



Peace
Corps
NAMIBIA



Community Progress Report

2021-2023



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On behalf of Peace Corps/Namibia (PC/Namibia), it is my pleasure to share updates and achievements for 2021-2023 as well as plans for the next year. This community report conveys our commitment to quality performance management, demonstrates accountability and operational effectiveness of the agency, and shows the progress we have made in achieving our goals.

Since the establishment of Peace Corps in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, more than 240,000 Americans have served in 139 countries around the world promoting a mission of world peace and friendship by fulfilling three goals. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women, to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, and to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Peace Corps is known for its commitment to service, skills transfer, cultural exchange, and friendship building in over 60 countries around the world. In Namibia, Peace Corps has been active for 34 years, and more than 1,800 Volunteers have dedicated themselves to fostering connections with communities and leaving a lasting impact today and for generations.

We currently have 32 traditional Volunteers and three Response Volunteers serving in eight regions of Namibia. Next year, we hope to increase this to 93 Volunteers and eight Response in ten regions. Our traditional Volunteers commit to a three-month training and two-year assignment while Response Volunteers who come with more experience and specialized skills stay for one year. These Volunteers



work closely with Counterparts and Supervisors in schools or organizations to contribute to knowledge transfer, cultural exchange, and friendship building within Namibian communities. The deep bonds of connection formed during these assignments often endure even decades after the Volunteers have completed their service.

We currently do not have any Virtual Service Participants who provide part-time support remotely for three to six months, but over the past two years, we have had nine virtual participants who have contributed to organizations in the areas of capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, database creation and business planning.

The global COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on programs worldwide and Peace Corps was not exempted. The pandemic resulted in the evacuation of all Peace Corps Volunteers worldwide including Namibia to prioritize the health and safety of Volunteers and communities during such a challenging time. Despite the interruptions caused by the pandemic, Peace Corps has been able to make significant strides, a result of the resilience

and dedication of staff and Volunteers who have been actively supporting diverse projects in Namibia.

Partnerships and collaboration are crucial for addressing complex challenges, and Peace Corps has played a role in fostering such relationships to achieve positive outcomes in host communities.

Since Peace Corps was founded, its objectives have remained steadfast. Through the sharing of talents and the development of mutual understanding between Volunteers and the people they live with, work with, and eat meals with throughout a transformative two-year journey of love and service, these goals seek to promote world peace and friendship. Furthermore, underlying the development achievements, genuine, meaningful, and uplifting human connections are forged throughout the Volunteer's service which will help transform lives for generations.

Monitoring and evaluation efforts remain critical elements of Peace Corps' strategy to continue to achieve high quality results. We are well on our way to optimizing our global impact to meet today's development challenges while continuing our tradition of service.

Peace Corps has an important partnership with the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the largest commitment by any nation to address a single disease in history. In Namibia, PEPFAR has played a crucial role in supporting efforts to prevent the spread of HIV, provide treatment and care for those affected, and strengthen healthcare systems. Namibia has a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and PEPFAR has provided

funding and technical assistance to support the country's efforts to combat the epidemic and save lives.

I am inspired and humbled by the dedication of Peace Corps Volunteers, staff, and community organizations as we partner for a better Namibia. Lastly, we extend our deepest condolences to the family and people of Namibia and all those mourning the loss of the late President, His Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob. "The People's President" was known for his wisdom, diplomacy, and unwavering commitment to the well-being of Namibians.

"Peace requires the simple but powerful recognition that what we have in common as human beings is more important and crucial than what divides us."

— Sargent Shriver
Founding Director of the Peace Corps
1961-1966

It is such a privilege to serve in the "Land of the Brave."

Sincerely,



Elizabeth C. Anderson
Country Director
Peace Corps/Namibia



SPOTLIGHT ON HOST PARTNER CHAMPION NAEMI SHOOPALA

*Director of Primary Health Care Services
Acting Director of Directorate of Special Programmes
Ministry of Health and Social Services*



While serving as a nurse in the Primary Health Care Unit supporting HIV counselling at Okahao District Hospital in 2001, Ms. Naemi Shoopala met two young Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), Jessica Samuels and Saara “Nelago” Branch. They would come and share reports of children missing school due to caring for sick parents. Through interactions with them, together with community volunteers, they decided to establish a support group for people infected and affected by HIV, known as “Tukwathelathaneni” meaning “Let us help each other”. However, there were no Antiretrovirals (ARVs) to treat HIV, so she frequently travelled back home to Oshakati, where she pooled funds with Jessica and Saara to buy Vitamin C and Vitamin B12 supplements in bulk and distribute to members of the support group to boost their immune system. Today, these individuals stand strong and live productive lives because of this support.

In 2002, the PCVs arranged for Naemi to attend a Peace Corps-led training on Project Design and Management. This training proved instrumental in equipping Naemi with essential skills for designing and managing grant-funded projects. Her proficiency in this area is evident in her current role as a director in the Ministry of Health and Social Services, where she oversees grant-funded projects valued at millions of US dollars from the U.S.

Government and various other donors. Furthermore, the experiences and skills gained through collaboration with Peace Corps have facilitated Naemi’s seamless engagement with international organizations and individuals from diverse cultures. Notably, her association with Peace Corps Volunteers and cultural exchange developed her interest, exposed her to study abroad and played a pivotal role in her successful admission to the Fulbright scholarship program, the Humphrey Fellowship. During her Humphrey Fellowship, Naemi followed the HIV Prevention and Policy track, at Emory University. In her current capacity, Naemi collaborates closely with PEPFAR Inter-Agency partners and has played a key role in Namibia’s tremendous progress in reducing the HIV incidence.

She expresses admiration for how Peace Corps Volunteers effortlessly assimilate into the communities they serve, becoming deeply acquainted with the local cultures and norms. Her advice to PCVs is to “*know your community, know their needs, respond to their needs and everything else will follow.*”



As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Peace Corps evacuated Volunteers worldwide. In the absence of Volunteers, Peace Corps staff supported activities in several ways. Through funding from the U.S. President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Peace Corps staff supported Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) by strengthening host organizations to refer, link, follow up and raise awareness of available health services. Peace Corps staff rolled out interventions to prevent HIV and sexual violence among over 3,000 individuals during the period under review.

Since 2020, the Community Health, HIV/AIDS Program (CHHAP) has done well to continue HIV/AIDS work during COVID-19. One activity was the staff-led "Making a Difference (MAD) Campaign". Peace Corps staff trained 80 people from ten organizations in program implementation, monitoring and evaluation and financial accountability.

In its quest to reach young people with HIV/AIDS prevention interventions, Peace Corps saw the opportunity to identify volunteers from local youth organizations as well as youth officers from the Ministry of Youth, Sports and National Service and trained them in the Grassroot Soccer (GRS) curriculum. Grassroot Soccer is an adolescent health program that leverages the power of soccer to equip young people with life-saving information, services, and mentorship they need to live healthier lives. Once trained, coaches implement GRS at their respective organizations. Since 2020, PC/Namibia has hosted five GRS workshops and certified 134 staff and local partners from all 14 regions.



In 2021, Peace Corps staff, the Ministry of Education and partners determined a strong need to reprint the National My Future My Choice (MFMC) curriculum for life skills teachers. Peace Corps printed 1,800 manuals to fill this gap and handed over 1,600 manuals to the Ministry of Education to aid their life skills teachers in their classrooms. The remaining 200 manuals were reserved for Peace Corps Volunteers.

The Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) produces comics, posters and brochures that translate legal matters on different issues that impact children, youth and their families. These resources help organizations educate children and their families on legal matters around different topics such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), rape, child maintenance, support to Orphans and Vulnerable Children, seeking safety at safe homes, child rights, baby dumping and the Namibian constitution. In 2021, Peace Corps partnered with the LAC to reproduce between 3,000 to 5,000 copies of each topic. The aim was for Peace Corps

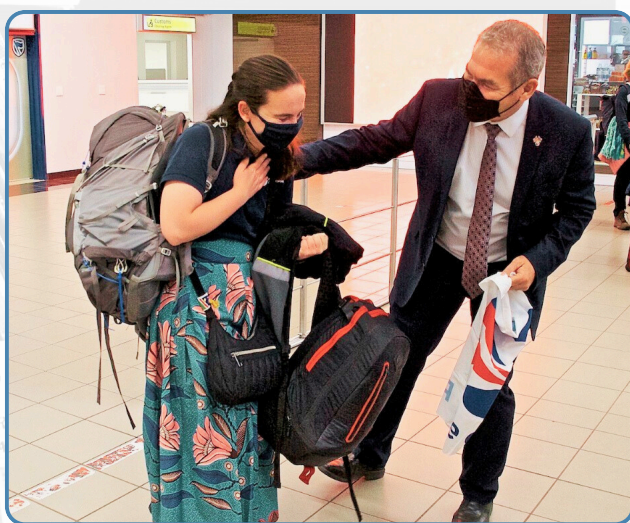
to supply and aid partners (as well as Volunteers upon their return) with these resources to use when conducting HIV/AIDS, life skills, and other social activities.





When the COVID-19 pandemic started, Peace Corps evacuated Volunteers worldwide, including **Crissy Hendrickson**, who had been an education Volunteer at Kaguni Central Combined School in northern Namibia. Sadly, Crissy was evacuated just as she started supporting the library, which at the time was used by only a few learners and teachers because it only had 360 books and lacked management and organization.

As Crissy waited for Peace Corps to resume Volunteer service, she would think back to the school where she worked and the library she had promised to help develop. Eventually, as time continued to pass, she held onto the idea of that library more strongly and it became central towards motivating her to return. She says: "When I finally made it back to Kaguni school after two years, so many emotions of gratitude, joy, and loss overwhelmed me. COVID had destroyed and changed so much, but the school library was still there waiting on me to help bring it to life."



First volunteer returns after the pandemic



A corner of the Kaguni school library



It took over two months of collaboration, hard work, and input from both teachers and students, but they finally relaunched the library in early September 2022. Crissy trained library prefects to organize and manage the library, as well as motivate other learners to use the library. In August 2022, less than 25 books were checked out but by the end of September that number had jumped to over 150 books.

After they restarted the library program when Crissy was reinstated, they went from having zero books checked out in some months to averaging 100 books in a week! During her time at the school, over 200 books were donated.

Crissy concluded: *"I can't describe how gratified and honored I was to see students literally lined up waiting their turn to get something to read. To me, this exemplified the spirit of the Peace Corps and is why I wanted so badly to come back."*



During Crissy's time at the school, over 200 books were donated to the library program.



First Ladies of Namibia and the United States Visit HISA and Peace Corps Volunteer

Hope Initiatives Southern Africa - Namibia (HISA) and Peace Corps had the honor in 2023 of hosting a visit by the First Lady of the United States of America, Dr. Jill Biden and the First Lady of the Republic of Namibia, Monica Geingos. They visited one of our long-standing partner organization, HISA, on the outskirts of Windhoek, in the Kilimanjaro informal settlement. Since 2019, Peace Corps Volunteers have supported HISA by supporting disadvantaged families to attain socio-economic autonomy. HISA supports women and children living in informal settlements, especially those significantly impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

During the visit, the two First Ladies met with Peace Corps Economic Empowerment Program (EEP) Volunteer, Chris Nottingham, and beneficiaries of the FXB village program.



FLOTUS VISIT 5

The program supports 100 vulnerable families through training and support to reach socio-economic autonomy over the course of three years through strengthening their economic capacities, ensuring food security, supporting child nutrition, improving access to medical care and prevention, improving living and hygiene conditions, and enhancing access to education.



During the visit, Dr. Biden and First Lady Monica Geingos, interacted with beneficiaries of the FXB village program, the DREAMS program (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe), and Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) programs, who shared their experiences with them and the powerful impact that these programs have made on their lives.



Peace Corps has several initiatives which the agency prioritizes to maximize quality and leverage the impact of Volunteer activities at a global level. These are activities or projects Volunteers implement outside of their primary assignments. Peace Corps initiatives in Namibia include HIV/AIDS supported by PEPFAR funding and Women Economic Empowerment through Digital Literacy (WEE-DL). In 2023, Peace Corps shared a forward leaning plan to promote environmental adaptation and resilience in partnership with, and at the invitation of 63 countries around the world.

6.1

THE U.S. PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF (PEPFAR) AMBASSADOR'S VISIT



Ambassador John Nkengasong, U.S. Government Global AIDS Coordinator, had the opportunity to observe a Grassroot Soccer (GRS) event that was implemented at Penduka Trust, Peace Corps Partner Organization. The Ambassador observed a session where 20 youth aged between 15-19 years learned how HIV attacks the immune system, as well as the role of HIV medication in treatment and prevention. GRS uses football (soccer) language, metaphors, and activities to promote key behaviors that prevent the spread of HIV, which includes unprotected sex, multiple sexual partners, and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). It also creates simple and

powerful connections using football as a hook to empower adolescents with healthy life skills.



PEPFAR Ambassador witnesses GRS event



6.2

WORLD AIDS DAY



Every year, Peace Corps/Namibia joins many others around the world to commemorate World AIDS Day (WAD). Peace Corps partners, Volunteers and staff follow the theme for the year and initiate different activities. These include WAD marches, candlelight vigil, youth discussions and sports activities.

In 2022, all Volunteers were involved in commemorating WAD in one way or another. Some joined organizations in implementing HIV activities that support the theme "equalize", while others designed artwork with messaging around HIV/AIDS. These were used as an education tool in their respective communities. In 2023, Peace Corps and Hope Initiatives Southern Africa (HISA) commemorated World AIDS Day at Groot Aub Combined School under the theme "Let Communities Lead". Various organizations also participated as "exhibitors" and shared information related to HIV/AIDS, Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC), Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) mitigation activities, and the impact of cervical cancer among people living with HIV/AIDS.

EQUALIZE





6.3

WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DIGITAL LITERACY (WEE-DL)



To compliment the efforts of the government of Namibia to build digital literacy skills among community members, Peace Corps/Namibia is implementing an initiative called Women Economic Empowerment through Digital Literacy (WEE-DL).

During **Phase One**, a team of Volunteers, local experts, and staff created a strategy to guide digital literacy skill building activities across three sectors: Education, Health, and Economic Empowerment. The targets are in-school youth, unemployed youth, and youth in vocational trainings, who have limited knowledge and access to technology and digital skills. Peace Corps is also targeting Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise (MSME) owners - particularly women, youth, and teachers with limited knowledge and understanding of information, communication and technology (ICT) as a tool for strengthening everyday classroom teaching practices.

Volunteers and Counterparts will focus on:

- Creating awareness about digital literacy and entrepreneurial behaviors for youth to increase HIV prevention knowledge.
- Facilitating digital literacy trainings for increased entrepreneurial potential, increased capacity to secure employment, and improved marketing and business operations.
- Facilitating formal and informal training sessions for teachers using information, communication and technology (ICT).
- Supporting the development, access, storage, sharing and use of digital materials to enhance teaching.

In **Phase Two**, a team of Volunteers, Namibian Counterparts, and Peace Corps staff members developed digital literacy resources that are tailored to the unique needs of the personas that Volunteers and Counterparts will be targeting with digital literacy skill building.

The **last Phase** was the training of Volunteers and Counterparts on the digital literacy resources.



7

PEACE CORPS NAMIBIA PROGRAMS



7.1

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM (EEP)

EEP Volunteers work closely with grassroots-level community members and several different partner organizations such as Town Councils, Municipalities, Hope Initiatives for Southern Africa (HISA), Community Skills Development Foundation (COSDEF) and Penduka Trust. Over the last year, EEP Volunteers in collaboration with stakeholders trained **269 aspiring or existing entrepreneurs in basic business skills** and **74 aspiring or existing small business owners were guided to apply basic business skills to their new or existing small businesses.**

In terms of capacity building for young people to secure jobs and support themselves, a total of **37 individuals were trained in digital literacy skills**, and **34 in personal money management skills.** Volunteers contributed in

a number of different ways ranging from leading trainings on computer skills to analyzing profits for an organization. Several Volunteers provided services to youth and community members by assisting them with their resumes, writing grants, and creating business plans.



Community and Volunteer Initiatives:

- Volunteer in Karibib supported the Town Council in coordinating an annual festival in Omaruru to create a platform for businesses and showcase their products and will support the next festival in Karibib in 2024.
- Volunteer in Swakopmund, supported COSDEF to set up an online shop to sell locally produced souvenirs.
- Volunteer in Windhoek, worked with HISA to roll out a series of workshops to support youth with increasing entrepreneurial skills for small businesses.
- Volunteer in Groot Aub helped community members with digital literacy skills - teaching community members how to develop websites and social media pages.
- Volunteer in Katutura collaborated with Penduka Trust to analyze profitability of various aspects of their non-profit which aims to provide women from marginalized communities to earn a sustainable income.
- Volunteer in Swakopmund supported trainers at the COSDEC center to manage costing, pricing, and invoice processing for welding, bricklaying and other projects, resulting in increased profits for the center.
- Volunteer serving at the Swakopmund Municipality provided basic computer skills training to the community and mentored new and existing entrepreneurs in business skills.



EEP volunteers conduct capacity-building activities in communities



7.2

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HIV/AIDS PROGRAM (CHHAP)

Health Volunteers are currently implementing several HIV/AIDS activities in schools, communities, or with nonprofit organizations. Volunteers are primarily working in alignment with PEPFAR goals by promoting messaging and behavior change around life skills, stigma reduction, abstinence, proper condom use or use of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) - medicine to prevent HIV. Volunteers provide support to orphans and vulnerable children, organize, and coordinate health camps, and refer people to health and other social services.

Over the last year, PC/Namibia through Peace Corps Volunteers with support from their Counterparts reached **3,043 youth and adults** and **2,576 orphans and vulnerable children with HIV prevention interventions**.

Peace Corps trains health Volunteers and Counterparts on tools such as community health services mapping to better understand the availability and accessibility to health and social services. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (MER) is another area of focus, so that Volunteers can correctly report on activities that they implement in communities.

Volunteers are doing exciting work! A Response Volunteer based with Project HOPE, developed a stakeholder engagement plan for two programs that provides guidelines to research and identify prospective economic strengthening partners for vocational training, apprenticeships, internships, mentorships, job placements and business start-ups for orphans and vulnerable children as well as caregivers.

Peace Corps/Namibia Programs



Several Volunteers rolled out a Grassroot Soccer camp to promote healthy decision-making among youth and prevent HIV. Based in Schools, two Volunteers, teach life skills, speaking to issues ranging from teenage pregnancy, HIV to alcohol abuse. Given the high rates of HIV, one Volunteer in Nkurukuru implemented an after-school boys and girls club which provides learners with a safe space to discuss concerns related to life skills and health issues. One Volunteer worked with the Sam Nujoma Multi-Purpose Center and a Secondary School on an after-school club to discuss HIV/AIDS, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), goal setting and healthy relationships.



CHHAP volunteer organizes GRS camp

7.3



SECONDARY AND UPPER PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Twenty-two education Volunteers began their two-year service in seven regions in November 2023 after a 12-week training in Okahandja. During the training, the Volunteers took intensive language lessons in Oshikwanyama, Rukwangali, Khoekhoegowab, Otjiherero, Afrikaans or Oshindonga; lived with host families to practice their language skills and learn about culture. They took courses in classroom management, lesson planning, general teaching skills, teaching STEM and English in Namibia, classroom assessment, national professional standards for teachers in Namibia, workplace culture and practiced teaching in several schools in Okahandja.

Volunteers are supporting schools and learners in either English or Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Some of the benefits that Volunteers bring to schools include enhancing the learner-centered approach, highlighting the importance of intercultural engagement, expanding problem solving, and critical thinking skills among learners and teachers.

We have two education Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRV). In the Kunene Regional Education Office, Volunteers in collaboration with colleagues, have created online shared resources and trained staff in Excel as well as developed digital tools to reduce staff workload. A second PCRV led two debate workshops with committee members, Vice President Mr. Anton and additional member Mr. Nadunya, and coached learners to research and speak convincingly.

Peace Corps/Namibia Programs



He supported the officials in adjudicating the debate in Otjiwarongo and Walvis Bay. Additional responsibilities included assisting teachers with capacity building through continuous professional development trainings in English as a second language.



Education volunteer teaches STEM lessons





Peace Corps/Namibia has three types of volunteers:

Traditional Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV)

Serve for a period of two years in one of three sectors (Economic Empowerment, Education or Health). Health and Economic Empowerment Volunteers arrive in August 2024 and every other year after that – **requests are due to the office by January 2024. The next Education Volunteers will arrive in August 2025.**

Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRV)

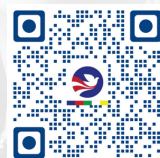
Highly skilled and experienced professionals who work for six months to one year to meet host organization needs and requests. **Requests for Response Volunteer are due to the office by September or earlier and arrive the following May.**

Virtual Service Pilot Participants (VSPP)

Execute assigned tasks virtually as per host organization's requests (they donate five to 15 hours weekly for three to six months). Host organizations must have access to internet and the ability to prioritize calls with the participant in the afternoon due to the time difference. **Deadlines to request participants are March, September and December 15, 2024.**

For more information, please visit us at www.peacecorps.gov/namibia or scan the quick-response (QR) code. Alternatively, you can reach us on our **Peace Corps/Namibia** Facebook page. To apply, please request the application forms by emailing **NA-info@peacecorps.gov**.

Scan me



Peace Corps Mission Statement: *To promote world peace and friendship.*

GOAL 1

To help people of developing countries meet their needs for trained men and women.

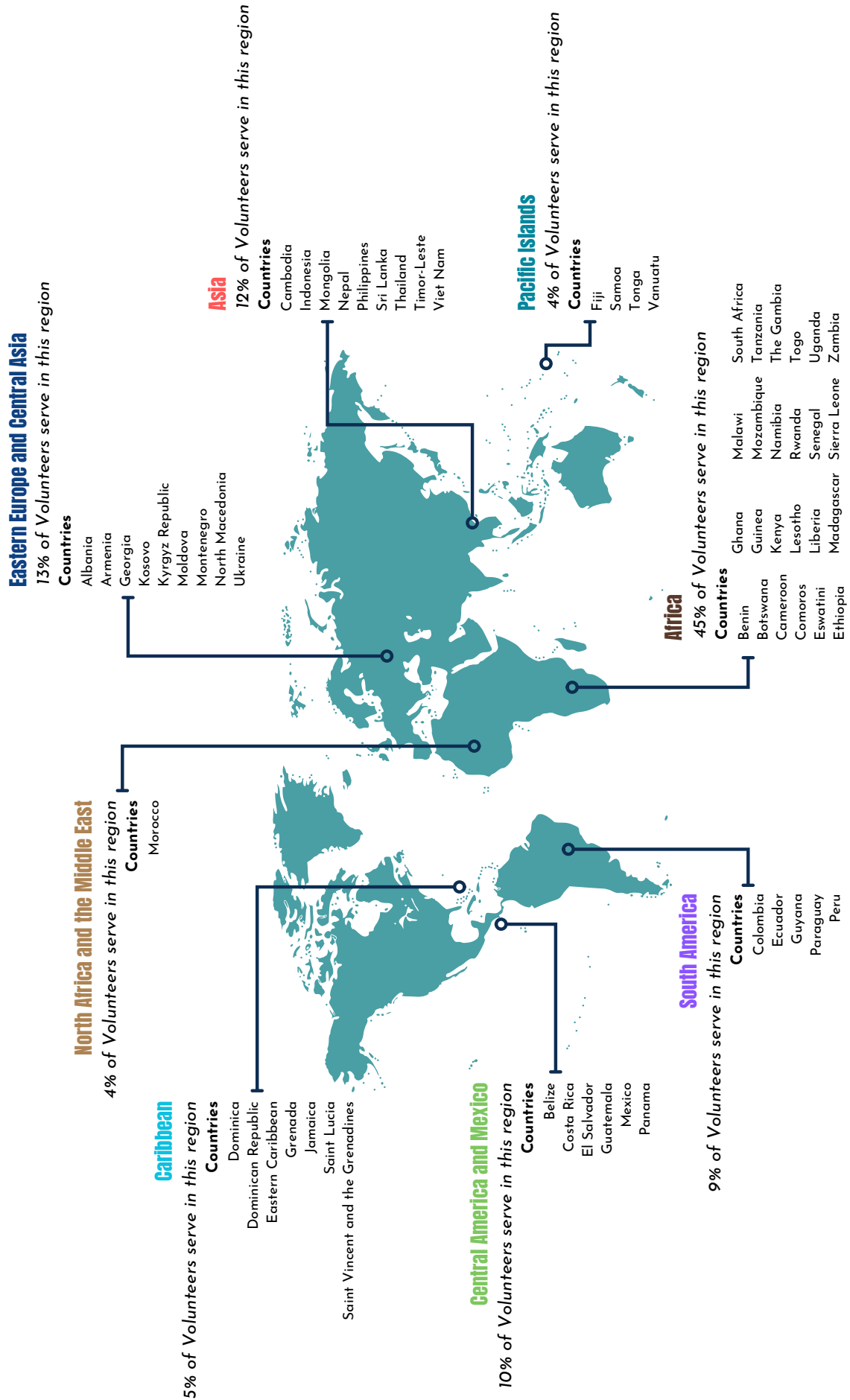
GOAL 2

To help promote a better understanding of the American people among the peoples served.

GOAL 3

To promote a better understanding of the peoples of developing nations on the part of the American people.

Peace Corps Volunteers serve in over 60 countries.



ARV	Antiretroviral
CHHAP	Peace Corps Community Health, HIV/AIDS Program
COSDEC	Community Skills Development Centre
COSDEF	Community Skills Development Foundation
DREAMS	Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe Program
EEP	Peace Corps Economic Empowerment Program
FLOTUS	First Lady of the United States
GRS	Grassroot Soccer Program
HISA	Hope Initiatives Southern Africa
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
MAD	Making a Difference Campaign
MER	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
MFMC	My Future My Choice Program
MSME	Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PC	Peace Corps
PCRv	Peace Corps Response Volunteers
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PEP	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Program
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
VMMC	Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision
VSPP	Virtual Service Pilot Participants
WAD	World AIDS Day
WEE-DL	Women Economic Empowerment through Digital Literacy Program



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