts and conclude with a comprehensive report.

Our investigators have also had numerous noteworthy accomplishments during this reporting period. OIG investigators secured several significant prosecutions in foreign

jurisdictions against perpetrators of attacks, robberies, rapes and other sexual assaults against Peace Corps Volunteers. In addition, a number of criminal investigations led to disciplinary actions, resignations, restitution and convictions. Finally, significant progress has been achieved in the OIG's continuing investigation of fraud and abuse in Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) claims brought by former Peace Corps Volunteers and staff members. The OIG has procured an electronic case management system to coordinate the FECA-related cases, and has embarked upon an innovative strategy to identify FECA claimants who have been unlawfully receiving benefits, which has already yielded significant monetary results.

The accomplishments of the OIG have been enhanced by the support of the Peace Corps Director, management, and employees. I look forward to continuing this productive and professional working relationship as we continue to help Peace Corps meet its important challenges.



H. David Kotz
Inspector General

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

AGENCY CONTEXT

At the end of FY 2006, 7,749 Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees were serving in 73 countries at 67 posts. This total includes: 111 Volunteers and Trainees funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief working on HIV/AIDS projects in nine countries; 35 Crisis Corps Volunteers serving overseas in short-term assignments in 11 countries; and 10 Volunteers serving in Thailand on tsunami relief efforts funded through an inter-agency agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The Volunteers and their programs are supported by 891 American direct hire staff—196 overseas, 120 in the regional recruiting offices, and the remaining 575 in headquarters. Approximately 2,000 locally hired personnel complete post staffing. The Peace Corps also has corporate contracts domestically and overseas, principally for guard services and training, and hires expert consultants, largely for training and financial management.

OIG STAFFING

During the reporting period, the Office of Inspector General filled several critical positions, including the position of Assistant Inspector General (AIG) for Investigations. The new AIG for Investigations, Geoffrey Johnson, joined the OIG from the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Inspector General, where he served as a Senior Special Agent, and has experience with the Offices of Inspector General at both the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of State. He received numerous awards and citations during his distinguished career prior to joining our office, including the Silver Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce for his inspection and investigation work, the Franklin Award from the U.S. Department of State on three separate occasions for conducting sensitive and critical investigations, the Bronze Award from the Department of Commerce for a 1996 inspection, and numerous letters of commendation from the State Department and the Library of Congress. We also filled a criminal investigator position during the reporting period, giving Mr. Johnson four investigators under his direction.

In addition, we added two experienced and highly-regarded evaluators during this reporting period, having lost one evaluator to retirement. Also, we replaced an outgoing technical audit manager with an experienced auditor with substantial OIG experience and have finalized the selections of both a new Assistant Inspector General for Audits and a new auditor. We are presently recruiting to fill a vacant administrative position.

Our long-serving and invaluable Deputy Inspector General (and former Acting Inspector General) Allan Gall retired during this reporting period; although he has kindly agreed to stay on as an expert/consultant. Finally, our IG counsel is currently on detail with the U.S. Department of Treasury.

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE AGENCY AND OTHERS

During this reporting period, we provided advice to management on a number of serious issues that were brought to our attention. This advice was conveyed through briefings and meetings with the Director of the agency and other senior-level Peace Corps officials. We also acted upon a request from the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS/OIG) to review the role of the Peace Corps in providing disaster and relief assistance in the aftermaths of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

PEACE CORPS BEST PRACTICES IN PROGRAMS STUDY

In April 2006, we met with the agency Director to report our preliminary findings of the OIG evaluators' landmark programming study. Our OIG evaluators interviewed staff and Volunteers in nine high performing posts to determine the best practices that contribute to effective programming. We advised the Director on our initial assessment of the Peace Corps programs in nine countries: Niger, Malawi, Mauritania, Panama, Paraguay, Honduras, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Philippines. We emphasized the extent to which the overall quality of the programs depended on the leadership of the country director and described the qualities of the country directors at these high-performing posts that were integral to their superior levels of performance.

The Director stated that he would factor these qualities into the agency's recruitment of country directors. At the request of the Director, in June 2006, we provided to the agency's Chief of the Office of Executive Selection and Support, a list of traits of high-performing country directors, which he used in connection with the agency's country director recruitment efforts.

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR PC/SOUTH AFRICA

In April 2006, following an OIG evaluation team's visit to South Africa, we met with the Regional Director and the Chief of Regional Operations for the Africa region to discuss reports made by PC/South Africa staff members that the country director had engaged in disrespectful and unfair treatment and unprofessional behavior. Subsequently, the Regional Director traveled to South Africa and met with all PC/South Africa staff.

The Regional Director has informed the OIG in a written memorandum of the steps he has directed the PC/South Africa management and staff to take to resolve the issues raised by the OIG. The Regional Director also has concurred with the OIG recommendation that the country director submit quarterly reports to the Regional Director on the corrective actions taken to address these issues.

PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF EXPENDITURES

In May 2006, we met with the Agency's AIDS Relief Coordinator and Africa regional office headquarters staff regarding the OIG's concerns about the use of resources provided by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The OIG advised management that PEPFAR funds were being spent in some Peace Corps posts, particularly Zambia, on activities that were not identified in the country operating plan (COP). The Peace Corps has an agreement with the Department of State's Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (O/GAC) that all activities carried out by Peace Corps with PEPFAR funds would be approved in the COP. The Peace Corps AIDS Relief Coordinator reviewed our concerns and pledged continued efforts to provide clear guidance to country directors receiving PEPFAR funding of the restrictions regarding the use of those funds.

PC/Mozambique reimbursed \$7,900 to the FY 2004 PEPFAR account for activities not included in their COP and reprogrammed an additional \$53,000 of operational costs. PC/Zambia reimbursed \$27,633 to the FY 2004 PEPFAR account for purchases not authorized by the COP.

IMPREST FUND CONCERNS

In June 2006, the IG and OIG auditors met with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and members of his senior staff to express our concerns regarding imprest fund issues at several overseas posts, specifically PC/Zambia and PC/Uganda. PC/Zambia had reported an imprest fund loss of approximately \$70,000 to headquarters. PC/Uganda's cash reconciliations had been out of balance for an extended period of time. The CFO informed us that his staff was working with post management to get the last seven posts (including Zambia and Uganda) "certified" and thereby automated and that he would follow up with the posts and assist in resolving these matters. In September 2006, we performed follow-up audit reviews of PC/Zambia and PC/Uganda. These reports will be included in our next Semiannual Report to Congress.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

At the request of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (DHS/OIG), our office reviewed the Peace Corps' role in providing disaster and relief assistance in the aftermaths of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This was the first time in the agency's history that Volunteers served domestically. DHS/OIG asked us to provide them with a description of the agency's assistance and expenditures funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Our response to DHS/OIG included the results of our review.

FEMA requested assistance from the Peace Corps under two mission assignments and obligated more than \$5 million to support their request. The mission assignments allowed for Peace Corps “to provide up to 300 Crisis Corps Volunteers and/or other staff for FEMA disaster and relief functions including individual assistance and community relations functions for Hurricane Katrina disaster victims” and “to provide up to 100 Crisis Corps Volunteers for FEMA disaster and relief functions . . . for Hurricane Rita disaster victims.” Peace Corps provided a total of 272 Crisis Corps Volunteers: 247 and 25, respectively, for Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita-related assistance during the period September 8, 2005 – November 15, 2005. Crisis Corps Volunteers were asked to make a thirty-day minimum commitment, with an opportunity to extend up to an additional 30 days. Seventy-three of the 272 Crisis Corps Volunteers (27%) chose to extend.

As of our August 25, 2006 response to DHS/OIG, two submissions were made to FEMA by the agency for reimbursement of expenditures made. The first, in the amount of \$546,985, was reviewed and approved by FEMA. The second, in the amount of \$1,963,919, is in the process of review by FEMA.

AUDITS AND PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

OVERVIEW

The Peace Corps' OIG focuses principally on the programs, financial and administrative operations, and staff support that sustain Peace Corps Volunteers serving around the world. We accomplish this through audits and evaluations of the agency's posts overseas and its functions in headquarters and domestic recruiting offices.

Both individual staff members and multi-disciplined teams carry out these reviews. Whenever the work is by a team, we publish a single, combined report of findings and recommendations. For some highly technical audits, we also contract with firms and individual experts.

Audits examine operations and financial transactions to ensure that good management practices are being followed and that resources are adequately protected in accordance with laws and regulations. Our audits are conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

Most of our audits focus on the operations and management of Peace Corps' overseas posts, which include a review of financial and administrative practices and the safety and security of persons and property. We also conduct audits of specific headquarters and regional activities, as well as contract and follow-up audits, as needed. In addition, the Accountability of Tax Dollars Act provides the OIG with the responsibility for the annual audit of Peace Corps' financial statements. Furthermore, the Federal Information Security Management Act specifies that the OIG annually review the information security program of the agency, which is part of our auditors' responsibilities.

Program Evaluations review the operation and administration of a specific unit of the Peace Corps or may involve a limited review of a particular problem, issue, or function.

Most evaluations are of overseas posts and provide management with a comprehensive assessment of how overseas programs are functioning. This includes a review of the Volunteers' sites and assignments, their integration into their communities, the quality of their training, the quality of the support provided to them, and the adequacy of the post's administrative infrastructure to manage the program. Evaluations focus particularly on the effectiveness, satisfaction, and well-being of the Volunteers, including their housing, health care, and safety. Evaluators issue a survey to all Volunteers in country, interview a representative sample of one-third or more of the Volunteers at their sites, and interview all available Peace Corps staff and some of the Volunteers' co-workers and supervisors.

Post evaluations that do not accompany an audit may include a limited review of the post's financial and administrative practices, and compliance with agency rules and regulations on these matters. Evaluations may also include follow-up on the findings of a previous program evaluation and a limited follow-up on previous audit recommendations.

SUMMARY OF AUDITS AND EVALUATIONS

Peace Corps Fiscal Year 2006 Financial Statement Audit

During this reporting period, we extended our contract option with an independent accounting firm to conduct the audit of the Peace Corps' fiscal year 2006 financial statements. The audit is in progress and we intend to issue the report prior to the mandated reporting date of November 15, 2006, as established by the Office of Budget and Management. Details of this audit will be included in the next Semiannual Report.

Review of the Agency's Federal Information Security Program

The Federal Information Security Act (FISMA) requires each federal agency to establish security protections and a program to secure its information systems from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification and other harmful impacts, by using specific guidelines established by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). In addition, FISMA requires the OIG to review the security program annually. Because the Office of Budget and Management (OMB) is required to report to Congress on the progress made by Federal agencies as a whole, it has developed a data collecting process which combines reporting from each Federal agency and their respective OIGs to measure the progress of developing and institutionalizing each security program.

In May 2006, we issued the following two FISMA-related items: (1) a report on the "Evaluation of Peace Corps FISMA for FY 2005," and (2) a memorandum transmitting the results of a separate review initiated in February 2006. Both products were based on the work of an independent audit firm under the oversight of the OIG.

The FY 2005 FISMA evaluation was our first comprehensive assessment on the effectiveness of the Chief Information Officer's oversight of the Peace Corps' information security program. We evaluated ten primary security activities, provided a baseline for OMB reporting, and identified control deficiencies that could expose Peace Corps systems to unauthorized access and result in the potential loss and/or compromised integrity of data. Seven deficiencies are detailed in the report with corresponding recommendations to strengthen these weaknesses.

One of those findings, the absence of an inventory, was addressed shortly after the evaluation, leading to additional audit work to validate the adequacy and completeness of the Peace Corps' systems inventory and the issuing of a memorandum. We were in

general agreement with the process used by the agency, which was consistent with the requirements of FISMA and NIST standards. However, we requested the agency to notify the OIG on an annual basis of any changes made to the systems and inventory to reconfirm our understanding and general agreement with the inventory as it is modified.

Benin: Audit

We conducted an audit of Peace Corps/Benin October 17 - November 3, 2005. The Peace Corps began its program in Benin in 1968. At the time of our visit, 97 Volunteers were working in four program sectors: rural community health, environmental action, secondary education, and small business development.

Peace Corps/Benin's financial and administrative operations did not comply with several Peace Corps policies and federal regulations. Chief among them were the administrative officer's failure to implement the recommendations contained in our December 23, 2003 memorandum to the regional director that identified significant internal control weaknesses. The post had incurred \$12,600 in losses to its imprest fund and continued to operate in a high risk environment. Also, the post did not collect approximately \$44,000 in host country contributions from the Government of Benin for FY 2004 and FY 2005. We expressed concern with the potential liability to the agency due to the post's realignment of some administrative responsibilities.

One implication of our audit of this post is that the Office of the Chief Financial Officer and the Office of Acquisitions and Contract Management in headquarters were not exercising adequate review and oversight of the documents submitted by overseas posts. Some of the deficiencies we found should have been caught through the routine review of required submissions from the post.

Management concurred with 39 of the 42 recommendations, partially concurred with two, and did not concur with one recommendation. We have closed 37 recommendations and five remain open.

Dominican Republic: Audit

We conducted an audit of Peace Corps/Dominican Republic August 1 – 26, 2005. Since 1962, over 3,500 Volunteers have served in the Dominican Republic. There were 137 Volunteers working in five projects at the time of our visit: business, education, environment, youth development, and health.

We found a breakdown in internal controls at PC/Dominican Republic due to inadequate supervision of the administrative staff by former country directors. The Peace Corps bank accounts were not periodically reconciled; the country director had not overseen the accounts. The administrative officer had opened checking accounts for Peace Corps funds without first obtaining authorization to do so and opened them in his name and

without another co-signer. He had made personal and other unauthorized payments from a Peace Corps account set up in his name and also had made deposits of personal funds to this account. The administrative officer did not retain complete documentation to support his use of the post's credit card; some transactions appeared to be personal purchases. In addition, he spent money for personal expenses from private grant funds for a Volunteer's project.

We also found the following concerns:

- The cashier administered a Peace Corps bank account to make cash payments, rather than making the payments from the imprest fund.
- Volunteers were permitted to use Peace Corps equipment and supplies for their projects.
- Peace Corps property was given away to staff.
- The administrative officer kept Volunteer property without documenting the transactions.

Finally, we found that the Office of Financial Policy and Cash Management in headquarters had not adequately monitored the post's financial transactions.

Management concurred with all 49 recommendations. At the end of the reporting period, 38 recommendations are closed and 11 remain open.

Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau: Audit

We conducted an audit of Peace Corps/Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau March 28 – April 14, 2006. The Peace Corps program began in the Federated States of Micronesia in 1966. At the time of our visit, there were 44 Volunteers working in two projects: Youth and Community Development and Natural Resources Conservation and Development.

We found inadequate supervision of the cashier and failure to report known imprest fund shortages. At the time of our audit, we documented a \$5,207.57 shortage in the imprest fund. Records indicated that the loss dated back to April 27, 2004. Imprest fund verifications from that period up to the arrival of a new country director and a new administrative officer were falsified to hide the loss. Staff in the Inter-America and Pacific regional office in headquarters and in the Office of Financial Policy and Cash Management were aware of the loss as early as May 2005. The loss was not reported to the OIG.

In 2003, a prior shortage was documented in the amount of \$277.54. The post's records indicate that a request was made to relieve the cashier of the responsibility for this loss. We also identified \$1,100.00 in duplicate payments during the period of the \$5,207.57 loss. Further, the current cashier found a \$798.58 shortfall in an advance that was made to an alternate cashier when a reconciliation of an advance was conducted. We established that all of these losses were attributable to the former cashier. The \$798.58

shortfall took place while she was performing the duties of alternate cashier. She resigned at the end of our audit.

Additional losses at the post included uncollected bills from staff who had left Peace Corps employment.

Management concurred with 29 of our 31 recommendations, and we accepted their non-concurrence with one recommendation. At the end of the reporting period, 19 recommendations are closed and 12 remain open.

Mid-Atlantic Regional Recruitment Office: Audit

We conducted an audit of the Mid-Atlantic regional recruitment office July 5 – August 3, 2006. The Mid-Atlantic regional recruitment office, located in Rosslyn, Virginia, is one of the agency's 11 domestic recruitment offices.

The Mid-Atlantic regional recruitment office's financial and administrative operations were, in general, operating effectively. However, areas for improvement included:

- Travel vouchers not being prepared accurately nor processed in a timely fashion.
- Control over vehicle usage being inadequate.
- Property inventory records not being complete or accurate.

Management concurred with all 16 recommendations. At the end of the reporting period, eight recommendations are closed and eight remain open.

Romania: Audit

We conducted an audit of Peace Corps/Romania October 26 - November 17, 2005. The Peace Corps initiated operations in December 1990. At the time of our review, 137 Volunteers were working in four projects: teaching English as a foreign language, community economic development, environmental management and education, and institutional development.

We found that PC/Romania generally complied with Peace Corps policies and federal regulations. However, improvements were needed in procurement practices. The post made payments to vendors from a special local currency account that the U.S. Disbursing Officer had approved solely for making payments to Volunteers. The post made its salary payments to personal services contractors by having the cashier cash the payment check and distribute the salaries in cash.

We found that the post used an unapproved personal services contract template that did not include benefits and excluded the country's social security plan. The post's drivers were also paid for overtime at a rate reduced by withholding taxes, and the post did not

pay the government for the taxes that should have been withheld or the amount the employer was to contribute. The unpaid taxes may represent a future liability for the agency.

Management concurred with 37 of the 38 recommendations. We closed 33 recommendations and five remain open.

Travel Policies and Procedures: Audit

We conducted an audit of Peace Corps travel policies and procedures October 26, 2005 – February 21, 2006. Travel is an essential element in executing the Peace Corps' mission. The agency's records showed total travel obligations for FY 2005 of \$27,954,963 (paid and unpaid as of September 30, 2005) submitted to the Office of Management and Budget.

We found that the agency was not enforcing its travel policies and procedures. Our most significant finding was that numerous recommendations that management had agreed to implement from our 1992 report remained outstanding.

We found:

- The Peace Corps Manual section 812, "Staff Travel," was 20 years old and referred to sections in the Foreign Affairs Manual that no longer existed.
- A list of approved signatories for travel authorizations and vouchers and detailed procedures for the review of travel vouchers did not exist.
- Unused tickets, valued at approximately \$25,000, which travelers had returned to the agency, had not been processed for reimbursement to the agency.
- Some travel authorizations and vouchers were incomplete, some were erroneous, and some had been submitted late.
- Travel vouchers from as far back as fiscal year 2002 remained unprocessed.
- Director's office staff had been approved to fly business class with an overnight stopover without appropriate justification.
- No supervisory system was in place for reviewing the work of the voucher examiners.
- Sato Travel's database of passport holders' identities improperly included social security numbers.

Management concurred with all 22 recommendations. At the end of the reporting period, 10 recommendations are closed and 12 remain open.

Turkmenistan: Audit

We conducted an audit of Peace Corps/Turkmenistan March 6 - 24, 2006. The Peace Corps began its program in Turkmenistan in 1993. At the time of our visit, 61 Volunteers were working in two program sectors: English language instruction and Health.

Peace Corps/Turkmenistan's financial and administrative operations were, in general, operating effectively. However, areas of improvement were noted, including:

- The post having an unauthorized bank account.
- Vehicle sales not being managed properly.
- Property inventory records being inaccurate.
- International travel vouchers being inaccurate.
- The post not collecting all of the host country contributions specified in the host country agreement.

Management concurred with all 20 recommendations. At the end of the reporting period, 18 recommendations are closed and two remain open.

East Timor: Follow-up Audit

During the period February 27 – March 3, 2006, we conducted a follow-up review to our audit carried out August 22 – September 5, 2005. We reviewed management's compliance with the actions agreed upon for 26 of the 27 recommendations; one recommendation was an unresolved non-concurrence.

The principal finding from our follow-up audit was the failure of the post to address the weaknesses in its imprest fund operation. However, because operations at Peace Corps/East Timor were suspended shortly after our follow-up, we closed all recommendations except for those related to closing the post's financial books.

At the end of the reporting period, 25 recommendations are closed and two remain open.

Zambia: Audit and Program Evaluation

We conducted an audit and program evaluation of Peace Corps/Zambia August 8 – 25, 2005. The audit included an examination of 2004 expenditures under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). In 2005, more than 150 Volunteers were promoting sustainable development through activities in agricultural and natural resource management, health and sanitation, education, and HIV/AIDS assistance.

Our audit findings included that the post had spent PEPFAR funds on basic post operational costs not approved in the 2004 Country Operating Plan (COP) or the project

plan for the HIV/AIDS Assistance Project. We initially identified over \$127,000 that was spent on items not in the COP and upon receipt of additional documentation after our visit to the post, the amount was revised to \$73,420. In addition, the post used cash advances to vendors from its imprest fund for many of its purchases. We found that, at any given time, outstanding advances from the imprest fund averaged over \$33,000—more than half of the authorized fund level of \$60,000. We also found cash payments totaling nearly \$16,000 for personal items that should not have been paid from appropriated funds.

Our program evaluation concluded that the country director did not provide sufficient leadership in programming, staff management, and financial oversight. In addition, staff were reluctant to take their concerns to the country director, and their morale was low. The post relied heavily on Volunteer Leaders to fulfill staff functions: technical support to Volunteers, site selection, site development, policy enforcement, and relations with host country agencies. This was in opposition to Peace Corps policy and undercut the staff's role and responsibilities. We found that this management approach had a long history in PC/Zambia and we recommended a serious program management review. In July 2006, the agency named a new country director to PC/Zambia.

We determined that PC/Zambia's Rural Aquaculture Promotion project, which provides farmers with income-generating opportunities through fish farming, is a well-designed project that reaps visible benefits for the farmers in a relatively short amount of time.

The other projects, where site selection and development practices were not followed as closely, grappled with uneven commitment from the host government, inconsistency in local host readiness, and a lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities among staff, Volunteers, and host country sponsors. We had serious concerns about the viability of the education project and recommended that the post terminate this project.

Zambia's vast territory and weak transport and communication infrastructure posed challenges in ensuring Volunteer safety and security. In its February 2005 testing of the Emergency Action Plan, it took the post 48 hours to reach a 95% response rate and one week to hear from all of the 101 Volunteers in the testing pool. The OIG is also concerned that the burden of contacting Volunteers fell heavily on the Volunteer Leaders.

Volunteers were generally satisfied with staff support except in the areas of technical and financial/logistical matters. They received reimbursements late and sometimes used personal funds to undertake special projects. In surveys and interviews, Volunteers in three of the five projects reported that site visits by staff were infrequent, and where they occurred, many were not useful.

The post did not adequately manage or integrate Crisis Corps Volunteers into program activities. We found inadequate housing arrangements, outdated job descriptions, and a failure to conduct adequate site and project development for Crisis Corps Volunteers.

Management concurred with 21 of the 25 recommendations, partially concurred with three recommendations, and did not concur with one recommendation. At the end of the reporting period, 21 recommendations are closed and four remain open.

Botswana: Program Evaluation

We conducted an evaluation of Peace Corps/Botswana February 25 – March 17, 2006. The Peace Corps first established a program in Botswana in December 1966, two months after it achieved independence from the United Kingdom. At the time of our visit, there were 59 Volunteers in-country serving in four projects dedicated to assisting those with HIV/AIDS.

We found a program recovering from prolonged staffing vacancies; but, currently with effective leadership and productive Volunteers. The most serious findings were inadequate emotional and technical support for the Volunteers and inadequate pre-service and in-service training for the Volunteers.

Volunteers assigned to government agencies had structured and viable work assignments, and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief-funded Volunteers assigned to non-government organizations (NGOs), who had been in the country for five months at the time of our visit, said they too were finding meaningful work with their NGOs.

Support for Volunteers was lacking in several areas. Most important was the Volunteers' mental health. Volunteers working with people living with HIV/AIDS have a critical need for emotional support. Volunteers reported few site visits from staff and virtually no feedback on their work. There was no support for on-going language learning at site, nor was there adequate support forthcoming for work-related problems such as misunderstandings between Volunteers and their host organizations.

The pre-service training for Volunteers, including language training, was also ineffective. Technical training was overly theoretical and lacked practical application to the realities of the Volunteers at their sites.

The region concurred with all 10 recommendations and all of them remain open.

BEST PRACTICES: CASE STUDIES

We conducted a study of best practices of Peace Corps programs and prepared case studies of programs in nine countries.

The purpose of the study was to identify best practices that resulted in high quality programs that prepare and place Volunteers in sites where they can be productive (the agency's first goal), provide a healthy cross-cultural exchange (goal two), and inspire them to bring the world home (goal three).

In phase I of the study, OIG staff conducted extensive interviews with the staff at each overseas post involved with designing and planning programs; training Volunteers; developing sites; providing technical, medical, emotional, and administrative support to Volunteers; and, managing the operational aspects of ensuring that these functions are performed effectively. In phase II, we spoke with Volunteers about their experiences and their perspectives on what the staff described.

Ten reports resulted from the study, the nine country case studies and a tenth report reflecting the perspective of “counterparts,” the local people who are the primary contact for the Volunteer in his/her community or host agency. These reports are summarized below.

Counterparts Report: Best Practices Study

We spoke with people in local communities in Honduras, Panama, and Paraguay who had worked with Volunteers on projects as their counterparts. We sought their perspective on working with Peace Corps Volunteers. While this report reflected the voices and views of counterparts in only three countries, the lessons they offered are universal.

The counterparts play key roles in the lives and work of the Volunteers. The counterparts increase the effectiveness of the Volunteers by introducing them to people and by lending the Volunteers validity and credibility in the community and within the host organization. Counterparts are often responsible for Volunteers’ safety, physical and mental health, and cultural integration. This is a difficult and demanding role. For the agency, finding good counterparts, supervisors, and colleagues is challenging, but worth the effort because every Volunteer and every Volunteer project benefits greatly from having a local human partnership.

In terms of their perspective on the Volunteers’ contribution to the community or host organization, counterparts spoke of the need for Volunteers to arrive with a purpose that was clear to the Volunteers, the counterpart, and the local people. This was the most important input to successful Volunteer service. The counterparts also made the following points:

- Volunteers need a local support network to help them with community integration and to facilitate their work.
- Volunteers’ personal attributes play an important role in their ability to accomplish their assignment.
- Volunteers in technical projects need appropriate skills.
- Volunteers with local language skills and good communication skills are more effective.

Georgia: Best Practices Study

The staff of PC/Georgia has developed a successful program through attention to detail. They have systems in place for site development, safety and security, and Volunteer support that they are continuously evaluating and refining. Their commitment to make PC/Georgia an even better program was evident to the Volunteers, who credited the hard work and dedication of the staff for their success as Volunteers.

At the time of this study, there were 58 Volunteers in two programs, Teaching English as a Foreign Language in secondary schools and the organizational, technical, and financial development of non-government organizations.

The staff of PC/Georgia are also good problem solvers and tackle issues with a combination of creativity and pragmatism. One example of this was their approach to improving the quality of host organizations that request a Volunteer. They adopted a marketing approach, using a variety of channels to let organizations and schools know about PC/Georgia. They also designed a rigorous application process. Consequently, demand for Volunteers exceeded supply and host organizations competed for Volunteers. This competition led to higher quality applications, and to host organizations that were better prepared to use the Volunteers productively.

Another example of the staff's attention to detail was the workshops they held for prospective host organizations, host families, and local police. In addition to providing supervisors, families, and local police with important information about the Peace Corps and the Volunteers, these workshops vested in host organizations, families, and the local police a sense of responsibility for the safety and well-being of the Volunteers and their success in their assignments.

Finally, PC/Georgia required that Volunteers live with host families for the first six months and encouraged them to continue to do so throughout their service. Most Volunteers chose to live with a family throughout their service. For many of them, the opportunity to live with a Georgian family and to see Georgia and the world through their eyes was an invaluable part of their Peace Corps experience. Being a member of a local family also provided immediate acceptance in the community, validity for the Volunteer's work, access to resources, and help with secondary projects.

Honduras: Best Practices Study

PC/Honduras managed its large number of Volunteers (213 at the time of the study) by systematizing its processes with a set of "tools." Every task staff perform to carry out the Peace Corps program—developing projects, training Volunteers, identifying sites and counterparts, preparing sites, and supporting Volunteers—was guided by a tool in the form of a written document, a handbook, a guideline, a detailed procedure, or a form. These tools guide staff to assure that each detail, each required step, was followed, documented, and completed. The tools assured consistency and thoroughness.

Of the post's six projects (water and sanitation, protected areas management, youth development, business development, municipal development, and HIV/AIDS prevention and child survival), the study singled out the youth project for a thoroughness in site selection and preparation.

The staff responsible for the youth project met prospective host organizations several times before assigning a Volunteer. They identified and trained four counterparts at each location where a Volunteer would be assigned to increase the likelihood that the Volunteer would have an effective working relationship with local people. For all of their projects, PC/Honduras' strategy was to minimize the need for the Volunteer to be the mobilizing force for a project. Instead, the staff identified a local NGO that was already working in a community and had the Volunteer work through them. Another strategy for ensuring that Volunteers were productive was to have Volunteers provide technical training of local workers who, in turn, conducted the community outreach aspect of the project.

From the Volunteers' perspective, the attention to detail by staff translated into well-designed project plans, sites where Volunteers were productive, and effective technical and administrative support. The Volunteers singled out the water and sanitation and health projects for a high level of productivity and Volunteer satisfaction. Their work assignments, they reported, were clear and met critical needs of the communities. Volunteers also worked in protected areas management, business development, municipal development, and HIV/AIDS prevention and child survival.

Malawi: Best Practices Study

The leadership of the country director, a commitment to teamwork, close collaboration with the Government of Malawi, targeted technical training, and Volunteer input were five factors that contributed to the strength of the Peace Corps/Malawi post. The staff credited the quality of their program to the country director's commitment to open communication and her participatory management style. One hundred and five Volunteers were working in the following three projects: education, natural resources management, and community health and HIV/AIDS.

The Peace Corps has a long history of close relations with government officials in Malawi. The country director noted that "Peace Corps' significant and positive historical presence here has helped our programming efforts. The students who [were taught by] Volunteers here in the past are now high-level government and NGO officials (the former Vice President of Malawi was taught by Volunteers, and he was a Peace Corps language trainer), and Peace Corps is now reaping the benefits of what they sowed in the past. Our partners come forward to support us when needed" The Volunteers also reported that they directly benefited in their assignments from these relationships.

The staff of PC/Malawi were technically well-qualified and had a commitment to teamwork. They had worked for international development organizations and the

Government of Malawi in the fields in which Volunteers work. They participated in practical training exercises for the Volunteers, which helped them to know the Volunteers and make compatible site assignments. Their teamwork facilitated cross-sector collaboration on projects that extended to the Volunteers assisting one another with project activities across sectors.

The Volunteers were positive about what they have contributed and gained through this experience. They credited their training, especially language and cross-cultural training, as the foundation for their service. They have worked hard in their assignments and were proud of their accomplishments, not only in working in a very difficult situation but having made good friends in the process.

Mauritania: Best Practices Study

Mauritania hosts a very small number of international donor and development agencies. Consequently, the Peace Corps has unusual visibility, and the Volunteers' work is significant in the context of foreign assistance to the development of Mauritania. The Peace Corps is also the only U.S. aid program in Mauritania. Thus, the Volunteers are "the face of America," and they felt an obligation to gain respect professionally and personally. At the time of this study, there were 88 Volunteers working in agroforestry and environmental education, small enterprise development and communications technology, health education, and English teaching.

Working in Mauritania is not easy. Physical conditions are challenging. It has a conservative Muslim culture. It requires skill and effort to make friends and be accepted. In particular, the Volunteers must have good facility in speaking the local language of the site to which the Volunteer is assigned. The post placed a premium on language training. Sites were identified and placements made soon after Volunteers arrived in country, so that they could be trained in the appropriate local language. The staff monitored their progress and offered tutoring for those who needed it.

In Mauritania, we found Peace Corps programs that met critical needs and were fully supported by the government. Programming in PC/Mauritania was shaped by the collaboration among Volunteers and facilitated by clustering Volunteers in nearby sites. Volunteers from all projects participated in a national secondary project to promote girls' education in a safe environment outside the schools where girls could advance their skills. The Volunteers had set up twelve centers in regional capitals where they provided tutoring and taught computer science and vocational skills. Peace Corps received formal support from NGOs and informal but politically essential support from government officials who attended functions at the centers.

The Volunteers reported a high degree of openness and communication between and among staff and Volunteers in Mauritania. The Volunteers felt supported and valued by the staff. We heard consistently that the quality of leadership of the country director and staff was excellent. The staff were viewed as hard-working, talented, accessible, and

attentive to the program and personal needs of the Volunteers. The staff made extraordinary efforts in supporting the Volunteers in this country, where logistics and transportation posed serious challenges.

Niger: Best Practices Study

In Niger, the Volunteers shared in the poverty of the people, the harshness of the climate, the inadequacy of the physical infrastructure and even the scarcity of food. Niger ranks at the bottom of almost every economic and human development index. Yet Peace Corps Volunteers were thriving. At the time of this study, 119 Volunteers were working in community and youth education, natural resources management, community health, and agriculture. They spoke with pride and confidence about their contribution to the people with whom they worked and lived; they were thankful for the openness of their Nigerien friends and neighbors in accepting them. Above all, they valued the dedication of the staff and their support for the Volunteers.

While PC/Niger staff fulfill all of the tasks that Peace Corps posts typically perform -- program design, site selection and preparation, training, and Volunteer support, their attention to every detail makes the difference between an average and high quality program. This included developing projects with feasible tasks, sites with a stake in what the Volunteer was there to do, training that gave Volunteers the skills to do the assignment, and support that made the Volunteers feel the staff and the Peace Corps office were behind and beside them as partners in carrying out their work.

Peace Corps/Niger had a dedicated and experienced local staff with excellent relations with the government and the NGOs. They found creative solutions to the logistical barriers to Volunteer support in Niger posed by its poor communications infrastructure. The Volunteers rated their support significantly higher than the average for Volunteers around the world.

The country director had a profound impact on the staff and Volunteers. His empathy and concern for the Volunteers was real, but, at the same time, he expected excellence and professionalism from the Volunteers. For example, the country director raised the language competency level requirement before Volunteers could be sworn in.

Panama: Best Practices Study

PC/Panama had a clear vision of its mission and role in the development of Panama. This vision was transmitted to the Volunteers, to the staff, and to the public at every opportunity, and two large posters immediately inside the office entrance prominently displayed statements of mission, vision, and values. The staff had internalized the mission statement and integrated it into what they do and how they do it. At the time of our visit, 137 Volunteers were working in the following projects: sustainable agriculture

systems, community environmental conservation, environmental health, and community economic development.

The mantra of the staff was to identify real jobs for Volunteers and place them with effective partner organizations. The staff sought out local organizations with ongoing projects in communities. The job of the Volunteer was to help the local organization implement its project. Volunteers had clearly defined tasks and were able to use the skills for which Peace Corps had either recruited or trained them.

PC/Panama staff used the expression “getting the right people on the bus” to describe what the post does and how they do it. For the program, this metaphor meant:

- Knowing where you are going (vision and mission).
- Partnering with the right organizations.
- Hiring the right staff to manage and support projects.
- Training and supporting the Volunteers based on an understanding of what the Volunteers do and what it takes to be a Volunteer.

The Volunteers credited staff leadership with making PC/Panama effective and sustaining Volunteers’ confidence in the management of PC/Panama as an organization. They appreciated that the country director took input from the Volunteers seriously and responded promptly to their concerns. The Volunteers also felt that their service had been positively affected by the reputation of the agency, the widespread knowledge that people have about PC/Panama, and its contributions to the country. Volunteers appreciated working in projects with tangible outcomes that fulfilled critical needs in the community.

Paraguay: Best Practices Study

There are approximately 200 Volunteers in Paraguay working in six project areas: agroforestry extension, environmental education, early elementary education, rural health and sanitation, rural economic development and agriculture, municipal service development, and urban youth development.

One hallmark of PC/Paraguay was its training program. PC/Paraguay had developed a successful pre-service training program by contracting a private company, CHP International, and directing and monitoring their work through a detailed Description of Work. The staff felt that this arrangement gave them both flexibility and control. The Volunteers gave especially high marks to language and cross-cultural training. Trainees whose work assignments required Guaraní, the national language of Paraguay, were able to achieve reasonable proficiency in both Spanish and Guaraní. Volunteers also praised training for its realism – the similarities between their training communities and permanent sites helped them make smooth transitions from working with trainers to working with their host organizations and counterparts.

The second hallmark was the geographic clustering of Volunteers in nuclei. The Volunteers saw nuclei as serving at least two purposes. First, having other Volunteers nearby ensured that technical and social support was never far away. This was especially important for new Volunteers and Volunteers who lived far from Asunción, the capital of Paraguay. Second, the nuclei served a programming function. Each nuclei contained Volunteers from different sectors, allowing Volunteers to combine their different skills and technical knowledge around a single, but multi-faceted, project. The staff saw nuclei as facilitating their support to Volunteers and enhancing the potential for impact on a local community.

PC/Paraguay used a two-prong approach to monitor, evaluate, and support Volunteer projects: the Work Plan and the Progress Report. In the work plan, submitted quarterly, the Volunteer and his/her community contact or counterpart laid out what they intended to accomplish in the subsequent four months. In the progress report, they reported their accomplishments. The Volunteer prepared the work plan and progress report, but the Volunteer's main counterpart had to sign it. The document was the official medium for the counterpart to be abreast of the activities of the Volunteer, some of which may not be with the counterpart's organization but with other community counterparts or groups.

Philippines: Best Practices Study

The Philippine staff take pride in their work and in what they feel is a cultural propensity to work hard. "Filipinos want to do a good job," said one. The staff's commitment to the work and well-being of the Volunteers contributes to the effectiveness of programming and training at Peace Corps/Philippines.

To harness this energy and commitment, the post recently reorganized staff functions to provide more effective support to the 138 Volunteers, located on 16 islands and working on five projects: business advising for youth; basic education for technical assistance; small islands development and water and sanitation; community services education; and community-based conservation of important biodiversity areas. The reorganization integrated regional (geographic) responsibility, administrative support, and technical expertise. Program staff now support a group of Volunteers within a region rather than within a single project. They work closely as a team and coordinate on identifying and developing sites, training the Volunteers, and supporting them in their assignments.

The staff were also committed to listening to the Volunteers. They took the views of the Volunteers seriously and gave the Volunteers a voice in PC/Philippines through a quarterly Volunteer Forum in which staff and Volunteers discussed the needs of the Volunteers and identified solutions.

The close oversight by the Government of the Philippines over all foreign agency volunteer programs was also an important factor in shaping Peace Corps/Philippines' operations. The Philippines established a government agency that monitors, approves, and coordinates all foreign volunteer-based assistance from international NGOs and

foreign governments. This agency approves local agencies as partners, local agency requests for Volunteers, and sites. It is involved in training and requires quarterly and end-of-service reports from Volunteers. As a result, staff completed site development well in advance to meet the deadlines of the approval process.

While the Volunteers appreciated the work of the staff, ultimately, they saw their experience defined by the culture of the Philippines—warmth, hospitality, and acceptance from the children in their neighborhood to the staff at the Peace Corps office.

Ukraine: Best Practices Study

The PC/Ukraine staff built a quality program by excelling in three areas. The first and most important was in paying attention to the Volunteers' assignments, training, and support. The responsiveness of the staff to the needs of the Volunteers helped the Volunteers feel valued as individuals—a particularly impressive achievement for a post with approximately 350 Volunteers. Peace Corps/Ukraine is the agency's largest program.

One mechanism the staff used to keep the focus on the Volunteers is a Volunteer Advisory Council (VAC). The VAC served as a sounding board and mechanism for giving Volunteer feedback on policies and staff performance by conducting surveys of Volunteer satisfaction. The Volunteers appreciated that the staff sought and acted on feedback from the Volunteer Advisory Council. One Volunteer commented, "It would be easy to take the staff for granted --until you realize that the excellent service they give me is multiplied 350 times. Amazingly, it works."

For the country director, paying attention to the Volunteers meant first and foremost that every Volunteer was placed in a meaningful work assignment: "I believe that Volunteers want to make a contribution. We owe every Volunteer a good job, and in turn, they owe Peace Corps responsible behavior and achievement."

The second area in which the staff excelled was in maximizing efficiency by using technology to enhance collaboration, especially on site development and Volunteer support. The staff support a large number of Volunteers located over an extensive geographical area and working in four projects: business development, environmental protection, youth development, and teaching English. Configuring the organization of the staff to the realities of Ukraine, the country director reorganized the program staff by geographic coverage and sector expertise. The regional managers provide overall support to Volunteers in a region while the sector specialists provide technical support to all Volunteers within a project. This division of labor has resulted in more efficient and effective support for the Volunteers.

The third area of excellence was the emphasis on striving for continuous improvement—accepting that the job is always a work in progress, that quality can always be improved, and that laurels rested upon quickly lose their luster.

INVESTIGATIONS

OVERVIEW

Investigations respond to allegations of criminal wrongdoing, fraud, and abuse that come to us through audits and evaluations, hotline complaints, and Volunteers, Trainees, staff, and the public. We also investigate ethics and conflicts of interest violations. The Office of Inspector General is charged by law with the conduct of criminal investigations. The Inspector General is authorized by statute to develop policy for the conduct of investigations, and to coordinate and supervise both domestic and overseas investigations. Investigators work with other offices within the agency or with other agencies, including law enforcement officials and public prosecutors, as appropriate.

With over 7,000 Volunteers in more than 70 countries, incidents of crime against them are inevitable. Part of the agency's support to Volunteers who become victims is a protocol under which country directors report incidents of violent crimes to the OIG. The OIG manages and coordinates the agency's part of the investigative and prosecution process from the initial incident to the closing of the case. We coordinate the investigation of the crimes with the country director, headquarters offices, the State Department's Office of Diplomatic Security Services, and the embassy's Regional Security Officer (RSO). We work with the RSO to develop the best evidence for local trial. This might include preparation of witness statements, developing photo spreads, or obtaining DNA analysis. As needed, we accompany witnesses back to the country where the crime occurred for lineups, depositions, and trial. We consult with the Department of Justice's Office of Foreign Litigation and receive assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), including the forensic laboratory at Quantico and the overseas legal attachés, the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and the Secret Service Forensic Services Division. Our role in coordinating the investigation and assisting in the prosecution of violent crimes against Peace Corps Volunteers brings a high volume of work but also gives us the opportunity to help curb violence against Peace Corps Volunteers.

The OIG operates a 24/7 duty officer system for country directors to make direct and immediate contact with criminal investigators in this office to coordinate the response to violent crimes against Volunteers and assist the victims of crime. Early intervention and coordinated support has enhanced the quality of overseas investigations. We may, in limited circumstances, also arrange for a local lawyer to be hired to help the prosecutor in making the case against the perpetrator of the crime.

The 2004 "Equal Access to Justice Act" and other Congressional enactments, as well as the Attorney General's guidance, provide a prescriptive framework for the OIG's victim advocacy responsibilities and authority.

OIG INVESTIGATIONS OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION ACT RECIPIENTS

In an effort to maintain the integrity of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), the Peace Corps OIG coordinated with the Peace Corps Office of Medical Services (PC/OMS) and Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL/OIG) to investigate recipients. As part of our investigative effort, we have been reviewing case files for each beneficiary of the FECA program, and following up with background database reviews, including property verifications and site visits, to ensure that the FECA program is utilized properly.

During this reporting period, we sent letters to over 1200 recipients reminding them to report changes in their disability, current income, address, and other pertinent information to the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, letters were also sent to specific recipients who we had reason to suspect of FECA violations. PC/OIG investigators also visited and interviewed more than 35 active claimants in Districts 6 and 13. The following adverse practices were identified:

- Recipients that did not live at the address provided to the Department of Labor.
- Claimants that moved out of the country; recipients that were working and receiving salaried wages but had not notified the Department of Labor.
- Recipients that were working and had notified the Department of Labor but continued to receive disability compensation benefits.
- A recipient whose dependent had passed away but had not notified Department of Labor to have his benefits reduced.

During the reporting period, the OIG also began undertaking field investigations of FECA recipients with potential fraud indicators or other suspicious circumstances, such as those with no or low medical costs but high compensatory benefits. In one field investigation, the OIG discovered that a FECA recipient was employed in several part-time positions without notifying the Department of Labor of her re-employment status. With the assistance of PC/OMS, we informed the Department of Labor of the results of our investigation, and the Department of Labor reduced this FECA recipient's annual benefit. As a result of the OIG's efforts, cost savings to the Peace Corps over the life of this claim totaled \$574,104.

VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST VOLUNTEERS

Overseas posts are required to report immediately to the OIG and RSO any incident of a specified list of violent crimes against Volunteers. Early notification and response is critical to a successful investigation and prosecution, which may assist in a victim's recovery, serve as a protective deterrent, and remove violent persons from society.

Incidents and crimes to be reported to the OIG and RSO are:

- Volunteer Death (under any circumstances)
- Kidnapping
- Rape and Attempted Rape
- Major Sexual Assault
- Robbery
- Aggravated Assault
- Major Physical Assault
- Burglary with Volunteer/Trainee present (or attempted)
- Death Threat
- Intimidation/Stalking (also Domestic Violence)

Crimes are reported to the OIG through telephone number 202-692-2911 or the crime hotline violentcrimeline@peacecorps.gov, from which the Inspector General and investigative personnel receive notification on a 24/7 basis to assure prompt assistance and coordination in their investigation. For overseas crimes, the OIG engages with the Criminal Investigative Liaison Branch (CIL) of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to facilitate communications and support to the victim and to the Peace Corps post. During the reporting period, approximately 203 preliminary inquiries were opened, which resulted in the initiation of 25 investigations.

We have also established a dedicated law enforcement liaison line (911@peacecorps.gov) for other federal and foreign law enforcement agencies to access OIG investigative personnel on a 24/7 basis. This resource for coordination among law enforcement agencies may be the first of its kind.

We have three investigators whose primary responsibility is to oversee the cases in one of the agency's three geographic overseas regions: Africa; Inter-America and Pacific; and Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia. This allows them to develop closer coordination with overseas counterparts and a better understanding of the characteristics of each country and its criminal justice system. We have a fourth investigator who will oversee the agency's FECA initiatives.

Closed Cases of Violent Crime Against Volunteers

- A Volunteer was attacked while jogging in an Eastern European country. The RSO was notified and, with the assistance of an OIG investigator, coordinated with the local police. A subject was arrested and the local courts sentenced him to a three-year prison term.
- A Volunteer serving in a Central Asia country was the victim of a robbery. During the robbery, the two attackers attempted to throw the Volunteer off a bridge. The subjects were located by the local police, tried in local court, and convicted. One subject was sentenced to four years imprisonment. The accomplice was sentenced to a two-year suspended prison sentence.

- As reported in the previous Semiannual Report, a Volunteer was the victim of a robbery in a Central Asian country. During this reporting period, the subject was tried and convicted by the local court and received a three-year suspended prison sentence and is serving a one-year of probation sentence.
- In the Pacific region, a Volunteer was raped at knifepoint in her home. Three suspects were arrested; one suspect for rape and two suspects for “creeping” or voyeurism. The two suspects charged with creeping pled guilty and received sentences of two years and fifteen months, respectively. The rape suspect pled guilty and was sentenced to three years and eight months in prison.
- In 2004, a Volunteer serving in the Caribbean was the victim of an attempted rape by a hotel security guard who entered her room while she slept. In August 2006, an OIG investigator accompanied the Volunteer victim and two Volunteer witnesses to testify at trial. The OIG investigator coordinated with the local prosecutor and the safety and security coordinator. The defendant was convicted of sexual abuse and sentenced to four years in prison.
- In a rural community in a Central American country, a Volunteer was raped and robbed by her landlord and another individual. An OIG investigator coordinated with the RSO and the country director to obtain physical evidence and to follow up with local authorities. The OIG retained legal counsel to represent the victim. In April 2006, the case went to a jury trial but the defendant was acquitted.
- An OIG investigator provided forensic investigative support to the local police and the assistant RSO during the investigation of the accidental death of a two Volunteers in an African country. Four Volunteers were on a river in a catamaran when the steel mast struck a high voltage power line. Two Volunteers died, another Volunteer was severely injured, and the fourth Volunteer escaped injury. The deaths were deemed an accident.
- Two Volunteers in an African country were attacked by an armed male and received injuries. One Volunteer was struck on the head and required six stitches to the scalp. Local police detained and questioned some individuals but no suspects were positively identified.
- In a southwestern Africa country, a Volunteer was accosted by an unidentified male armed with a knife during a home invasion. The Volunteer resisted the assailant and received minor injuries. The Volunteer was treated at a local hospital and released. A suspect was apprehended but the Volunteer was unable to identify the assailant in a line-up.
- In a coastal West African country, a Volunteer and two visiting family members were assaulted and robbed at a hotel by four armed perpetrators. The OIG with assistance from the RSO collected fingerprints and delivered the evidence to the FBI lab for latent print processing. A suspect was apprehended and his fingerprints were submitted to the FBI lab for comparison. The case was closed after the suspect’s fingerprints failed to match the latent print samples.

- A Volunteer in a northern African country reported having been sexually abused by her language tutor. The Volunteer was medevaced to PC/Washington where, after receiving treatment and counseling, the Volunteer declined to prosecute the assailant.
- A Volunteer reported a rape a month after its occurrence to Peace Corps staff. The Volunteer reported being harassed, chastised, and compelled to have sex with the village chief's son. The Volunteer declined to prosecute.

Pending Cases of Violent Crime Against Volunteers

- In a South American country, an OIG investigator coordinated with the RSO to locate and arrest the perpetrator of an attempted rape of a Volunteer that occurred in 2003. In February 2006, the RSO and local authorities arrested the subject, who was detained without bail. The OIG retained legal counsel to represent the victim in the case. An OIG investigator accompanied the Volunteer, who had subsequently left service, to the post to provide a legal deposition and to identify the suspect in a lineup. The public prosecutor initiated a formal investigation into the matter and filed formal charges against the subject for sexual coercion. Trial is pending.
- In the Pacific region, a Volunteer was raped in her residence by a host country national. An OIG investigator coordinated with the Volunteer victim and the post to bring the case to trial. The OIG investigator accompanied the Volunteer to the preliminary hearing. The defendant was remanded to the Supreme Court for trial with an October 2006 trial date.
- In the Pacific region, a case of an aggravated assault of a Volunteer that occurred in 2005 was scheduled for trial in September 2006. The case was rescheduled and elevated to the Supreme Court due to the severity of the crime. An OIG investigator traveled to the post to coordinate with the prosecution lawyer, provide digital photographs of injuries, and coordinate with the safety and security coordinator to ensure a witness's appearance at a pre-trial deposition. Trial is pending.
- The case of a missing Volunteer in South America remains open. We continue to pursue investigative leads.
- In Southeast Asia, a suspect was released pending trial for the sexual assault and robbery of a Volunteer. The Volunteer, who has subsequently left service, shows continued high interest in prosecuting the subject.
- The accused in a case of sexual assault against a Volunteer in central Africa remains in custody awaiting trial. The Volunteer, who has subsequently left service, was accompanied back to the country for a preliminary hearing and a trial date is pending.
- In northwest Africa, a Volunteer suffered a fractured arm during a rape by two men. The two suspects were subsequently apprehended, but one escaped from local police custody and was sentenced in absentia. The fugitive was recaptured, appealed his

sentence, and is waiting to be retried. The Volunteer, who has subsequently left service, will return to the country with an OIG investigator for the trial.

- The homicide of a Volunteer in Africa several years ago remains an open case with the OIG, the RSO, and the FBI. The Peace Corps program in the country has been closed, but the OIG continues to coordinate with both law enforcement agencies and the local authorities to seek justice in the case and the return of personal effects of the decedents to the family.

TITLE 18 CRIMINAL AND OTHER INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED

Investigations Leading to Disposition

- Two Peace Corps employees were the subject of an investigation in which they defrauded the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program. One employee agreed to repay the government \$1,000. The second employee entered into the U.S. Department of Justice's pre-trial diversion program, agreed to pay restitution of \$7,125.68 to the U.S. government, and will perform 40 hours of community service. Both employees voluntarily terminated their employment with Peace Corps.
- During the last reporting period, we began an investigation of a Volunteer serving in Central Asia who was alleged to have misappropriated federal money from a grant program. During our investigation, the Volunteer confessed to embezzling \$766.13 from the grant program. Restitution was made and the Volunteer pled guilty to misdemeanor embezzlement through the United States Attorney's Office in his home of record.
- An unannounced cash count at Peace Corps headquarters revealed a \$500.00 shortage in the cashier's imprest fund. OIG investigated the loss and the employee subsequently tendered her resignation.
- In the Pacific Region, a former host country national employee began restitution payments for the unauthorized use of a Peace Corps-issued phone card. The former employee had incurred a significant debt after terminating service, and agreed to make restitution payments until the debt is paid off. The Peace Corps recovered \$300 during this reporting period.
- The OIG and the RSO investigated a report of a Volunteer having sexual contact with multiple young males. The Volunteer acknowledged having sexual contact with the young males, but indicated that all were over the age of 18. The Volunteer terminated his service. The investigation was declined for prosecution for lack of probable cause.
- In a southeastern African country, an OIG investigation of missing diesel fuel from the post's motor pool reaffirmed findings initially disclosed by the RSO. The investigation also detected patterns of fraudulent activities in the motor pool that

existed over a two-year period. Inconsistencies found in motor pool records, along with testimony from a confidential source that identified persons, places, and means of theft, provided the OIG evidence that fraudulent activity has existed in the Peace Corps' motor pool operations and employee and operational changes are warranted. Several of the local employees were terminated from service.

- In the Caribbean, an OIG investigation confirmed that a Volunteer engaged in sexual conduct with a host country national under the age of 18, in violation of 18 USC 2423. An OIG investigator provided information on the case to an Assistant United States Attorney at the Volunteer's home of record, who declined to prosecute this matter. The Volunteer resigned from service.
- In May 2006, the OIG was notified of possible marijuana use by Volunteers serving in Central Asia. It was alleged that four local staff members had known about the marijuana use, yet had not informed the post's management staff. As a result of our investigation, 16 Peace Corps Volunteers resigned. Of the four host country staffers implicated in the incident, two were verbally reprimanded and reminded of their reporting duties, one received a written reprimand, and the fourth staff member resigned.
- A Volunteer in a Central Asian country was the victim of an assault. While filing a police report, the local police noticed that the Volunteer was in the company of a host country national minor. An investigation of a potential Protect Act violation was initiated by the OIG, Diplomatic Security Service, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Cyber Crimes Center, Child Exploitation Section. However, due to limited evidence and no indication that sex was ever exchanged for compensation, the matter was closed. Shortly after receiving notification of the accusation, the Volunteer resigned from the Peace Corps.
- An investigation was opened during the last reporting period regarding a former Volunteer's application for benefits under FECA. The Volunteer's FECA claim was determined to lack merit, and the Department of Labor denied the Volunteer's claim. The investigation was closed.
- OIG investigated a host country national employee in a South Asian country who was accused of using her position within the Peace Corps to operate a prostitution business. The informant's claim was jointly investigated by the RSO, the OIG, and the FBI. The investigation found no credible evidence to support the primary claim; however, the employee was found to have committed minor administrative violations. The employee was officially reprimanded and later resigned citing non-related reasons.
- OIG continued its investigation into an ethics complaint against Peace Corps management in a Central Asian country. The informant subsequently denied making the allegations and did not provide any additional information to substantiate earlier claims. OIG and the U.S. Department of State will continue to monitor this issue. We closed the ethics complaint.

- A contractor at Peace Corps headquarters was alleged to have sent inappropriate electronic mail from an agency account using a Peace Corps computer. The investigation found that the contractor was in violation of agency policies governing electronic mail and the use of government equipment, as well as the Standards of Ethical Conduct. The contractor received verbal counseling by his supervisor.
- OIG received an anonymous complaint alleging that a Peace Corps headquarters employee was allowed by their supervisor to attend training outside of the Washington, D.C. area and that the employee took annual leave in conjunction with the training. The investigation revealed no problems associated with the training or the employee's use of annual leave.

Pending Investigations

- The investigation of a Volunteer who allegedly raped two fellow Volunteers while serving in Eastern Europe is ongoing. OIG investigators are currently working with a number of police departments around the United States to gather additional evidence.
- The OIG continues to work with the U.S. Embassy, Peace Corps management, and a locally retained lawyer to prosecute and receive restitution relating to theft of internet services from a Peace Corps office in eastern Africa. This is the first case of this type in this country. Peace Corps is seeking restitution of approximately \$6,000. The subject is a former host country national Peace Corps employee who is suspected of allowing persons to fraudulently access the internet at Peace Corps' expense.
- A Peace Corps employee was alleged to have committed ethics and criminal conflict of interest statute violations, 18 USC 205 and 208. The OIG conducted interviews of persons that were believed to have direct knowledge of the alleged activities. The investigation disclosed that the employee committed several violations of the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees, as well as violations of the Peace Corps Manual. The agency's disciplinary action is pending.
- In a southeastern African country, a joint investigation by the OIG and the RSO resulted in the arrest of a locally hired cashier for the theft of more than \$9,000. The case is awaiting trial.
- In a South American country, a Volunteer engaged in sexual relations with a host country national under the age of 18, in violation of 18 USC 2423. An OIG investigator conducted interviews of multiple witnesses in country and subsequently interviewed the suspect with a DHS-ICE agent and obtained a confession. The OIG and ICE agents met with the Assistant United States Attorney Chief of the Criminal Division in the former Volunteer's home of record, who determined that he would not seek to prosecute the former Volunteer. The United States Attorney's Office is preparing to seek a grand jury indictment.

TABLE 1

LIST OF REPORTS: AUDITS, EVALUATIONS AND INSPECTIONS

Benin: Audit
Dominican Republic: Audit
Federated States of Micronesia: Audit
Mid-Atlantic Recruitment Office: Audit
Romania: Audit
Travel Policies and Procedures: Audit
Turkmenistan: Audit
East Timor: Follow-up Audit
Zambia: Audit and Program Evaluation
Botswana: Program Evaluation
Counterpart: Best Practices Study
Georgia: Best Practices Study
Honduras: Best Practices Study
Malawi: Best Practices Study
Mauritania: Best Practices Study
Niger: Best Practices Study
Panama: Best Practices Study
Paraguay: Best Practices Study
Philippines: Best Practices Study
Ukraine: Best Practices Study

TABLE 2**REPORTS ISSUED WITH COSTS QUESTIONED
OR FUNDS PUT TO BETTER USE**

	VALUE	NOTE
Audit of Peace Corps/Dominican Republic	\$ 5,300.00	1
Audit of Peace Corps/Turkmenistan	\$152,486.00	2
Audit of Peace Corps/Zambia	\$109,017.48	3
Management Alert Report/Mozambique	\$138,000.00	4
Audit of Peace Corps/Micronesia	\$ 11,617.55	5
Audit of Peace Corps/Benin	\$ 62,442.00	6
Audit of Travel Policies and Procedures	\$ 27,695.90	7
Total of Reports Issued with Costs Questioned or Funds Put to Better Use	\$506,558.93	

Note:

1. Discontinued use of appropriated funds for unallowed expenditures. Costs incurred for not selling disposable items.
2. Uncollected host country contributions. Offsetting of VAT rebate in operating plan.
3. Inappropriate use of PEPFAR monies and other funds. Unallowable expenditures charged to appropriated use.
4. Unallowable use of PEPFAR funds.
5. Imprest fund losses, duplicate payments made, uncollected bill of collection, and recovered imprest fund shortages.
6. Losses to the imprest fund of \$12,600. Uncollected host country contributions of \$44,000. Discontinued use of appropriated funds for unallowable expenditures. Uncollected travel advances.
7. Unused tickets not submitted to SatoTravel for reimbursement. Offset of business class vs. coach airline transportation.

TABLE 3**STATUS OF REPORTS ISSUED BY OIG WITH QUESTIONED COSTS**

		NUMBER OF REPORTS	VALUE
A.	Reports issued prior to this period	1	\$138,000.00
	For which no management decision had been made on any issue	0	
	For which some decisions had been made on some issues	0	
B.	Reports issued during the period	3	\$96,433.38
TOTAL OF CATEGORIES A AND B		4	\$234,433.38
C.	For which final management decisions were made during this period		
	(i) Costs allowed	4	\$144,796.94
	(ii) Costs disallowed	3	\$89,636.44
D.	For which no management decisions were made during the period	0	
E.	For which management decisions were made on some issues during the period	0	
TOTAL OF CATEGORIES C, D, AND E		4	\$234,433.38

TABLE 4**STATUS OF REPORTS ISSUED BY OIG WITH FUNDS PUT TO BETTER USE**

		NUMBER OF REPORTS	VALUE
A.	Reports issued prior to this period	0	0
	For which no management decision had been made on any issue	0	0
	For which some decisions had been made on some issues	0	0
B.	Reports issued during the period	6	\$272,125.55
TOTAL OF CATEGORIES A AND B		6	\$272,125.55
C.	For which final management decisions were made during the period	6	\$272,125.55
D.	For which no management decisions were made during the period	0	0
E.	For which management decisions were made on some issues during the period	0	0
TOTAL OF CATEGORIES C, D, AND E		6	\$272,125.55

TABLE 5**REPORTS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ON WHICH
CORRECTIVE ACTION HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETED**

RECOMMENDATIONS OPEN 60 DAYS OR MORE		
REPORT	DATE ISSUED	NUMBER OF OPEN RECOMMENDATIONS
Zambia: Audit	6/5/06	4
Travel Policies and Procedures: Audit	6/27/06	12
Romania: Audit	7/17/06	5
East Timor: Follow-up Audit	7/17/06	2
RECOMMENDATIONS OPEN 120 DAYS OR MORE		
REPORT	DATE ISSUED	NUMBER OF OPEN RECOMMENDATIONS
Benin: Audit	5/18/06	5
FISMA	5/22/06	8
RECOMMENDATIONS OPEN 180 DAYS OR MORE *		
REPORT	DATE ISSUED	NUMBER OF OPEN RECOMMENDATIONS
Gap Analysis	10/15/2004	9
FY 04 Agency Financial Statements: Audit	11/15/2004	50
Samoa: Follow-up Audit	12/9/2004	4
Armenia: Audit and Program Evaluation	2/1/2005	1
Audit of the Safeguarding of Social Security Numbers	3/4/2005	3
Dominican Republic: Evaluation	4/15/2005	1
Kiribati: Audit and Program Evaluation	7/1/2005	2
Kenya: Follow-up Evaluation	8/30/2005	5
Jamaica: Audit	9/20/2005	1
Uganda: Audit	9/21/2005	3
FY 05 Agency Financial Statements: Audit	11/15/2005	37
Namibia: Audit	12/9/2005	8

* WE HAVE ENTERED RECOMMENDATIONS INTO OUR NEW SYSTEM ONLY SINCE OCTOBER 1, 2004.

TABLE 6**SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITY**

CASES	NUMBER	VALUE
Cases Opened as of 4/1/06	80	
Cases Opened during 4/1/05 – 9/30/06	27	
Cases Closed that were previously Opened	53	
Cases Open and Closed during 4/1/06 – 9/30/06	10	
Total Open Cases as of 9/30/06	54	
Referrals for Prosecution	3	
Referrals for Agency Administration Action	3	
Referrals to Other Agency	1	
COURT ACTIONS*		
Prosecutions	0	
Convictions	0	
Suits	0	
Judgments	0	
Fines/Restitution	0	
MONETARY RESULTS		
Savings	0	
Recoveries/Restitution	3	\$7,426
Cost Avoidance	1	\$574,104
ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS		
Employees	2	
Other Persons/Businesses	0	

* Court actions reflect violations of U.S. law prosecuted in U.S. Courts.

TABLE 7

SUMMARY OF HOTLINE AND OTHER COMPLAINTS

Complaints Received	38
Complaints Closed	8
Awaiting OIG Action	0
Resulted in Investigations	5
Resulted in Audits	0
Resulted in Evaluations	0
Referred to Agency Management	23*
Referred to Other Agency	0
No Action Needed	2

** Sixteen of these complaints were regarding one issue.*

TABLE 8**REFERENCES TO REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF
THE INSPECTOR GENERAL ACT**

The Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, specifies reporting requirements for semiannual reports to Congress. The requirements are listed below and indexed to the applicable page.

ACT REFERENCE	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	PAGE
Section 4(a)(2)	Review of legislation and regulations	None
Section 5(a)(1)	Significant problems, abuses, and deficiencies	4-23
Section 5(a)(2)	Significant recommendations for corrective actions	4-23
Section 5(a)(3)	Prior significant recommendations on which corrective action has not been completed	36
Section 5(a)(4)	Matters referred to prosecuting authorities	29-31
Section 5(a)(5)	Summary of instances where information was refused	None
Section 5(a)(6)	List of audit reports, including evaluations, inspections, and reviews	32
Section 5(a)(7)	Summary of significant reports	7-23
Section 5(a)(8)	Statistical table – questioned costs	34
Section 5(a)(9)	Statistical table – funds to be put to better use	35
Section 5(a)(10)	Summary of previous audit reports without management decisions	None
Section 5(a)(11)	Significant revised management decisions	None
Section 5(a)(12)	Significant management decisions with which the Inspector General disagrees	None
Section 5(a)(13)	Information under Federal Financial Management Improvement Act of 1996	None

Help promote the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Peace Corps. Anyone knowing of wasteful practices, abuse, mismanagement, fraud, or unlawful activity involving Peace Corps program or personnel should call or write the Office of Inspector General.

Call

202-692-2900 or 800-233-5874 (toll free)

For violent crime notifications – 202-692-2911

Write

Peace Corps
Attn: Inspector General
1111 20th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20526

or

Peace Corps
Attn: Inspector General
P.O. Box 57129
Washington, DC 20036-9998

Email

oig@peacecorps.gov

For violent crime notifications:

violentcrimehotline@peacecorps.gov

Information received is held in confidence to the maximum feasible extent.