



# 2016 Host Country Staff Survey Summary Report

Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

12/08/2016

# 2016 Host Country Staff Survey Table of Contents

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# I. Introduction



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## Introduction (1 of 2)

Building on the success of the surveys administered in 2014 and 2015, the 2016 Host Country Staff Survey (HCSS) continues to tap into the wealth of experience and knowledge found among our host country staff. As a critically important segment of the Peace Corps' operations and mission, host country staff offer a unique perspective on the agency's success in building a more inclusive and diverse organization, as well as generating broader insights into training needs, clarifying host country staff motivations for working for the Peace Corps, and providing additional insight on the work of our Volunteers.

The HCSS was piloted in 2014 to support the Peace Corps Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2014-2018 by providing results for two official indicators used by the agency to report its annual performance to Congress, OMB, and the public. The survey solicits feedback from employees whose work is vital to Peace Corps operations, but whose viewpoints were previously unavailable to agency management at headquarters. The data received through the HCSS complements the Peace Corps' other performance data sources, including the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) of U.S. direct-hire (USDH) staff, the Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS), and the Global Counterpart Survey (GCS) of Volunteers' primary work partners.

The HCSS is distributed online to a multicultural and/or multilingual community of respondents. All post staff who are hired as foreign service nationals (FSNs) or personal services contractors (PSCs) are eligible to participate in the HCSS, regardless of whether they are nationals of the host country, the United States, or a third country. In an attempt to reach as many staff as possible, the 2016 HCSS was again available in three languages: English, French, and Spanish.<sup>1</sup>

The first HCSS, piloted in 2014, included nine core questions drawn from the Office of Personnel Management's FEVS, which is fielded every year to U.S. direct-hire employees throughout the agencies of the federal government. The 2014 survey...[go to next page]

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to Appendix B for a link to the questionnaire as distributed in English, French, and Spanish.

## Introduction (2 of 2)

focused on measuring two of the agency's performance goals (PGs), PG 6.2: Build an Open and Inclusive Organizational Culture, which calls for the agency to increase the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteers, U.S. direct-hire staff, and host country staff who report that the agency has an inclusive culture; and PG 9.1: Improve Staff Training, which calls for the agency to increase the percentage of staff who are satisfied with the training they receive to do their jobs.

In 2015, all core questions were retained, while the scope of the survey expanded slightly to offer broader insight. With the addition of five new questions, the 2015 HCSS was able to gain host country staff perspectives on agency inclusion, job satisfaction, Volunteer development impact and integration, and how their work contributed to the Peace Corps' Strategic Plan.

In 2016, two new questions were added, and one original question was expanded. These changes were made to gain insight into the motivation of host country staff for working for the Peace Corps, and to better understand the extent to which they feel Volunteers deeply integrate into their host country's culture.

## II. Top-Line Findings

## 2016 HCSS Top-Line Findings

The 2016 HCSS received responses from over half of its total population, a 7.7 percent increase in responses from eligible staff from 2015.<sup>2</sup> However, survey results must be viewed with caution due to the constraints and limitations outlined in Appendix A. In addition, it is important to note that all subsequent references to “staff” in this report refer only to those who participated in the 2016 HCSS and do not reflect the views and opinions of all overseas staff.

Despite its limitations, the 2016 HCSS offers valuable observations about Peace Corps operations and Volunteers. The staff who participated in this year’s survey overwhelmingly reported that they were satisfied with their jobs. In addition:

- **The majority of staff felt they did high quality work, but few reported enough input into work-related decisions.**
- **Staff felt their jobs at PC were more personally interesting but more demanding compared to other available jobs.**
- **Most staff felt supported in their professional development.**
- **Though down slightly from 2015, host country staff still largely agreed the agency was inclusive of diverse people.**
- **Over half of all staff saw no gaps in the Peace Corps culture of inclusion.**
- **Staff reported that integration and management of cultural differences were the biggest challenges for Volunteers.**
- **More than two in three staff reported a more positive opinion about Americans since becoming an agency employee.**
- **Staff reported the opportunity to improve the lives of people in my country as the main reason they work at Peace Corps.**

<sup>2</sup> 78 percent of staff with a valid email address and 55 percent of the total eligible pool of staff responded to the survey in 2016, compared with 52 percent of all eligible staff in 2015, and 37 percent of all eligible staff in 2014.

# III. Engaging Employees



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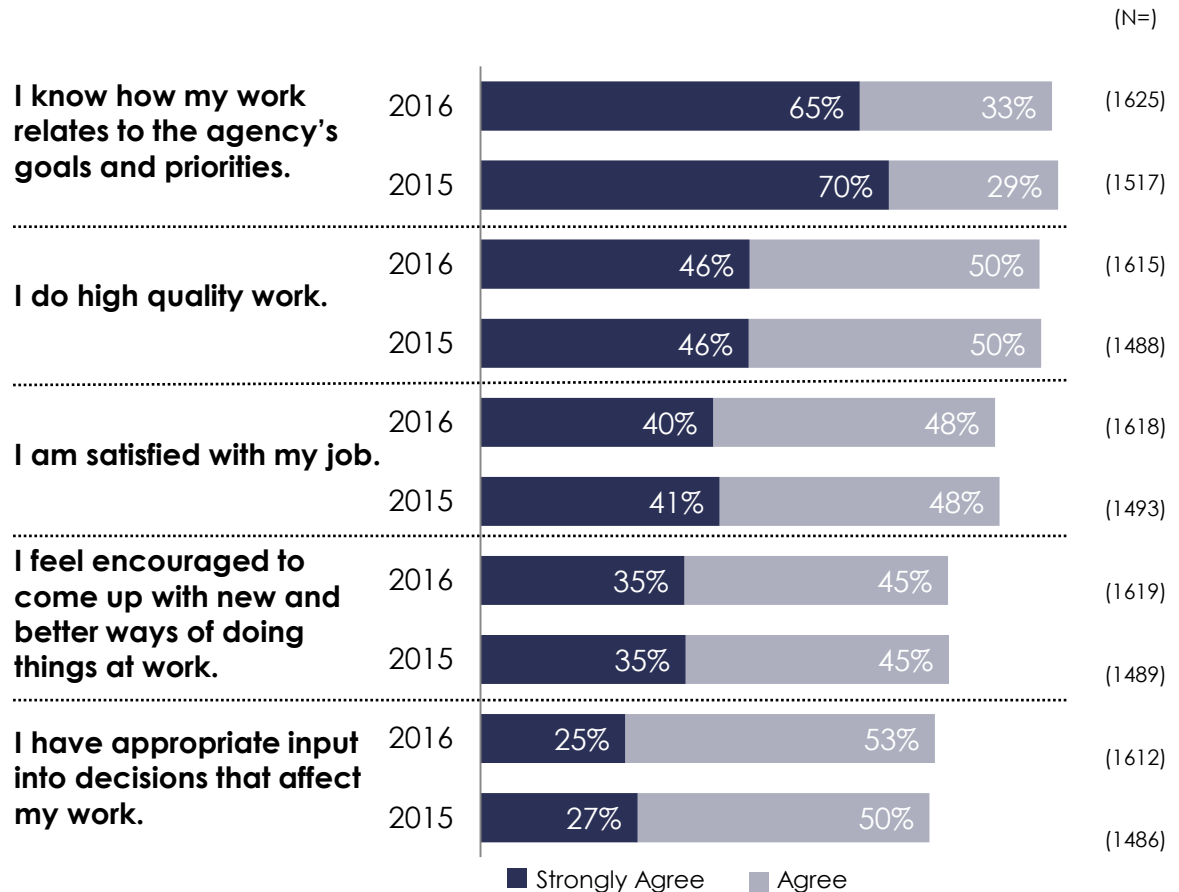


# The majority of staff felt they did high quality work, but fewer reported having enough input into work-related decisions.

## Finding:

Staff reported having a solid understanding of how their work related to the Peace Corps' goals and priorities. In addition, four in ten strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their job. However, only one in four staff strongly agreed they had appropriate input into decisions that affected their work.

## To what extent do you agree with the following statements...

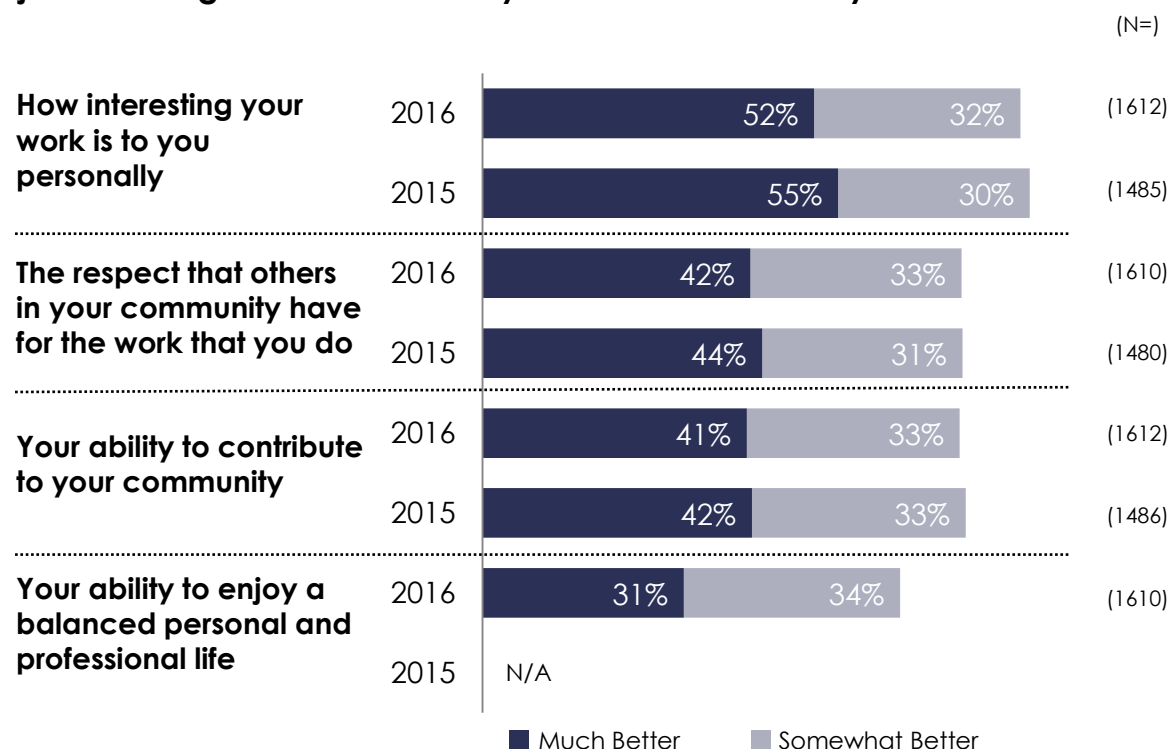


# Staff felt their jobs at PC were more personally interesting but more demanding compared to other available jobs.

## Finding:

The vast majority of staff (84%) believed their job at the Peace Corps was more personally interesting than other available jobs. In addition, three out of four staff reported that their job was better respected and offered them a better opportunity to give back to their community than other positions. Fewer (65%) of staff believed their job at the Peace Corps offered a balanced personal and professional life when compared to other available jobs.

## How does your job with the Peace Corps compare to other jobs that might be available to you in the area where you live?



# IV. Creating a High-Performing Learning Agency



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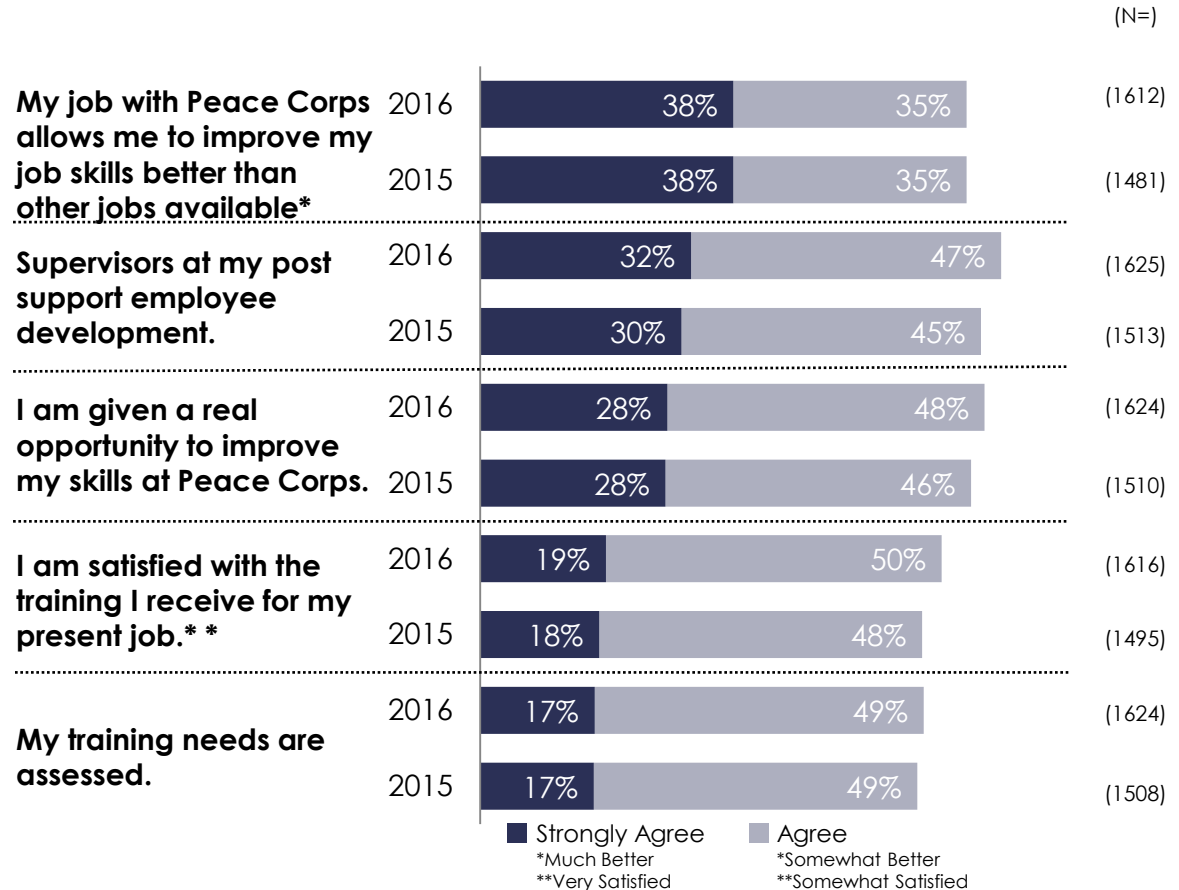
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# Most staff felt supported in their professional development.

## Finding:

Staff experiences with Peace Corps development and training have been highly consistent over the past two years. In summary, more than one in three staff members reported that their position at the Peace Corps allowed them to improve their job skills much better than other available jobs. Fewer staff, however, were highly satisfied with the job training they received and the assessment of their training needs.

## Thinking about your experiences with Peace Corps Staff Development and Training...



\*Reference question: How does your job with Peace Corps compare to other jobs that might be available to you in the area where you live in your ability to improve your job skills?

\*\*Reference question: How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job?

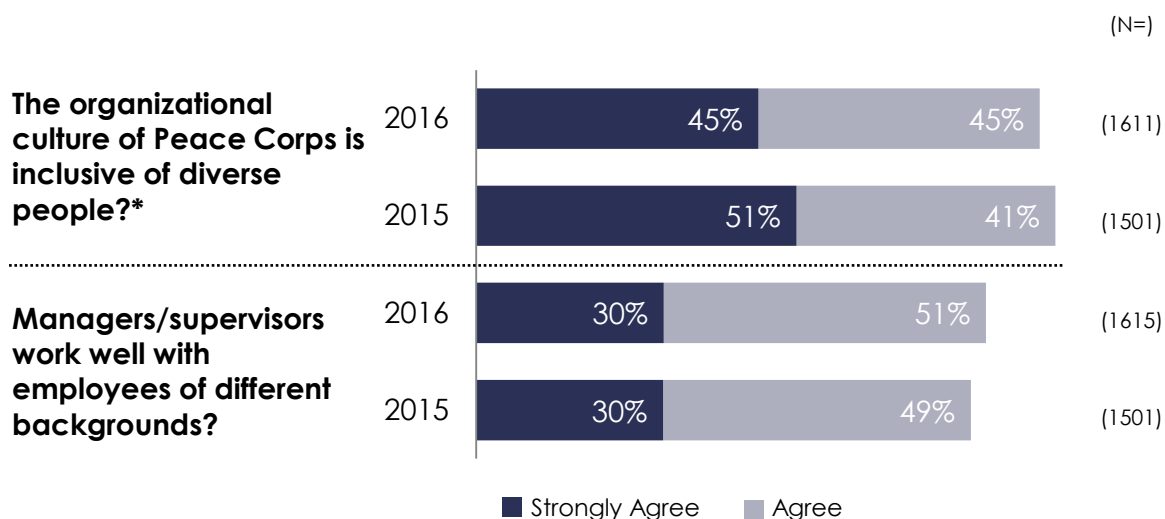
# V. Creating a Diverse & Inclusive Agency

# Though down slightly from 2015, host country staff still largely agreed the agency was inclusive of diverse people.

## Finding:

Nine in 10 staff (90%) agreed that the culture of the Peace Corps was inclusive, and 80 percent agreed managers worked well with employees of different backgrounds, though a minority *strongly agreed*. While the former result was very similar to responses in 2015, staff were slightly less likely to *strongly agree* in 2016 that the organizational culture of the Peace Corps was inclusive of diverse people.

## To what extent do you agree or disagree...



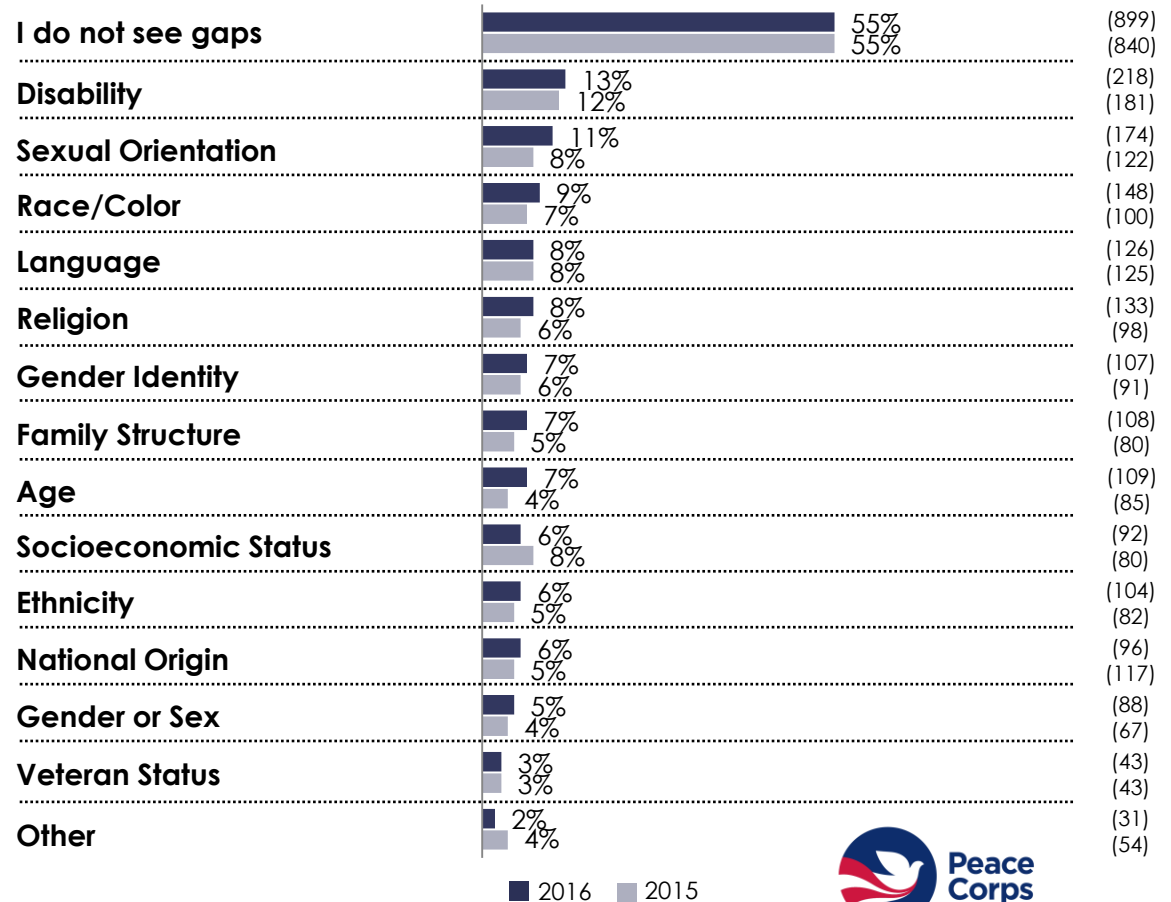
\*Diversity is a collection of individual attributes that include, but are not limited to, characteristics such as nationality, language, race, color, ethnicity, disability, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structures.

# Just over half of all host country staff saw no gaps in the Peace Corps culture of inclusion.

## Finding:

In measuring Performance Goal 6.2: Build an Open and Inclusive Organizational Culture, Peace Corps staff have consistently reported that the culture of inclusion at the agency is strong. While the greatest number of staff who reported seeing a gap pointed to disabilities, no single inclusion gap was noted by more than 13 percent of staff.

## Where, if anywhere do you see gaps in the culture of inclusion in the Peace Corps...



# VI. Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding



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# Staff reported that integration and management of cultural differences were the biggest challenge for Volunteers.

## Finding:

Nearly 100 percent of staff felt that Volunteers made a positive impact on their country, and over 80 percent believed Volunteers were helping to create lasting change in their communities. While staff also agreed that Volunteers worked hard to learn the local language, more saw challenges in Volunteer integration and the management of cultural differences.

## What kind of impact do you think Peace Corps has on people in your country?

2016\*



■ Strong Positive (56%)   ■ Somewhat Positive (42%)

## Peace Corps Volunteers do a good job....

**Working hard to learn the local language**

2016

36%

49%

(1615)

**Helping to create lasting change in their community**

2016

31%

53%

(1614)

**Managing cultural differences during their service**

2016

23%

55%

(1615)

**Easily integrating into their communities**

2016

15%

53%

(1614)

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Agree



\*Unchanged over 2015 (N=1616)

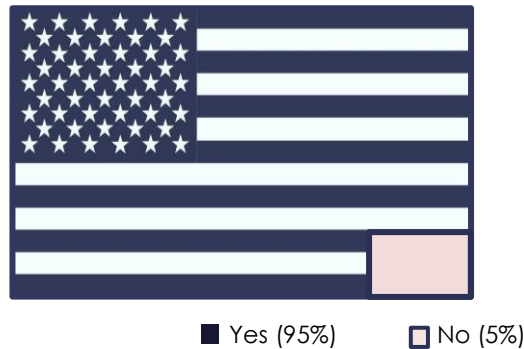
# VII. Promoting a Better Understanding of Americans

# More than two in three staff reported a more positive opinion about Americans since becoming an agency employee.

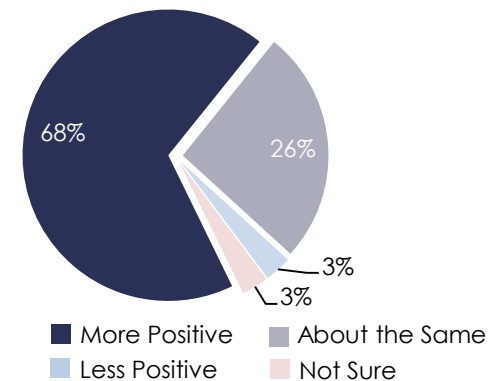
## Finding:

In measuring Goal Two: Sharing America with the World, 95 percent of staff reported gaining a new, and largely more positive, understanding of Americans during their employment at the Peace Corps. Staff were most likely to share this new understanding with co-workers and family members.

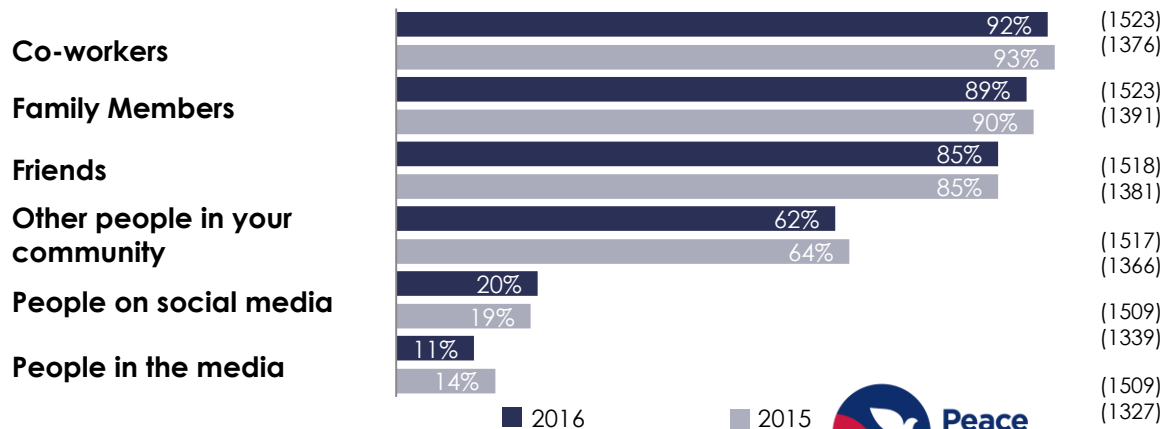
Have you gained a new understanding of Americans during your employment at Peace Corps?\*



My overall opinion about Americans since I became a Peace Corps employee is....\*



I have shared the new understanding gained during my employment at Peace Corps with....



\*Unchanged over 2015 (N=1609/1618)

# VIII. Why Peace Corps?



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
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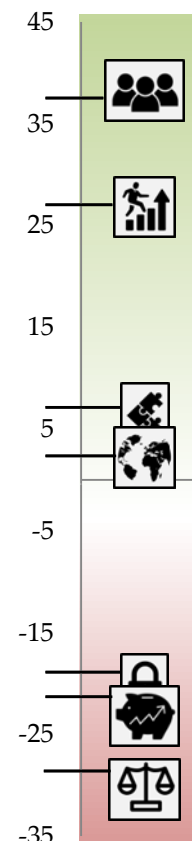
# Staff reported the *opportunity to improve the lives of people in my country* as the main reason they work at Peace Corps.

## Finding:

Staff overwhelmingly reported that the reason they choose to work at the Peace Corps is to improve the lives of people in their country – a clear reflection of Goal One.

Reasons global staff choose to work at Peace Corps (N=1306) Rank Score

Reason	Rank	Score
 <b>Opportunity to help improve the lives of people in my country</b>	1	38
 <b>Opportunity for professional growth and development</b>	2	27
 <b>Challenging and dynamic work</b>	3	6
 <b>Opportunity to help improve understanding between my country and the U.S.</b>	4	2
 <b>Stable employment</b>	5	-20
 <b>Pay and benefits</b>	6	-23
 <b>Balance of personal life and professional life</b>	7	-30



- None of the items that were presented to respondents are inherently negative, so all can be judged equally by respondents.
- Data analysts also need to remember that no item is negative when interpreting MaxDiff scores. Rather than focusing entirely on each component's absolute score, the relationship between the different ranked items is important, because the results show us, in a nuanced way, the overall motivations of staff in working for the Peace Corps.
- MaxDiff scores run from -100 to 100, where negative scores indicate that the item was selected more often as a "bottom" choice, and positive scores indicate that the item was selected more often as a "top" choice.
- The scores are proportionate, so a score of -50 for Item X can be compared to a score of 50 for item y by saying "Item Y was selected as a bottom choice as often as Item X was selected as a top choice."

# IX. Appendix A



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## Acronym List

The acronyms below are commonly used in the Peace Corps and throughout this report.

<b>AFR</b>	Africa Region
<b>EMA</b>	Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region
<b>EVS</b>	Employee Viewpoint Survey
<b>FSN</b>	Foreign service national
<b>HCN</b>	Host country national
<b>HCS</b>	Host country staff
<b>HCSS</b>	Host Country Staff Survey
<b>IAP</b>	Inter-America and the Pacific Region
<b>OSIRP</b>	Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
<b>PG</b>	Performance goal in the agency's Strategic Plan
<b>PSC</b>	Personal services contractor
<b>USDH</b>	U.S. direct hires

## Limitations (1 of 2)

Distribution of the survey tool by email limited participation to staff who had an email address that was both valid at the time of the survey and available to the research team. Email addresses were compiled utilizing a linking process to match staff names provided by an internal data source and email addresses provided by a separate internal data source, thus introducing the possibility of linking error.

Additionally, It is important to note that while staff may be literate in English, French, or Spanish, some of the survey questions were originally designed by the Office of Personnel Management for use in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, which is targeted to an American workforce. Concepts such as “veteran status” may be unfamiliar to post staff who do not speak English as their native language. As a result, there may be barriers to participation embedded in the questions themselves, both in terms of the level of language that is used and in terms of underlying cultural concepts or norms.

Lastly, barriers to participation may be related to the time of year in which the survey is fielded (mid-August to early September). The timing of the survey could potentially limit the participation of staff if it conflicts with planned vacation schedules or periods when short-term contracts are not active.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>To minimize this limitation, the survey period was established as a full 30 days, and the survey tool itself was limited to a small set of questions that could be answered in an estimated time of 10 minutes or less.



## Limitations (2 of 2)

The cumulative effect of these limitations is that the results are based on a non-random sample of respondents who: (1) had an active peacecorps.gov email address that was provided to the researchers; (2) were in the office and able to receive the message during the survey window; (3) were sufficiently literate in computers and English, French, or Spanish to take the survey; and (4) chose to respond.

While 78 percent of the staff with an active peacecorps.gov email address that was provided to the researchers responded to the FY 2016 survey, they constitute just over half (55 percent) of the total eligible pool of staff. Thus, results should be interpreted with caution, as they may not accurately represent the opinions of the global pool of host country staff.

## Methodology and Data Interpretation: Why We Focus on Global Findings

This report focuses on global results for two primary reasons. First, global insights provide “the big picture” for how supervisors can enact positive behaviors to support employee satisfaction and performance. While individual circumstances may vary among staff at different posts, the insights that are received from employees around the world are the ones that are most likely to produce positive results once they are acted upon at the local level.

Second, although the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning (OSIRP) used all of the tools available to its research team to increase the validity of the HCSS data, some logistical and intercultural limitations persist. Challenges to validity, such as sampling bias, coverage error, and the effects of intercultural interpretation of questions, are magnified at lower levels of reporting,<sup>4</sup> but global-level results can offer insights where respondents display consensus around results.

<sup>4</sup> The researchers investigated job title, job hierarchy, and regional breakdowns in assembling this report but did not find a compelling case for including results at those levels of analysis due to the potential for sample bias and coverage error.

## Surveying Method: An Attempted Census

The HCSS attempts to reach all eligible staff, which is a non-random sampling methodology also known as a census. Unlike random sampling methodologies, census approaches cannot ensure with a known degree of confidence that those who respond to a survey are similar to those who do not respond. It is therefore important not to extrapolate the HCSS results to the eligible staff who did not participate in the survey, either because they chose not to respond, because they did not have a valid email address, or because they do not speak the survey's supported languages of English, French, and Spanish. French and Spanish accounted for 16 percent of the responses to the 2016 survey. See Appendix B for response rates broken out by language.

In 2016, email addresses for 70 percent of all host country staff were identified by the research team. Of those staff members who received the HCSS, 1,627 overall responses were received, or 78 percent of those surveyed—an eight percent increase over 2015. In total, 55 percent of all host country staff globally responded to the survey.

While we continue to receive a greater number of responses, when compared to the previous two years<sup>5</sup>—likely due to wider dissemination of survey results and Agency awareness—the response rate is still far less than ideal for a census methodology.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>In 2015, 52 percent of all eligible staff or 71 percent with identified email addresses responded to the survey. In 2014, 37 percent of all eligible staff or 58 percent of staff with identified email addresses responded to the survey.

<sup>6</sup>Please see Appendix B for tabular data regarding response rates among different categories of staff.

# The HCSS Questionnaire: Intercultural Surveying

The HCSS Questionnaire was originally designed as an extension of the FEVS and closely retains several questions from that survey. It is notable, however, that those questions were originally designed for a very specific population: English-speaking federal employees who were well-acquainted with American and U.S. government culture. Consequently, the questions on the HCSS might be interpreted differently by—or be more or less sensitive to—host country staff who do not share this same cultural background. This limits the survey's comparability to Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results and also complicates comparability when looking at data below the global level.

The issue of cross-cultural comparability is also compounded by translating the survey into multiple languages<sup>8</sup> and by imperfect coverage of the languages spoken at post. As a result, the nature and extent of the effects of intercultural interpretation of the terms used in the survey is unknown.

<sup>8</sup>Translations were completed by the U.S. Department of State's Office of Language Services and checked by internal Peace Corps employees who were familiar with agency operations and also fluent in the languages employed.

# X. Appendix B



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## Respondent Rates by Global/Employment/Language Type

The research team worked in cooperation with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and individual posts to assemble a survey distribution list that was as complete as possible. However, the distribution list was limited by the fact that not all host country staff are supplied with email addresses, and there is currently no central list or database of host country staff that includes email addresses. Despite the best efforts of all three offices, email addresses for only 2,081 of all 2,970 eligible staff (70%) were available for distribution of the survey. The HCSS received responses from 1,627 staff for a response rate of 78 percent of reachable staff and 55 percent of all eligible staff.

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate	Population Members	Population Response Rate
<b>GLOBAL</b>	<b>1627</b>	<b>2088</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>2969</b>	<b>55%</b>
Personal Service Contractor, Long Term	1556	1994	78%	<b>EMPLOYMENT TYPE</b>	
Foreign Service National	68	89	76%		
Employment Type Unverified	3	4	75%		
English	1360	84%	16% Non-English	<b>LANGUAGE TYPE</b>	
French	104	6%			
Spanish	163	10%			

Please note on Respondent Rates: Job Title (3 of 3) 124 sample responses and 162 sample members were unlisted. These respondents had insufficient job title information.

## Respondent Rates by Region: Africa (1 of 3)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate	Population Members	Population Response Rate
<b>AFRICA</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>1592</b>	<b>49%</b>
BENIN	24	30	80%	97	25%
BOTSWANA	27	35	77%	51	53%
BURKINA FASO	53	68	78%	100	53%
CAMEROON	39	46	85%	74	53%
COMOROS	12	12	100%	12	100%
ETHIOPIA	40	57	70%	114	35%
GAMBIA	28	32	88%	62	45%
GHANA	33	48	69%	57	58%
GUINEA	19	28	68%	74	26%
KENYA	21	26	81%	28	75%
LESOTHO	23	30	77%	41	56%
LIBERIA	14	30	47%	58	24%
MADAGASCAR	39	46	85%	86	45%
MALAWI	38	43	88%	77	49%
MOZAMBIQUE	45	53	85%	56	80%
NAMIBIA	28	34	82%	35	80%
RWANDA	30	35	86%	63	48%
SENEGAL	42	63	67%	88	48%
SIERRA LEONE	19	26	73%	29	66%
SOUTH AFRICA	32	42	76%	58	55%
SWAZILAND	21	22	95%	40	53%
TANZANIA	38	43	88%	58	66%
TOGO	29	44	66%	68	43%
UGANDA	33	46	72%	55	60%
ZAMBIA	44	59	75%	111	40%

## Respondent Rates by Region: EMA (2 of 3)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate	Population Members	Population Response Rate
<b>EMA</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>54%</b>
ALBANIA	21	28	75%	45	47%
ARMENIA	22	28	79%	34	65%
BURMA	9	11	82%	14	64%
CAMBODIA	26	30	87%	53	49%
CHINA	18	18	100%	65	28%
GEORGIA	27	36	75%	55	49%
INDONESIA	18	25	72%	31	58%
KOSOVO	23	26	88%	26	88%
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	25	29	86%	33	76%
MACEDONIA	21	24	88%	42	50%
MOLDOVA	26	34	76%	52	50%
MONGOLIA	26	32	81%	56	46%
MOROCCO	26	32	81%	36	72%
NEPAL	22	25	88%	41	54%
PHILIPPINES	44	65	68%	68	65%
THAILAND	24	28	86%	51	47%
TIMOR LESTE	18	19	95%	22	82%
UKRAINE	34	50	68%	75	45%



## Respondent Rates by Region: IAP (3 of 3)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate	Population Members	Population Response Rate
<b>IAP</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>74%</b>
BELIZE	20	24	83%	24	83%
COLOMBIA	20	27	74%	27	74%
COSTA RICA	34	40	85%	40	85%
DOMINICAN	25	36	69%	41	61%
EASTERN CARIBBEAN	20	23	87%	23	87%
ECUADOR	26	45	58%	47	55%
EL SALVADOR	4	6	67%	9	44%
FIJI	15	16	94%	16	94%
GUATEMALA	35	47	74%	47	74%
GUYANA	20	22	91%	22	91%
JAMAICA	11	17	65%	17	65%
MEXICO	15	19	79%	19	79%
MICRONESIA	18	23	78%	25	72%
NICARAGUA	20	29	69%	32	63%
PANAMA	30	39	77%	40	75%
PARAGUAY	29	40	73%	40	73%
PERU	43	51	84%	57	75%
SAMOA	10	11	91%	12	83%
TONGA	11	12	92%	17	65%
VANUATU	16	19	84%	19	84%

## Respondent Rates by Job Title (1 of 2)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate
Administrative Assistant	78	94	83%
APCD	27	34	79%
Assistant Training Manager	3	4	75%
Cashier	34	37	92%
Deputy Administrative Officer	4	4	100%
Director of Management and Operations	6	6	100%
Driver/Mechanic	127	226	56%
Education Advisor - Programming	0	1	0%
Executive Assistant	39	47	83%
Expediter	1	1	100%
Financial Analyst	17	21	81%
Financial Specialist	24	25	96%
Gardener	3	5	60%
General Service Specialist	37	44	84%
General Services Assistant	47	67	70%
Guard	26	54	48%
HIV/AIDS Coordinator	7	8	88%
Homestay Coordinator	11	13	85%
Information Resources Coordinator	8	8	100%
Intern	2	3	67%
IT Specialist	56	61	92%
Janitor	18	49	37%
Kitchen Staff	0	1	0%
Language & Cross Cultural Coordinator	47	57	82%
Language & Cross Cultural Facilitator	52	92	57%
Logistics Coordinator	15	21	71%
Mail Clerk/Messenger	6	10	60%

## Respondent Rates by Job Title (2 of 2)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate
Medical Assistant	42	51	82%
Medical Secretary	16	18	89%
Motor Pool Coordinator	7	8	88%
PCMO/PCMC	117	134	87%
PCR Coordinator	5	6	83%
Program & Training Assistant	43	49	88%
Program & Training Officer	3	3	100%
Program & Training Secretary	5	6	83%
Program And Training Specialist	70	78	90%
Program Assistant	87	100	87%
Program Manager	108	120	90%
Program Specialist	67	78	86%
Property Manager	4	4	100%
PST General	5	9	56%
Receptionist	33	40	83%
Regional Manager	2	2	100%
Safety & Security Officer	10	11	91%
Safety and Security Assistant	20	19	105%
Safety and Security Coordinator	36	39	92%
Technical Trainer	17	25	68%
TEFL Coordinator	0	1	0%
Training Assistant	23	27	85%
Training Director/Manager	45	51	88%
Travel Clerk	4	5	80%
Volunteer Records Clerk	8	11	73%
Volunteer Support/Services Assistant	22	25	88%
Voucher Examiner	9	11	82%

# XI. Appendix C



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## The 2016 HCSS Questionnaire in English, French, and Spanish

The 2016 Host Country Staff Survey was designed in English and then translated into French and Spanish by the Department of State's translation services in order to increase the number of staff who could be reached.

Links to the English, French, and Spanish questionnaire can be found here:

[HCSS Questionnaire](#)

# About the Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning

OSIRP advances evidence-based management at the Peace Corps by guiding agency strategic planning; monitoring and evaluating agency-level performance and programs; conducting research to generate new insights in the fields of international development, cultural exchange, and Volunteer service; enhancing the stewardship and governance of agency data; and helping to shape agency engagement on high-level, governmentwide initiatives.

## Acknowledgments

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