



**Peace
Corps**
GUYANA



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

From the Country Director

Greetings!

Whew! What an amazing, challenging, insightful, unexpected, collaborative, exhausting, introspective, worth every minute of it year. So much of this year centered on and responded to our decision to return to receiving only one intake of volunteers per year. We needed to achieve the following:

- postpone a scheduled intake of Environment Trainees (sad, but necessary) and reschedule it into one large intake with Health and Education;
- review our past to know where we wanted our future to go - a huge endeavor conducted internally;
- embark on a complete rework of our Health and Education project frameworks as well as recalibrate our Environment framework, supported by a series of facilitated workshops with our national, regional and local partners; and
- put it all into practice — preparing trainees for arrival, designing a Creolese language program, creating a 2-week model school program, and developing regional host family orientations — all to be ready by June and all the 1st of its kind for PC Guyana. Again, whew!

What I greatly appreciate about all of this was that efforts were conceived, developed and implemented with the entire Peace Corps Guyana community in mind (Volunteers, staff, national, regional and local stakeholders, counterparts and host families). Every initiative was a testament to collaboration, partnership and ownership of a US Peace Corps program that responds to the developmental goals and objectives of the government of Guyana.

It was a long, packed year and based on the preliminary and almost immediate outputs we are already witnessing, I wouldn't hesitate to go through it all over again.

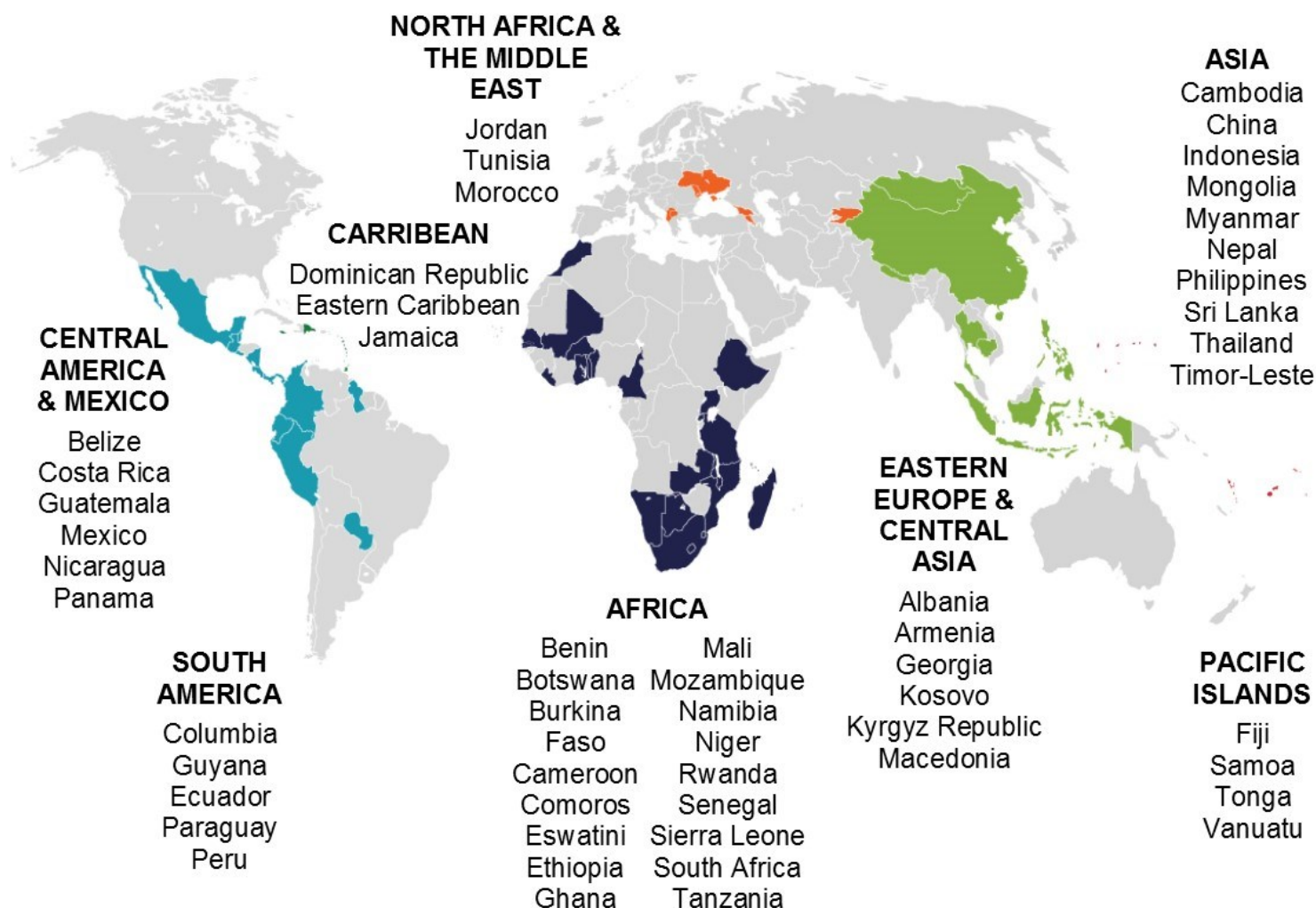
Tremendous thanks go out to everyone in the Peace Corps community who stayed committed to this process even when their days never got any shorter; to those who showed up well before and after hours and on weekends; to those who put their ideas out there even if they weren't the most popular; and to those who fought to ensure inclusivity and sustainability throughout the process. It is due to this passion and commitment that I get up every day and do it all again. I am blessed and honored to serve as the United States Peace Corps Country Director in the Republic of Guyana.



Kury Cobham
Country Director, Peace Corps Guyana



Peace Corps Around the World

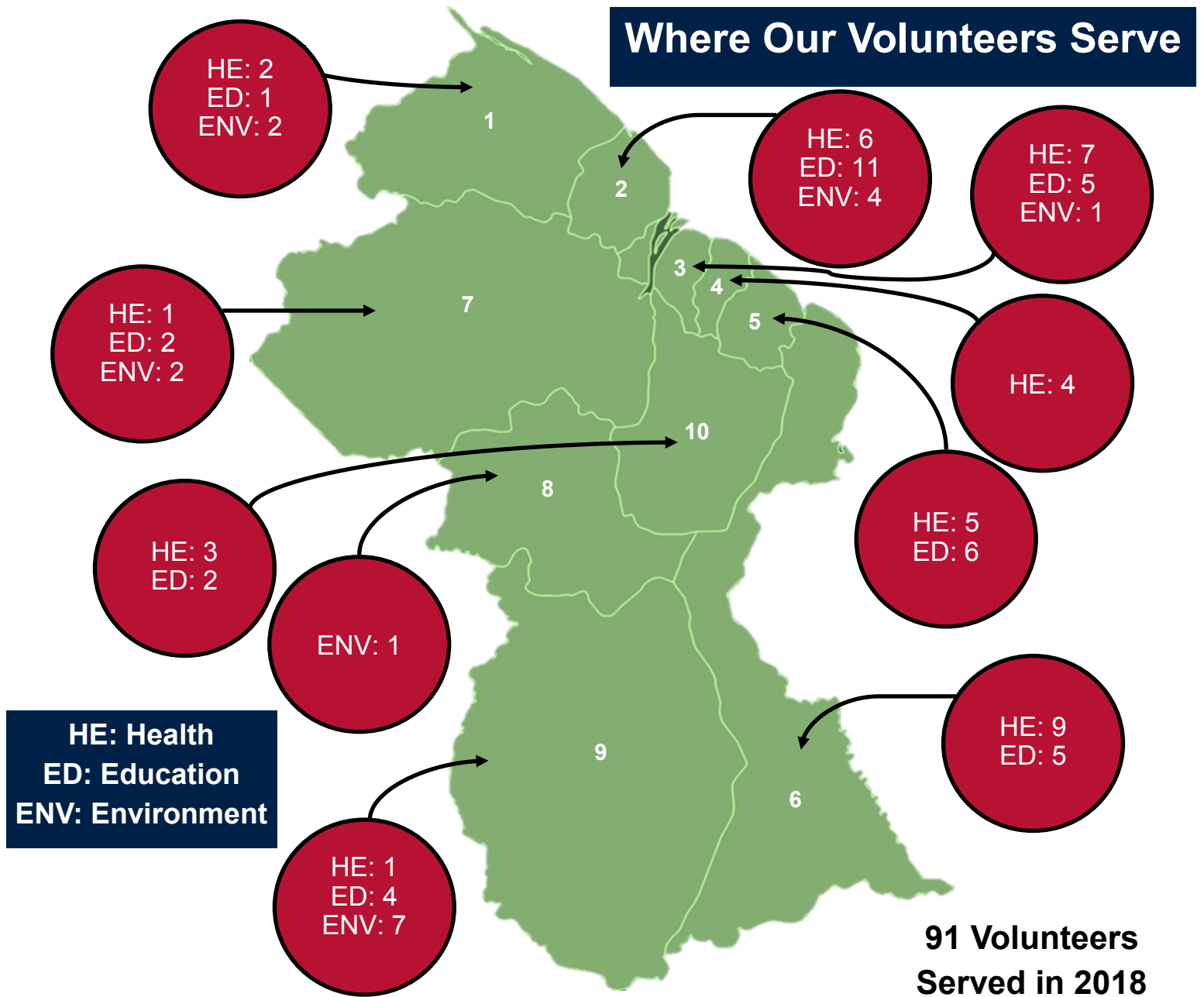


57 years of promoting peace and friendship

Since its establishment in 1961, Peace Corps has pursued a vision of world peace and friendship through the volunteer service of Americans living and working around the globe, promoting community-based development and forging intercultural understanding. Over the past 57 years, more than 230,000 volunteers have served in 141 countries.

At the invitation of host countries, Volunteers work on global priorities in six sectors: health, education, environment, agriculture, youth, and community economic development. In a world becoming more interdependent each day, the Peace Corps helps face challenges that go beyond borders — environmental shocks and stressors, youth development, food security and gender equality and empowerment.

Where Our Volunteers Serve



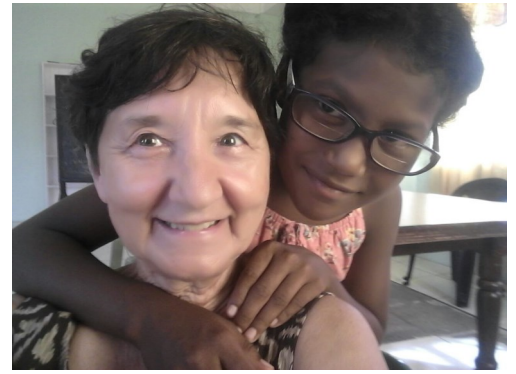
Peace Corps in Guyana

Peace Corps has worked in Guyana for nearly 30 years. Volunteers are currently assisting the Ministries of Education, Public Health and the Presidency with projects in early childhood literacy, adolescent health and well-being, and environmental education.

Volunteers live and work in villages and towns from Aishalton to Mabaruma. They respond to the challenges of the changing times with creativity, determination, and compassion. In age, experience and perspective, they represent the diversity of America so we can share our greatest resource — our people — with the communities we serve.



About our Volunteers



All are
US citizens



Average age
26



68% female
32% male



University
graduates



26%
minorities



Serve 2 years
following 3
months of
training



The Year in Review

New Project Frameworks and MOUs Carry Program Forward until 2023

In 2018, in collaboration with our Guyanese Ministry partners, we adopted new project frameworks for Health and Education, updated our Environment project, and signed new Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to carry the Peace Corps Guyana program forward through 2023.

The new Education framework, Read to Achieve, reaffirms our commitment to early grade reading. In cooperation with the National Centre for Education Resource Development (NCERD), we have placed Volunteers in 11 primary schools to support the Ministry's pilot Literacy Project in Regions 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9. Volunteers teach children in grades 1-4 to read, build teacher capacity, enhance the learning environment and support parents and caregivers.

The Health framework, Youth Health and Well-being, was developed with the MOE and MoPH, and engages Volunteers in supporting the development of youth ages 10-14 by co-facilitating the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum in secondary schools, helping parents support adolescents, working with youth in camps and clubs, and linking adolescents to youth-friendly health services. Health Volunteers currently serve in Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 & 10.

Under the Environment project framework, Community-based Environmental Education and Natural Resource Management, adopted in 2016, Volunteers are placed in remote hinterland communities where they support the teaching of science, organize wildlife clubs for youth, and help communities identify and address local environmental issues. The project is governed under the new MOU with the MOE, as well as previous agreements with the Ministry of the Presidency, Department of Environment, and the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs.



"Without a doubt, this MOU will serve to strengthen the capacity and capability of our school system ... When we come together and we forge strong partnerships and collaboration, only good things can happen. And in this instance, our common goals and objectives are clearly mapped out in this document."

- Honorable Nicolette Henry, Minister of Education

The Year in Review

Regional Host Family Orientations Help Build the Home Stay Program at Site

Each year, dozens of families throughout Guyana open their homes to host Peace Corps Volunteers during their first five months at site. This year, Peace Corps Guyana designed and offered intensive Host Family Orientation events which were attended by 74 people in Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10.

The day-long workshops brought Guyanese host families together to learn about the goals of the homestay program and their role as a key partner in the Volunteers' service. Topics included intercultural communication, diversity and inclusion, and Peace Corps Guyana's projects, policies and procedures.



Regional Town Halls Introduce Peace Corps to the Larger Community

Peace Corps Country Director, Kury Cobham, and staff traveled widely this year holding community Town Halls in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5/6 and 9. Volunteers invited community leaders, host family members, fellow teachers, counterparts, supervisors and other stakeholders to attend.

The events provided an opportunity for community members to learn about the mission and work of Peace Corps in Guyana, meet our staff, and hear stories from the field directly from the Volunteers themselves.



PC Guyana Receives Global Award for Excellence

Each year, Peace Corps Headquarters, based in Washington, D.C. recognizes a few posts around the world for "sustained superior performance that has furthered the cause of world peace and friendship by making a positive impact on Volunteer support and/or post operations." In recognition of Peace Corps Guyana's extraordinary efforts, our post received the Director's Distinguished Service Award - Exemplary Post Group Award for 2018.

The Year in Review

Welcoming Our 31st Group of Peace Corps Volunteers (GUY 31)

In early June, 38 Peace Corps trainees arrived in Guyana to begin pre-service training. For the first time, Health, Education and Environment Volunteers all arrived in a single cohort. Over the course of 10 weeks, they lived with host families in Region 2 villages from Pomona to Charity, and developed the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to succeed during their two-year service. Training topics included, but were not limited to, participatory approaches to community development; Creolese language and Guyanese culture; staying healthy and safe in a new environment, and intensive technical training in their project sector.

In collaboration with Ms. Nichola Matthews, Regional Education Officer, Region 2, staff also designed and implemented an intensive, two-week model school at three sites where trainees prepared and taught daily lessons in literacy, primary science and HFLE under the watchful eye of Region 2 sector specialists. Nearly 90 students attended each of the model schools. Volunteers and teachers alike appreciated the opportunity to practice teaching together with students in a realistic school setting. Training wrapped up with a two-day Supervisors Conference for Head Teachers, focusing on the partnership between Peace Corps and Ministries, intercultural behaviors and values and Peace Corps policies and procedures.



GUY 31 Swearing-in Ceremony

On August 15, Peace Corps Guyana swore in 33 new Volunteers to begin their 2-year assignments in communities all over Guyana. The event, hosted by U.S. Ambassador Perry L. Holloway, was attended by First Lady Sandra Granger; Honorable Volda Lawrence, Minister of Public Health; Honorable Dawn Hastings-Williams, Minister of Public Affairs; Ambassador Ivan Evelyn, Chief Protocol Officer, Ministry of the Presidency and Mr. Marcel Hutson, Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education as well as many other Peace Corps national, regional and local partners.

In her remarks, Minister Lawrence said, "... I am convinced that over an extended period of time, your intervention with the schools, coupled with your interactions with parents and the health care workers will certainly impact significantly and influence positively the choices our youths make." Minister Hastings-Williams called the Volunteers "shining examples for our nation and especially our youth."



2018 IN NUMBERS

- **234** youth educated on harmful effects of alcohol and other substances
- **154** youth can identify 2 or more health risks associated with over consumption of alcohol or substances
- **553** youth trained in sexual and reproductive health
- **383** youth can identify two behaviors to prevent unwanted pregnancy

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Project Profile: Health

Empowering boys and girls 10-14 to adopt life skills for healthy behavior (38 Volunteers)

In cooperation with the Ministries of Education and Public Health, Peace Corps works with secondary schools, youth-friendly health facilities, parents and communities to help raise a new generation of youth with a healthy outlook on the future.

Key Activities

- **Building Teachers' Capacity to Deliver HFLE**
Teachers and Volunteers co-facilitate HFLE curriculum and explore ways to teach life skills more effectively.
- **Supporting Youth in Clubs and Camps**
Volunteers and community counterparts co-facilitate informal opportunities for youth to build knowledge and practice life skills; they also link them to youth-friendly health services.
- **Supporting Delivery of Youth-friendly Services**
With the Ministry of Public Health, Volunteers co-facilitate workshops, and provide informal support to help healthcare workers develop non-clinical skills.
- **Helping Parents and Caregivers Support Adolescents**
Working with Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and community groups, Volunteers co-facilitate discussions and learning to share information about adolescent health and allow adults to practice skill building.

"Partnering with Peace Corps Guyana has been beneficial to the improvement of the delivery of the Health and Family Life Education curriculum. The Ministry of Education recently signed an MOU that sees Peace Corps Volunteers, often with backgrounds in Public Health and Social Work, supporting HFLE teachers in secondary schools. The health project also aims to provide linkages to resources that our young people need."

- Colleen King-Cameron, HFLE Coordinator



Project Profile: Education

Working with students, teachers and parents to improve primary literacy (36 Volunteers)

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education's National Centre for Educational Resource Development (NCERD), Peace Corps works with select primary schools across Guyana.

2018 IN NUMBERS

- **416** students demonstrated improvement in basic reading skills
- **319** students demonstrated increased reading outside of class instruction material
- **304** teachers improved use of literacy instruction techniques
- **112** teachers increased use of student-centered teaching techniques
- **976** students gained access to more reading materials or electronic resources through a new/expanded library or computer center

Key Activities

- **Teaching Children to Read**
One-on-one, in small group pull-outs, and in the classroom Volunteers teach alphabet knowledge, phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics and comprehension to children in grades 1-4.
- **Building Teacher Capacity**
Teachers and Volunteers work together, forming communities of practice and exploring ways to teach more effectively - from student-centered learning techniques to improved classroom management.
- **Enhancing the Learning Environment**
Teachers and Volunteers co-develop learning materials and resources, including classroom libraries, to support literacy.
- **Supporting Parents and Caregivers**
Working with PTAs and parent groups, Volunteers help adults learn how to help their children learn.

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"As Regional Education Officer, I have found that partnering with Peace Corps Guyana is tremendously beneficial to the improvement of education in Region 2. I have observed Peace Corps Volunteers' interaction with our primary and secondary school students. They engage the students in learning through fun and skillful activities, and also bring a number of new ideas and methodologies to increase learning."

- Nichola Matthews, Regional Education Officer (REDO), Region 2



Project Profile: Environment

Helping youth develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be good environmental stewards (17 Volunteers)

2018 IN NUMBERS

- **120** youth increased knowledge of biodiversity
- **152** youth exhibited increased appreciation of biodiversity
- **37** youth identified two or more leadership behaviors
- **6** teachers prepared lesson plans that include environmental concepts and issues

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In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, and the Ministry of the Presidency, Department of Environment, Peace Corps works with teachers, students, and community members to teach science more effectively, stimulate a love of nature, and empower youth to be environmental leaders.

Key Activities

- **Supporting the Teaching of Science**
Volunteers and primary school teachers team up to develop new materials and deliver dynamic lessons in and out of the classroom.
- **Growing Youth Environmental Leadership**
Community members and Volunteers co-facilitate afterschool and weekend wildlife club activities for boys and girls, encouraging exploration of nature, supporting cultural traditions and offering opportunities for youth to grow as leaders.
- **Working with Youth and Adults to Address Local Environmental Issues**
Volunteers collaborate with their host community to build awareness of local environmental issues and take action to address them.

"Peace Corps Environment Volunteers and their Guyanese Counterparts are promoting inquiry-based science education and environmental clubs in primary schools in indigenous communities across Guyana. This initiative aligns with Guyana's development goals of advancing efforts towards a green economy, seeking to improve critical thinking, developing youth leaders, and encouraging positive behavior change towards the effective management of the environment and utilization of Guyana's natural resources."

- Petal Jetoo, National Science Coordinator, NCERD

Bridging Cultures

The home stay experience is an integral part of the Peace Corps Guyana program and helps achieve Peace Corps' goal of intercultural exchange. To assist with effective community integration, each Volunteer lives with a welcoming family for the first five months at site. The family helps prepare the Volunteer to serve safely, happily and productively in their community by supporting their understanding of cultural norms, introducing them to fellow community members and teaching them about day to day life. Families and Volunteers share chores, family events, and holidays and gain insight into one another's culture. Many develop friendships that last a lifetime.



"My host mom is not just an awesome host mom but has also become my best friend at site. Any concerns I may have had before moving in have completely disappeared, and any initial issues that came up as I settled in were quickly handled. They have really accepted me as part of the family and this house has come to feel like a home away from home."

- PCV Rachel A.



"I learnt from my Volunteer that time is important. Must always have value for time as you would want them to value your time. Americans are known for being on time to events and meetings. I now have a new appreciation for being on time."

- Ms. Semple, Host Mom



"My host families continue to be the closest friends - essentially family - that I have in Guyana. I had an expectation of what Guyana was going to be like, and the reality was so different, and they helped me adjust, adapt and be comfortable in any setting."

- PCV Taylor L.



"A true and greater integration, the volunteers bring warmth and are always refreshing. I feel honored to be a Host."

- Mr. Layne, Host Dad

Small Project Assistance from USAID

Since 2014, Peace Corps Guyana has partnered with USAID under the Small Project Assistance (SPA) program to build the capacity of host country individuals, organizations and communities to meet their own development needs and priorities.

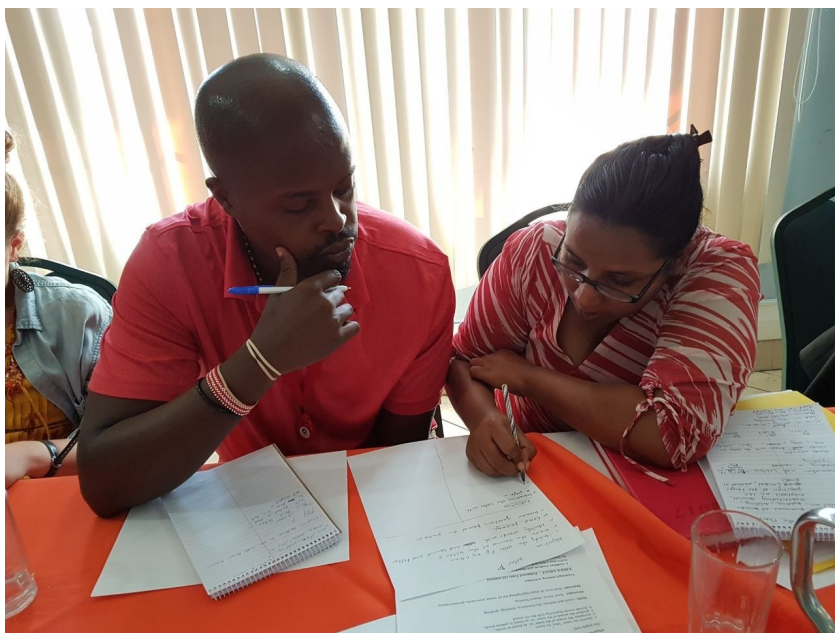
The SPA program provides resources to Peace Corps in the program areas of Basic Education and Workforce Development.

We have used these funds to provide important technical trainings to Volunteers and their community counterparts and to provide grants to Volunteers and communities to implement projects that will result in capacity building.

In 2018, SPA funds supported three Volunteer and community-led grants, totaling nearly \$8,000 USD in support, with communities contributing 47% of the total project costs. Two of these projects are profiled in the Success Stories on the following pages; the third is still in progress.

In addition, \$32,500 USD in SPA funds were used to conduct two technical training workshops, one on the delivery of the HFLE curriculum and developing youth through clubs and another on how to deliver interactive literacy lessons in student-centered ways and apply effective classroom management techniques.

In all, these workshops trained 50 Volunteers and 32 Guyanese counterparts, representing 30 different communities across 8 regions, to increase their ability to work with students and youth.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GUYANA

SUCCESS STORY

Positive Futures for Youth

A SPA grant helps build leadership in an indigenous community.



PCV Thomas S. and some of the members of the Kanukruta Youth Conservation Club.

Nappi is an indigenous Macushi village of nearly 700 located in the Rupununi savannah of Guyana against the backdrop of the forested Kanuku Mountains. Dwight (age 10), his sister Aneira (12), their parents and six siblings are my closest neighbors. Since we revived the Kanukuruta Youth Conservation Club, they have done their best to attend every after school session, hike or birding walk. They, like many of the club members, have gained an impressive knowledge and genuine appreciation of their environment through participation in the wildlife club.

Through a SPA grant, totaling nearly \$2,600 USD, Egbert (36), Sylvester (40) and I worked with the Nappi tourism committee to plan and execute an overnight trip to Surama and Iwokrama to meet the villages' wildlife clubs. We were given tours of the villages and nature trails and went on a birdwatching trip. For months afterward, the 24 children and 9 chaperones repeatedly reminded me how much they'd learned. As Agatha (22) pointed out "Many of these children have never traveled so far. [...] They will remember that trip for the rest of their lives."

Also, we used grant funds to organize a workshop for teens from Nappi and its neighboring communities. Seven facilitators delivered a full day of leadership and capacity-building sessions covering goal setting, assertive communication, sexual assault, gender equity, mental health, employment, and indigenous culture. Said Triton (23), "I think each of us has taken something important from today. [...] I hope more days like this will be organized in the future." That's exactly what Sylvester (who is also an elected community leader) fully intends to carry out.

- PCV Thomas S.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GUYANA

SUCCESS STORY

Building Community Environmental Knowledge

Thanks to a SPA grant, a village wildlife club is the beginning of a whole new relationship with the natural world.



Children in Shea Village watching birds in the Rupununi Savannah.

Shea Village is a small Amerindian community of about 440 villagers in Region 9. It lies right on the edge of the savannah and the rainforest, making it a wildlife sanctuary and a land abundant in resources. Unfortunately, there are threats from environmental degradation including mining, deforestation, over-fishing, and habitat loss.

With nearly \$2,600 USD in funding from SPA, we designed a two-part project to 1) train teachers to effectively teach about environmental issues; and 2) run an after-school wildlife club to give youth an experiential relationship with their environment to build appreciation of biodiversity. Project funds supported binoculars, compasses, hand lenses, camping gear, and school materials. Youth are already showing improvement and excitement about learning about the natural world around them. One senior teacher says, “The children are excited to come to club and learn new things.”

Passing scores by students improved from 58% to 88%. There were 70 youth, ages 6-18 years that attended wildlife club at least once, including 22 regular members. Thirteen parents also attended one or more club activities. This project has been the beginning of creating environmental stewards and leaders of change for the future of the community.

- PCV Jon W.

Peace Corps Guyana Staff



Front row from left:

Amber Enyart, Peace Corps Volunteer Leader
Millicent Benjamin, Medical Officer
Jennel Gray, Medical Secretary
Fiona Persaud, Program Manager - Education
Kellon Gibbons, Cashier
Merica George,
Program & Training Specialist - Health
Alesha Berkley, Administrative Assistant
Jean Vyfhuis, Medical Officer
Chandra Dautram, Janitress
Michelle Henry, Financial Specialist
Wendy Hershberger,
Director of Management & Operations
Roger Wilson,
Program & Training Specialist - Environment
Flavio Rose, Safety and Security Manager
Brian Thorington,
General Services Assistant - Vehicles

Back row from left:

Jamal Goodluck,
Program and Training Specialist, Education
Cedric Sills,
General Services Assistant - Property
Patrick Hawker, Janitor
Kury Cobham, Country Director
Harry Persaud, Safety & Security Assistant
Andrew Duesbury, Driver
Stephanie Williams, Training Manager
Melanie Ingalls,
Director of Programming & Training
Sasha Lindo, Admin & Comms Specialist
Lucy Anderson, Program Manager - Health
Fahzeela Mohamed,
Housing & Small Grants Coordinator
Carey Bhojedat,
Program Manager - Environment
Rebecca Tatarsky, Peace Corps Volunteer Leader
**Not Pictured - Frederick Adrian*, IT Specialist