Close of Service
[COS]

TRAINER'S HANDBOOK

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

Overview of the COS Conference

Purpose

"COS" usually means one thing to the Peace Corps: close of service. (For particular training sessions, it may also stand for "continuation of service.") A COS conference is a training event for Volunteers, usually the last in a series that includes staging, pre-service training, and various in-service training events and conferences. The COS conference takes place approximately three months prior to a Volunteer's end-of-service date. The purpose of the conference is to help Volunteers close their host country service and prepare to transition to the next steps in their lives, including continued involvement with the Peace Corps as a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV). The revised COS Trainer's Handbook includes 16 detailed sessions, plus an optional session to help trainers plan and conduct effective COS conferences. Additional resources including a sample COS handbook, sample agendas, and additional post-developed sessions are located on the Intranet where this manual is stored. This current handbook is a revision of the handbook last published in 2010.

Features of the COS Trainer's Handbook

With this handbook, we hope to continue to address the reality of the COS conference: it is an exciting, overwhelming, and sad time for Volunteers when much administrative paperwork must be completed, many goodbyes are said, and travel and other post-service plans are made. It is simultaneously the time when many Volunteers start thinking about their careers post-service.

This handbook addresses both of these realities. Day 1 of the suggested agenda includes sessions that help Volunteers prepare to leave service. Day 2's sessions help them begin to build their career search strategy and understand the resources that are available to support them post-service.

This revised version of the handbook offers several new features that will enrich the COS experience for staff, Volunteers, and communities:

- Moving process model that helps Volunteers relate their actions and feelings to places and times
- Activity suggestions from the field that are detailed within each session plan
- Sample materials of tested best practices from the field

- Session plan full of ideas and detailed plans to help Volunteers conduct Third Goal activities

- Materials to help translate the Peace Corps experience to the job market.

- Ideas for bringing closure with counterparts and the community, and making smooth transitions for everyone

- Sessions targeting critical administrative issues, considerations, and decisions

- Re-entry awareness, understanding, and preparation

- Translating experiences into accomplishments and skills

- Options for next steps, including further volunteer activities, such as Peace Corps Response

- Activities designed to build awareness of safety and security issues particular to the last few months of service

- Information about RPCV administrative and medical issues

- Optional materials to teach storytelling and other useful skills to use after Peace Corps service

Planning

It is highly recommended that planning for the COS conference include some COSing Volunteers, RPCVs who may be on the staff or in the community, and Peace Corps training and administrative staff, including the PCMO. This includes COS conference planning at posts where a training consultant is hired to deliver some of the content.

The basic topics are laid out in the session plans, but most sessions have various choices of how to present the content. Many choices can be made by Volunteers, and some activities can be conducted by Volunteers or PCVLs.

The duration of each session is an approximation, and individual segments may be longer or shorter depending on how many Volunteers are in the group and how the segments are conducted.

Some activities in a COS conference might be optional. For example, some post's conferences may be longer than two days so they might choose to expand one of the existing sessions by choosing the longest activity when given a choice, or by including Session 11b: Storytelling.

Materials

Most materials you will need are in the handbook. However, be sure to read all sessions at least a month in advance to see if any updated material is needed from PC/Washington. For example, you will need the latest information on after-service insurance and Peace Corps Response.

There is a model Close of Service Administrative Procedures Handbook for Volunteers posted on the Intranet where this manual is stored.

COS resources are available to COSing Volunteers at: http://www.peacecorps.gov/resources/returned/cos/.

Posts with limited connectivity can request COS kits from rpcv@peacecorps.gov. The COS web page will connect COSing Volunteers with resources including:

- **Hometowner Privacy Act release form** — allows an RPCV to share a bit of his or her Peace Corps story and grants Peace Corps permission to use that story

- **The Peace Corps Response fact sheet** — a one-page overview of the Peace Corps Response program

- **RVS/Career Center flyer** — an overview of the Return Volunteer Service Office's offerings and the help RPCVs can receive at the RPCV Career Center

- **Third Goal Flyer** — promotes Third Goal activities and how to register those activities

- **NPCA Flyer** — explains what the national Peace Corps Association is, offers free membership, and tells a little about the programs available

- **RPCV Letter** — sent from the RVS Office congratulating the attendees and encouraging them to stay in touch with the office

- **Fellow/USA flyer** — explains the Fellows program, and lists schools that have participated in the program

- **RPCV checklist** — a bookmark made of colored card stock that serves as a quick reminder of some of the things that returning Volunteers should do

When posts need COS kits they contact overseas support. In the case of an emergency (i.e., the kits don't arrive on time or there is a sudden post closing), electronic copies of all items in the COS kit can be sent.

Model COS Conference Schedule

There are 16 sessions for the COS conference. How much time is spent on each session depends on how posts want to present their conference. Most sessions have various options, and some designed with more interaction than others. The basic schedule outlined in Figure 1 shows the approximate estimated times needed to complete each session. All sessions can be completed within two days. There is a natural split in the content after Sessions 8, with sessions 1 - 8 more focused on wrap-up and closure, and sessions 9 - 16 more focused on next steps.

The posts have the flexibility to modify the schedule, spending more time on certain sessions and adding other post-specific activities. Many posts have Volunteers arrive on Day 1 by 12 noon, have afternoon sessions, a full day on Day 2, and another half day on Day 3.

Session	Description	Estimated Time
1	Welcome Overview	1 hour to 1-1/2 hours
2	Reviewing Your Volunteer Experience	45 minutes to 1-1/4 hours
3	Closing Out Your In-Country Experience	30 minutes
4	Health Care After Volunteer Service	45 minutes to 1 hour
5	Providing Feedback to the Peace Corps	45 minutes to 1-1/2 hours
6	Bringing Effective Closure	.75 to1 hours
7	Safety and Security at COS	1 hour
8	Anticipating Readjustment to Life in the U.S.	1 hour
9	"Peace Corps is…"	30 minutes
10	Leveraging RPCV Resources	30 minutes
11	Sharing Your Peace Corps Experience at Home	1 hour
11b	Storytelling (optional)	1 hour
12	Translating Your Skills for the Job Search	1-1/2 hours
13	Volunteer to Employee: Turning Your Story into a Career	1-1/2 hours
14	Non-Competitive Eligibility	45 minutes
15	Peace Corps Response	30 minutes to 1 hour
16	Wrap-up and Closure	1 hour to 1-1/2 hours

SESSION 1
Welcome and Overview

Purpose

This session establishes a positive, effective working tone for the group and provides a blueprint for Volunteers to understand and take full advantage of the conference. The trainer introduces the goals and activities, schedule of events, logistical concerns, and available resources. A moving process framework is introduced to anchor discussions and provide Volunteers with a way of understanding what they will be going through. Additionally, some interesting and motivating activities help get Volunteers involved in sharing their experiences.

Rationale

This conference is an important point in the Volunteers' service that helps them begin the closure of their host country service, learn about and begin to take care of necessary administrative activities, and look ahead at what comes next. It should be a meaningful transition point between their Peace Corps experience and their re-acclimation to life back in the United States.

Duration

1 hour to 1-1/2 hours, depending on activity options chosen

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to:

- Reconnect with members of their group
- Establish common expectations for conference participants
- Begin a new phase of Volunteer service
- Identify the stages in the moving process
- Share experiences
- Receive thanks for their service and congratulations on its completion

Session Outline

Part 1: **Welcome (20 minutes)**

Part 2: **Moving Process framework (15 minutes)**

Part 3: **Sharing activity (duration depends on option)**

Part 4: **Logistics (5 to 15 minutes)**

Part 5: **Transition (5 minutes)**

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This session can be run by a combination of Peace Corps staff and Volunteers. If Volunteers or PCVLs are helping with the conference, it would be ideal for them to run the sharing activity.

Materials and Equipment

- Prepared flip charts:
  A. Conference schedule
  B. Objectives of the conference
  C. Objectives of this session
  D. The Moving Process
- Blank flip charts, markers
- Handout: The Moving Process. Stick figures or sticky notes (one for each person in workshop)
- Any materials required by the activity option chosen for Part 3

Trainer Preparation

- Revise, as necessary, the overall conference goals and prepare a flip chart of those. Prepare a corresponding flip chart of the complete conference schedule (See Figure 1.)
- Read the full session plan and determine what options you will use. Note any particular materials you will need for activities, and any special preparation needed.
- Study Part 2 on the moving process. If available (check your IRC), read *Transitions* by William Bridges to give yourself more background. Think through some of your own moves to make the concepts real; add your own examples, if appropriate.

Methodology

Part 1.   Introduction and Welcome (20 minutes)

Step 1: Welcome Volunteers and make sure everyone knows each other, as well as all staff and facilitators

Step 2: Explain the meaning of COS

Example of what you might say: "COS means close of service. You have only three months left in-country and are probably thinking about what you need to do to complete service—if you're not, you should be! So part of the conference will focus on steps to complete service and to bring a feeling of closure. Also, you need to think of the future—so we'll cover what the next steps might be, what resources are available, ideas about readjustment to the United States, to another country, or to whatever comes next!

The Peace Corps is an experience so profound that one is forever changed by it. It will always be part of you. One aspect of Peace Corps service that tends to stick is the desire to do service—that is, Continuation of Service. So we'll also look at some ways to do that, and how the Peace Corps can help."

Step 3: Review the overall conference schedule and objectives (flip charts A and B)

Here is an example of flip chart B:

  e. Review your Peace Corps experience

  f. Identify the stages of moving and the necessary transitions

  g. Assess skills and experience you have gained and how to document them for future use

  h. Provide Peace Corps with feedback and recommendations

  i. Explore options for life after the Peace Corps

  j. Identify ways of working toward the Peace Corps' third goal

  k. Increase awareness of issues regarding reentry into U.S. culture and develop relevant strategies

  l. Plan your final months in-country – bring closure to work, relationships, and host country activities

Step 4: Review their expectations (Brainstorm and write on flip chart)

Explain that the conference is probably too short to deal with everything, so it is just a start to get the gears turning. They're not going to know everything they need to know by the end of the conference, but they will have ideas about how to continue and what resources are available.

Explain that there may be a parking lot for questions and ideas the group can't get to during the conference, but those are things on which Peace Corps staff will follow up.

Step 5: Review the specific objectives of this first session (flip chart C)

Part 2: The Moving Process framework (15 minutes)

Step 1: Reveal flip chart D: The Moving Process

Step 2: Explain the chart and the concepts

Ask participants just to listen to this step—they will get a handout later. Below is suggested language for the trainer.

a. Every time we move, we go through a three-stage process: We leave the place we have been for a length of time; physically travel; and get reengaged in a new place.

b. There are two aspects to moving: the changes one goes through and the feelings about these changes. Author/speaker William Bridges describes change as "the situation and transition as the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the change." He says this three-step process happens every time there is a major change in one's life, not just when there's a physical move.

c. Disengagement involves letting go of the things that will no longer be the same. It involves physically disengaging—ending all of the current activities: leaving a job; moving out of a house or apartment; and doing necessary paperwork and tasks (finishing reports, returning books to the library, closing the bank account, getting an airline ticket, etc.). It also means saying goodbye to people, places, and things. Even a change that one is looking forward to—traveling, going back to school, moving back to a city you like—involves losses. Those losses may include a peer group, community members or host family, tasks one liked to perform, a feeling of competence, or being "special."

d. Limbo is between the old and the new, a period of time when a sense of identity is lost and a new one has not yet been established. It is important to recognize this phase, because it may create confusion, even fear. However, it can also be a time for creativity, renewal, and development

e. Reengagement is getting reestablished in a job, school, further volunteer work, and/ or retirement. It also means feeling comfortable and confident in a new setting, or a new role.

f. The dotted lines on this chart indicate that the effects of these stages may begin before you get there and linger after you are physically in a different place.

   – For example, think back to when you left home to come into the Peace Corps. Are there things you left undone—people you did not say goodbye to, paperwork you didn't do—that you thought about after arriving in-country? Did any of these things impact how you were able to get started in your Peace Corps experience?

   – Do you remember when you heard you were accepted into the Peace Corps? Did that change how you thought about what you were doing? Were you already imagining what it might be like, and feeling things at home were not as important or done as well as they might have been? When did you enter limbo?

   – Now that you know you are leaving the Peace Corps, are you already thinking ahead—to foreign travel? To a vacation? To moving around in the States to visit family and friends? Are you looking forward to being in limbo for a while? Ready to start school again? Looking for a job? Or, are you already engaged again— sending applications for school or work, for example?

g. William Bridges, who writes about dealing with the transition part of moving, says that how we feel about a change (or a move) affects how we will deal with the stages of that change. Let's see if that is true.

Step 3: Distribute sticky notes or stick figures and have people put their names on them

a. Have the PCVs bring them up and stick them on the chart where they feel they are right now—in disengagement, limbo, or reengagement.

b. Once they have placed themselves, look at the chart together. There will probably be a wide range:

   – Some may be way to the left, maybe not even thinking about disengagement.

   – Many may place themselves in disengagement.

   – Some may already be in limbo, feeling they are done with their assignment

   – Some may be working on reengagement (writing letters to graduate schools, job hunting, corresponding with people at home about returning).

   – Husbands and wives may be in different places on the chart.

c. Ask a few in each location to explain why they put themselves there. (You may find a pattern. Those who don't want to leave may be in denial and not ready to be ending

anything. Those who are ready to leave might already be disengaging or feel they are in limbo. Any who are happy to leave are probably thinking mostly about travel or reengagement. Those who have solid plans or are working on them—already job hunting, enrolled in graduate school, ready to live in their retirement home—may have placed themselves in reengagement.)

Step 4: Reinforcing the importance of going through The Moving Process

Tell the PCVs that, to make a good transition, it is important to do the work of each phase—physically and psychologically. Emphasize that the group will be focusing on these stages of The Moving Process as they go through the COS conference.

Part 3: Sharing activity (time depends on activity chosen)

Select an activity option at the end of the Session 1 section of this handbook, or create one of your own.

Part 4: Conference logistics and arrangements (5 to 15 minutes)

Go over any specific arrangements, such as housing, meals, rules of the conference (e.g., optional and mandatory sessions), evening activities, etc.

Part 5: Transition to next session (5 minutes)

Step 1: Explain what the next session will be, and how it relates to looking at endings

Step 2: Distribute "The Moving Process" handout for their reference

References:
"Going Overseas" Workshops, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. State Department, Washington, DC.
Bridges, William, *Managing Transition: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, De Capo Press, 2004.

Session 1 Resources

Activity Options for Part 3

These options come from the field. If you do not find one you like, build off of something else or design one of your own. Be sure you have any necessary materials for whatever you choose. This is a good section for Volunteers or PCVLs assisting with the workshop to select and present.

Funny Story (PC/Honduras)

On a half sheet of paper, have each PCV write a short story about something funny that happened to him or her during Peace Corps service—or a meaningful story that the PCV would like to share. They don't have to put their names on them. Stories will be read to the group as an icebreaker before sessions, and the group will guess who wrote it. (Expect lots of moans and groans at the beginning, but Volunteers love this. The person who will read the stories out loud should review the stories silently beforehand, so there are no surprises while reading them to the group.)

Map of the United States

On a large map of the United States, have Volunteers write their names near the area where they will return. Keep this map in a highly visible place throughout the conference for Volunteers to revisit. This map will be helpful in some of the later sessions on reentry, job searching, and third-goal activities.

Two Truths and a Lie (PC/Togo)

Each Volunteer thinks of two truths and a lie about his or her Peace Corps service. Taking turns, he or she recites the three statements and the rest of the group has to guess which one is the lie. If the group is large, have them break into smaller groups. Each smaller group will do the activity, and then will choose one person from their group to present their three statements to the whole group. This can also be done with teams. Teams (small groups) can guess the lie, write it down, and then all groups reveal their answers. Keep score and award prizes.

Write a Letter Home

Volunteers write letters home (or to someone they choose—it can be themselves) about their experience as a Volunteer. They are given envelopes to address. Peace Corps staff takes the letters and mails them a month (or two) after the Volunteers have left the country.

Your Part of the Peace Corps Puzzle (PC/Costa Rica)

Create a puzzle starting with one large map of the country, a map of the United States, or the Peace Corps logo, etc. Cut it into the same number of pieces as there are Volunteers attending the conference.

Each Volunteer gets a piece. As each brings their piece to build the puzzle, they have to tell the group what change (positive or negative) in expectations occurred for them between the time they got on the plane to come to their host country and now at the close of their service. (Instead of a change in expectations, other factors can serve as the focus of this activity: something they have learned, something they still don't understand, their favorite local food, their favorite local name, etc.)

After the puzzle has been completed, summarize the activity with some of these points:

a. Each of you boarded the plane to come to _____ to join the Peace Corps. You came from all parts of the United States.

b. You all had different expectations, but the one thing you all had in common when you boarded that plane was the dream of becoming Peace Corps Volunteers.

c. You came with the dream of living and working with ordinary people in _____, helping them at the grassroots level and, in the process, forming friendships and establishing mutual understanding.

d. And in realizing this dream, you became a part of a family, the Peace Corps family. You are a part of a special group of people of approximately 200,000 Volunteers who have served in 139 countries since the Peace Corps was founded. You are incredibly special people. You persevered through good times and bad times. You never gave up on yourself or your communities.

e. And it was these difficult challenges and experiences that have forever changed you. You are not the individuals who arrived two years ago, and as a group you have changed.

f. Now the adventurous trek you embarked upon is almost at an end. Today, you come here to begin the next phase of your journey in life.

g. Over the next two days, we will help you prepare for closing your Peace Corps service and begin thinking and perhaps planning for the next step in your lives, be it traveling, returning home, graduate school, or a job.

h. Photo opportunity!

Put Together a Book of Memories (Nepal)

In an attempt to personalize the COS conference, Peace Corps/Nepal developed a COS conference book of memories and a directory of U.S. addresses for their COS group. The book had two objectives: (1) to give Volunteers an opportunity to contribute experiences, feelings, ideas, stories, pictures, drawings, etc., to a group remembrance; and (2) to provide Volunteers with a directory of U.S. addresses of their fellow Volunteers. All aspects of the book were agreed to, designed, and executed by the Volunteers during the COS conference and about two weeks later at the Peace Corps office.
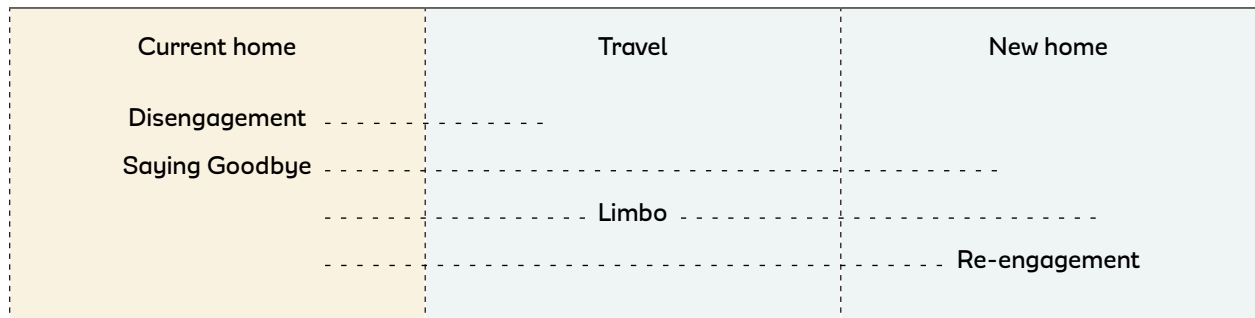
How to make a book of remembrances:

1. Present the idea to Volunteers via a memo before the COS conference. Ask them to begin thinking about what kinds of things they'd like to include in their book of remembrances, and even ask them to prepare some material in advance and bring the contact address they would like to have included in the book.

2. At the COS conference, during the Welcome and Overview session, bring up the book for discussion. Volunteers can offer ideas for sections or headings and agree on what to include. Also, at this time, let the Volunteers know they are responsible for producing the book during the conference. Here are some sample section ideas:

- The early months
- The middle months
- Travel stories
- What we learned in [country]
- Fashion in [country]
- Foods we craved the most
- Our favorite stories from the country's daily newspaper
- The most useful medicines
- My favorite N/168 (the training group's designation) PCV
- My worst night in [country]

- Our best night in [country]
- Our favorite books/tapes
- Things we brought but didn't end up needing
- Silly or unusual things we were sent but didn't use
- The smells of [country]
- Key or unusual [country] statistics
- Most famous person I encountered in [country]
- Things to take home
- Short stories and pictures

3. Once the headings are agreed upon, post them on flip charts around the room, one topic per sheet. Allow Volunteers to jot down ideas on the posted pages throughout the conference. At the same time, a sheet is passed around for the Volunteers to write down their addresses. During the conference, the PCVs who have offered to take responsibility for producing the book record what has been written on the flip charts by their fellow Volunteers.

4. After the conference, the Volunteers assemble the finished book. Photos and other graphics can be added.

5. The final version is reviewed by the Peace Corps office and then copied and sent to all Volunteers in the COS group.

6. To streamline the production process, take a computer to the COS conference so content can be taken from the flip charts and recorded via digital cameras and or documents.

The Moving Process

Every time we move, we go through a similar process. It is a three-stage process. We leave the place we have been for a length of time, physically travel, and get re-engaged in a new place. On a chart it looks like this:

Current home	Travel	New home
Disengagement - - - - - - - - - - - - -		
Saying Goodbye -		
- - - - - - - - - - - - - Limbo -		
- Re-engagement		

There are two aspects to moving: the changes one goes through and the transitions.

William Bridges describes change as the situation and transition as the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the change.

Disengagement involves letting go of the things that will no longer be the same. it involves physical disengaging—ending all of the current activities: leaving a job, moving out of a house or apartment, doing necessary paperwork and tasks (finishing reports, returning books to the library, closing the bank account, getting an airline ticket, etc.). It also means saying goodbye to people, places, and things. Even a change that one is looking forward to—traveling, going back to school, moving back to a city you like—involves losses. Those losses may include a peer group, community members or host family, tasks one liked to perform, a feeling of competence, being "special."

Limbo is between the old and the new, a period when a sense of identity is lost and a new one has not yet been established; the old way is gone and the new is not yet established or comfortable. It is important to recognize this phase, because it may create confusion, even fear. But it can also be a period of creativity, renewal, and development.

Reengagement is getting re-established in a job, school, further volunteer work, and/or retirement. It also means feeling comfortable and confident in a new setting, a new role.

The dotted lines on the chart indicate that the effects of these stages may begin before you get there and linger after you are physically in a different place. To make a good transition, it is important to do the work of each phase—physically and psychologically.

References:
"Going Overseas" Workshops, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. State Department, Washington, DC.
Bridges, William, *Managing Transition: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, De Capo Press, 2004.

SESSION 2
Reviewing Your Volunteer Experience

Purpose

In this session, Volunteers begin to reflect on their accomplishments during service and identify how they have contributed to the communities in which they have lived and worked. The activities in this session prepare Volunteers for identifying skills they have learned, as well as formulating accounts of their experience to assist in reentry and reengagement back home (which will be the focus of Sessions 8 and 12).

Rationale

Unless Volunteers are regularly reflective, they may not have a complete view of their service. While many Volunteers can readily admit frustrations, mistakes they have made, and times they felt they were just spinning their wheels, some will admit lessons learned but perhaps not claim successes or accomplishments. Some Volunteers are not even able to recognize their accomplishments. It may feel like bragging; many Volunteers appear to be perfectionists and might only focus on what was not done. It's important for the Volunteers to help each other recognize accomplishments so they can begin to have some closure on their Peace Corps experience.

Duration

Approximately 1 hour, but can vary according to activity chosen and size of group.

Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will be able to:

- Reflect on their Peace Corps experiences and identify important accomplishments
- Identify contributions to the development of the communities (and the country) in which they have lived and worked

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Part 2: Individual or group activity (15 to 45 minutes)

Part 3: Whole group processing (15 to 30 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Facilitator should be able to help Volunteers transform their experiences into statements of skills and accomplishments that can be used on résumés.

Materials and Equipment

- Blank flip charts, markers
- Tape or pins for posting
- Prepared flip chart: The Moving Process (from Session 1)
- Prepared flip chart or handout with activity task

Trainer Preparation

1. Read Session 13 of this handbook, "Volunteer to Employee: Turning Your Story into a Career," to see how the information from this session will lead to development of statements about skills and accomplishments

2. Select an activity for Part 2 and prepare any materials needed including flip charts and handouts.

3. Keep the poster of The Moving Process from Session 1 posted and use it to reinforce participants' mentions of concepts from it.

Methodology

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Describing the purpose and objectives

Refer to the Moving Process chart, introduced in Session 1. Explain that this session will focus on what the Volunteers have been doing and on the end that the group is approaching.

Part 2: Activity (15 to 45 minutes)

Step 1: Select an activity from the options at end of this Session 2 section, or create one of your own

Part 3: Group Debrief (15 to 30 minutes)

Step 1: Use the debrief that is outlined in the activity chosen.

Session 2 Resources

Activity Options for Part 2

These activities have been used in the field. If none of them fits your particular needs, build on one or create one of your own that meets the objectives of the session.

Individual Reflection I: Stories

Volunteers reflect on their experiences as PCVs and write for about 15 minutes. You may want to play music softly in the background. Here are a few topic ideas:

1. Write about your challenges and accomplishments (work, social, community, personal, recreational, etc.) as a PCV

2. Identify the five that have the most meaning for you

3. Choose one to share with the group

Individual Reflection II: 300-Word Vignette (PC/Turkmenistan)

Instructions to the group: Write a short (300-word) essay or vignette that describes some aspect of your service, your accomplishments, what you are coming away with that you hadn't anticipated, insights you gained, humorous or telling incidents, etc. This short piece might be used in a Volunteer Assignment Description (VAD) or Welcome Book that applicants receive before they depart for their host country. Peace Corps/Washington might also use one or more of these stories for marketing or other purposes where a colorful, first-person account conveys what being a PCV is all about. Some of these stories might even be read in Congress. This effort to recap and summarize is an important exercise in beginning your own debriefing as you finish up your service. Please provide a hard and soft copy to your DPT or program managers. We ask that you sign a release form permitting publication of your writings.

Individual Reflection III: Timeline

Provide each of the Volunteers with a sheet of flip chart paper and a marker. Ask them to turn their paper horizontal and draw a line across the middle of the page. On the left side, they should write "Arrival" and on the right side, "COS."

Tell them they have about 15 minutes to reflect on what has happened between those two points in time. Using pictures and words, above the line they should represent the high points of their Peace Corps experience and below the line, the difficulties, disappointments, and low points.

After 15 minutes, ask them to post their timelines on the walls around the room. Give them a chance to walk around and look at all of them.

Group Debriefing

Ask the following questions, based on the PCVs' graphical representations:

- In what ways have we seen personal growth?
- What do we seem to have in common?
- What are some of our accomplishments?
- In what ways have we made contributions to individuals, organizations, and communities?

Individual Reflection IV: Guided Visualization

Note: Guided visualizations can prompt powerful emotions, and the facilitator may well not be aware of the memories the prompts may evoke. This is an activity that might be conducted by an RPCV (or Volunteer leader) with the PCMO or other staff member comfortable dealing with emotions. The RPCV or PCVL can develop and read the prompts, since he or she will have ideas of what may have occurred at each point. Prompts can be humorous, poignant, serious, sad, or difficult. The staff member can help with the debriefing, including handling strong emotions. You may want to play music softly in the background.

The Visualization and Script

Explain that you are going to help the PCVs review their Volunteer experience through a guided visualization. Everyone should get comfortable and relax, close their eyes, and let the prompts take them on their Peace Corps journey. Use the following script for your prompts, or paraphrase as appropriate.

"Take yourself back to when you decided to apply to the Peace Corps. Where were you living? What were you doing? Why did you decide to apply to the Peace Corps?" (Pause for a minute or so to let them visualize.)

"Do you remember when you got your acceptance letter? Recall the thoughts and feelings that letter (or call) evoked." (Pause.)

"You leave for your staging soon. What are you doing? What are you feeling?" (Pause.)

"Staging starts and you meet the people you'll be serving with. Can you remember staging and what was going on for you? What were you excited about? Concerned about?" (Pause.)

"You arrive in country. Do you remember getting off the plane? What was the weather like? The airport? Who met you? Where did you go from the airport?" (Pause.)

Continue by preparing a script that fits your post, your PST and sites, etc. Include some prompts about challenges the Volunteers faced and met or couldn't quite overcome, some people they befriended, some accomplishments, some ways they think their work has helped the people they lived and worked with. End with a prompt about the idea of coming to the COS conference. "What did that invitation say to you? What did it mean in terms of finishing your service?"

End Visualization and Debriefing

After the final prompt and pause for reflection, say something like, "This brings us to today. Bring yourself back to our conference when you are ready."

Give them a minute of quiet time to relax.
Tell them they do not need to share any information they don't wish to.

Start discussions with questions like these:

- What memories surprised you in their vividness?

- Were you able to bring back feelings of particular times? What were some of them?

- What were some of your biggest challenges? How did you handle them?

- Who are the memorable people? Talk about your relationships.

- What accomplishments did you think about? Describe some.

Individual Reflection V: Gallery Walk

Post flip charts all around the room with these types of headings:

- What I liked best
- My funniest moment
- My biggest accomplishment
- Something I will never forget
- Something I'd like to forget
- Something I've learned

- Souvenir I'd like to take back
- Biggest challenge I overcame
- At work, I've …
- People who have been special to me
- I'd like people in my community to remember me for…

Give Volunteers markers and have them walk around and contribute to the charts and read what others have written.

Debriefing

Ask the group what they see:

- As general trends, commonalities
- As big differences
- As something they would still like to do

Group Reflection I: Accomplishment Charts by Projects

Show the group a sample accomplishment chart:

Secondary and Technical Education Project

Goal 1: Students increase their knowledge and application of English and life sciences.

Objective 1.1 Create student-centered environments.
Objective 1.2 Provide coaching for test-taking and study skills.
Objective 1.3 Incorporate community content into classroom.

<u>**Challenges**</u>	<u>**Accomplishments**</u>

Ask them to work in groups to develop a list of challenges and accomplishments for their projects. Then have them develop statistics for their project over their two years of service.

Share the charts with the other project groups. Discuss the different types of accomplishments—some countable and some less tangible.

Secondary Projects

Ask participants to call out their secondary projects. Group the projects by similarity. Ask the PCVs to form small groups around one type of project and discuss and record.

1. Successes and failures
2. Strategies for success
3. Other possible projects that can be done with the community

Have each small group report to the whole group. Others can add to their points. Suggest that the results of this work will not only help them recall their accomplishments, but will help the post with secondary project suggestions for new Volunteers.

SESSION 3
Closing Out Your In-Country Experience

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to provide the Volunteers with the administrative procedures for closing out their service at post.

Rationale

A smooth conclusion to the Volunteer experience is highly desired by Volunteers and the staff members who support them at post. This session provides an opportunity to clarify the responsibilities and procedures involved in close of service, and gives the Volunteers the necessary checklists and forms they will need to fill out before they depart for their home country (or next assignment).

Session 4 will explain the health benefits that follow Peace Corps service.

Duration

30 minutes

Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will have:

- Reviewed the specific administrative and medical procedures required for closing out their Peace Corps status at post
- Received a written handbook that includes procedures and forms for closing their service

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction (1 minute)

Part 2: Review administrative handbook (25 minutes)

Part 3: Transition to next session (4 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

The administrative officer or his or her designee should present this session. The person must be knowledgeable about the procedures and forms, and should be able to answer Volunteer questions on close of service details. The DMO may deliver the section on medical procedures.

Materials and Equipment

- Prepared flip charts:
  - The Moving Process from Session 1
- List of administrative items to be completed during COS workshop
- Handout: Close of Service Administrative Procedures Handbook for Volunteers (See sample online at the Intranet site.)

Trainer Preparation

1. The materials for this session must be compiled by the DMO. A well-organized handbook containing all of the procedures and necessary forms, including a final checkout list, will help the Volunteers immensely.

2. The content of this session is strictly administrative information that Volunteers will receive in hard copy, so it is suggested that the presenter move through the handbook quickly. Session 4, focusing specifically on health care after Peace Corps service, is more interactive.

3. It is highly recommended that this session be conducted early in the COS workshop. Should circumstances not permit that, consider conducting the session:

   a. After Session 2: Reviewing Your Volunteer Experience

   b. After Session 5: Providing Feedback to the Peace Corps

Avoid scheduling this session after the focus of the training has shifted toward returning home and third goal activities.

Methodology

Part 1: Introduction (1 minute)

Explain that this session provides Volunteers with the administrative and medical procedures for closing out their service. These procedures are part of the Disengagement Phase of The Moving Process. Refer to The Moving Process flip chart from Session 1.

Part 2: Review administrative handbook (25 minutes)

Step 1: Suggest that Volunteers have a pen or pencil available to make notes in their Close of Service Administrative Procedures Handbook (a sample can be found on the Intranet where this manual is found.). Distribute the handbooks.

Step 2: Talk through the sections without reading the text. Take questions as you proceed.

Step 3: As a summary, ask Volunteers to read the final checkout sheet.

Step 4: Take any final questions.

Step 5: If PCVs need to do any of the steps during the COS training, provide a list of those items on a flip chart. Tell them when and where to complete them. (Examples: Sign up for a medical examination with PCMO after this session. Turn in the "cash-in-lieu" form—to receive cash rather than an airline ticket—to admin office by end of COS workshop.)

Part 3: Transition to next session (4 minutes)

Explain that there is a second part to this session having to do with health care after the PCVs leave service—and then offer them a 10 – 15 minute break if this is the third session in a row.

SESSION 4
Health Care After Volunteer Service

Purpose

This session provides Volunteers with important information about health care benefits and options after their service ends.

Rationale

After their service ends, RPCVs may travel, continue living abroad, or return home without work—possibly without any health insurance. Depending upon their age, sex, and past health insurance status (on parents' plan, paid for by college or university or former employer), COS Volunteers may or may not be aware of how health insurance works, what their possible need for medical benefits might be, and the costs of those benefits. For younger Volunteers in good health and with little health insurance experience, this may not seem like an important topic to think about. However, the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) requires that all Americans purchase health insurance.

Since, under the Affordable Care Act, completion of Peace Corps service qualifies as an "event," Volunteers are able to purchase insurance even before completing their Peace Corps service. Volunteers must purchase insurance before their AfterCorps® expires.

Duration

45 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the size of the group

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to:

- Understand the medical benefits they are entitled to: PC-127C authorization; FECA claim; and AfterCorps®

- Know how to contact the Office of Health Services Post Service Unit at Peace Corps Headquarters for questions/clarifications pertaining to post-service health benefits, issues, and needs

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction to health care options (15 minutes)

Part 2: Time-travel stories (15 minutes)

Part 3: Small-group presentations and discussion (15 to 30 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

The facilitator of this session must be familiar with health care programs and the FAQs related to them. It is recommended that the facilitators do the time-travel activity themselves to anticipate potential stories and prepare to help participants decide which health care benefit is appropriate for which situation.

Materials and Equipment

- Prepared flip chart: The Moving Process (from Session 1)
- Reproduce the chart in Handout A for this session on flip charts, overhead, or PowerPoint
- PowerPoint presentation or prepared flip charts (see trainer notes at end of session)
- Handouts:
    A. Post-service Health Benefits chart
    B. Time-travel Activity
    C. What to Do When
    D. Contact information
- Peace Corps Post-Service Medical Handbook (hard copy and/or on thumb drive)
- Health Benefits identification cards

Trainer Preparation

1. Read the Post-Service Medical Handbook thoroughly and highlight talking points for each type of service. Provide only highlights of each benefit—spend about 5 minutes on each one.

2. Prepare flip charts or a PowerPoint presentation from sample provided at the end of this section.

3. Develop a time-travel story of your own for at least three different scenarios so you can anticipate the stories the Volunteers might write and the issues they might raise.

Methodology

Part 1:   Introduction to health care options (15 minutes)

Step 1: Introduce the topic with a couple of "show of hands" questions:

a. How many of you are thinking of health insurance right now? (Probably no one)

b. How many of you are planning to travel before going home?

c. How many of you have a job lined up that provides health care when you get home?

d. Who's planning on getting pregnant, or maybe your wife or girlfriend might become pregnant, within a year of leaving the Peace Corps?

e. Who's worried about having a recurring illness or medical condition that you contracted while you were a Volunteer?

Step 2: Refer to The Moving Process flip chart

Note that this is an example of something they need to take care of in Disengagement that will have lasting influences, through time, into Reengagement.

Step 3: Give the rationale for this session

Sample presentation:

"This session is important because you need to know your options about health care after you leave. I'm going to introduce you to three services or options that you are entitled to: FECA, PC-127C, and AfterCorps® We are going to work with these benefits a little bit so you get the gist of it and can make some informed decisions. Then you will get the details so you'll have them when you need them."

Why is this important?

1. Continuity of health care coverage is important to U.S. health insurance plans. Any break in coverage could jeopardize your ability to obtain coverage in the future.

2. Whether you are healthy or have an existing medical condition, get and keep coverage. Health insurance protects you financially in the event of large medical bills.

3. Keep the information and list of resources handy at all times—ID card and phone numbers. The Peace Corps has taught you to be prepared for the unexpected, and this is no different.

4. Ultimately, you are responsible for your own health and health care."

Step 4: Distribute Handout A, and using the PowerPoint or flip chart, explain Peace Corps authorization forms PC-127C and PC-209B.

Step 5: Using the PowerPoint or flip chart, explain FECA benefits and how Volunteers get them, i.e., that they cannot be filed until the RPCV has a diagnosis and treatment plan.

Step 6: Using the PowerPoint or flip chart, explain AfterCorps® insurance. Since it does not meet the minimum requirements of the Affordable Care Act, AfterCorps® is now given at no cost to RPCVs for one month only. RPCVs may purchase it for two additional months; however, they are urged to review the Affordable Care Act website (www.healthcare.gov) to identify and procure the best health plan for themselves based on individual needs.

Step 7: After you distribute Handout A, reiterate the following points:

- The provider that an RPCV sees with the PC-127C must accept FirstHealth (Medical) and Humana (Dental).

- If they foresee that treatment will be required, the provider they choose for the evaluation must also be on the list of FECA providers if they expect to use that same provider for the treatment. Explain that there are different provider lists for FirstHealth and FECA and that RPCVs need to cross reference to find providers that are on both lists.

This is an important point that either needs to be covered or tell RPCVs to contact Office of Health Services Post Service Unit before using a PC-127C. The PSU will provide information about proper use of PC-127C forms and FECA applications.

Part 2: Time-travel stories (30 minutes)

Step 1: Introduce the activity

Explain that having just gone over a lot of technical information; you want to apply that information to potential scenarios in an activity that employs time-travel stories.

Step 2: Distribute Handout B and go over the instructions

Step 3: Ask participants to suggest some scenarios they might be in after leaving Peace Corps service

For example: traveling for three months or longer; staying in-country to work for an NGO or a business; returning home immediately and taking some months to travel and see friends in the United States; returning home and going back to school; returning home and seeking a job.)

Put key words on flip charts: traveling out of U.S., staying in country, traveling in U.S.,

seeking a job in U.S., etc. Post the charts around the room.

Step 4: Form groups and develop stories

Part 3: Small-group presentations and discussion (15 to 30 minutes)

Step 1: Ask groups, in turn, to present their stories. They can use any of the options presented on the handout, or one of their choosing.

Step 2: After each presentation, confirm the correct option for seeking medical care and reimbursement, if applicable.

Step 3: Provide information for future reference:

a. Distribute Peace Corps Post-Service Medical Handbook or identify that it is on the thumb drives.

b. Distribute Health Benefits identification cards or tell the PCVs when and where they will receive them.

c. Distribute Handout D with contact numbers. Remind the PCVs of the PC/Washington office where they can get their forms and have their questions answered.

Post-Service Health Benefits

Benefit	Covers	Time Limit	How Accessed
PC-127C Authorization	Evaluation of medical and dental health conditions related to Volunteer service. Condition must be documented in the PCV's/RPCV's health record or PC-1790 or COS labs before a PC-127c will be issued for the determination of iCD9 diagnosis and specific treatment plan.	Must be issued and used within six months after service.	May be issued by the Peace Corps medical officer (PCMO) at post, or the Peace Corps Office of Health Services, Post Service Unit, in Washington, D.C. Ph: +1-202-692-1540 Present form along with Health Benefits identification card.
FECA Benefits	Treatment for most medical and dental conditions occurring during service, and/or pre-existing conditions made worse during and because of PC service; must have happened while Volunteer was outside United States.	Claims should be filed within three years after service, or within three years of recognition that a health condition is service-related.	Claims should be filed through the Peace Corps Office of Health Services, Post Service Unit, in Washington, D.C. Ph: +1-202-692-1540
AfterCorps® insurance	Non-service-related medical problems. Specifically: • Some pre-existing conditions not covered by FECA • Conditions that arose during service that are not covered by FECA (e.g., while in the U.S. on vacation, home leave, emergency leave, or medevac) • Health problems arising after Volunteer service • Note that AfterCorps® does not satisfy the minimum requirements of the Affordable Care Act	The Peace Corps pays one month's premium for all Volunteers and their minor children (less than 18 years of age) who are living with the Volunteer at the time of service termination. Volunteers may purchase up to two months of additional coverage for themselves, their spouse, and all qualified dependents.	Contact AfterCorps® customer service at +1-800-544-1802 for: • Claiming emergency medical assistance • Referrals to network hospitals, physicians, and other health services • Insurance coverage extensions for 2nd and 3rd month post-Peace Corps service, should you choose to do so.

Time-Travel Stories

Develop your own story of a Volunteer (or several Volunteers) after they have finished their Peace Corps service. This story should include:

- Who—man or woman, approximate age?
- Where—location (traveling, in a particular city, etc.)?
- What—what are they doing?
- Some medical issues—symptoms or something that recurs from their service, an accident, an illness or medical condition that arises that is not related to their Peace Corps service.
- What can, or should, they do about the medical situation? Recall information about their options from the session and Handout A.

You will be sharing this story with the group. Some options:

1. Simply tell the story with all the details
2. Tell the story and stop and ask the rest of group what they should do about the medical situation(s)
3. Make the story into a skit
4. Follow the format below
5. Use your own creative idea

Maximum time to present your story to the whole group: 5 minutes
Sample story format:

- Once upon a time, …
- Then one day, …
- Because of that, …

- And because of that, …
- And because of that, …
- And because of that, …
- Until finally, …

What to Do When

If returning home immediately

Step 1: Maintain AfterCorps® for up to three months and/or enroll in a health insurance policy provided under the Affordable Care Act (ObamaCare). RPCVs in some states may find out that they are eligible for Medicaid based on their specific states' criteria and their income.

Step 2: Use the PC-127C authorization forms to get an evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment plan for unresolved issues that either occurred during Peace Corps service or were pre-existing conditions that were made worse during and/or because of Peace Corps service. Make sure the provider you see with the PC-127C accepts FirstHealth (for medical) or Humana (for dental).

- If treatment is needed, seek a provider who is on the U.S. Department of Labor provider list.
- Call the Office of Health Services Post Service Unit if you have questions about any of this: Ph: +1-202-692-1540.

Step 3: Based on the type of medical or dental issue or need, contact AfterCorps® for coverage if the medical condition is not related to Peace Corps service; Peace Corps for FECA information on service-related conditions; or, if you've chosen another health care plan, contact that administrator.

- *Note:* Before using your AfterCorps® or Affordable Care Act insurance, it is very important to understand the level and extent of coverage. AfterCorps® is a very basic insurance. For details, call +1-800-544-1802.

Traveling abroad, then returning home

Step 1: Visit www.healthcare.gov to research health care options and determine if one of those options will serve you better than AfterCorps® If you select new insurance, enroll and keep their contact information handy in case a medical need arises. The most important step is to secure coverage.

Step 2: PC-127C authorization forms for evaluation, diagnosis, and determination of a treatment plan must be used within six months. If you are traveling longer than six months, you will need to obtain the evaluation, diagnosis, and/or determination while on travel. Medical expenses may have to be paid out of pocket, and then reimbursed when you return home.

Step 3: Based on the type of medical or dental issue or need, contact the appropriate organization.

- Contact AfterCorps® for coverage if the medical condition is not related to Peace Corps service.
- Contact Peace Corps for FECA information on service-related conditions.
- If you have enrolled in another health plan, contact them.

Remember that AfterCorps® coverage is worldwide. Payment for health services may have to be paid out of pocket, and then reimbursed when you return home.

Contact Information

Seven Corners

Contact Seven Corners for issues related to the processing and payment of PC-127C authorization forms.

- Bill payment: +1-800-544-1802
- Find a doctor, hospital, or dentist: +1-800-726-0766
- www.peacecorps.sevencorners.com

AfterCorps®

Contact AfterCorps® for questions about any medical conditions and services not related to Peace Corps service.

- +1-800-544-1802 (select the AfterCorps® option)
- www.peacecorps.sevencorners.com

Peace Corps Post-Service

For any questions regarding PC-127C or FECA, please call or email the Office of Health Services Post Service Unit.

- +1-855-855-1961, ext. 1540 or +1-202-692-1540
- psu@peacecorps.gov

SESSION 5
Providing Feedback to the Peace Corps

Purpose

This session provides time for Volunteers to reflect on various aspects of their Peace Corps experience and provide feedback to the office on what went well and where they recommend changes.

Rationale

The Peace Corps program at post needs to be constantly revised in its attempts to meet the changing needs of the host country. One effective way of monitoring these changing needs is to solicit information from experienced Volunteers.

Volunteers concluding their service are bound to have certain impressions and concerns, and can provide valuable feedback for shaping future programming, training, and Volunteer-management efforts.

Duration

45 minutes to 1-1/2 hours, depending on activity chosen

Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will have:

- Discussed favorable and unfavorable experiences of individuals (or groups) relating to Peace Corps programming, training, administrative and medical support, site selection, and safety issues
- Formulated recommendations for the post based on their experiences

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Part 2: Feedback Questionnaire Discussions (30 to 60 minutes)

Part 3: Presentation of recommendations (15 to 30 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Depending upon the post's preference, this session could be facilitated by an external consultant. This is particularly helpful if there have been issues that seem to be unresolved. Volunteers may be more honest and straightforward in their responses and recommendations if given to a third party, and staff may be less defensive and able to hear more refined opinions and recommendations.

If you choose this option, it may still be helpful for staff to meet with the Volunteers to discuss their recommendations at some point during the COS, perhaps at the end of the session.

Materials and Equipment

- Questionnaires, sent prior to the workshop or distributed at the workshop (see samples at end of session plan)
- Prepared flip charts (see samples at end of session plan)
- Blank flip charts and markers

Trainer Preparation

The post needs to determine what type of feedback they want during this session. There are various options, several samples of which are given at the end of this section.

1. Questionnaires sent in advance and compiled prior to the workshop. Discussion of the results at the workshop.
2. Questionnaires sent in advance and brought to the workshop. Compilation and discussion of responses and recommendations during the workshop.
3. Questionnaires handed out early in COS. Compilation and discussion of responses and recommendations during this session.
4. Questionnaires handed out and answered at the beginning of this session, followed by discussion of responses and recommendations during this session.
5. Structured discussion by topic in small groups during the session, with some type of sharing and consensus building.

Questionnaires, if used, need to be designed and distributed. Sample from the field is included at the end of this section.

Methodology

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

> **Step 1:** introduce the session by explaining the value of the Volunteer's experiences and recommendations in helping the post maintain its quality services and improve its programs and systems where necessary.

> **Step 2:** explain the process you are using for gathering and discussing PCVs' recommendations.

Part 2: Feedback Questionnaire Discussions (30+ minutes)

> See sample formats at end of this section.

Part 3: Presentation of recommendations (15 to 30 minutes)

Session 5 Resources

Activity Options

Questionnaires sent in advance; compiled prior to workshop

1. Develop questionnaire with input from APCDs/program managers, training manager/DPT, administrative officer, PCMO, safety and security officer, etc.
2. Send to Volunteers approximately one month prior to COS workshop, with deadline of at least a week prior to the workshop for completed questionnaires to be sent to the Peace Corps office in country.
3. Compile answers to be shared in this session.
4. Consider how to group participants to review results and provide recommendations (see options below).

Questionnaires sent in advance; compiled during the workshop

1. Develop questionnaire with input from APCDs/program managers, training manager/DPT, administrative officer, PCMO, safety and security officer, etc.
2. Send to Volunteers approximately one month prior to COS workshop with instructions to bring completed questionnaires to the workshop.
3. Determine how to group participants to share their responses and provide recommendations (see options below).

Questionnaires provided at start of COS workshop; compiled during the session

1. Develop questionnaire with input from APCDs and program managers, training manager and DPT, administrative officer, DMO, safety and security officer, etc.

2. Provide questionnaire to Volunteers on the first day of COS workshop, with instructions to bring completed questionnaires to this session.

3. Determine how to group participants to share their responses and provide recommendations (see options below).

Questionnaires provided at beginning of session

1. Develop questionnaire with input from APCDs/program managers, training manager/DPT, administrative officer, DMO, safety and security officer, etc. A questionnaire to be used during a session should not be too long or complex; Volunteers should be able to fill it out in about 15 minutes.

2. Determine how to group participants to share their responses and provide recommendations (see options below).

Topics for individual reflection and then discussion (no questionnaire)

- Provide 15 minutes for Volunteers to write down their individual experiences with the following. They may make their own notes or write directly on flip charts with these headings.
  - Project direction and support from Peace Corps and host country
  - Training and conferences
  - Administrative support from Peace Corps
  - Medical support
  - Safety issues
  - Other (be specific)
- Determine how to group participants to share their responses and provide recommendations (see options below).

Small-group discussion options

1. Volunteers can be grouped by project. Subgroups of project groups can be formed if there are more than six Volunteers per project. These groups can discuss all of the topics and compile their answers and recommendations.

2. Volunteers can work in two successive small groups: the first groups by project to discuss project-related issues, including training; the second small groups can be random collections of Volunteers to consider all other topics.

Charting and reporting

1. Small groups can make charts by topics of positive feedback and recommended improvement.

2. Small groups can make two charts for each topic:

   a. Start—Do more

   b. Stop—Do less (or, Do instead)

3. Small groups can report to the whole group by taking turns. Each group, in turn, presents two ideas; the next group adds two additional ideas, and so on until all ideas are presented. Then general clarification and discussion can take place.

4. All small groups can post their charts around the room. Groups can do a gallery walk where they move from chart to chart, read the notes, and add their own reactions. Then general clarification and discussion can take place.

Sharing recommendations with staff

Staff can be invited to the last part of the session (if they haven't been a part of the session).

1. APCDs should have time with the Volunteers in each of their projects.

2. Administrative officer, DMO, safety and security officers should be available to discuss the recommendations in their own areas.

3. It would be good to have the country director available for final recommendations and discussions.

Close of Service Questionnaire

The Director's Office

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1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good

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_____

The Programming and Training Office

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1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good

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The Regional Offices

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1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good

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The Administrative Office

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1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good

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The Training

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_____

1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good

The Medical Office

1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good

Overall Evaluation

Sample feedback via flip charts

Explain that you've posted six flip charts around the room, each with its own topic: Programming, Training, Medical, Administration, Safety/Security and Other. Let the Volunteers know that, by the end of this session, you hope that they will have provided useful comments in each of these areas.

SAMPLE TOPICS FOR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS	
Programming	Site selection and development, housing, host families and organizations, job description, counterparts and supervisors, project objectives and activities, SPA, regional meetings, APCD–Volunteer relations
Training	PST, IST, special events attended by individual Volunteers, training staff–Volunteer relations
Medical Services	Long distance PCMO support, care at Medical Unit, local care near site, lab services, medicines, confidentiality
Administrative Services	Supplies and equipment provided by the Peace Corps, financial and banking matters, mail, work permits, Volunteer committees, newsletter, travel policies
Safety/Security	Conditions at your sites, eAP, local safety/security support
Other	Volunteer–Volunteer relations, etc.

Procedure

This will be a self-organizing session. Peace Corps staff will excuse themselves from the room so you can have a free, frank, and open discussion among yourselves.

1. Generating ideas and recording feedback

   There are various ways of generating ideas.

   Option A: Before you start writing on the flip charts, you may want to meet in pairs or small groups for 10 to 15 minutes to quickly brainstorm thoughts. Then you may convene a large group discussion, after which you write your comments on the flip charts.

   Option B: You may decide to have a large group discussion right away and write comments and suggestions as you go through the process.

   Option C: You may decide to go directly to the flip charts on the walls as individuals start writing comments and making suggestions. If someone has written something that you agree with and you would like to extend the thought, write your thoughts beside that person's comments or suggestions.

2. Providing oral feedback

   It is important that Peace Corps staff understand your flip chart comments and suggestions. So after you have spent an hour as a group, you will need to provide an oral review of what has been written on the flip charts.

   You might assign one person to each flip chart to read the comments and facilitate any clarification questions that might be asked by Peace Corps staff. If you choose Option C above, you will have to spend some time as a group reviewing the individual comments so the person doing the oral debriefing understands the context of the comments and suggestions.

Footnotes

Everyone's Peace Corps experience has unique qualities. For example, some of you might have had excellent counterparts and others of you might have had disengaged counterparts. Some of you might have found medical support to be consistently excellent, whereas a few of you might have had a less satisfactory experience. So when reporting to staff, it will be useful to note whether a comment or suggestion is held by a majority or just a few of you.

Try to be constructive and specific. A comment such as "My counterpart was useless" is less helpful than a suggestion such as "It might be worthwhile to delay the selection of a counterpart until a Volunteer has been at site for three months."

Certain comments and suggestions may require clarification by describing specific incidents. If necessary, think of ways to provide the clarification that preserves anonymity.

Please remember that the point of this session is not to throw darts; rather, it's to provide evidence that the Peace Corps needs to retain, eliminate, strengthen, or introduce things to provide a better Volunteer experience.

Peace Corps/Bangladesh: Project Plan Review and Feedback

Time: 2-1/2 hours

Objectives:

1. Obtain feedback on Peace Corps/Bangladesh's Youth and Community Development (YCD) and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) stated goals and objectives

2. Obtain feedback on Peace Corps/Bangladesh's YCD and TEFL stated training areas

Materials Needed:

1. Copies of TEFL and YCD simplified project frameworks (purpose, goals, and objectives) and implications for Training (attached)

2. Handouts of Feedback Discussion Questions (attached)

3. Flip charts, markers, masking tape

Procedures:

1. Present session objectives and provide overview of the session. (5 minutes)

2. Explain the development of the YCD and TEFL project plans. (10 minutes)

3. Divide participants into project groups: TEFL and YCD. (2 minutes)

4. For each project group, summarize the project framework's basic content (i.e., capacity building levels, structure of goals [general, lofty, result-oriented], and objectives [activities and outcomes], and actual activities). (10 minutes)

5. To each project group, explain the feedback discussion questions. (2 minutes)

6. Divide project groups into two smaller discussion groups and have each group address two or three different sets of goals and objectives, using the questions listed on the handout. Write major points on flip charts. (1 hour)

7. The four project groups get back into their larger project groups (i.e., all TEFL PCVs together and all YCD PCVs together) and representatives of each smaller group summarize the major points. Try to get the group's consensus on how the project framework should read. (45 minutes)

8. With all PCVs together, summarize the process, any findings, and next steps. (15 minutes)

9. Collect, label, and number all relevant flip charts.

Feedback Discussion Questions

Within your discussion group:

1. Select a recorder to write major points on flip charts.

2. Select a presenter to summarize the major points to the larger group.

3. Discuss the following questions in a focused and constructive way. (Please don't worry about wordsmithing – just simply discuss the concepts.)

A. Programming

1. For each goal:

   a. Should this remain a major goal of the project? Why, or why not?

   b. If not, how should it be changed?

2. For each objective (please note that each objective consists of an activity or set of activities [e.g., "Volunteers will teach students…"] and an outcome [e.g., " … students will improve their English skills"]):

   a. How many in your group conducted this activity? Overall comments?

   b. How many in your group had some success in achieving the outcome? Overall comments?

   c. As a group, do you think this objective should be changed? If yes, to what?

3. Overall: Are there other things that should be included in the project's goals and/or objectives?

4. Stepping away from the project plan, what are your general recommendations for the future TEFL or YCD project?

B. Training

For a few minutes, review the "implications for Training" section of your project plan.

1. Comment on the training areas identified in the project plan:

   a. What's missing from the list?

   b. What's not needed that is on the list?

2. Stepping away from the project plan, what are your general recommendations for the future training of Peace Corps/Bangladesh Volunteers?

PEACE CORPS/BANGLADESH

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Project

Goals and Objectives

It is important to note that not all Volunteers need to work on all the objectives, except for those indicated with an asterisk (*). Volunteers may choose which of the other objectives to address, depending on the needs and desires of their institutions and communities, and their own skills and interests.

Purpose: To assist the Bangladesh government, schools, and teachers in providing students with personal and professional skills that are needed to improve students' lives, through English-medium instruction and activities. Additionally, Peace Corps Volunteers will work with local communities to support local and national development processes.

Goal 1 (Individuals): Students will gain the skills and confidence to use English inside and outside the classroom.

> ***Objective 1.1:** Volunteers will teach students using modern, learner-based teaching methods and materials so some of those students can improve their English speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills.

> **Objective 1.2:** Volunteers will conduct co-curricular activities with students to provide a forum and environment where students feel more comfortable using their English skills so some of those students can improve their communicative abilities.

Goal 2 (Individuals): Students will broaden their understanding of the world and gain personal and professional knowledge and skills to improve their lives and their communities.

> **Objective 2.1:** Volunteers will use innovative methods for teaching students how to take an active role in their education and personal growth so some of those students can develop personal knowledge and skills, such as critical and creative thinking.

> **Objective 2.2:** Volunteers will facilitate learning events and service-learning activities, and connect students to community resources so some of those students can develop the professional skills they need to examine and address local, national, and international issues.

Goal 3 (Counterparts/Colleagues): Through the exchange of skills and knowledge, teachers will implement learner-based teaching methods that are sustainable and applicable to Bangladeshi schools.

> **Objective 3.1:** Volunteers will facilitate workshops and co-teach classes with teachers so some of those teachers create a learning-friendly environment and implement learner-based teaching methods in their classrooms.

> **Objective 3.2:** Volunteers will train teachers, using various modern teaching methods so some of those teachers can improve their communicative English skills.

Goal 4 (Institutions): Schools will be efficient institutions that provide a positive, student-centered learning environment.

> **Objective 4.1:** Volunteers will facilitate trainings/workshops, share knowledge and experiences, and help improve facilities and resources with staff in schools, so some of those schools will create better learning environments and more learning opportunities.

> **Objective 4.2:** Volunteers with the staff in schools will organize co-curricular activities and fundraising events that promote better relationships between schools, parents, and community members, so some of those schools can increase awareness about and participation in school activities.

Goal 5 (Communities): Communities will better address their needs and hopes.

> ***Objective 5.1:** Volunteers and their community partners will work with communities, so some of those communities can better identify their assets and needs, and develop, implement, and monitor education and development projects.

> **Objective 5.2:** Volunteers and their community partners will assist communities, so some of those communities better support their initiatives.

> ***Objective 5.3:** Volunteers and their community partners will promote the empowerment of underrepresented community members, such as women, children, minorities, and people with disabilities, so some of those individuals can increase their representation and participation in community activities.

PEACE CORPS/BANGLADESH

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Project

3.2. Implications for Training

Individual Level

- Identifying and using resources

- How to develop a work plan

- Understanding Bangladesh's national English curriculum— "English for Today"

- Understanding national exams and syllabus for Secondary School Certificate

- Teaching methodology:

  – Curriculum-building and development

  – Course development and design

  – Lesson planning

  – Assessment and evaluations

  – Methods of problem-solving and critical thinking

  – Classroom management

  – Teaching goal-setting and confidence-building

  – Facilitation techniques

  – Motivation techniques

  – Leading discussions

  – Activity building

  – Communicative activities

- Mobilizing and selecting participants

- Cross-cultural sensitivity practices, techniques, and activities

- Informal instruction methods

- Appreciative inquiry

- Forms of civic responsibility in Bangladesh

- Methods of empowerment

- Identifying and implementing educational or development projects

Counterpart and Colleague Level

- Identifying a counterpart

- Identifying and using resources

- Co-teaching strategies or methods

- Model teaching

- Team-building skills

- Methods for adult education and teaching staff

- Situation analysis for Bangladeshi teachers

- Networking with teacher training colleges

Institution Level

- Identifying assets and needs

- Structure in government schools and the Ministry of Education, and how they operate

- Ministry of Education's School-Based Assessment pilot program

- Background on Bangladeshi clubs (e.g., youth athletic clubs)

- Institutional management methods

- How to conduct participatory assessments (PACA)

- Methods for creating partnerships; networking

- Methods for monitoring and evaluation

- Office protocol

- Codes of professionalism

- Work ethics and values

- Government schools calendar year, exam schedule

- Parent Teacher Associations

- Connecting schools with community partners

Community Level

- Identifying marginalized groups

- Identifying community initiatives

- Integration techniques

- Development strategies

- Background on development in Bangladesh

- Background on development in general

- Methods for civic responsibility

Additional Training Needs

- Reporting and filing

- Site history records

- Technical language sessions

PEACE CORPS/BANGLADESH
Youth and Community Development (YCD)

Goals and Objectives

It is important to note that not all Volunteers need to work on all the objectives, except for those indicated with an asterisk (*). Volunteers may choose which of the other objectives to address, depending on the needs and desires of their institutions and communities, and their own skills and interests.

Purpose: Peace Corps will assist the Ministry of Youth and Sports to provide unemployed and underemployed youth with vocational and skills-development training. Additionally, the

Peace Corps will work with local communities to support the local and national development process.

Goal 1 (Individuals): The youth of Bangladesh will gain the necessary knowledge and ability to develop their personal, professional, and technical skills to increase their employment opportunities and broaden their worldview.

> ***Objective 1.1:** Volunteers will teach youths through English-medium classes, workshops, clubs, and discussions, so some of those youths can improve their communicative English abilities and their learning and employment opportunities.
>
> **Objective 1.2:** Volunteers will facilitate the development of youths through classes, service learning, and mobile outreach activities, workshops, and clubs, so some of those youths can gain technical and life skills, such as information technology, batik block printing, conflict resolution, critical thinking, health practices, goal setting, and learning skills.
>
> **Objective 1.3:** Volunteers will facilitate learning events and service activities for youths about civic responsibility, other cultures, and global issues, so some of those youths can develop the knowledge and skills they need to examine and address local, national, and international issues.

Goal 2 (Counterparts and Colleagues): To enhance the quality of teaching, counterparts and colleagues will train youths through a variety of innovative instruction methods.

> **Objective 2.1:** Volunteers will co-teach, facilitate workshops, and model teaching techniques with counterparts so some of those counterparts and colleagues can learn and implement innovative teaching practices and classroom management methods.

Objective 2.2: Volunteers, along with counterparts and colleagues, will conduct and participate in workshops, training sessions, and informal activities, so some of those counterparts and colleagues can enhance their professional abilities, such as information communication technology, English, and technical skills.

Objective 2.3: Volunteers, along with counterparts and colleagues, will exchange ideas by participating in cultural activities, Peace Corps trainings, and community programs and discussions, so Volunteers and some counterparts and colleagues can improve their cross-cultural understanding.

Goal 3 (Organizations): Organizations, such as DYDs, NGOs, and youth clubs, will provide the resources, skills, and training to community members to better meet community needs.

*Objective 3.1: Volunteers will assist organizations, so some of those organizations can create and expand programs, services, and resources offered.

Objective 3.2: Volunteers will work with organizations, so some of those organizations can increase their management capacity in such areas as identifying resources, training staff, enhancing communication, and improving monitoring and evaluation processes.

Objective 3.3: Volunteers will work with organizations, so communication, cooperation, and coordination on development projects is increased among some of those organizations.

Goal 4 (Communities): Communities will better address their needs and hopes.

*Objective 4.1: Volunteers and their community partners will work with communities, so some of those communities can better identify their assets and needs and develop, implement, and monitor educational and development projects.

Objective 4.2: Volunteers and their community partners will assist communities, so some of those communities can better support their initiatives.

Objective 4.3: Volunteers and their community partners will promote the empowerment of underrepresented community members, such as women, children, minorities, and people with disabilities, so some of those individuals can increase their representation and participation in community activities.

Youth and Community Development (YCD)

3.2. Implications for Training

Individual Level

- How to develop a work plan
- Identifying and using resources
- Teaching methodology
  - Curriculum-building and development
  - Course development and design
  - Lesson planning
  - Assessment and evaluations
  - Methods for problem solving and critical thinking
  - Classroom management
  - Teaching goal-setting and confidence-building
  - Facilitation techniques
  - Motivation techniques
  - Employment teaching/building skills
  - Leading discussions
  - Activity-building
  - Communicative activities
- Mobilizing and selecting participants
- Cross-cultural sensitivity practices, techniques, and activities
- Methods for adult education and teaching staff
- Informal instruction methods/appreciative inquiry
- Methods for teaching civic responsibility in Bangladesh
- Methods of empowerment
- Identifying and implementing educational or development projects

Counterpart and Colleague Level

- Identifying a counterpart
- Co-teaching strategies or methods

- Model teaching
- Team-building skills

Organization Level

- Traditional systems of structure and hierarchy
- Structure of the DYD and what they're doing at all levels
- Background on Bangladeshi clubs (youth athletic clubs)
- Organizational and NGO management methods
- How to conduct participatory assessments (PACA)
- Methods for creating partnerships
- Methods for monitoring and evaluation
- Office protocol
- Codes of professionalism
- Work ethics and values
- Major cultural holidays and activities
- Identifying assets and needs

Community Level

- Identifying marginalized groups
- Identifying community initiatives
- Integration techniques
- Development strategies
- Background on development in Bangladesh
- Background on development in general
- Methods for teaching civic responsibility

Additional Training Needs

- Reporting and filing
- Site history records
- Technical Language sessions

SESSION 6
Saying Goodbye: Bringing Effective Closure to Your Last Months In-Country

Purpose

This session helps Volunteers plan to make the most of the last few months in-country by bringing assignment and community activities to a close and then saying goodbye appropriately before moving on to the next steps in life. This is a critical step toward making a good transition. Volunteers discuss strategies for reviewing their work with counterparts to help communities plan for the next steps with a new Volunteer, or to move forward without a Volunteer. Volunteers review issues of safety and security that are specific to the last few months of service—often a vulnerable time for Volunteers.

Rationale

The last three months of Volunteer service should be approached differently than the earlier stages of volunteering. During these final months, it is important for Volunteers to conclude their assignment responsibilities; say goodbye to their friends and co-workers; and prepare to leave the host country, or, if staying, prepare to move into a new status.

These months are extremely busy for most Volunteers. The demands of work, social life, and planning for the future can make the time fly by and perhaps even create stress and exhaustion. These factors can contribute to more vulnerability in terms of safety and security. In addition, some people may find it difficult to discuss their departure at their site and face the farewell events and parties.

This is a good time for Volunteers to begin thinking about the closure of overseas service as a means of preparing for the future, which includes third goal activities that will benefit the people they served for two years. Presenting this concept at this session allows the Volunteers to consider their last three months in-country as a time of closure, as well as a time of opportunity. (Here, you can remind Volunteers that they are Volunteers for a brief time, but are returned Volunteers for the rest of their lives.)

Duration

45 minutes to 1 hour

Objectives

By the end of the session, the Volunteers will be able to:

- Accept and plan for the fact that their Volunteer service abroad is coming to an end

- Explain the importance of saying goodbye and seeking closure

- Identify activities to be completed prior to their departure from their assigned community and country

- Plan how to review status of work with counterpart, community, or host organization and help them prepare for what happens next

- List last things to see or experience, as well as people to receive goodbyes

[Session 7: Safety and Security at COS discusses and reviews safety and security strategies related to closing service.]

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction (10 minutes)

Part 2: Closing out assignment and life in community (10 minutes)

Part 3: Personal goodbyes (20+ minutes)

Part 4: Superlatives (5 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

1. Facilitator should be aware of what is expected of Volunteers, in terms of site reports, project follow-up documents, etc.

2. Facilitator should also be aware of any special issues with the particular COS group, such as difficult assignments, unpleasant events, etc., that might affect how this session will unfold. Make modifications to address any special issues.

3. If possible, have an HCN co-facilitator who can give tips on culturally appropriate ways to say "Thank you" and "Goodbye"—written cards, types of gifts, etc.

4. Facilitator should review Session 11b for appropriate ideas and resources related to storytelling as a third goal and job-hunting strategy.

Materials and Equipment

- Blank flip charts
- Prepared flip charts
  a. The Moving Process Chart (from Session 1)
  b. Superlatives
- Handout C: "Saying Goodbye"

Trainer Preparation

If post has guidance for Volunteers on reports and documents for transitioning out of projects and sites, those should be made available during this session, if they were not covered in Sessions 3 and 4.

Methodology

Part 1: Introduction (10 minutes)

> **Step 1:** Look back at the transition chart. Note that saying goodbye happens while physically in-country, but that the effects of doing it well—or not doing it well—will linger into their reengagement. Ask if anyone has an example of not saying goodbye well before leaving home and how it affected him or her once in the host country. (Examples: Leaving relationships open-ended and feeling bad; not calling or visiting an older relative who becomes ill or dies; having tasks left undone [reports, papers] follow you to post where it is difficult to finish them; etc.)

> **Step 2:** Ask, "Why do you think we sometimes don't do a good job of saying good-bye?" (Denying that we have to leave people or things we like; not ready to leave—procrastinating; don't think it is important; uncomfortable with expressing emotions, receiving emotional expressions of others; fed up with certain tasks or people—just want to leave them behind, etc.). "If saying goodbye sounds dreadful to you, and you prefer to just 'disappear,' think about how your counterparts, host family, and others you worked and lived with would feel—rejected and unappreciated."

> **Step 3:** There are two aspects of leaving: one is disengagement—all the paperwork and physical things we have to do, and the other is saying goodbye. Saying goodbye is putting closure to relationships and recognizing what places and things will be missed. By planning how we will say goodbye and getting tasks on the calendar, we can do a better job of it, and leave the country in a better state of mind to face whatever comes next.

> **Step 4:** Review the objectives of the session.

Part 2: Closing out assignment and life in community (10 minutes)

Step 1: We have already had a session and a big checklist of things you must do to close out your service with the Peace Corps. But what are the things you need to do with your school, agency, NGO, and community to put closure to the work you have been doing? Make and discuss two lists: one if the Volunteer will not be replaced and one if there will be a next generation of Volunteers in the same job. (Items may include: writing down information on projects to be followed up on: reports that may be required; transition meetings with counterpart(s) who will take over projects; site information for next generation Volunteers; be careful not to raise false expectations—like giving away things or money, or promising to send things back from home.)

Step 2: Discuss local customs for people who are leaving or are honored in some way. What might Volunteers expect to happen to them? How do they feel about it? What strategies do they have for handling it? Do they feel there will be expectations of them doing something special? If so, what?

Part 3: Saying goodbye to personal friends, special places, and things (20 minutes or more)

Step 1: Remind them: "There are both professional and personal goodbyes to say. Just as we thought about the professional things above, you need to make plans for the personal things as well."

Step 2: Ask them: "What are some of the personal things you will miss?" (Just have PCVs call them out.) Are there any special ways to remember them?

Step 3: Guide them: "Since things will start getting busy once you leave this conference, let's take some time for you to make your own plans for saying goodbye." Distribute the worksheet "Saying Goodbye" and give participants about 10 minutes to work.

Step 4: Ask PCVs to pull their chairs into groups of five or six and share some of their items.

Step 5: Ask an HCN facilitator to give specific tips on culturally appropriate thank yous and goodbyes to different people (supervisors, colleagues, friends)—written, verbal, gifts, or gestures (such a taking a cake or cookies to a workplace). Ask if Volunteers have any specific concerns they would like advice about, such as someone who might go to the airport although they don't want them to. What are culturally acceptable ways to address their concerns?

Part 4: Superlatives (5 minutes)

Trainer's note: Since this session may have been unpleasant for many Volunteers who have enjoyed their service and are finding it difficult to leave, this is a way to lighten up at the end.

Step 1: Explain that as a final step, the group will look at superlatives. Reveal the flip chart and ask participants to think back to the group discussion, their individual planning, and their small-group sharing. In a minute, you'll call off the superlatives and they are to call out their responses.

Step 2: Read through the list and have the PCVs call out their responses. There are no right or wrong responses, and people may say the same thing for different categories. Hopefully, there will be some laughter!

Session 6 Resources

Prepared flip charts

a. The Moving Process chart (from Session 1)

b. Superlatives

- The hardest
- The most complicated
- The most popular
- The saddest
- The most expensive

- The most obvious
- The most surprising
- The most intriguing
- The most dreaded
- The most unusual

- The silliest
- The cheapest
- The most poignant
- The cleverest

Saying Goodbye

	Professional	Personal
Who I need to see (individuals, groups)		
What I need to do (make appointments, call a meeting, prepare remarks/ gifts, take photos)		
Places I want to visit; things I want to do		
How will I remember these people, places, and things?		

SESSION 7
Safety and Security at COS

Purpose

There are three purposes of this session: (1) to alert Volunteers to their risk of crimes that are more likely to occur late in their service; (2) to have Volunteers report incidents that they have not yet reported; and (3) to invite Volunteers to provide feedback for improving the post's Volunteer safety and security support system.

Rationale

Volunteers who are preparing for COS may be anxious about leaving and be less vigilant about their personal safety. Or, they may feel very comfortable in their surroundings, also leading them to be less vigilant. In addition, they may already be "moving on" in their minds and paying less attention to their surroundings. This session raises their awareness of the need to remain vigilant and gives them an opportunity to explore actions they can take to avoid crimes that tend to occur late in Volunteers' service. The session also will introduce the Volunteers to the Security Incident Questionnaire (SIQ) and the requirements for this survey.

Duration

1 hour

Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will be able to:

- Explain the crimes that are most likely to occur late in their service.

- State several strategies to avoid crimes or reduce their effect

- Describe how to complete the SIQ and why their input is important

- Report any incidents that they have not yet reported

- Provide feedback for improving the post's Volunteer safety and security support system

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Part 2: Safety concerns at end of service (30 minutes)

Part 3: Reporting past incidents (5 minutes)

Part 4: Overview of the Security Incident Questionnaire (5 minutes)

**Part 5: Feedback for improving post Volunteer safety and security support system
          (15 minutes)**

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This segment of the COS training is often done by the post Safety and Security Manager.

Materials and Equipment

- Blank flip chart paper, markers, tape
- 3 x 5 index cards or ¼ sheets of paper
- Pens and pencils
- Prepared flip charts:
    A. The Moving Process chart (from Session 1)
    B. Objectives of the session
    C. Chart of time-in-service crime trends
    D. Small group task
- Handouts:
    A. Commonly Reported Crimes Toward the End of Service
    B. The Security Incident Questionnaire (SIQ)
- Trainer Material: SIQ Frequently Asked Questions for Staff

Trainer Preparation

Prepare up-to-date information about what crimes are most likely to occur during the last three months of service. Use the post's own crime data, or seek assistance from the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer assigned to your post. The Crime Statistics and Analysis Unit in Peace Corps/Washington can also provide data analysis assistance and may be contacted at CIR@ peacecorps.gov.

For most posts, the most common crimes at the end of service are robbery, burglary, and theft, but may also include rape or attempted rape, vandalism, aggravated assault or physical assault,

stalking, or intimidation. If possible, contrast these end-of-service crimes with the types of crimes that may be more likely to occur earlier in service or at a year into service.

Review the Trainer Material: SIQ Frequently Asked Questions for Staff before the session to prepare to answer Volunteer questions.

Methodology

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Refer to the Moving Process chart from Session 1. Ask how the transition that PCVs are in now might affect their safety and security. (Answers may include anxiety about leaving and less vigilance about their personal safety. Or they may feel very comfortable in their surroundings, also leading them to be less vigilant. They may be already "moving on" in their minds and paying less attention to their surroundings.)

Step 2: Explain that this session will address safety and security. Introduce yourself and the objectives.

Part 2: Safety concerns at end of service (30 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that, based on data you have been gathering (or compiled by PC/Washington); we can identify certain crimes that are more likely to occur later in a Volunteer's service.

Step 2: Reveal the crime data flip chart (or distribute Handout A) and explain the data. Identify crimes more likely to occur later in service.

Step 3: Explain that PCVs will have about 10 minutes to consider these different crimes in small groups: burglary, robbery, and theft. Place Volunteers into small groups. Give each group a blank flip chart and marker, and tell them which crime to discuss. Remind them when they have two minutes left.

While in groups, Volunteers should discuss the following questions:

1. Why the incidence of this crime might be most common toward the end of service.
2. What you already do to manage your risk of this crime.
3. What additional action COS Volunteers could take to further reduce their risk.
4. Are there any resources you would like Peace Corps to help with?

Step 4: Ask the whole group to come back together. Have each small group report their conclusions about the causes for the pattern and their suggestions for preventing the crimes.

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For example, one group might be assigned to examine burglary, and might observe it is common at the end of service because PCVs might become complacent about their integration into the community and stop locking doors; criminals may seek to steal items before the PCV leaves; the PCV may be absent from home frequently for wrap-up activities; PCVs' property such as cameras might be more conspicuous as they take pictures around the community in anticipation of leaving, etc. The group might then describe steps they can take to manage their risk, such as asking neighbors to help keep an eye on their house, purchasing personal articles insurance, securing windows in a certain fashion, etc. Finally, they should identify additional ways to reduce their risk at the end of service, including locking the door, even if you're just down the street for a short time; reducing travel; not conspicuously displaying property; and backing up data on electronic devices so a loss will be less traumatic.

Step 5: Ask Volunteers if they have any reactions to the exercise, or if they noticed anything from the groups' work. (Most of the strategies are their own responsibility; the strategies sound like things they have been doing throughout their service: They merely shouldn't let down their guard as COS approaches. By talking to other Volunteers, it is possible to collect a lot of security ideas. It is a lot easier to prevent a crime from occurring than to reduce the impact once it occurs, etc.)

Acknowledge that Volunteers have identified many ways to reduce the risk of the crimes that are most common at the end of service, and it is your hope that they can conclude their service without incident. Further, explain that gathering these insights—along with crime information—from past Volunteers enables present and future Volunteers to better understand the risks they face.

Part 3: Reporting past incidents (5 minutes)

Step 1: Transition from the previous activity by saying that you would like the PCVs to contribute to the understanding of Volunteers' experience with crime by informing the Peace Corps about any crimes they have not reported. Explain that you understand that Volunteers experience crimes that they sometimes do not report to the Peace Corps. Provide some of the reasons they do not report them: fear of administrative consequences, shame, believing there is nothing the Peace Corps can do to help, loss of privacy, etc.

Step 2: Explain that the Peace Corps is using a more powerful and automated system for collecting and analyzing crime data. But in order to better analyze crimes and reveal trends, we need more data. We also need to know about crimes so we can provide better support to Volunteers. This means we would like Volunteers to report all crimes and attempted crimes they experience.

Step 3: Encourage Volunteers to report to the Safety and Security Manager (SSM) any crimes or attempted crimes they experienced, even if those crimes happened a long time ago. Crimes that should be reported include rape, attempted rape, robbery, attempted robbery, physical assault, burglary, forced kissing, groping, threats, stalking, theft, attempted theft, vandalism, or other crimes.

Step 4: Announce that in addition to post staff, there is another resource to help Volunteers if they become victims of crime. The Office of Victim Advocacy is available to assist currently serving Volunteers as well as RPCVs in accessing support services by calling or texting +1-202-409-2704 or emailing victimadvocate@peacecorps.gov. All Volunteers should have a copy of the victim advocacy contact card; that contact information is also in the Safety and Security PST workbook they were given during PST.

Part 4: Overview of the Security Incident Questionnaire (5 minutes)

Step 1: All departing Volunteers are required to log on to the SIQ as part of their COS process, regardless of whether they were victims of crimes or previously reported crimes to staff. Similar to the AVS process, Volunteers are not required to complete the SIQ. However, in the case of the SIQ, Volunteers are required to log on to the questionnaire. After logging on, they have the option of declining to complete the form.

Volunteers should be instructed to fill out the SIQ as close to their date of departure from their country of service as possible so that their answers cover their entire period of service. Most Volunteers fill out the SIQ in less than 30 minutes, and many complete it in fewer than 10 minutes. This item is listed as one of the required steps to take in the COS checklist. When PCVs log into the survey link, SSM will receive an automated notification that a specific PCV has logged into the page; this email notification will serve as a verification that PCVs have completed this obligation within the COS checklist.

Step 2: Distribute and review Handout B, The Security Incident Questionnaire (SIQ).

Step 3: Distribute and review Handout C, SIQ Frequently Asked Questions, for additional information.

Part 5: Feedback for improving post safety support (15 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that there is one more part of this session. This is where the PCVs can help the post serve new Volunteers better.

Step 2: Explain that the Volunteers can help the post improve its Safety & Security program to better serve its Volunteers. Ask Volunteers to brainstorm some components of the Volunteer safety and security system at the post (policies, email/SMS notifications, introductions to the local police, PST sessions, Safety & Security Council, incident response procedures, etc.), and to record their ideas on a flip chart sheet.

Step 3: Next, to elicit feedback on these components, distribute a small piece of paper to each PCV and ask them to write one idea for how the post can improve the safety support the Peace Corps provides to Volunteers. Instruct participants to make the suggestion short, specific, and concrete. Offer an example: Program Managers should meet with police when they visit sites, think through evacuation routes before placing PCVs in individual sites, explain what crimes are occurring in-country more often, stress the importance of living near a family in selecting housing, etc. Give them a few minutes to write down their idea. Encourage them to write clearly because others will have to read it.

Step 4: After everybody is ready, invite all PCVs to stand in a circle with their individual cards and a pen. Prompt the PCVs to start handing their notes to PCVs on their right, until you say, "Stop." PCVs stop handing the cards and will quietly read the recommendation/idea written on the card. Each PCV should rank the idea from 1 to 5 (with one being the lowest score and five being the highest) on the other side of the note.

Step 5: The PCVs will continue with four more rounds; at the end, ask everyone to take whatever card they ended up with, sum up the scores, and write the total score on the card (with 25 being the highest score and 5 being the lowest score).

Step 6: Invite the Volunteers who have cards ranked above 15 to line up and read the ideas out loud so everyone hears the recommendations/ideas that got the highest number of points.

Step 7: Thank the PCVs and ask if they have comments or questions about the ideas they ranked. Record their suggestions and their importance (from the ranking) for later discussion with the CD and other senior staff members. Collect all of the cards.

Step 8 (Wrap-up): Thank all participants for sharing their recommendations for the new group and helping improve the safety and security program. Tell them that the SSM is available to discuss any safety and security related topic individually or in groups.

Commonly Reported Crimes That Occur Toward the End of Service

Each post should examine its own experience with crime to discern trends, including which crimes are most common at the end of service.

Worldwide, the most common crimes being reported at the end of service are robbery, burglary, and theft.

The Africa and IAP regions mimic the global pattern, with robbery, burglary, and theft as the most commonly reported crimes toward the end of service.

The EMA region is distinct due to its high proportion of physical and sexual assaults reported toward the end of service. Theft is still the most reported, and burglary is reported as often as assaults.

In Africa, the subregions of West Africa, Southern Africa, and East Africa/Indian Ocean all experience robbery, burglary, and theft as the predominant types of crime reported.

In the Eastern Europe/Mediterranean subregion, thefts, threats, and physical assaults were the most commonly reported incident types during the last three months of service.

In the Central Asia/Caucasus subregion, the most commonly reported incident types are split among three classifications: theft, physical assault, and sexual assault. Very few incidents are reported in the last two months of service.
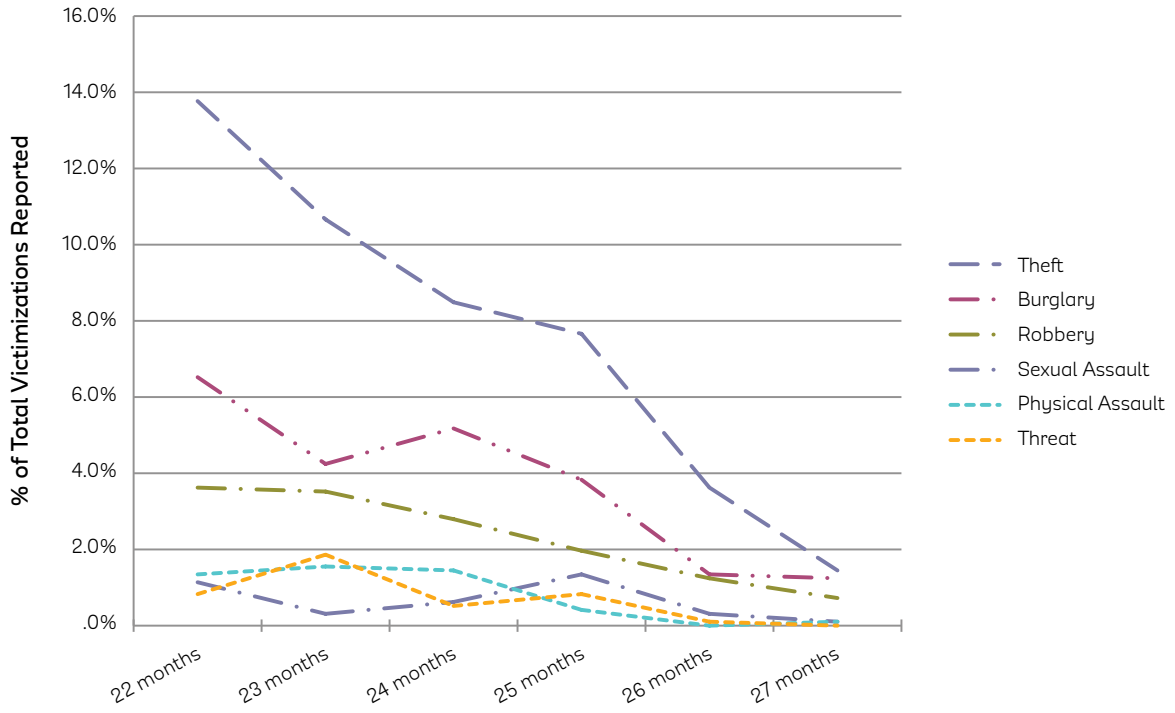
The East Asia subregion reports a high proportion of theft (more than 50 percent of reported incidents) in the last six months of service. The next most reported crimes are physical and sexual assaults.

The Central America subregion reports the same three most common crimes as the global and regional assessments (robbery, burglary, and theft).

The Pacific subregion shows a higher percentage of thefts and burglaries reported.

The South America and Caribbean subregions are consistent with the global pattern, reporting mostly robbery, burglary, and theft in the last six months of service.

Most Common Reported Victimizations in the last 6 Months of Service, 2010-2014

Y-axis: % of Total Victimizations Reported

Y-axis values: 16.0%, 14.0%, 12.0%, 10.0%, 8.0%, 6.0%, 4.0%, 2.0%, .0%

X-axis: 22 months, 23 months, 24 months, 25 months, 26 months, 27 months

Legend:
- Theft
- Burglary
- Robbery
- Sexual Assault
- Physical Assault
- Threat

The Security Incident Questionnaire (SIQ)

You Can Help Future Volunteers

The safety and security of Volunteers are among the Peace Corps' top priorities. The Peace Corps is committed to providing every Volunteer with the training, guidance, and support she or he needs to remain safe and productive during service.

As a seasoned Volunteer, you have knowledge we need to help assure that future Volunteers benefit from the most effective risk reduction programs and that Volunteers who experience crimes receive highly responsive support. As your service comes to a close, we ask that you take a few minutes to share that knowledge with us by filling out the Security Incident Questionnaire (SIQ).

Who Should Fill Out the SIQ?

Everyone is required to log on to the SIQ before COS ends. This includes:

- Volunteers who did NOT experience any security incidents (we need to know that!)
- Volunteers who already reported incidents to Peace Corps staff

After you log on you will have the option to decline filling out the questionnaire, but you must log on.

If you will be extending your service, note that you must be within 120 days of the date when your extension will end to fill out the SIQ.

How Do I Access the Questionnaire?

Go to this link to request a username and password: http://tinyurl.com/SIQuestionnaire. The link to the actual form will be sent to your email address.

How Long Will It Take?

Many Volunteers fill out the SIQ in less than 10 minutes, and the majority fills it out in less than 30 minutes.

Are My Answers Anonymous?

Yes, your answers are collected anonymously. Your post will be notified that you logged on to the SIQ, but they do not have access to your answers.

If you have any problems accessing the form or filling it out, send an email to SIQHelp@peacecorps.gov.

Trainer Material:

Security Incident Questionnaire Frequently Asked Questions

What exactly is the SIQ?

The Security Incident Questionnaire (SIQ) is an anonymous electronic form that all Volunteers fill out at the end of service. It asks questions about crimes they may have experienced during their service. The SIQ captures information about reported and unreported crimes, and identifies obstacles that contribute to underreporting.

What is the purpose of the SIQ?

By filling out the SIQ, Volunteers will provide a more thorough understanding of the nature and frequency of crime so that the Peace Corps can:

- Deliver more appropriate and effective training
- Accurately advise Volunteers about security threats
- Provide more accurate and in-depth security information to invitees to assist them in making informed choices regarding service
- Better support Volunteers through targeted and improved services (medical, security, counseling, etc.)
- Improve our site development and site placement practices
- Target interventions and allocate resources where needed

Who needs to fill out the SIQ?

All Volunteers (including PCRVs) need to log on to the SIQ before their close of service (COS) date. Filling out the SIQ is voluntary; however, Volunteers must log on to the SIQ to register their decision not to fill it out in order to have the SIQ requirement checked off of their COS checklist. Volunteers who end their service early due to Medevac, early termination, or those who are administratively separated also need to log on to the SIQ. Volunteers who Medevac to the United States are informed about the SIQ by Office of Health Services (OHS).

Do Volunteers have to log on to the SIQ if they were never the victim of a crime?

Yes. It is important that all Volunteers log on to the SIQ so that the Peace Corps gets a complete and accurate picture of security incidents. If Volunteers who did not experience crimes do not fill out the SIQ, the victimization rates will likely seem higher than they actually are.

When do Volunteers need to fill out the SIQ?

Volunteers should fill out the SIQ as close to their departure date as possible. However, any time between their COS conference and departure date is an acceptable time to fill out the SIQ.

How do Volunteers fill out the SIQ and how long will it take?

The SIQ is filled out online. About 90 percent of Volunteers fill it out in 10 to 30 minutes.

Volunteers do not need a fast internet connection. We have not had any reports of technical difficulties with the SIQ.

We seem to be overwhelming Volunteers with security questionnaires these days … why?

Volunteers only receive two Peace Corps/Washington-generated questionnaires related to security incidents at posts: (1) the SIQ, which is for all PCVs and PCRVs; and (2) the Response Quality Survey (RQS), which is only for sexual assault victims. The SIQ helps us better understand the nature and scope of crime incidents at posts, as well as the reasons that Volunteers didn't make official reports. The RQS allows victims of sexual assaults to evaluate the services they received from the Peace Corps.

Could filling out the SIQ "re-victimize" Volunteers?

Sexual assault researchers have found that less than 1 percent (fewer than 1 in 100) of people who were sexually assaulted became very upset by answering questions about their experiences[1]. If needed, Volunteers may skip questions they find upsetting; decline to fill out the SIQ; and/or contact their PCMO, the Office of Victim Advocacy, or someone else they trust for support.

The SIQ is going to make the security environment at my post look worse. Don't we scare Volunteers enough as it is?

The SIQ will show higher prevalence rates then the Consolidated Incident Reporting System (CIRS) because it captures reported and unreported crimes, and covers a longer period of time. However, having more thorough information about crimes will help the Peace Corps better target resources and interventions and, ultimately, enhance Volunteer safety and security.

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[1]Decker, S. E., Naugle, A. E., Carter-Visscher, R., Bell, K., & Seifert, A. (2011). Ethical issues in research on sensitive topics: Participants' experiences of distress and benefit. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, 6, 55-64

Was the SIQ mandated by the Kate Puzey Act?

No. The SIQ was not mandated by the Kate Puzey Act, but it is based on best practices in the field of crime victimization research, sexual assault research, and online surveys.

Will posts see the information from the SIQ? When?

Yes. Keep in mind that the SIQ is not like the AVS where all of the information is collected in a short period. Information from the SIQ accumulates gradually throughout the year. Look for the first summary of SIQ data in January 2016.

Who is the contact person for the SIQ?

The point of contact for information about the SIQ and technical assistance is the Safety and Security Survey Specialist, at SIQHelp@peacecorps.gov.

SESSION 8
Anticipating Readjustment to Life in the United States: Issues and Strategies

Purpose

In this session Volunteers begin to plan for their reentry into the United States. They learn to recognize reentry situations and potential difficulties that may occur, and identify strategies to address them.

Rationale

For many people who live abroad, returning to their own country and culture is a more difficult adjustment than moving into the foreign culture. There are many reasons: (1) They have changed due to their experience abroad but may not be aware how much. (2) They expect home to be just like they left it, but people and things at home have changed too. (3) They have lots of interesting stories to tell but many listeners can't relate to their experiences and have limited patience to listen. (4) They are surprised that most of their family and friends ask naïve questions because they have limited or no foreign experience . (5) When frustrated abroad, they may have idealized their own country. When arriving home, they may be disappointed, which is particularly upsetting because they are "home" and expect to feel comfortable there. (6) They do not expect to have trouble readjusting to home.

Duration

1 hour

Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will

- Compare their experience transitioning to their host country with their preparations to transition back to the United States.

- Examine potential challenges that they will face in readjusting to the United States.

- Rate which of Michael Paige's 10 Intensity Factors will have the biggest impact on their reentry, and develop coping strategies to address three of them.

Session Outline

Introduction (5 minutes)

Readjustment to "Home" (45 minutes)

Conclusion (10 minutes)

Facilitation and Technical Expertise

Ideally, the facilitator(s) of this session will have experienced reentry themselves. If there are RPCVs among the current Volunteers or staff, they may be good facilitators.

Materials and Equipment

- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Prepared flip chart:
  - Flip Chart A: Johari's Window
- Handouts:

  A. Welcome Home Role-Play

  B. 10 Intensity Factors Associated With Intercultural Experiences

Trainer Preparation

1. Research information regarding Johari's Window, if unfamiliar with that concept.
2. Research information regarding Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management theory, if unfamiliar.
3. Cut out the different character roles for the Welcome Home Role-Play (Handout A).

Methodology

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

> **Step 1:** Ask the Volunteers to take a moment and think back to the time between receiving their Peace Corps Invite and departing for their country of assignment. Ask the Volunteers what emotions they felt during that time. Record their responses on one side of a flip chart sheet titled "Emotions – Start of Service."

Step 2: Ask the Volunteers to take a moment and reflect on how they are feeling now as they are getting closer to their end of service and (possible) return to the United States. Ask the Volunteers what emotions they are currently feeling about returning. Record their responses on the other side of the flip chart paper titled "Emotions – End of Service."

Step 3: Ask the Volunteers how these emotions are similar or different, and what the reasons are for that.

Step 4: Connect the Volunteer responses with the objectives of the session and the idea of readjustment.

Part 2: Readjustment to "Home" (45 minutes)

Step 1: Welcome Home Role-Play (Handout A): Assign the various roles for this role-play to Volunteers. (Ideally, you will want Volunteers with some dramatic/theatre experience.) Give the Volunteers two minutes to prepare individually, and let them know that their performance will be about five minutes long. It is important that the RPCV character not know what the other characters will be doing.

Step 2: While the role-play Volunteers are preparing, ask the remaining Volunteers what they feel will be the most difficult part of going back to the United States. Record their responses on a flip chart sheet.

Step 3: Ask the Volunteer audience to watch the role-play and identify the various challenges the RPCV will face and what they perceive the RPCVs emotions to be. Let the role-play begin.

Step 4: End the role-play at a good stopping point somewhere between the three minute and five minute mark. Thank the actors and have them sit back down. Ask the Volunteers:

- What did they see?
- How do they think the RPCV felt during this exchange? (You can also ask the RPCV actor how he/she felt playing the character.)
- What were the challenges in this scene?
- Which of these challenges connects to what you have already identified? (See Step 2)
- What do you think are the causes of the challenges seen here?
- Do you think that the challenges seen here are realistic as experienced by RPCVs as they return home?

Step 5: After facilitating this debrief for about five minutes, explain that many RPCVs report situations and feelings similar to those seen here. While there are many theories as to why readjustment back to a "home" culture is challenging after an immersion into another, we are going to only look at two explanations.

Step 6: Reveal the prepared flip chart paper showing Johari's Window. Explain that the window contains four areas that describe the interaction between the Y-axis "What is known to others" and the X-axis "What is known to self." The four areas can be explained as follows:

1. Hidden: What you know about yourself, but what others do not know about you.
2. Open: What you know about yourself and what others also know about you.
3. Blind: What others know about you, but what you do not know about yourself.
4. Unknown: What you and others do not know about yourself.

Note: Johari's Window is a tool developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955 to help increase one's understanding of his/her relationship with self and others.

Step 7: Explain that many of the challenges felt when returning home result from when there have been changes in you from when you have left the United States to when you return. Volunteers experience many changes during their service, some of which they are aware of, and some that they are not aware of. When interacting with people you knew before you left, they may not see or understand these changes, or they may see a change in you that you are not aware of. Vice versa, many of the individuals you knew before you left have also changed. You might not always be able to detect these changes, or you may notice changes in them that they are not aware of. All of these factors lead to increased uncertainty, and at times anxiety, in those interactions that will take time to come back to a balanced point. This adjustment phase is often unanticipated in RPCVs and can be very frustrating. (To review additional information regarding Gudykunst's Anxiety and Uncertainty Management Theory, see the AUM Learning Lab page located on the Training Community of Practice Workspace page.

Step 8: Explain that R. Michael Paige Ph.D in Education, Professor of International and Intercultural Education at the University of Minnesota, has developed 10 Intensity Factors that contribute to difficult cultural transitions. Tell the Volunteers that you are going to provide a handout of these factors and that they are to review the 10 factors. When done, they should independently complete the activity sheet that is included. Provide the Volunteers with a handout of these factors (Handout B). Give the Volunteers about 15 minutes to complete the reading and activity sheet.

Step 9: Put the Volunteers into pairs or triads to share their work for five minutes.

Part 3: Conclusion (10 minutes)

Step 1: Remind the Volunteers that they are veterans of cultural adjustment and that they will need to use their adaptation skills and strategies even more so when they return to the United States.

Step 2: Ask for a few Volunteers to share readjustment strategies that they created on their activity sheet (two minutes).

Step 3: Emphasis that no matter how frustrating the readjustment process may be, they have some very good tools to help them cope and that they are not alone. RPCVs from around the world will be going through, or have already been through, the readjustment process. All Volunteers should reach out to RPCVs either informally or through the National Peace Corps Association. Remind Volunteers that information about NPCA can be found in their COS packets.

Welcome Home Role-Play

Notes for the Trainer:

Cut out the instructions below for each character. Read "The Scene" to the whole group, then ask for volunteers to act out the different characters. When you distribute the instructions for each role, be sure that the RPCV cannot hear what the other characters are preparing. You should let them all know that there is not a specific script for this, but that they all will be expected to show the character as described and complete the tasks given. Give the Volunteers performing in the role-play two minutes to prepare and let them know that they will be performing for three to five minutes.

The Scene:

Welcome Home Party

After being away with the Peace Corps for 30 months, RPCV (insert PCV name) has returned home. To have a proper welcome, RPCV's parents have invited old friends and extended family members to a party. This party is taking place three days after RPCV (insert PCV name) has returned.

The Roles:

RPCV

After backpacking in the region for a few months, you have finally returned home. You are excited to be home, but pretty tired and jet lagged. You are very excited to share your experiences and to catch up with friends and family.

Mom

You are very excited to have your son/daughter back. You are very concerned that everyone is happy and that your son/daughter is comfortable, having a good time, and is eating enough.

Your Task:

- Ask a lot of questions regarding the food, sanitation, and overall health situation of the country your son/daughter served in.
- Hover close and keep checking in to make sure that son/daughter is okay.
- You should also continually prompt your son/daughter to tell others about what he/she already shared with you, especially about general country information, the host family, and the exotic places he/she saw. Do this especially when others try to steer the conversation away from your son/daughter!

Friend 1

You are excited to have your best friend back. You have missed him/her a lot and want to be able to share about all of the things that you have been doing since he or she left. You are working a new and exciting job that you want to explain to your RPCV friend. You also took a cross-country road trip recently and feel that you experienced a lot of different cultures on the trip and want to share that, too.

Your Task:

- Bring up stuff that you used to do together and ask if he/she wants to go do it again.
- As your friend speaks, try to relate as much as you can back to your job and road trip.
- Be sure to interrupt your friend often so that you can share your stories too.

Friend 2

You are not very comfortable with attending this party. While you were both friends, you were not overly close and secretly you have been jealous of this Peace Corps experience. You feel that the attention given to your friend is not fully deserved.

Your Task:

- Try to steer the conversation toward things that have happened in the United States.
- Ask "did you know" questions about things in the U.S. news/pop culture that you think your friend would not know.

Uncle

While you think going out in the world is a pretty cool thing to do, you feel it is time for your nephew/niece to begin thinking more about his/her future. You know that no one really takes the Peace Corps seriously, and you are not afraid to say so. You also have a very strong U.S.-centric viewpoint of the world.

Your Task:

- Ask questions about what the RPCV's plans are for the future: What job are you thinking of applying to? Are you going to graduate school? What will you study? How much will that cost? How are you going to pay for it? How long will you be at home? How are you going to make money? Are you going to buy a car?

- For the above factors, you should also be willing to make helpful connections for the RPCV ..."I know a guy who knows a guy..."

- Ask questions about the presence of terrorists or religious extremist: Did you feel safe? How dangerous was it?

Cousin

You really admire your cousin for joining the Peace Corps and now you want to join as well. You have never left the United State but feel this would be a great way to do so. While you want to listen to all of the stories, you are very excited to get your questions answered and tend to interrupt often. You are in your freshman year of college.

Your Task:

- Ask questions about the day-to-day details: What did you eat? Did you like it? Did they have toilets? Did you use toilet paper? How often did they shower? What did it look like?

- Try to get the RPCV to say a lot of things in the language he/she spoke during service.

- You have so many questions that you don't really listen to any answers you get; instead, you tend to interrupt and jump right in with another question.

Prepared Flip Chart A: Johari's Window

	Known to Self	Not Known to Self
Known to Others	Open	Blind
Not Known to Others	Hidden	Unknown
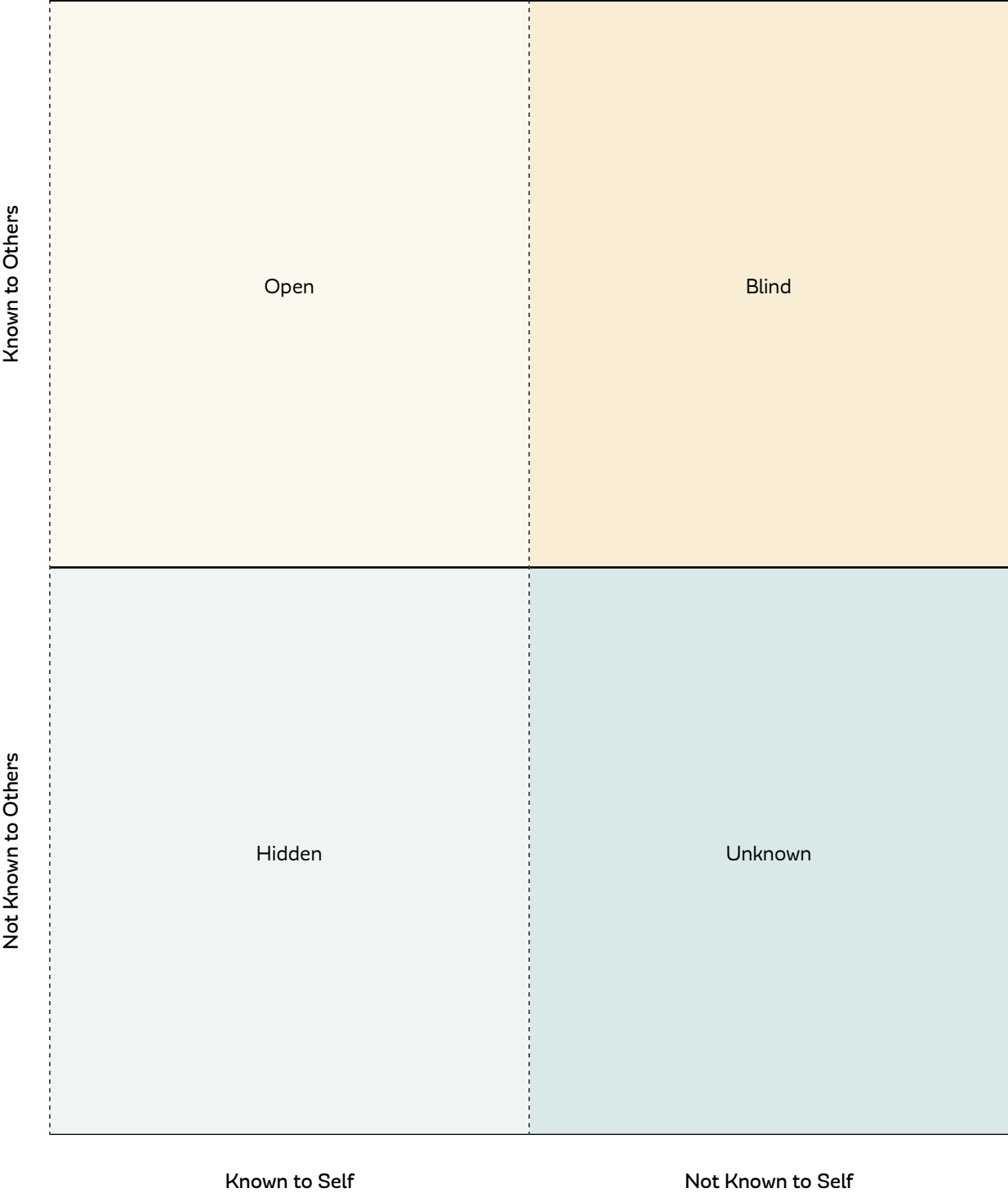
10 Intensity Factors Associated With Intercultural Experiences

Read the following 10 intensity factors as identified by Professor Emeritus of International and Intercultural Education at the University of Minnesota, Michael Paige in his book, Education for the Intercultural Experience (1993). Then, complete the worksheet that follows.

Cultural Differences	Cultural differences in values, beliefs, and behaviors represent the most common intensity factors. The stress of adaptation is greater as the cultural distance between home and host culture increases. Moreover, the more negatively the individual evaluates particular cultural differences, the more stressful the intercultural experience will be.
Ethnocentrism	Ethnocentrism is an intensity factor that expresses itself in two ways. First, ethnocentric persons find intercultural experiences more threatening. Second, some cultural communities themselves are less accepting of outsiders. Sojourners in these more ethnocentric cultures, regardless of their openness to the new culture, will find the experience to be more stressful.
Cultural Immersion	The more immersed the person is in another culture—interacting with host culture counterparts and/or using the host country language on a regular basis—the greater the amount of stress. Culture and language fatigue can be the result of extensive immersion.
Cultural Isolation	Cultural isolation is deep immersion combined with limited opportunities to interact with home culture/country peers. This can result, for example, from being isolated by geography or workplace conditions. The greater the isolation, the greater the stress.
Language	Persons unable to speak the language of the host culture will often find the experience more stressful. The ability to speak the target language is not always essential, nor does it assure effective communication or intercultural adjustment. Lack of language skills, however, can lead to social isolation and frustration.
Prior Intercultural Experience	Stress is affected by the amount and nature of one's prior intercultural experience. In general, people with a limited intercultural background will experience more stress in a cross-cultural situation. Those with a great deal of previous intercultural experience will generally adapt more effectively because they have already developed effective learning and coping strategies, have realistic expectations, and possess strong intercultural communication skills.

Expectations	There are two major expectation issues in intercultural work. First, persons who have positive but unrealistic expectations about the new culture will feel a psychological letdown after a time. Second, persons who have high expectations of themselves in terms of their ability to work effectively in the new culture will experience stress when they do not feel they are meeting their own standards of effective performance.
Visibility and Invisibility	Persons who are physically different from members of the host (or dominant) culture are highly visible and may become the object of curiosity, unwanted attention, or discrimination. This can lead to considerable stress. Stress can also occur when an important aspect of one's identity is invisible to members of the host culture (e.g., one's religion or political philosophy) or is concealed because it is not accepted in the host culture (e.g., sexual orientation). Concealing something about oneself can cause considerable psychological stress.
Status	The markers of status vary considerably across cultures. Persons who feel they are not getting the respect they deserve or, conversely, feel they are receiving unearned recognition will find the experience more psychologically intense. Qualities that are valued in the home culture may not be important in the new one and can result in a loss of status. Alternatively, one might gain status on the basis of characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, nationality, or family background that might not be important in the home culture.
Power and Control	One of the most consistent research findings is that persons in cultures other than their own feel a loss of power and control over events and people compared to what they are accustomed to at home. And the more power one is used to exercising, the more disturbing is the loss. Their personal efficacy is diminished and they can feel that things are "out of control." The less power and control the person has in the intercultural situation, the more psychological stressful the experience will be.

Intensity Factor Worksheet

What three factors do you think will challenge you the most in your return to the United States? Why?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What are your expectations for your first six months after you return to the United States?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you believe that your status will go up or down? How will that effect your readjustment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How can you use your adaption experiences from your Peace Corps service to assist in your readjustment back to the United States?

_____

_____

_____

_____

SESSION 9
Peace Corps is...

Purpose

This icebreaker session sets the tone for the second day of the conference. It's a fun way to get Volunteers to process how they think and feel about their country of service. Once they've completed this activity, they'll be able to refer back to it throughout the day as they learn to craft stories from service to share with friends, family, employers, and others when they return home.

Rationale

This session helps COS Volunteers define what messages they will want to convey when they share their story upon returning home.

Duration

30 minutes

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to:

- Define what they think of when they think of their Peace Corps country
- Begin to understand how they can implement the Third Goal by sharing their perceptions about their host country

Session Outline

Part 1: Activity (25 minutes)

Part 2: Sharing (5 minutes)

Part 3: Photo Shoot (optional)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Suitable for any facilitator

Materials and Equipment

- Handout: [Country name] is …
- Several wide-tip markers
- Camera (optional)

Trainer Preparation

The trainer should customize the handout with the host country name, and print enough copies so that each Volunteer has at least one to complete during the session. Set out enough markers on each table so that there is at least one marker for every Volunteer.

If you'd like to take pictures of the Volunteers with their signs, you'll need to find a camera and you'll want to prepare a space to display the photos. Find a spot with a nice (interesting or plain/textured) background where you can take the pictures of the PCVs holding their sign.

Methodology

Part 1:   Reflecting and completing the statement, "Peace Corps is . . ."

Step 1: Explain to the Volunteers that this short session will be an opportunity to learn how to tell compelling stories about their service and their country of service to their friends, family, employers, and others when they return home.

Step 2: To get Volunteers thinking about the messages they want to convey in those stories, start out with a thought-provoking icebreaker.

Step 3: Pass out the handout that you customized to your post to each Volunteer and ask them to take five minutes to decide how they'd like to complete that sentence.

Step 4: Explain that you've provided markers for Volunteers to use to fill in their answers. Inform participants that unless someone prefers not to share what they've written, their signs will be shared. If you also plan on photographing the completed signs, let them know they'll have that option.

As Volunteers are reflecting, encourage them to ask themselves what they'd most like their friends and family to know about their country of service. Volunteers generally take this pretty seriously and will likely have a difficult time deciding exactly how they want to finish the sentence. Allow time for them to finish. Some Volunteers may quickly fill out the paper and then find themselves wanting to do it over more thoughtfully or from a different perspective.

Part 2: Opportunity for Volunteers to share

Step 1: Let Volunteers know when time is up and then ask them to share what they wrote. Explain to Volunteers that you want to provide them an opportunity to share their reflections.

Step 2: Ask Volunteers to raise their hands if they would like to share how they completed the statement. If time permits, provide an opportunity for all interested Volunteers to share their reflection.

Step 3: After Volunteers have shared, thank them for sharing and ask them to keep these in mind as they're working through some of today's storytelling sessions.

Part 3: Photo "booth" (optional)

Step 1: As an optional activity, you can take pictures of each Volunteer with what they wrote. You can share these pictures with the individual Volunteers so they can have a copy for themselves. If they'd like to share it on social media, encourage them to use the #PeaceCorpsIs hashtag to connect their conversation to those of other COS PCVs around the globe.

You might also ask for the Volunteer's permission to post their photos to a page on your post's website. The photos can be a really authentic and powerful way to let the Volunteers tell their story of Peace Corps service.

Some photos examples are provided below:
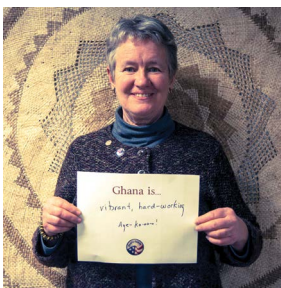
The handout is found on the following page.

SESSION 10
Leveraging RPCV Resources

Purpose

This session serves as an overview of the free resources that are available to support Volunteers after service. Many of the resources introduced in this session will be discussed in more depth in later sessions.

Rationale

COSing Volunteers need support not only with successfully closing their service, but also with adjusting to life after service.

Duration

30 minutes

Objectives

- By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to:
- Describe the relationship between Peace Corps and the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA)
- Describe and find all of the resources that Peace Corps and NPCA offer RPCVs
- Understand types of RPCV groups and how to connect with them
- Find information online that can help them share their story, and find career and educational support post-service

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction and Overview of RPCV Resources (5 minutes)

Part 2: Information on Career and Educational Resources (5 minutes)

Part 3: Third Goal Resources (5 minutes)

Part 4: National Peace Corps Association (5 minutes)

Part 5: Useful Websites and Contacts (5 minutes)

Part 6: Closing (5 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This session should be run by Peace Corps staff that have a working understanding of RPCV resources.

Materials and Equipment

- Handout: Useful Websites and Contacts
- PowerPoint file (available on the Intranet) or flip chart paper if no projector.
- Access to internet
- LCD projector

Methodology

Part 1:   Introduction and Overview of RPCV Resources (5 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that there are free resources from the Peace Corps and the National Peace Corps Association to support the Volunteers' transition home.

Step 2: Tell participants that there are a few different types of resources that will be explored in this session as well as the methods for accessing these free resources and services.

- Career and educational resources
- Third Goal resources
- National Peace Corps Association

Part 2:   Information on Career and Educational Resources (5 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that the Peace Corps RPCV Virtual Career Center offers all sorts of free tools and services to support RPCVs as they transition home from service. Distribute the handouts and use the PowerPoint or flip chart.

The following services are available:

- Career Self-Assessment Test
- An online RPCV jobs board with 3,000 jobs posted each year
- Noncompetitive eligibility information
- Web-based content to refresh your job search strategy
- Monthly RPCV career events—including conferences and job fairs—online and around the United States
- One-on-one career counseling, including resume reviews, mock interviews, and other career advising

Tell Volunteers that all of these resources are outlined in Handout A and they can access all of this information on the RPCV Virtual Career Center, www.peacecorps.gov/careercenter. If there is web access, the trainer should visit the site and walk participants through the pathways to find the resources on the web.

Step 2: Tell Volunteers that there are two additional career and educational resources for COSing Volunteers. The first is Peace Corps Response, which offers the ability to gain additional experience by serving in a short-term, high-impact assignment. Session 15 focuses exclusively on Peace Corps Response and participants will receive additional information at that point.

Volunteers and RPCVs can access assignments for Peace Corps Resource on www.peacecorps.gov/response.

Additionally, COSing Volunteers have access to the Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program, which makes financial assistance available to RPCVs at more than 90 partner schools. Fellows complete internships in underserved American communities.

Part 3: Third Goal Resources (5 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that helping Americans understand your country of service can be a great way to ease your transition home. The Peace Corps provides resources at www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal to help you do just that:

- A customizable PowerPoint template
- Peace Corps videos, pictures, and fact sheets
- Peace Corps promotional materials
- Ideas for ways/places to share your story
- Peace Corps Week events

Part 4: National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) (5 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that NPCA is a nonprofit organization that connects and champions RPCVs and the Peace Corps community. Mention that while NPCA and the Peace Corps work closely to support RPCVs, they are two separate organizations.

Step 2: For more information, tell Volunteers to visit NPCA's website, www.peacecorpsconnect.org, to learn how they can work with NPCA to advocate for the Peace Corps and to learn about their resources and opportunities, including the mentorship program, travel programs, educational resources, and Peace Corps promotional items.

Step 3: Finally, mention that NPCA also oversees and organizes numerous RPCV groups throughout the U.S. Tell Volunteers to check out the website www.peacecorpsconnect. org/resources/member-groups to see what groups may interest them.

Part 5: Useful Websites and Contacts (5 minutes)

Step 1: Provide the handout, which is a compiled list of useful websites and contacts for COSing Volunteers and RPCVs. Explain that The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services exists to support their transition home. Visit their webpages to find information on all of the resources discussed here, as well as contact information for various other Peace Corps offices.

Part 6: Closing (5 minutes)

Step 1: Thank Volunteers for their attention during the session. Let them know that additional sessions will go into greater detail on some of the resources. If participants have been sitting for a couple of hours at the end of this session, invite them to take a 15 minute break before starting the next session.

RPCV Virtual Career Center

Need help deciding what to do after service?

Email rpcv@peacecorps.gov, and provide your country and years of service, to request access to an online career self-assessment program. This assessment is free to all RPCVs. By responding to a few simple questions, this tool will help you define a career path that matches your interests and skills.

Need help finding a job?

There's a tool for that, too! Check out the Center's online jobs board, RPCV Career Link, to find jobs posted by employers who are specifically interested in hiring RPCVs. With more than 3,000 jobs posted annually, you're sure to find something you like!

Need help figuring out how to use your noncompetitive eligibility (NCE) status?

The Career Center provides information on this and all sorts of other career topics 24/7 through their website.

Need help refreshing your job search skills?

The RPCV Career Center hosts free RPCV Career Conferences around the country each year. The events, ranging from two to four days in length, include hands-on workshops and dynamic career fairs full of employers who are eager to hire RPCVs. For details on these and our other monthly career events, check out the RPCV Career Events page within the Virtual Career Center.

Need some one-on-one career advice?

Email rpcv@peacecorps.gov to schedule an appointment with one of the Center's career development specialists, based in Washington, D.C. and the San Francisco Bay area. The specialists are former RPCVs who provide virtual and in-person career counseling, resume reviews, and mock interviews for all interested RPCVs.

Volunteers can access any of the online materials anytime they like.

However, the Center is only able to offer the one-on-one services to Volunteers after you COS.

Useful Websites and Contacts

Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services
+1-202-692-1430
www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv

RPCV Career Center: www.peacecorps.gov/careercenter

RPCV Career Events Calendar: www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events

RPCV Career Link Jobs Board: www.peacecorps.gov/rpcvcareerlink

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Noncompetitive Eligibility (NCE) Information: www.peacecorps.gov/nce

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Peace Corps Response: www.peacecorps.gov/response

Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program: www.peacecorps.gov/fellows

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Third Goal Resources: www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal

National Peace Corps Association and RPCV groups around the country:
www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/member-groups/

Peace Corps' Volunteer & PSC Services Office (to request a copy of your Description of Service): certify@peacecorps.gov

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SESSION 11
Sharing Your Host Country at Home

Purpose

This session helps PCVs understand the power they have in telling the story of their Peace Corps country and service (Peace Corps' Third Goal). It also provides them with ideas for how they can tell their story, as well as where they can find resources for telling their story.

Rationale

When RPCVs share their story, it not only helps paint a fuller picture of their Peace Corps country for Americans, but it also helps to ease their own transition home after service.

Duration

1 hour

Note: This session can be expanded to take 2 hours if you incorporate storytelling materials (Session 11b)

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to:

- Articulate the importance of sharing their Peace Corps experience with Americans
- Describe multiple ways they can share their story
- Know how to plan a Third Goal activity
- Locate resources to help them share their story.
- Use the Third Goal Checklist to prepare to return home and tell their story
- Commit to at least one specific Third Goal activity after service

Session Outline

Part 1: Why Share Your Story (15 minutes)

Part 2: Ways to Share Your Story (10 minutes)

Part 3: Planning a Third Goal Activity (25 minutes)

Part 4: Closing (10 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Facilitators should be familiar with "The Danger of a Single Story" TED talk.

Facilitators should also have a good understanding of what Third Goal resources exist to help RPCVs share their stories. (www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal)

Materials and Equipment

- Access to internet
- LCD projector
- Flip charts & markers for listing ideas from PCVs
- Handouts:
    A. Third Goal Treasure Chest Checklist
    B. Peace Corps Activity Design Template
    C. Third Goal Activity Pledge

Methodology

Part 1: Why Share Your Story (15 minutes)

> **Step 1:** Ask the Volunteers to shout out what Americans picture when they think of their Peace Corps country.
>
> Now ask the Volunteers to think back to the icebreaker they did this morning (Session 9) where they completed the sentence "[Country Name] is …" What do they picture when they think of their Peace Corps country?
>
> Finally, explain to the Volunteers that, by sharing their experience with Americans, they have the power to bridge the divide between those likely differing perspectives, and that this session will help them do that.

Introduce and show (if the audience has not seen it) Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "The Danger of a Single Story" TED talk. Explain the background of the speaker and the purpose of the talk: to encourage people to dispel stereotypes by telling (and learning) many stories. Share the following quotes to help the Volunteers understand exactly how she explains that sharing a story can dispel stereotypes:

"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."

"The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar. Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize."

Step 2: Explain that dispelling stereotypes is one very important reason that Volunteers should share their story, but there are other reasons, too. Ask the PCVs to share other reasons that it might be helpful to share their stories. Once they've identified all the reasons they can think of, share any that they don't list:

- Helps them to transition home
  - Can help them process the meaning of their service
  - Can help with achieving closure after their service
  - Can help them answer questions from friends and family
- Helps with the job search
  - Having good stories will help them network and interview
- It's a way to continue your Peace Corps service – the Third Goal.
- When you register your Third Goal activity on Peace Corps' website, you help the Peace Corps demonstrate to Congress and the American people one of the ways that the Peace Corps benefits the U.S. communities (our "Domestic Dividend").
  - The Peace Corps must report how many RPCVs carried out Third Goal activities to Congress each year.
  - Report your activities at www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoalregistrations

Part 2: Ways to Share Your Story (10 minutes)

Step 1: Pose the following question to the PCVs: What are some different ways you could share your story? Record their answers on a flip chart sheet.

Here are some ideas they may mention:

- Letters to the editor or op-eds
- Classroom presentations (K-12, universities, etc.)
- Library activities (set up a display, give a talk, etc.)
- Community centers
- Girl/Boy Scouts activities
- 4-H clubs
- Other boys and girls clubs
- High school career fairs
- Map murals
- Impromptu conversations sparked by artifacts and pictures
- Open mics (poetry or story slams, etc.)
- Share your story with local leaders *

*Sample script: "Take a minute to identify your local elected leaders who represent the town you call home, particularly your elected member of the U.S. House of Representatives and two elected members of the U.S. Senate. You can use the 'Contact Me' link on their website to share with them your Peace Corps story. In a few concise paragraphs, explain the work you did and the communities you served. If there is a story with particular meaning to you or a success story about a project you started or implemented, please share that as well."

Note to trainers: Federal law prohibits Peace Corps staff from asking or encouraging anyone outside of the Peace Corps (including Volunteers and trainees) to lobby Congress on any issue. This means that staff may not ask or encourage Volunteers to ask their Senators or Representatives to increase the Peace Corps budget or otherwise help the Peace Corps. We may encourage Volunteers to educate Congress about what they do, and to reach out to tell their stories, but that is all we can do.

Ask participants: Who can find at least one thing in this list that they think they'd enjoy doing?

If time allows, Session 11b which helps Volunteers find, craft, and practice one story that will help them share their experience with friends, family, community leaders and others when they return home, can be inserted here.

Part 3: Planning a Third Goal Activity (25 minutes)

Step 1: Organizing your activity

The participants now understand the importance of sharing their stories and ways that they can share them. Explain that you'll now discuss a few recommended steps in organizing an activity to share their story (a Third Goal activity). (5 minutes)

List the following four categories on a piece of flip chart paper and discuss the points under each.

1. Identify your audience

    -   Think of audiences you have a personal connection to.

    -   Think of audiences you like interacting with and reach out to them. Maybe you like kids, or you are looking for a reason to talk with your fraternity or sorority.

    -   Reach out to World Wise Schools to sign up for Speakers Match (wws@peacecorps.gov).

2. Work with your defined audience to craft your activity

    -   Let your audience tell you what topics might interest their group and then work with your contact to brainstorm possible approaches for discussing those topics.

    -   Prepare to talk to your contact by checking out the online resources that the Peace Corps provides to aid RPCVs in their Third Goal activities.

    -   Show the Tips and Tools to Tell Your Story page (www.peacecorps.gov/resources/returned/thirdgoal/tellyourstory/), and click on "Resources to help you tell your story".

3. Get Support from the Peace Corps

    -   Contact your local recruiting office. They may be able to support you and/or your event details with applicants who might want to attend. www.peacecorps.gov/recruit

    -   Register your event with the Peace Corps and you'll receive a free kit of promotional Peace Corps items for yourself and your event. www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoalregistrations

4. Enjoy, educate, inspire!

    -   Try to have fun during your event. Your audience is eager to hear what you have to say so take advantage of their interest and have fun with it!

    -   Bring photos and artifacts from your service – or maybe a local dish – to help bring your story to life.

Step 2: Distribute the Third Goal Treasure Chest Checklist (Handout A) and the Peace Corps Activity Design Template (Handout B).

Review each one with the Volunteers so they understand how they can use them to help them prepare their own Third Goal activities. (5 minutes)

Step 3: Brainstorming session

Ask the Volunteers to partner up and brainstorm and fill out as many parts of the Peace Corps Activity Design Template as they can for an activity they identified under the "Ways to Share Your Story" section of this session. (15 minutes)

Part 4: Closing (10 minutes)

Step 1: Check and see if there are any lingering questions from the previous section. Provide an opportunity for participants to answer their peers' questions.

Step 2: Give each Volunteer a Third Goal Activity Pledge sheet (Handout C) and ask them to commit to themselves, their host country, and the Peace Corps to do one Third Goal activity in the first three, six, or nine months of returning home.

Third Goal Treasure Chest

The Peace Corps encourages all Volunteers to prepare content to bring home to use when telling their story. While we provide many online resources to help you do this (www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal), the most compelling part of any story you tell will be the personal touches you can add to it.

What are some of the things or images you might wish you had once you are home? We've provided a list below to get you started. Look it over and check off—and add—those items that you want to be sure to pack and bring home with you.

Photos of:

- Daily routine/activities
- Chores
- Staple food/favorite food
- Co-workers/students
- Neighbors
- Transportation
- Shopkeepers
- Animals/birds
- Market
- Vistas/nature/trees
- Sunrise/sunset
- Water source/rivers lakes/ocean
- Your space(s)
- Games/sports
- You around your community (get someone to capture this)
- Projects (process and outcome)
- Advertisements/newspapers/ signs
- Games/toys
- Snacks/tea/coffee

Audio/Video:

- Singing
- Dancing
- Quotes
- Interviews
- Tours around your site

Things:

- Cloth/traditional clothing
- Bags
- Tools
- Recipes
- Jewelry
- Artwork

Impact:	What is the desired change in the situation after the knowledge transfer occurs?

Participants will express a deeper desire to understand the world around them, more interest in Malawi

When? Where?
Both geographic location and venue details. Pick dates/times that work for your participants.

Date and time	*Example:* Monday, March 2, 4:00 p.m., 45 minutes
Location:	*Example:* Lincoln Elementary School, Room 703 (check in at main office when arriving)
Venue details:	*Example:* PowerPoint and internet available, 35 students in groups of 5 to 8

What?/How?

Example:

Materials: 8-slide PowerPoint, 2-minute video on Malawi, camera to take photos, Third Goal kit with stickers, bookmarks, "artifacts" for museum activity.

Outline:

- 5 min -Introduction: Who I am, Peace Corps overview, Malawi intro using 8 slides with photos

- 20 min - Artifact walk with interaction, e.g.: wrapping the cloth around waist, carrying water on head, etc.

- 2 min - Show video

- 15 min - Questions; teach goodbye in Chichewa; give out stickers and bookmarks; leave map for teacher

Peace Corps Activity Session

Who? What do you know about the participants that could help you design the event?
Learners: How many, Experience with topic, Language, Age
Backers: Who else has an interest in the event?

Why? What reasons do the different participants have for taking part?
Purpose: What do the learners want to learn? Why are the backers interested in hosting this event?
Transfer: What is the desired behavior change? (Objectives)
Impact: What is the desired change in the situation after the knowledge transfer occurs?

When? Where? Both geographic location and venue details. Pick dates/times that work for your participants.	
Date and time	
Location:	
Venue details:	

What? /How?

SECTION 11B
Crafting Compelling Stories (Optional)

Purpose

This session gives Volunteers time to reflect on their Peace Corps service and to find, craft, and practice one story that will help them share their experience with friends, family, and others when they return home.

If adding this session to the suggested agenda, we recommend adding it after Session 11.

Rationale

When Volunteers return home from service, all sorts of people—friends, family, potential employers—are going to be interested in hearing about their service. Most of these people will have little to no knowledge of returned Volunteers' Peace Corps country and a short attention span before their interest begins to wane. Telling a poorly crafted story is a sure way to lose an audience, while telling a good story is likely to solicit further interest. This session helps participants craft a short story that will resonate with Americans and make their audience want to learn even more about their Peace Corps service.

Duration

1 hour

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will

- Describe how to craft stories that are informative, interesting, and relevant to American audiences.
- Identify best practices to use in crafting stories.
- Practice crafting and telling one story from service.

Session Outline

Part 1: **Why do you need to tell a good story? (5 minutes)**

Part 2: **Storytelling framework (10 minutes)**

Part 3: **Finding your story (10 minutes)**

Part 4: **Crafting your story (15 minutes)**

Part 5: **Practicing your story (15 minutes)**

Part 6: **Conclusion (5 minutes)**

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This session can be run by a combination of Peace Corps staff and Volunteers.

Materials and Equipment

- Handouts
  - Storytelling Tips
  - The Story Spine
  - Storytelling Peer Coaching Guide
- Flipcharts and markers

Trainer Preparation

Methodology

### Part 1: Why do you need to tell a good story? (5 minutes)

Step 1: Ask the Volunteers to raise their hand if they have ever known someone who tells bad stories. Then ask them what it was that made those stories bad. Let the PCVs come to the following conclusions:

- The story was too long.
- The point of the story was unclear.
- They couldn't figure out how the story was relevant to them.
- The storyteller rambled.
- It was boring.

Explain to the PCVs that they already learned in Session 11 how powerful stories can be—in dispelling stereotypes, easing their transition home, helping with the job hunt, etc. This session will now teach them how to tell a good story and avoid the pitfalls listed above.

First, they will find a story that they think is worth telling; then, after crafting that story, they will practice telling it to a partner. In the end, each PCV should have at least one story ready to take home and help them answer, in an interesting and relevant way, questions about their service.

Part 2: Storytelling framework (10 minutes)
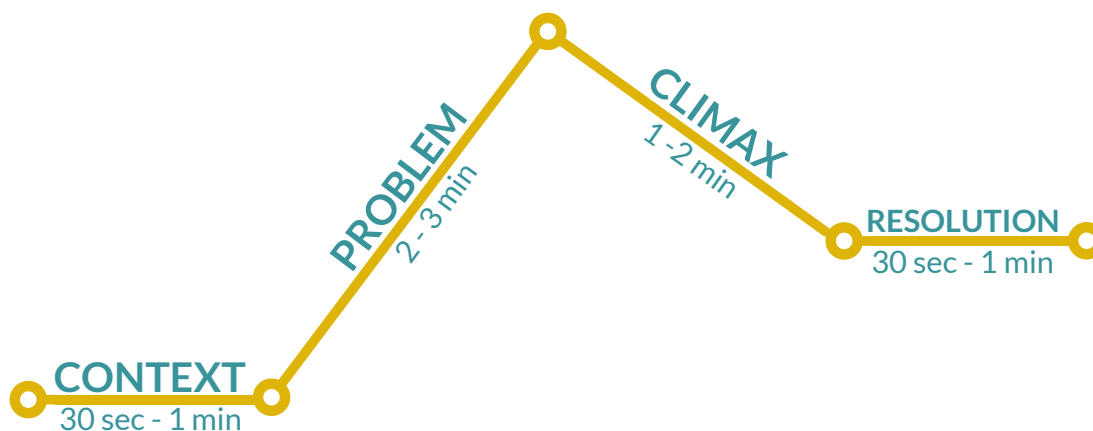
Ask Volunteers the following question:

- What is the last movie that you saw or the last book that you read?

Explain that the chances are high that it followed this arc. Ask Volunteers the following question:

- Can you describe how a movie or book that you know follows this arc?

After hearing a few examples, explain to Volunteers that you are going to review each part of the arc to explain how it applies to them and their stories.

Pass out Handout A, Storytelling Tips, to refer to as you make your way through this section.

Explain that the arc begins with Context. And that this is especially important for Volunteers. As they return home, their friends, family, potential employers, and others

will genuinely want to hear many stories. They will be fascinated to learn what living in [country name] was like. But they are not Peace Corps Volunteers and have likely never traveled to [country name]—or any country like it. This is where context comes in. In order to set the stage and help listeners visualize the reality of the story's environment, Volunteers need to:

- Explain when and where the story is taking place.
- Transport the audience to your country of service using colorful language.
- Use easily relatable reference points (e.g., Burkina Faso is the size of Colorado).
- Be as brief as possible to get to the action that hooks the listener.

Tell Volunteers that many of the tips in Handout A can help you set the context effectively.

Tell participants that good context should also explain the relevance or meaning of your story (i.e., what is the point?). To define a story's relevance a Volunteer could ask these questions:

- Why am I telling this story?
- Why does this event matter?
- What did this event mean for my cultural acceptance, life as a PCV, understanding of my host country's culture, or emotional well-being?

Next, explain the Action/Problem and Action/Climax of a story. This is where a listener can actually tell what happens in your story. Ask, "How do you move from action/problem to action/climax?"

Tell Volunteers to look at Handout A again. Refer Volunteers to #6: find and explain the change in your story. Explain that this is key in the action portion of the arc. There needs to be some sort of change – possibly a change in the storyteller's perspective – from when the story first starts to describe the action to when you get to the action climax. This is where the building tension makes the listener wonder what's going to happen next.

Move on to discuss Resolution. This is the portion of the story where, having built up the tension, the listener gets relief/closure and the action resolves.

Explain to the PCVs that they'll use the rest of the session to walk through how to use this arc to craft one story of their own that they can take home with them.

Part 3: Finding your story (10 minutes)

Step 1: Tell participants that the first step in crafting a story is finding their story topic. Explain that the next two activities will help participants find some possibilities.

Use a timer set to two minutes and ask participants to list everyone they met during their Peace Corps service, trying to go chronologically. Explain that the list is just for them so nicknames or abbreviations are fine.

Volunteers often get frustrated when you call time and want to "finish the list" but part of the point of the brainstorm is to see what stands out in a short amount of time. After two minutes are up, tell PCVs that it is time to move to the next step in the activity.

Tell them that they now have two minutes to list everywhere they went during their service, again in chronological order. Ask them to be as specific as possible – for example, note "Frank's porch" instead of "my neighbor's house."

After they've finished their lists, ask the Volunteers to circle people or places they think might be good characters in a story. Ask the group to share anything from their lists that might have surprised them.

Step 2: Ask PCVs to choose a story that they'd like to work on today. It might include people or places from their lists or it might not. It is up to each individual. Remind them that their stories have the power to bridge the divide between Americans' view of their Peace Corps country and their view of the country (see Session 11 to learn more about this point). Once everyone has selected their story, move to the next section.

Part 4: Crafting your story (15 minutes)

Let participants know that since they have identified astory, there's a simple tool that will help put it into a form that follows the story arc discussed earlier: the story spine.

Step 1: Pass out Handout B, The Story Spine.

Step 2: Tell Volunteers to take 10 minutes to craft their story using as many of the prompts in the spine as they need. Tell them to refer back to Handout A for some tips to help craft a story.

Step 3: After 10 minutes, bring the group back together and provide the next set of instructions.

Part 5: Practicing Your Story (15 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that Volunteers should partner up to practice their stories. Invite them to use notes the first time, but let them know that the hope is that they'd be able to recite this easily from memory eventually.

Provide Handout C: Storytelling Peer Coaching Guide. Ask the PCV partners to follow the instructions on the sheet as they tell each other their stories. Each Volunteer has five minutes to tell their story and get feedback. Let Volunteers know when it is time to switch who is sharing their story.

Step 2: With the last five minutes of the session, ask the Volunteers the following question:

* What were some interesting points you learned from this activity?

Part 6: Conclusion (5 minutes)

Sample script: We hope you keep practicing with each other so you can tell these stories when you get home and make sure that there is not a "single story" about your country.

Step 1: Thank Volunteers for their attention during the session and ask them if they have any questions.

Storytelling Tips

Find a way to frame your story: Find the context of why you are telling the story. This relates to what your story is really about. Recommended exercise: write pairs of first and last lines that frame your story nicely.

Include only a few compelling characters: A listener only has so much memory capacity when a story is told orally, so limit the number of characters and make it easy for them to follow your story.

Engage all five senses: This helps bring your story to life and helps the listener more easily relate to what you are saying.

Use dialogue: Include dialogue in your story to help develop the characters and make it fun.

Show, don't tell: Instead of saying, "my students were amazing," provide a relevant example that shows this.

Be specific: Give detailed examples like, "My Fruit Loops and toast hit the spot," instead of, "Breakfast was great."

Find and explain the change in your story: It is not really a story unless something fundamentally changes. The change might be internal, like a shift in perspective. Edit out the jargon: Be sure your audience can follow every detail of your story by subtracting any jargon from it—"I taught students in troisieme," "SPA grant," "staging," etc. The listener won't be able to understand your story if they don't understand the details within it.

Use the rule of threes: This principle suggests that things that come in threes are inherently funnier, more satisfying, or more effective than other number groups. 3 adjectives, 3 examples etc.

Insight: Let your listeners in on your thoughts, feelings, and in-the-moment reactions by giving them a backstage pass to your brain through your internal voice. Be careful not to give too much away, though, to maintain the power of your story's ending.

SESSION 12
Translating Your Skills for the Job Search

Purpose

This session communicates the steps that are required to go from a Peace Corps Volunteer to an employee with skills gained from Peace Corps, with an emphasis on networking best practices.

Rationale

RPCVs need to leverage their networks to increase their chances of finding a rewarding career.

Duration

1-1/2 hours (includes optional activities, if time permits)

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to:

- Define two approaches to job searching
- Tell a short career story digitally and in-person
- Reflect on ways to leverage their personal network
- Use basic profile and search techniques on LinkedIn
- Use basic networking tips for in-person events
- Plan an informational interview

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Part 2: Visible Job Market (30 minutes)

Part 3: Using Networking to Access the "Hidden" Job Market (30 minutes)

Part 4: Informational Interviews (15 minutes)

Part 5: Cultivating Your Network (5 minutes)

Part 6: Conclusion (5 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Facilitators should have experience and knowledge of networking and informational interviews. This session can be run by a combination of Peace Corps staff and PCVLs.

Materials and Equipment

- Access to internet
- PowerPoint associated with the session on the Intranet, or flip charts with information.
- LCD projector
- Flip charts and markers

Flip Chart 1:

JOB SEARCH

ONLINE
- Job Listing Sites
- Company/ Organization Sites

IN PERSON
- Networking Events
- Anyplace You Can Meet People

LINKEDIN
- 1st Connections
- 2ndConnections
- Groups

Goals:
★ INTERVIEWS ★ OFFERS ★

Flip Chart 2:

You can just include the column titles in your flip chart to show them the type of information they should be tracking.

Sample Job Search Spreadsheet													
Category	Priority	Status	Company	Job Title	Contact Name/Email	Link to Position description	Location	Fit (1-5)	Salary	Benefits notes	Last contact Date	Follow Up Date	Comments/Next Steps/Action
Association A Contact	1	Interviewed	Company A	Program Manager	xxx@wehire.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	D.C.	1	105K	Standard	2/14/2016	3/15/2016	
School Alumni Contact	2	Applied	Company B	Project Lead	bbb@gradjobs.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	Boston	2	85K	Pension	3/1/2016	4/1/2016	
Kosovo 2 Contact	2	Prep App	Company C	Team Supervisor	ccc@wepay.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	S.F.	2	90K	only 5 days vacation	1/29/2016	3/5/2016	
USDA Career Fair	3	Applied	Company D	Exec Assistant	ddd@moretolifethanmoney.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	Rome	5	65K	Work from home	2/1/2016	3/15/2016	
New LinkedIn contact	N/A	Info Interview	Company E	N/A	eee@inetworked.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	International	N/A	TBD	N/A	Yesterday	3-4 months	

Flip Chart 3:

- Your story, profile, online and in-person presence, business cards, hard work, etc., lead to networking opportunities
- Networking leads to informational interviews
- Informational interviews lead to opportunities
- Opportunities lead to resume submissions
- Resumes (with cover letters) lead to interviews
- Interviews lead to offers
- Offers, hopefully, lead to you feeling valued and fulfilled in your career
- Handouts
    A. Job Search Example Spreadsheet
    B. Example LinkedIn Profile
    C. Example Elevator Pitches/"Asks"
- Trainer Material: Common concerns about networking and possible facilitator responses

Trainer Preparation

Prepare Flip chart 1 before the session; if using PowerPoint, this step is unnecessary.

Methodology

Part 1: Introduction to Job Research, Networking, and Informational Interviews (5 minutes)

> **Step 1:** Explain to Volunteers that the session is designed to help them move from their current meaningful service to a meaningful job post-service. During the session, you'll discuss:
>
> - Job Research
>   - The "do-at-home" part of your job search (e.g., online jobs boards, websites). This should be an efficient way for Volunteers to educate themselves about opportunities and industries.
> - Networking
>   - The "pound the pavement and press the flesh" part of the job search. This will also require a bit of time on the computer.
> - Informational Interviews
>   - The part of the job search where they increase their knowledge of companies, career paths, industries, and opportunities.

Explain that for those who like visuals, the following shows the paths that can get them to a job offer. Show Flip Chart 1.

Explain that everything in this session is about identifying opportunities through their job research and networking activities. The next session will focus on how to capitalize on those opportunities to get an offer through their cover letter, resume, job interview, etc.

Step 2: Explain that there are two types of job opportunities:

"Visible" opportunities:

- Those that you see on job boards like RPCV Career Link, Indeed.com, LinkedIn, USAJobs, Idealist.com, Dev-Ex, etc.

- These represent 25 to 40 percent of the opportunities that are actually available – but are accessible by 100 percent of job seekers.

"Hidden" opportunities:

- Those that have not made it onto the public jobs boards yet.

- These are the jobs posted internally. They are the ones their friends tell you about and might refer them for. They are the ones that will be filled by someone that knows someone.

- They represent the majority of opportunities available. Why? Because companies trust that their employees know the skills/experience a candidate needs to excel in their organization.

Part 2: "Visible" Jobs

Step 1: Explain that the first step in your job search is about educating yourself.

Use the following sample script:

- Define the industry you're interested in and then research the most relevant jobs boards for that industry.

- Use those sites to understand:

  - What companies, agencies, organizations, etc., are hiring right now?

    This is a great way to learn about small organizations that are in the field you want to be in. Tech is a great example. There are the big names that we all know, but there are many, many smaller companies doing cool projects and hiring the same types of positions as the large firms.

- What types of positions do organizations need?

- If the economy is good, you'll see lots of recruiting and sales positions, for example.

If it is in a slower cycle, you'll likely see more of the "core" roles like finance and programming. Know how your skills, interests, and experience can match the realities of your local job market.

- What skill sets are being asked for?

- If you don't have tons of experiences or if you are looking to move your career into a different sector, you should focus on your skills. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the core competencies that are being asked for with any job opening – do I have those skills, and can I tell a story about how I developed and used them?

- What key words are being used?

- Am I noticing a lot of the same words popping up over and over again?

Keep an eye on the keywords in job announcements – you'll need them in your cover letter, resume, and interviews!

This information will inform your active search. Put this all together and you'll have the information you need to start a productive active search.

Step 2: Tell Volunteers that although this might sound like a lot of work, there are ways to make this process really efficient. Explain that it's helpful to save searches and automate as much as you can:

- Get relevant job openings emailed to you

- Keep these alerts active even after you find a job

- Set up calendar reminders to check sites that can't save searches

  Explain that if emailed job search results aren't an option, set reminders for yourself (include passwords, search words, etc.) and check back frequently. RPCV Career Link is a good example of a site that doesn't have saved searches but should be checked regularly.

- Volunteers can set up a spreadsheet to help keep track of all of this. If not using the PowerPoint with the chart on Slide 6 included, review the columns in the spreadsheet to help the Volunteers understand what information is necessary to record.

  You can provide Handout A: Job Search Example Spreadsheet or project the image from Handout A in a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate how Volunteers could use a spreadsheet to keep track of their job search efforts.

- Spreadsheet tips:
  - Don't link to the job announcement on the web, as they can disappear. Instead, paste the job announcement into a Word document and link that to your spreadsheet.
  - Link to your resume and cover letter for specific jobs applied to – these documents should be tailored to each specific position.
  - Use different tabs to track informational interviews, jobs interested in, jobs applied for, etc.

The goal of this is to ensure you spend your time on creating quality applications vs. spending time creating a large quantity of applications.

Part 3: Networking to Find the "Hidden" Job Market" (30 minutes)

Step 1: Ask Volunteers to raise their hands if they like networking. Then ask those who raised their hands why do they like to network?

For those in the audience who did not raise their hands (who don't like networking), ask them why not.

Set up a "Like" and "Dislike" chart on a flip chart page. While the Volunteers are sharing their answers, write them down on the flip chart. You're likely to hear the following responses from people that don't like to network. Possible facilitator responses are after them in parentheses.

- "I'm afraid I'll be imposing; I don't want to bother people." (People can always say no if they are too busy. Just don't let it bother you).
- "How can I call someone I don't know or I've lost touch with? It feels like I'm using people." (People like to do nice things for others. If you don't call to reconnect, you are denying someone the opportunity to enjoy helping you.)
- "People are too important or too busy to talk to me." (You'll never know if you don't try.)
- "I can't stand the superficiality of small talk; I don't like large gatherings." (Focus on meeting one or two people instead of the whole room.)
- "I never know what to say; I'm no good at working the room." (Write a brief elevator pitch and practice it. Set a goal for yourself that you want to talk to x # of people. If you know who is going to be at the event, pick specific individuals who you want to talk to, but leave room for strangers—sometimes the best networking can be a lucky coincidence.)
- "I feel like I'm asking for charity." (You aren't asking for charity, you are offering your skills and expertise to someone who may need them.)

For the list of reasons why people dislike networking, ask the Volunteers to brainstorm some answers to the following question:

- What are some ways that you could overcome these concerns?
- After facilitating a discussion and brainstorming solutions to concerns, ask Volunteers the following question:
- Why is networking important?
- Explain the following points:
- Networking will open doors and opportunities to the "hidden" job market where the majority of job openings are found.
- Networking shows your initiative.

Starting with friends and expanding to your professional contacts can be a good way to ease into this process if you're not already comfortable networking.

Step 2: At this point, Volunteers may be wondering, "But who do I network with?"

Activity: Distribute blank paper and ask participants to do the following task:

- List some of their connections who they think might be even remotely connected to their job search, even if only by introducing them to other people.

  Remind them to think of where friends are working, which professors might be in fields they are interested in, former employers, and relatives. Allow participants to fill it out for 10 minutes.

After Volunteers have brainstormed some of their connections, ask them the following question:

- What about the people who aren't listed but who might be helpful and how do we find them?

Sample script:
After hearing a few ideas from participants, say, "Here's where LinkedIn becomes really useful."

Explain that LinkedIn is a great tool to efficiently find people to talk to in the industry/organization you are interested in.

Like networking in person, it is important that you add four basic skills to your LinkedIn networking toolbox in order to make it work for you (If possible, on a computer, pull up a strong LinkedIn profile to look at as you go through this section. Nikolaus Crain, a Peace Corps Career Development Specialist, is a good example. Examples are also provided in

the PowerPoint if you're able to use that.)

Pass out Handout B: Example LinkedIn Profile.

After providing the handout to Volunteers, ask them to scan the profile and notice what is included and what types of skills pop out at them.

Share the following overview of the Example LinkedIn Profile. Some of the points should have already been mentioned by the Volunteers.

- Headline:
  - Not your job title - It's what you do/who you are
  - Examples include Web Designer and Information Architect, International Educator, Trainer of Trainers, Project Management Professional, Hospitality Manager, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer transitioning to domestic employment, Digital Communications Expert.
- Story – your summary
  - Ties your interests, experiences, skills together – The summary section is your chance to succinctly tell your career story. What is the common thread that ties your experiences and interests together? How does the Peace Corps fit into what you want to do with your career? What do you value – what are you looking for?
  - Say what you're looking for – if you're looking for a job/opportunity, say so!
  - Good stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Try to do the same in your summary. What inspired you to join the Peace Corps? What did it mean for you while you were there? How does it connect to the opportunities you're looking for now? Tell us:
    - Where you are
    - Where you've been
    - Where you want to go
  - Final notes about building your story on LinkedIn:
    - A job seeker's summary will likely read very differently from someone established in a career.
    - Feel free to sprinkle in keywords that are relevant to your sector (from your earlier research).
    - The rest of your profile also tells your story. Make sure it looks "clean," make the tone conversational, focus on your roles, your companies, your motivations, how you grew, etc. Save the quantitative accomplishments for your resume.
- Search – LinkedIn Advanced Search

Sample script:

"You want to find people who can be helpful to you – and who will agree to talk with you. The RPCV network is an excellent place to start! How to find them? LinkedIn's Advanced Search! We are going to talk about searching for people, but you can use this same tool to look for job openings, do company research, etc.

"For example, RPCVs might do a search where they are looking for current employees of Google that were past 'employees' of the Peace Corps. If you like, you can also use search filters (like location, keywords, etc.) or decide to research an industry instead of a specific company.

"When you do an advanced search on LinkedIn, it will look through your 1st connections as well as the connections of your 1st connections (i.e., your 2nd connections) and groups you belong to. Groups are a powerful way to expand your search results and potential connections so make sure you join, at the very least, the Peace Corps' official group – Peace Corps Network, which includes almost 12,000 RPCVs, PCVs, and Peace Corps staff.

- For Groups, ask for a connection request and follow up with an email.

"Now that you've got the results of your advanced search, visit the profiles of people who are the most interesting to you. For those who would make a good professional connection, do the following:

1. Ask to connect.
   - You need to select that you're connected through prior Peace Corps service.
   - You MUST personalize your note. Don't use the standard language. Tell this person how you're connected. You only have a few hundred characters to work with. You might say something like:
     - 'As a fellow Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who is interested in recruiting, I would appreciate a connection and an opportunity to hear more about your current role at Google.'
2. Once they've accepted your request to connect, send a follow up email through LinkedIn with a request for 15 to 20 minutes of time to chat.
   - Remind of your connection (RPCV, etc.)
   - Keep your requested amount of time short
   - Keep the question focused on them (i.e., want to learn more about their career/company/industry/etc., versus wanting to talk about getting you a job)

Step 3: Point out that you're going to show them how to take these same steps and apply them to good old-fashioned, in-person networking – another great way to find the people in your active job search.

- Headline

- Story

- Search

- Ask

Sample script:
"This is what you do when you're on the plane, at a conference, at a social hour, at an RPCV meeting, at alumni events, at career fairs, or any other social event!

- Headline: Your Intro
  - Determine how you want to introduce yourself
  - Make it similar to your professional headline on LinkedIn
  - You might say, 'I'm John Doe, an international youth development professional most recently working in Mali.'

Now, have the Volunteers turn to the person on their right and practice their headlines. Give them a minute or two to practice.

Then, say that the next part of an in-person networking conversation is telling your story.

- Story answers the, "How was the Peace Corps? / What did you do in the Peace Corps?" question.
  - Do's: Remind Volunteers to…
    - Incorporate skills they demonstrated in their service
    - Speak in concise terms to convey the "essence" of their experience (45-60 seconds)
    - Use the first person
  - Don'ts: Remind Volunteers not to…
    - Use Peace Corps jargon
    - Give a full recap of their two years
    - Mention their gruesome illness details

Optional Story Activity:

Take 10 minutes to break the group into small groups to practice answering the "What did you do in the Peace Corps" question. Give each person a chance to practice and then get feedback on their answer. The groups can come together and share 1-2 examples of the challenge of this question and/or examples of good answers that they heard and what they liked best about them.

After you have provided an opportunity for Volunteers to practice telling their stories, explain that another component of in-person networking is the search.

- Search: For in-person networking, this is just the search for the places/events where you can connect with people.

Explain that they can network everywhere! Networking is a state of mind as much as something they do at recognized events. They've spent the last two years meeting people and building relationships in their communities and across their country. Approach networking for a job search with the same mindset! They have experience in communicating. They have interesting personal and professional lives. Encourage them to set aside their fears and strike up a conversation and see where it goes!

Ask Volunteers the following question: "What types of formal events can you think of where you might network?"

Volunteers may share to the following ideas:

- Alumni gatherings
- Entrepreneur mixers
- Chamber of commerce socials
- Panel discussions/university presentations
- RPCV and Third Goal events

Next, ask them: "What types of informal events are good for networking?"

Volunteers may share the following ideas:

- The flight home
- Public transportation
- Grabbing lunch at a restaurant
- Many others – It's all about connecting wherever you can

Now cover the final component in the networking list: the Ask. In addition to using the information from their headline to inform their ask, explain that they can also use an elevator pitch. Below is some guidance for designing an effective elevator pitch for use at in-person networking events.

- The Ask: Your elevator pitch

Sample script: "This is the same concept as we discussed with LinkedIn, you're just asking verbally instead of via email.

- So what is an elevator pitch?
  - It's a short summary used to connect with the other person, quickly describe yourself and your professional experience, and request follow-up interaction.
  - You should be able to deliver the summary in the time span of an elevator ride, thus the name "elevator pitch" (approx. 30 seconds)
  - Your ask should be focused on the other person and include an easy request they are likely to agree to. This means: short amount of time, invitation to talk about themselves – this is not your chance to ask for a job.
- An elevator pitch contains the following parts:
  - Opener: Establish a connection
  - Where you are: Your most recent role
  - Where you're going: Why you are interesting
  - Follow-up: Get contact information and tentative informational interview

Pass out Handout C: Example Elevator Pitches/"Asks" which contains two examples.

Optional activity:

Break into small groups to practice and critique the PCVs' "asks." The trainer can decide how much time to spend on the activity – if there is a lot of time, all of the PCVs can practice their elevator pitch. If there's only 10 minutes, then perhaps only three PCVs from each group get to give their pitch and get feedback.

Remind the PCVs to include the following in their practice pitches:

- Opener
  - Establish a connection; comment on why you are there
- Where/what you're coming from
  - What you have done so far, or most recently did

- Career focus/where you're going
  - Years of experience and a distinguishing qualification or illustrative experience
  - Why you are interesting
- Request for follow-up
  - Try to get their business card!

Part 4: Informational Interviews (15 minutes)

Step 1: The result of both virtual and in-person networking is an informational interview. An informational interview is a 15- to 20-minute conversation focused on the interviewee. Remind the Volunteers that they should not go into an informational interview expecting it to lead directly to a job. They are there to get information, further contacts, and, in time, develop a better understanding of where opportunities are and what would be good ones for them to follow up on.

Explain that during the interview, they should:

- Learn about the industry/company/career history, via questions that arise from research prior to the meeting. (75 percent)
- State their interests and experience (20 percent)
- Get ideas for next steps – other people to interview, other organizations to look at, other resources that exist (5 percent)
- Get on their radar, get background information, get next steps
  - Try to leave the interview with information on more people to talk to or organizations to research.

You shouldn't leave without knowing your next steps!

During the interview, you should not:

- Let it last longer than you initially agreed upon – unless the interviewee wants it to take longer.
- Ask about things you could find out on their LinkedIn or company website page (e.g., Don't ask "Where did you work before the Peace Corps?")
- Ask questions like the following:
  - What jobs are available at xxx corporation?
  - I noticed you are growing your sales/HR/product development team. What skills and experience are most valued by those hiring managers?

Let them know that to create well-crafted questions they'll need to do some homework before the interview.

Finally, remind them that as they build up information and contacts through informational interviewing, the result will be a snowball effect of opportunities that eventually open up for them.

Part 5: Cultivating Your Network (5 minutes)

Step 1: Share some tips

Sample script: "Now let's review some helpful tips for cultivating your network…. Your network is only as good as your engagement with it. The odds of an opportunity being available at the exact moment of your informational interview are small. But staying engaged with your network makes you more likely to be alerted to opportunities when they do come up. Here are a few ways you can stay engaged with your network:

- Be a connector – not a collector: No, nobody wants to 'come over to your place' to check out your stack of business cards. Quality not quantity is the goal of networking. Do your part by connecting folks where appropriate or forwarding relevant information as it arises.

- Quarterly check-in: Create calendar reminders to check in with people you've met with to update them on your search. Similar to the 'connector' reminder above, do share other resources you've discovered while you've searched.

- Comment on and create articles online: Become a thought leader in your field of interest and build your brand. When people search your name online, they shouldn't see your tweets about your favorite sports teams, they should see your contribution and comments on the field you want to be working in. Think about who between those two searches you'd hire.

Part 6: Conclusion (5 minutes)

Step 1: Before the session, place the following notes on a flip chart (Flip Chart 3), then review them during the session wrap up:

- Your story, profile, online and in-person presence, business cards, hard work, etc., lead to networking opportunities
- Networking leads to informational interviews
- Informational interviews lead to opportunities
- Opportunities lead to resume submissions
- Resumes (with cover letters) lead to interviews

- Interviews lead to offers
- Offers, hopefully, lead to you feeling valued and fulfilled in your career

State that the first three bulleted points were explored in this session. PCVs will learn about resumes, cover letters, and interviews – the next three bulleted points – in Session 13.

Next, recap the session by saying that this has just been an introduction to these topics. If they'd like an in-depth dive into each of one, or other career topics, suggest they attend an RPCV Career Conference near them once they get home. They can visit the Virtual RPCV Career Center website (www.peacecorps.gov/careercenter) to learn more about these and the other career resources that Peace Corps offers RPCVs.

Finish the session by thanking the Volunteers for their participation, and elicit any questions on the content.

Job Search Example Spreadsheet

Sample Job Search Spreadsheet

Category	Priority	Status	Company	Job Title	Contact Name/Email	Link to Position description	Location	Fit (1-5)	Salary	Benefits notes	Last contact Date	Follow Up Date	Comments/Next Steps/Action
Association A Contact	1	Interviewed	Company A	Program Manager	xxx@wehire.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	D.C.	1	105K	Standard	2/14/2016	3/15/2016	
School Alumni Contact	2	Applied	Company B	Project Lead	bbb@gradjobs.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	Boston	2	85K	Pension	3/1/2016	4/1/2016	
Kosovo 2 Contact	2	Prep App	Company C	Team Supervisor	ccc@wepay.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	S.F.	2	90K	only 5 days vacation	1/29/2016	3/5/2016	
USDA Career Fair	3	Applied	Company D	Exec Assistant	ddd@moretolifethanmoney.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	Rome	5	65K	Work from home	2/1/2016	3/15/2016	
New LinkedIn contact	N/A	Info Interview	Company E	N/A	eee@inetworked.com	Link to Word doc w/ hiring announcement	International	N/A	TBD	N/A	Yesterday	3-4 months	

HANDOUT B

Example LinkedIn Profile

Nikolaus Crain
1st • PREMIUM

Connecting international professionals with rewarding careers

San Francisco Bay Area | Staffing and Recruiting

Current   Peace Corps
Previous   Backroads - The Worlds #1 Active Travel Company, Syracuse University, Peace Corps
Education Syracuse University

Send a message ▼

500+
connections

https://www.linkedin.com/in/nikolauscrain   📇 Contact Info

Posts

Published by Nikolaus

870
followers

Add Some Mingle to Your Jingle this Holiday Season
November 16, 2015

Job seeking? Ditch EQ and pitch grit.
July 13, 2015

6 things to delete to get your résumé noticed
February 27, 2015

Background

Summary

I live a charmed personal and professional life. My passion is to help others do the same.

For some, this means helping them define charmed. For others, it means better crafting their professional story when they are ready to change roles. For others still, it means encouraging their decision to incorporate personal values into career decisions.

Employers and employees both understand the importance of workplace culture, organizational values and intrinsic motivation. In a word, fit. I facilitate these connections. Please reach out if you're looking for passionate, globally focused talent. Also connect if you're looking to take another step in your own career development - regardless of the stage you're in.
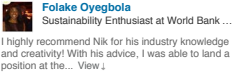
Experience

Career Development Specialist
Peace Corps
January 2015 – Present (1 year 2 months) | San Francisco Bay Area

I work with internationally experienced, values-driven problem solvers to help them define and attain fulfilling careers. I assist the career growth of the more than 215,000 current and returned Peace Corps volunteers through a combination of individual career counseling, presentations at regional and nationwide conferences and facilitation of online panel discussions.

Beyond individual career development, I work with a small team of dedicated marketing, technology, and relationship management professionals to ensure returned Volunteers are supported in the Peace Corps' mission to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

▼ 2 recommendations

Folake Oyegbola
Sustainability Enthusiast at World Bank ...
I highly recommend Nik for his industry knowledge and creativity! With his advice, I was able to land a position at the... View↓

Melinda Davies
Account Advocate at CDK Global
Nik presented thoughtful, relevant information during the West Coast National RPCV Career Conference. His disposition is... View↓

RPCV Career Conferences

Employer Resources

In Common with Nikolaus

1
Skill or Expertise

1
Company

People Similar to Nikolaus

James Potts   3rd
Career Development Specialist -- Experience...
Connect

Example Elevator Pitches/"Asks"

Hello, I am Arpi Seevi. **[opener]** I was very much encouraged by your presentation on successful social marketing techniques. **[opener]** I recently completed two years in Mali as a Community Health Extension Agent with the Peace Corps where I addressed everything from counseling thousands of residents on nutrition to working with youth on developing life skills. **[where you are]** As a result, I have honed a passion and a commitment to serving in areas of significant publ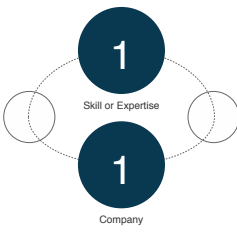ic health need. **[where going]** Can we have a brief chat at some point to discuss what might be next career steps for someone in my position? **[follow-up]**

Hello, I am Arpi Seevi. **[opener]** I have three years of experience in community agricultural education in the Pacific. **[where you are]** My previous assignment recently ended and I've just moved to this area. I understand that you are well-versed in D.C.-based NGOs. **[where going]** At your convenience, might you have 15-20 minutes to chat with me regarding your own experience and any tips or advice you might have for me as a job seeker? **[follow-up]**

SESSION 13
Volunteer to Employee: Turning Your Story into a Career

Purpose

This session builds on Session 12 and helps Volunteers translate the skills they learned and applied during their Peace Corps service to their resumes, cover letters, and interviews.

Rationale

As part of the COS training, it's important for us to help Volunteers learn how to create compelling resumes, cover letters, and interviews based on their Peace Corps experience so they can develop a fulfilling career post-service.

Duration

1-1/2 hours

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to:

• Identify and define transferable skills that were acquired during their Peace Corps service

• Articulate those transferable skills in a resume and cover letter and craft interview responses that reference these skills

• Draft an effective resume, including tailored key qualifications and bulleted descriptions that begin with action verbs and incorporate accomplishes and outcomes

• Practice effectively responding to typical behavioral interview questions

Session Outline

Part 1: Dispelling the myth: "I don't really have any marketable skills." (5 minutes)

Part 2: Defining the Skills You Gained in the Peace Corps (15 minutes)

Part 3: Crafting an Effective Resume (25 minutes)

Part 4: Making the Most of the Cover Letter (20 minutes)

Part 5: Interviewing (20 minutes)

Part 6: Conclusion (5 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Specialized knowledge of job search skills especially including resume writing, cover letters, and interviews.

Materials and Equipment

- Flip chart and markers
- Handouts:

    A. Skills Gained by Peace Corps Volunteers

    B. Example Cover Letter

Trainer Preparation

Prior to the start of the session, write some of the content on flip chart sheets as needed. Refer to this session to determine the needs. Additionally, print out the appropriate number of handouts for Volunteers.

Methodology

Part 1:   Dispelling the Myth: "I don't really have any marketable skills" (5 minutes)

Step 1: Introduction

Sample script: "You learned in Session 12 how to tell your story when networking online and in person. This session will build on that information and will help you tell that story in your resume, cover letter, and, eventually, when you interview for a job.

Your skills and attributes are the foundation of everything we'll discuss in this session. Before you can market yourself in your resume, cover letter, and interviews, you have to understand what skills and attributes you offer."

Step 2: Learn about in-demand skills

Sample script: "So before we delve into resumes, cover letters, and interviews, let's start by looking at what skills employers are looking for in their employees. A 2013 Forbes report listed the following as the 10 most sought-after skills by employers:

Note: Write the following on a flip chart in advance of the session.

- Teamwork
- Problem Solving & Decision Making

- Planning & Organizing
- Communication
- Research
- Quantitative Data Analysis
- Technical Skills
- Computer Proficiency
- Creating & Writing Reports
- Persuasive Selling & Influencing Skills

Before we get into what specific skills you gained in service and how you can use them in your job search, first know that each one of you has plenty of skills that employers are looking for, and a lot of them fall under skills on this list."

Part 2: Defining the Skills You Gained in the Peace Corps (15 minutes)

Step 1: Defining PCV skills

Sample script: "Let's spend some time defining the skills you gained in service."

Next, ask one Volunteer the following questions:

- "What is a project that you worked on in your village?" (wait for answer)
- "How would you describe the project?"

Once the Volunteer has told his/her story, ask the group to list the skills they heard as the Volunteer described the project.

List these on flip chart paper as the group shares them and ask probing questions to elicit skills that the group might have missed. For example, perhaps a Volunteer describes a project that they managed, but makes no mention of the project budget that they also likely managed. You could ask them if they also managed a budget as part of their project and, if so, they could also add "budget management" to their list of skills.

Elicit as many responses as you can from the group about the one Volunteer's project.

After you have identified skills that are specific to the one Volunteer, ask the group to reflect on their own service. Invite them to add skills to the list that were used in their own projects.

Step 2: At the end of this exercise, pass out Handout A, which includes a list of skills that many Volunteers gain during service. Tell them to keep this list so that they can refer back to it in their post-service job hunt.

Part 3: Crafting an Effective Resume (25 minutes)

Step 1: Resume writing tips

Sample script: "So now that we've defined our skills, let's take a look at some tips for writing a resume – one of the places where you'll be sharing those skills."

Note: For quick transitions, write the list of the five tips on flip chart paper before the start of the session.

For each tip, provide a quick explanation of the tip and why it is an important component of the job hunt.

- **Tip 1:** Use the words from the job posting in your resume

Sample script: "This is the most important tip of them all. You must look at the job description for the specific position you're applying for and incorporate the key words from it in your resume. This will help your experience resonate with the person that reads it. And equally importantly, it will help the resume pass the electronic application screening system that so many large organizations now use. So don't skip this tip!

An easy way to create a tailored resume is to start by creating a master resume that includes all of your previous experience. When applying for a job, you can pull from the master resume the experience that highlights the skills that the job description lists.

From there, simply tailor each bullet's language to include the language from the job description. For example, your bullet point might say that you have experience in analysis but the job description notes that candidates should be skilled in evaluation. Change "analysis" in your resume to "evaluation" to really tailor your resume.

- **Tip 2:** Use simple formatting to allow easy scanning

Sample script: "People read resumes similarly to how you read something on the Internet. Think about it for a second: When you visit a webpage, do you read the whole page from top to bottom? Probably not. Chances are you scan the page, looking at the headings, bullet points, beginnings of paragraphs, and other visual cues to help you decide if you're interested in reading further.

An employer reading a resume looks for these same clues in formatting and key words to choose the best candidates. Take advantage of this fact and use consistent, simple formatting with bold headings, several bullets, and key words that will catch the eye of the person who reads your resume. This may take up one page or possibly two for more experienced job seekers."

- **Tip 3:** Use "Key Qualifications" in place of the "Objective Statement"

Sample script: "While objective statements used to be advised, they have fallen out of favor. Today's job search is all about showing the employer what you can do for them – not the reverse – so delete the objective statement and use that space to include two to three bulleted points that describe the key skills that make you the best fit for the job and that will catch the eye of the reader. These bullets should include key words and skills from the job description."

A recommended format for the first bullet is as follows (Write on a flip chart.):

[Adjective + noun] with [insert Master's if have one, and] X years of _____ experience including...

For example, "Accomplished communicator with two years of marketing experience, including social media management, digital content development, and promotional materials development."

Give the Volunteers two minutes to craft one "key qualification" bullet point using the formula.

- **Tip 4:** Use fragmented sentences and past tense action verbs to describe each job skill

Example: "Wrote, received, and managed a $4,000 USAID-funded grant to build community resource center serving village of 1,200.

Do not use full sentences or the word 'I' in job descriptions – you should only use sentence fragments."

In order to practice this, ask participants to draft one or two bullet points for their Peace Corps service. After a few minutes, ask for a few Volunteers to share examples and let the group give feedback.

- **Tip 5:** Beef up your education by including two entries

Sample script: "Not everyone in the room can include both undergraduate and graduate experience on their resume; however, everyone in the room can include their undergraduate and Peace Corps PST or possibly a study abroad experience. Do this and make your employer think you've got tons of education as they do their quick scan of your resume.

Unless applying for an academic/research position, education should generally be included in the resume after your professional experience. This will help you avoid looking like a new graduate."

Part 4: Making the Most of Cover Letters – Optional if time permits (20 minutes)

Step 1: Ask the Volunteers the following question:

• "How many of you have heard that most employers do not read cover letters?"

After getting a show of hands and a few comments, explain to them that while it's likely that some don't, others won't hire someone who doesn't include a cover letter. Since you never know what sort of employer you'll be dealing with, you should always include a cover letter with your application whenever allowed. Here's why:

A cover letter:

• Shows your writing skills

• Complements your resume (does not duplicate it)

• Spotlights your qualifications/uniqueness

• Creates a winning first impression

• Sets you apart from the masses

Step 2: Pass out Handout B and discuss the following do's and don'ts of cover letters after the Volunteers have had a chance to look it over. Prepare this on a flip chart in advance of the session.

DOs	DON'Ts
Keep it to 1 page (3-4 short paragraphs)	Be too brief (It should add value to your application)
Tailor cover letter to each job applied for	
Match your skills	Misspell anything
Mention NCE status (for federal positions)	Address female as "Miss"- use "Ms."
Show uniqueness	Don't use the same letter for all job openings (tailor it)

Part 5: Interviewing (20 minutes)

Step 1: Introduction

Sample script: "Now that you've told a compelling story in writing, with your cover letter and resume, the next step is to present that story orally in the interview. There are three steps to doing this well:

1. Preparation

2. Presentation of yourself and your skills

3. Follow up

Step 2: Talk through these individually. First, ask the following question:

- "What comes to mind when you think of preparing for an interview?"

Let the Volunteers come to the following conclusions. If they do not share all of them, add additional comments.

- Research the company and interviewer

- Review the job description and your resume

- Prepare possible responses/examples/stories to use when responding to interview questions

- Formulate questions to ask the interviewer

Step 3: After discussing how to prepare for an interview, discuss the second step: presenting yourself and your skills. Ask the following question:

- "What are some things that you all do to present yourself well in an interview?"

Let the Volunteers come to the following conclusions. If they do not share all of them, add additional comments.

- Dress professionally

- Arrive early

- Keep a positive attitude

- Never talk poorly of a previous employer

Sample script: "Now what about presenting your skills effectively? That can be a little more complicated. First, it's a pretty safe bet that by the time you get to an interview you've likely already convinced the employer that you have the skills they need; so be confident as you describe this experience in your interview!

Beyond confirming your skills, your interviewer will be looking to see if you'll fit in with their office/organizational culture. In this part of the interview, employers will try to learn more about your personality by looking for specific traits, including how well you:

- Communicate

- Manage behavior

- Navigate social complexities (i.e., work in teams)

- Make personal decisions that achieve positive results

- Stay proactive

- Bounce back during adversity

- Perform under pressure

The way employers get to these points is through behavioral interview questions, which have become very common in job interviews today. These are the sorts of questions that ask you to describe your previous experience in specific situations so the employer can judge, based on your past performance, how you'll likely perform in the future. For example, an employer might ask, 'Tell me about a time you used your project management skills in a work environment;' or, 'Give me an example of a time you dealt with conflict while working in a team.'

This also demonstrates how important it is for you to be able to tell your Peace Corps story. In these types of job interview situations, there's a simple framework you can use to help you tell your story and provide an answer that highlights your skills and personality at the same time: SCAR

- **Situation** – The context in which you were working.
  Example: Prevalence of malnourished students at impoverished primary school affecting learning.

- **Challenge** – The task you had to resolve and why it was important.
  Example: Identify and develop an income generation activity to provide food and generate income.

- **Actions** – The specific steps you took to achieve your goal.
  Example: Assessed community resources; designed project through collaboration with village partners; raised funds; carried out knitting trainings to provide income generation source.

- **Results** – The effects of your work; your accomplishments.
  Example: Trained women in three villages to generate income to feed 150 children.

Would someone like to volunteer to give us an example of this framework using their own experience?" Spend a few minutes discussing one Volunteer's example.

Step 3: Following up.

Sample script: "The last step of interviewing well is following up with the interviewer after the interview. This basically means writing them a thank you note. An important part of this means that you need to have their personal contact info, so request their card during the interview if you don't already have their information. A few thank you note tips:

- Send it within 12 to 24 hours of the interview
- It can be emailed, but hand-written is a nice touch if it can be hand delivered (mailed).
- Reference something from the interview to remind them why they should hire you.
- Express appreciation and continued interest.

Optional Activity: Interview Practice

Sample script: "Now that you know all of the interviewing steps, all you need to do to interview well is practice! To help you practice, I'd like you to break into small groups of about five Volunteers. I want one Volunteer in each group to act as the employer/interviewer while the other Volunteers act as the interviewees."

If each Volunteer gets a chance to practice, the activity will take about 30 minutes – with about 5 minutes for each Volunteer to interview and get feedback. If you don't have that much time, you can also do this with the entire group with you acting as the "employer" and calling on Volunteers to be interviewed.

Before they get started, ask the Volunteer being interviewed to select an imaginary position and organization that they're applying for. Then ask the "employers" to ask the Volunteer the following questions:

1. Tell me about yourself. (Think back to your headline from Session 12.)
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. What's your greatest weakness?
4. Give me an example of a time you utilized your organizational skills to prioritize in a fast-paced environment.
5. Give me an example of a time you've had to manage conflict and how you dealt with it.

Part 6: Conclusion (5 minutes)

Step 1: Refer back to the flip chart that you created for Session 12. Mention that in Session 12, Volunteers learned about the first three bulleted points. This session discussed the last four bulleted points.

- Your story, profile, online and in-person presence, business cards, hard work, etc., lead to networking opportunities

- Networking leads to informational interviews

- Informational interviews lead to opportunities

- Opportunities lead to resume submissions

- Resumes (with cover letters) lead to interviews

- Interviews lead to offers

- Offers, hopefully, lead to jobs that make you feel valued and fulfilled in your career

Explain that this has just been an introduction to these topics. For an in-depth dive into each of these topics and other career topics, they can visit the Virtual RPCV Career Center (www.peacecorps.gov/careercenter) to learn more about these and the other career resources that the Peace Corps offers RPCVs and to find out when RPCV Career Conferences are happening near you once you get home.

Finish the session by thanking Volunteers for their participation, and elicit any questions on the content.

Skills Gained by Peace Corps Volunteers

Communication/People Helping

- Advocacy
- Building a sustainable community
- Building trust
- Collaboration with target audience
- Confidence building
- Conflict resolution and mediation
- Cross-cultural mediation
- Cultural awareness & sensitivity
- Diplomacy
- Empowerment
- Establishing trust
- Facilitating discussions and workshops
- Foreign language skills
- Leadership
- Listening
- Mentoring
- Motivating
- Negotiations
- Networking
- Persuasive skills
- Public relations
- Public speaking
- Relationship building
- Sensitivity to other cultures
- Solicitation
- Teambuilding
- Writing/editing Skills

Research/Analysis, Creative

- Curriculum development
- Flexibility
- Initiative-seeking opportunities
- Lesson planning
- Manual development
- Marketing
- Networking
- Organizing workshops
- Presentation assembly
- Working with limited resources

Research/Analysis, Technical

- Budget management
- Capacity evaluation (PACA)
- Critical thinking
- Environmental knowledge
- Foundation researching
- Fundraising
- GIS/GPS
- Grant writing
- Interviewing
- Market identification
- Needs assessment
- Project monitoring
- Survey development/reporting
- Translating/interpreting
- Troubleshooting

Organization/Planning/Management

- Adaptability
- Backstopping (project support)
- Building infrastructure
- Coalition building
- Designing budgets/proposals
- Developing sustainable projects
- Event planning
- Inter-organizational networking
- Logistics
- NGO development
- Planning/executing projects
- Planning/leading meetings
- Preparing expense reports
- Project management
- Recruitment
- Resourcefulness
- Resource identification
- Scheduling of events
- Small business development
- Supervision
- System building & sustainability
- Time management
- Training/capacity building
- Working independently

Career-Related Skills Often Developed through Peace Corps Service

TECHNICAL SKILLS	SOFT SKILLS	TECHNICAL SKILLS	SOFT SKILLS
Accounting	Adaptability	Human resource management	Inquisitiveness
Adult education	Building confidence	Lesson planning	Leadership - assigned or not
Allocation of funds	Charisma	Logistics management/ coordination	Negotiation
Building infrastructure	Conscientiousness	Marketing and advertising	Patience
Budget management	Creative problem-solving	Mediation and conflict resolution	Perseverance
Candidate/applicant assessment	Creativity	Multi-level coordination	Political savvy
Coalition building/ partnership development	Critical thinking	Needs assessment	Priority-setting
Community empowerment	Cultural awareness & sensitivity	Project management and support	Resourcefulness
Curriculum design/ development	Customer service	Public speaking	Persuasion
Data analysis	Delegation of responsibility	Public relations	Ability to self-start
Developing sustainable projects	Enthusiasm	Research and analysis	Tact
Donor assessment	Entrepreneurship	Small business development	Teambuilding
Environmental knowledge	Flexibility	Stakeholder analysis	Time management
Event planning	Independent work ethic	Strategic planning	Troubleshooting
Facilitation and training	Ingenuity	Technical/specialized knowledge	Youth advocacy
Feasibility analysis	Initiative	Translating professional materials	Motivating
Foreign language speaking/interpreting	Informal networking	Tutoring, teaching and mentoring	Empowering
Grant-writing and fundraising	Interviewing skills	Writing/Editing	Teaching sustainably

Example Cover Letter

March 24, 2015

We Love RPCVs, Inc.
1800 P St. NW
Washington, DC 20562

Dear Selection Committee:

I've been watching your company's job openings for the last year, waiting for the right position to come along. The Program Analyst position is just what I've been looking for and now I'd like to explain to you how great I'd be at this position and why you should choose me to fill it.

I want to work for a company with a mission that I believe in and that's why I've sought out this opportunity with your organization. I am passionate about...

Not only do I have an intense interest in supporting your mission, I also have the professional experience necessary to excel as a Program Analyst. A review of my resume and a chat with my references will confirm my experience and abilities in the duties listed in the position description: ...

Hire me for this position and let me put my interests and experience to work to further your organization's goals.

Thank you for your consideration,

[Your Signature]

Arpi Seevi

SESSION 14
Leveraging Your NCE for Federal Employment

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to provide the Volunteers with an overview of noncompetitive eligibility (NCE), which is a streamlined process for hiring managers in the federal government, allowing RPCVs to side-step the competitive hiring process.

Rationale

To help facilitate a smooth transition from service, it is important to provide an overview of the benefits of Peace Corps service so that COS Volunteers know how to access these benefits. This session provides a description of NCE as well as the methods for searching for NCE jobs.

Duration

45 minutes

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will be able to:

- Define the benefits of NCE
- Calculate their NCE
- Explain how to find NCE jobs

Session Outline

Part 1:   Introduction & Definition of NCE (5 minutes)

Part 2: Calculating NCE (10 minutes)

Part 3: Modeling Finding NCE Jobs (15 minutes)

Part 4: Tips for Making the Most of NCE (5 minutes)

Part 5: Closing (5 minutes)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

This session should be facilitated by Peace Corps staff that have a working understanding of NCE.

Materials and Equipment

- NCE video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaDmBHfX9KM
- Handouts (if no access to LCD projector):
   A. Overview of NCE
   B. Calculating NCE
   C. NCE Quiz
   D. NCE Quiz Answer Key
- Access to internet
- Trainer Material 1: Power Point Presentation
- LCD projector

Trainer Preparation

Print Handouts A, B, and C. Review the answer keys for Handout B and Handout C.

Methodology

Part 1:   Introduction & Definition of NCE (5 minutes)

> **Step 1:** Explain that this session will provide Volunteers with an overview of noncompetitive eligibility (NCE).

> **Step 2:** Show the NCE video (if showing the YouTube NCE video, skip to Part 5 of the session.), or use the PowerPoint or following flip charts.

> Show Volunteers the following phrases either on a PowerPoint slide or on a flip chart and ask them to choose one in response to the question: "What is NCE?"

> - Nifty Confident Evolutionaries
> - Non-Conformist Extraordinaire
> - Nutterbutter Cookies Expired
> - Non-Competent Educators
> - Newly Cooked Eggs
> - Noncompetitive Eligibility

- Network of Californian Entrepreneurs
- National Council of Earthmovers
- Never Concise Editors
- Non-Cultured Environmentalists
- Never Cool Elitists

Step 3: After facilitating the short opening activity, provide Volunteers with the definition and overview of NCE. Distribute Handout A, and using the PowerPoint or a flip chart, explain NCE.

- NCE permits (but does not require) a federal agency to hire an RPCV who meets the minimum qualifications for the position.
- NCE allows RPCVs to compete for positions not available for the general public.
- NCE is granted to RPCVs under Executive Order (EO) 11103.
  - You must have completed at least 12 months of Peace Corps service (including PST), and have been separated for reasons beyond your control, to receive this status.
  - If you resigned from Peace Corps service, you are not eligible.
  - If you are not sure if you have NCE, check your Description of Service (DOS).

Furthermore, explain that NCE streamlines the hiring process for hiring managers; RPCVs can side-step the competitive hiring process. Federal hiring managers do not need to post on USAJobs.com and RPCVs just need to meet the minimum qualifications for a position to be considered. However, NCE does not mean that RPCVs are entitled to federal employment, no matter how long they have served.

Additional information is available on www.peacecorps.gov/nce.

5 CFR 315.605 is the regulatory authority – give that number to any Federal HR employees that want more information about NCE.

Part 2: **Calculating NCE (10 minutes)**

Step 1: Using a PowerPoint or flip chart, explain how Volunteers can calculate the length of their NCE.

- Explain that RPCVs have NCE for one year from the date of their COS.
- NCE can be extended for up to three years (from COS date) for three reasons:
  - Full-time school enrollment
  - Military service
  - Engaging in another activity that the hiring agency thinks warrants an extension

For example, if a hiring manager feels that your previous work experience is relevant to the current position you are applying for, and that it can be expected to enhance your performance and add value to the agency, a hiring manager may decide to extend your NCE; however this is a rare use of NCE

Step 2: Distribute Handout B and provide an opportunity for Volunteers to practice calculating NCE for the mock RPCV Emily.

Part 3: Modeling Finding NCE Jobs (15 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that there are multiple methods for finding NCE jobs. Use a PowerPoint or flip chart to explain the five identified methods.

- RPCV Career Link
  - Easy to search for NCE positions
- USAJobs.gov
  - Use the "advanced search" feature and filter out the positions that are looking to hire individuals with NCE
  - Search feature is located under the search box on the landing page
- RPCV NCE Employment Program
  - RPCVs submit their resumes every 90 days to be considered for various Peace Corps openings during that time
- RPCV Career Fairs
  - As mentioned in Session 10, there are multiple RPCV careers fairs throughout the U.S. – many federal employers attend the career fairs because they know RPCVs have NCE
- Networking/Informational Interviews
  - Many individuals find jobs through this method

Step 2: After providing an overview of the different methods for finding NCE jobs, model how to locate jobs using RPCV Career Link, USAJobs.gov, and the RPCV Noncompetitive Employment Program. If you have internet, go to the webpages and navigate the sites for Volunteers. If you do not have internet, show the screen shots of the RPCV Career Link page and USAJobs.gov.

After showing how to navigate RPCV Career Link and USAJobs.gov, discuss the RPCV Noncompetitive Employment Program. Visit www.peacecorps.gov/nce to show the link to the RPCV NCE Employment program application.

Explain the following:

- The Peace Corps accepts NCE from RPCVs through the RPCV Noncompetitive Employment Program.
- This is an open-continuous announcement.
  - Positions that are listed are not necessarily vacant.
  - Resumes are added to a pool of RPCV resumes that hiring managers at the Peace Corps will review.
  - RPCVs must recertify eligibility (i.e., reapply) every 90 days or they will be removed from the roster.
- RPCVs may be contacted for an interview soon after being put on the roster or never contacted – it all depends on the hiring manager's needs.
- This program is for Peace Corps/Washington and Regional Recruiting Offices.
  - Not for overseas positions.
  - RPCVs are not applying for specific positions, so keep answers general (and broad) to increase likelihood to be called for an interview.
- For more information, contact rpcv@peacecorps.gov.

Part 4: Tips for Making the Most of NCE (5 minutes)

Step 1: Explain that there are several things to keep in mind with NCE. Use a PowerPoint or flip chart to explain the ideas.

- Peace Corps Volunteers are not federal employees.
  - RPCVs should not fill in a series or grade level on any application.
- Peace Corps Volunteers are not assigned a GS Level.
  - Generally, most RPCVs qualify at the GS-7 or GS-9 levels.
- Peace Corps Volunteers do not have security clearance.

Step 2: Explain that there are several tips for making the most of NCE. Use a PowerPoint or flip chart to explain the tips.

- List NCE status EVERYWHERE – resume, cover letter, online applications, and mention it in an interview.
- Include the DOS in any application submitted – this is official proof of RPCV status.
- Visit the NCE one-stop-shop at www.peacecorps.gov/nce.

- Include a copy of the "NCE Letter for Federal Employers" with any application.
  - Download at www.peacecorps.gov/nce.
- Refer federal employers to Returned Volunteer Services at rpcv@peacecorps.gov or +1-202-692-1430 with any questions.

Part 5: Closing (10 minutes)

Step 1: Provide Handout C to Volunteers and ask them to complete the True or False assessment. You can also choose to use a PowerPoint slide or flip chart for the questions.

Step 2: After Volunteers have completed the True or False assessment, check the answers as a group and see if there are any lingering questions. Review the useful websites and contacts using either PowerPoint slides or a flip chart.

- RPCV Career Link
  - www.peacecorps.gov/RPCVCareerLink
- NCE Video
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaDmBHfX9KM
- Returned Volunteer Service's NCE one-stop-shop
  - www.peacecorps.gov/nce
- NCE information for federal agencies (in case hiring managers are not familiar with NCE)
  - www.peacecorps.gov/hire
- Request a copy of your DOS
  - +1-202-692-1784
  - certify@peacecorps.gov
- Peace Corps' Returned Volunteer Services
  - +1-202-692-1430
  - rpcv@peacecorps.gov
- RPCV Career Events Calendar
  - www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events
- USAJobs.gov
  - www.usajobs.gov

Overview of Noncompetitive Eligibility

NCE permits (but does not require) a federal agency to hire an RPCV who meets the minimum qualifications for the position.

NCE allows RPCVs to compete for positions not available for the general public.

NCE is granted to RPCVs under Executive Order (EO) 11103.

- You must have completed at least 12 months of Peace Corps service (including PST), and have been separated for reasons beyond your control, to receive this status.
- If you resigned from Peace Corps service, you are not eligible.
- If you are not sure if you have NCE, check your DOS.

Calculating NCE

Calculate the remaining time that the Volunteer has for NCE. Start with the Volunteer's COS date of 12/2013.

Volunteer	Remaining NCE
1. COS Date 12/2015	1. If today is the Volunteer's COS date, how many months does the Volunteer have remaining on NCE?
2. Traveled to South America for 2 months until 2/2016	2. If the RPCV traveled to South America after COSing for two months, how many months does the RPCV have remaining on NCE?
3. The RPCV obtained a job from 2/2016 until 9/2016	3. How many months are remaining on NCE?
4. Accepted to grad school and in grad school as of 9/2016	4. In 9/2016, how many months are remaining on NCE?
5. The RPCV graduates in 5/2017	5. How many months are remaining on NCE?

Calculating NCE: Answer Key

1. 12 months

2. 10 months

3. 3 months

4. 3 months ("paused" at 3 months remaining)

5. 3 months

The RPCV's NCE would expire as of 8/2017 in this example. The RPCV would continue on a similar track if she joined the army or re-entered school. The hard-stop date would be three years from her COS date: December 2016.

NCE Quiz

Circle the correct answer for each statement. Decide if each statement is true or false.

As an RPCV, I am **NOT** considered a former federal employee.	True or False
RPCVs are given only **one year** of NCE.	True or False
If an RPCV enrolls in a **five-year PhD program**, NCE will be extended until they graduate.	True or False
If an RPCV is in graduate school, they do not need to do anything to extend their NCE.	True or False
If an RPCV uses NCE to apply for a job, the agency **has** to hire them.	True or False
With NCE, an RPCV **does not have to be the most qualified** candidate to be considered for a job.	True or False
You can use your NCE to work for a **State** agency.	True or False

NCE Quiz: Answer Key

As an RPCV, I am NOT considered a former federal employee.	True
RPCVs are given only one year of NCE.	True
If an RPCV enrolls in a five-year PhD program, NCE will be extended until they graduate.	False
If an RPCV is in graduate school, they do not need to do anything to extend their NCE.	True
If an RPCV uses NCE to apply for a job, the agency has to hire them.	False
With NCE, an RPCV does not have to be the most qualified candidate to be considered for a job.	True
You can use your NCE to work for a State agency.	False

PEACE CORPS
RESPONSE

Session 15
Not Ready to Go Home?
Consider Peace Corps Response

Purpose

Peace Corps Response (PCR) offers returned Peace Corps Volunteers and professionals with at least 10 years of experience the opportunity to serve in short-term, high-impact Volunteer assignments. PCR partners with local and international nongovernmental organizations, international development and relief organizations, and host country government institutions. To meet the needs of our partners, PCR Volunteers work on specific projects with defined deliverables.

Rationale

As of 2015, 84 percent of PCR assignments were filled by RPCVs. Many RPCVs leave service with the desire to one day return to the field to help communities in need, and PCR is a perfect platform to do exactly that. Additionally, Volunteers planning on a development career may be interested in PCR assignments to build technical development experience and skills.

Duration

30 minutes to 1 hour, depending on which activities are selected

Objectives

By the end of this session, Volunteers will:

- Become familiar with Peace Corps Response and the types of assignments available
- Learn the steps required to transition from Peace Corps service to Peace Corps Response service
- Recognize the benefits Peace Corps Response Volunteers receive

- Identify the medical and legal clearance process after COS

- Know where to connect with Peace Corps Response to learn more about the program and receive new assignment alerts

- Hear directly from Peace Corps Response Volunteers about their experience*

*This portion can either be facilitated by sharing videos from the Peace Corps Response YouTube page or by inviting a currently serving Peace Corps Response Volunteer to speak.

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction to Peace Corps Response (10 minutes)

Part 2: Overview of Peace Corps Response (15 – 20 minutes)

Part 3: Panel (20 minutes)

Part 4: Closing (5 minutes)

Facilitator and Technical Expertise

Facilitators should have experience with Peace Corps Response. If possible, a PCR coordinator/manager should facilitate the session. If he/she is not available, have the DPT or a currently serving PCR Volunteer lead the session. Alternatively, posts may contact PCR and request a recruiter to help facilitate the session.

Materials and Equipment

- Peace Corps Response Recruitment Video: http://bit.ly/1CMIhjN

- Peace Corps Response Volunteer vignette YouTube videos:
  - Peace Corps Response Volunteer Works with the Millennium Challenge Corporation in the Philippines: http://bit.ly/1IQoroD
  - Peace Corps Response Volunteer Works to Improve Local NGO HIV/AIDS: Prevention Services in Guyana: http://bit.ly/1I4QRhc
  - Peace Corps Response Volunteer Works as an HIV/AIDS Adviser in Malawi: http://bit.ly/1G54pse

- PowerPoint (slides and notes)

- Handout: Overview of PCR to Volunteers

- Equipment to support audio/visual presentations, including projector, speakers, and internet if possible

- Chairs for the panel

Trainer Preparation

If the trainer is not familiar with Peace Corps Response, it would be helpful for him or her to review the session materials prior to the training. Additional information can be found on the Peace Corps Response intranet page. If the trainer has a specific question and is unable to locate the answer within the suggested materials, email pcresponse@peacecorps.gov. Additionally, invite a currently serving Peace Corps Response Volunteer to participate in the panel.

Methodology

Part 1: Introduction to Peace Corps Response (10 minutes)

>   **Step 1:** Show the Peace Corps Response Recruitment Video (approx. 6 minutes) at http://bit.ly/1CMIhjN.
>
>   While Volunteers are watching the video, ask them to reflect on the following question:
>
>   • What excites you about Peace Corps Response?

Part 2: Overview of Peace Corps Response (15-20 minutes)

>   **Step 1:** For ease of facilitation a PowerPoint presentation is available with notes. If you do not have access to PowerPoint, please utilize a flip chart to present the most important information.
>
>   **Step 2:** Provide Handout 1: Overview of Peace Corps Response. You can also print the PowerPoint presentation and provide it to Volunteers.
>
>   **Step 3:** Talk through the sections of the PowerPoint presentation. Take questions as you proceed through the presentation. Tell Volunteers to capture their notes and ideas on the handout.
>
>   **Step 4:** When you are finished presenting the content, ask Volunteers the following question:
>
>   • What are your questions on Peace Corps Response?
>
>   **Step 5:** Depending on time, there are several videos hyperlinked that will provide more examples of Peace Corps Response.

Part 3: Panel (20 minutes)

>   **Step 1:** After presenting an overview of PCR, transition to the panel discussion with a currently serving Peace Corps Response Volunteer.

Step 2: Once the panelists (either currently serving PCR Volunteers and/or the DPT/program manager) have taken their seats, have a chosen moderator ask the panelists a series of suggested questions.

Below are a few suggested questions for the session:

- Are you a returned Peace Corps Volunteer?
    - If so, when and where did you serve?
    - If not, what were you doing/where were you working before your service?
- What motivated you to apply to Peace Corps Response?
- Could you please describe the application and placement process?
- What has been the most memorable moment of your assignment so far?
- What do you still hope to accomplish during your assignment?

Step 3: After the moderator has asked the panel some of the suggested questions, he/she should invite questions from COS Volunteers. Ask Volunteers to raise their hands and share their questions with the panelists.

Step 4: After wrapping up the panel, thank the panelists for sharing their experiences. Additionally, thank the Volunteers for the interest and participation in the session.

Part 4: Closing (5 minutes)

Step 1: Thank Volunteers for their involvement in the session.

Step 2: Explain that the next session will be Wrap Up and Closure, and that the session will start in a few minutes.

PEACE CORPS
RESPONSE

CONTINUE SERVING ABROAD

SHORT-TERM POSITIONS AVAILABLE WITH PEACE CORPS RESPONSE

Peace Corps Response (PCR) offers short-term, high-impact service opportunities to returned Peace Corps Volunteers and professionals with at least 10 years of work experience. PCR Volunteers bring advanced language, technical, and intercultural skills to their assignments.

Peace Corps Response partners with local and international nongovernmental organizations, international development and relief organizations, and host country government institutions. To meet the needs of our partners, PCR Volunteers work on specific projects with defined deliverables.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the application process?

Applicants apply online to specific positions in a country of their choice. The application takes 15–30 minutes to complete.

How long are Peace Corps Response assignments?

Assignments range from three to 12 months and are designed for Volunteers to hit the ground running.

What are the benefits of service with Peace Corps Response?

PCR Volunteers receive the same in-country benefits as Peace Corps Volunteers, and accrue a readjustment allowance of $425 for each month of service completed.

Fast Facts

- PCR Volunteers to date: 2,500
- PCR countries total: 50
- Percentage of PCR assignments filled by returned Volunteers: 84
- Average age of PCR Volunteers: 41

peacecorps.gov/response

SESSION 16
Wrap-up and Closure

Purpose

This session provides an opportunity to review and wrap up the content of the whole conference and bring closure to the COS groups' activities. To the extent possible, some of the group members should help determine how they would like to bring closure for the group and design a closing activity.

Rationale

A final session provides a review of the workshop content, revisiting objectives, and reinforcing important information. It should also include an evaluation—either oral or written—to assist the post in providing further COS events.

The closure for the COS group can include presentation of activities started earlier in the workshop, such as a group mural or a collection of addresses and memories.

Duration

1 to 1-1/2 hours, depending on activities chosen

Objectives

By the end of the session, Volunteers will be able to:

• Reflect on the objectives and content of the conference

• Evaluate the conference

• Receive reminders of follow-up they need to do

• Receive thanks from the Peace Corps staff for their service

• Enjoy a closure activity for their Peace Corps group

Session Outline

Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Part 2: Reflect on the objectives and content (15–40 minutes)

Part 3: Evaluation (10 minutes)

Part 4: Reminders (5–10 minutes)

Part 5: Thank you (5–15 minutes)

Part 6: Closure activity (depends on activity)

Facilitators and Technical Expertise

Peace Corps staff should be present for this session, even if not facilitating it.

Volunteers in the COS group should run their final activity.

Materials and Equipment

- Handouts:
    - A. Sample evaluation
    - B. Sample thank you from staff

Trainer Preparation

1. Determine how each part of the session will be presented (see options at end of session plan).

2. Collect materials from other sessions, such as the objectives, the moving process chart, etc.

3. Prepare the "thank you" to Volunteers. This can be any type of activity, anything from a personal statement from each staff to a staff skit or rap or song. A written thank you might be given. (See sample, Handout B.)

4. Work with representative COS Volunteers to plan their closure activity.

Methodology

Part 1:   Introduction (5 minutes)

Step 1: Introduce the session by explaining the objectives and activities.

Part 2: Reflect on objectives and content of the conference (15 to 40 minutes)

Step 1: Explain how you will conduct this review.

Step 2: Carry out the review.

Part 3: Evaluation (10 minutes)

Step 1: Distribute evaluation form and ask participants to complete it.

OR

Step 2: Conduct a discussion.

Part 4: Reminders (5 to 10 minutes)

Step 1: Provide a checklist, or return to checklist in COS booklet.

Step 2: If participants were supposed to have completed items during the conference (such as signing up for medical appointments), make sure this has been done.

Part 5: Thank you from staff (5 to 15 minutes)

As determined.

Part 6: Group closure activity (time depends on activity)

As determined.

Activity Options

Reflect on objectives and content of conference

Instead of the facilitator conducting a review, participants can do it. Here are some possibilities:

Divide the session topics among small groups. Each group's task is to review that topic or session, including any flip charts and handouts, and prepare a short review for the group. They have five minutes to present. Their reviews could be:

- An oral report
- A flip chart without words that represents the key ideas that the group has to decipher
- A skit, song, rap, or pantomime
- Filling a section of a mural—a mural made up of flip charts for each topic area, done in order

Closing Circle (Peace Corps/Honduras from Peace Corps/Dominican Republic)

Length: Depends on number of Volunteers

Objectives:

- Bring closure to COS conference
- Allow final opportunity for sharing/reflection among group

Materials:

- Slips of paper for all, each with a Volunteer's name on it.
- Poem: "The Road Not Taken"
- Bells with comforting sound or tranquil music, which signifies leaving

Preparation:

A day or two before the closing circle, fill a bag with strips of paper, each with a Volunteer's name on it. Have each of the PCVs draw out a name other than theirs. Tell them to prepare to tell a funny story about the Volunteer or say something brief but significant about that person at the closing circle.

Procedure:

- Review the "path" of the COS conference and tell PCVs that they are now in the final closing circle.

- Point out that it may be one of the last times the group is altogether.

- At the closing circle—with everyone seated in a tight circle—ask one person to start. That person goes behind the person they drew and puts their hands on their shoulders. They tell the story or make a statement about that person. After they finish, the person recognized then gets up and goes to the person they drew and repeats the process. It continues until all have been recognized.

- The facilitator who suggested this activity describes a personal wrap-up: "Then I usually tell them how they have personally affected my life and how I admire them for taking the road less traveled. I read Frost's poem to them and then ring the Tibetan peace bells, letting the sound ring for 30 seconds. I say 'Thank you,' and that it is time to move on."

The Road Not Taken

Two Roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had troddeen black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

*by Robert Frost—Poet Laureate under
President Kennedy*

Sample Volunteer-generated closure activities

When the invitation to COS goes to the Volunteers, they are asked to organize a special activity for the end of the workshop. They can communicate with each other prior to the workshop and let the office know if they will need any special materials. Activities Volunteers in various countries have created:

- Time capsule
- Slide shows or PowerPoint—of COS, of their experiences (encourage a thoughtful slide show or PowerPoint of their communities and activities, and offer to provide copies for all)
- Talent show
- PCV "Jeopardy!"-type game
- General trivia game

Evaluations

COS Conference Evaluation

Please present your comments on each session:

Admin. Procedures Session (note facilitator)

_____

Project Review with APCDs (indicate which APCD)

_____

Your Peace Corps Experience (note facilitator)

_____

Informal PST Evaluation (optional) (note facilitator)

_____

Evaluation of Site Development and APCD Support (note facilitator)

_____

Looking to the Future & Self-Assessment & Job Search/Résumé/Interview Tips
(note facilitator)

_____

Returning Home & Peace Corps' Third Goal (note facilitator)

_____

Country Director Forum (note facilitator)

_____

Other:

To what extent has this conference been of interest and useful to you?

 not at all   0   1   2   3   4   5   extremely

If you ran a conference for another PC group COSing, what would you do differently?

(Use reverse side for additional space and other comments)

Close of Service Conference Evaluation

1. To what extent has this conference been informative/useful to you?
   (Please circle the appropriate number: 0 = not at all; 5 = extremely)

   not at all   0   1   2   3   4   5   extremely

2. What were the two most important things you learned from this conference?

   a) _____

   b) _____

3. What did you particularly like about this experience?

4. What did you particularly dislike about this experience, and why?

5. What suggestions do you have to improve the conference?

6. To what extent did you find the following sessions interesting/informative/useful?

   6.1. Sharing your PC Experience: How have I changes?

   not at all   0   1   2   3   4   5   extremely

   Comments: _____

   _____

6.2. What have we accomplished? Compiling, Analyzing, and Sharing Your Work-Related Accomplishments (as a group, then present to PC Staff)

not at all   0   1   2   3   4   5   extremely

Comments: _____
_____

6.2. Suggestions to post: Compiling and Sharing Your Suggestions For Post (as a group, then present to PC Staff)

not at all   0   1   2   3   4   5   extremely

Comments: _____
_____

(continue with sessions presented)

7. How helpful do you think the material provided will be (oral and written materials?)

not at all   0   1   2   3   4   5   extremely

Comments: _____
_____

8. How would you rate the meeting space/facilities/food/services at the hotel for this conference?

poor   0   1   2   3   4   5   excellent

Comments: _____
_____

9. How would you rate the overall content/agenda, organization, and facilitation of the conference?

poor   0   1   2   3   4   5   excellent

Comments: _____
_____

OTHER COMMENTS: _____

Thank You!

Thank you

This sample from Peace Corps/Ghana can be localized and made either as a simple handout or a fancier version with the Peace Corps logo, country name, signatures of staff, etc.

As you close your service...

Thank you for leaving your friends and families for what were sometimes two (or three) very long years.

Thank you for giving up many of the comforts from back home.

Thank you for struggling to master a new language and, in many cases, two new languages.

Thank you for reaching, squishing, sweating, and stretching often more than you ever thought you could.

Thank you for staying and struggling, when the road was almost too sandy or muddy or steep, and the hot season was almost too hot.

Thank you for learning to walk in another's flip-flops, and learning to walk by his/her side.

Thank you for being open to the beauty of a mud brick home, a thatch home, a cement home, and to the warmth of the extended families within them.

Thank you for empowering others to believe in themselves.

Thank you for your piece in the puzzle of connectedness.

Thank you for helping a child start on a road of possibility, helping a woman to stand a little taller, and helping a farmer to value his land and his friendships.

Thank you for your openness to live as the majority of the people in the world live.

Thank you for giving the rest of us a little more hope.