

2018 Host Country Staff Survey Summary Report

Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning



2018 Host Country Staff Survey Table of Contents

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I. Introduction

Introduction (1 of 2)

Building on the success of four previously administered surveys starting in 2014, the 2018 Host Country Staff Survey (HCSS) continues to tap into the wealth of experience and knowledge found among our host country staff. As a crucially important component of the Peace Corps' operations and mission, host country staff offer a unique perspective on identifying agency successes and challenges including: building a more inclusive and diverse organization, broad insights into training needs and additional insight into the work of Volunteers.

The HCSS 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 and the Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS).

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.

The first HCSS, piloted in 2014, focused on measuring two objectives from the agency's legacy strategic plan. In 2015, all core questions were retained, while the scope of the survey expanded slightly to offer broader insight. Following improvements to the survey instrument implemented in 2016, the 2017 survey retained as much consistency as possible, while adding questions to gain greater insight into staff learning and development preferences and team cohesion.

Introduction (2 of 2)

The 2018 Host Country Staff Survey reflects extensive changes, due to similar results over the past three years and based on extensive stakeholder feedback. While some important questions used for agencywide metrics have been retained, a number of new questions have been added and older questions removed in order to provide fresh insight into our overseas staff. Lastly, in addition to offering the survey in English, Spanish and French, the 2018 HCSS was also offered in Russian.¹

The following concepts have been *removed* from the 2018 questionnaire:

- Staff work in relation to agency goals and priorities
- Staff improvement and supervisor development support
- Staff job satisfaction and work quality perception
- Peace Corps position competitiveness against the surrounding market
- Staff perception of organizational culture of diversity and conclusion and gaps
- Most and least influential reasons for working at Peace Corps
- Staff perception of the full spectrum of agency skill development and skill building support

The following concepts have been *added* to the 2018 questionnaire:

- Staff confidence in responding to Volunteer safety and security incidents
- Workload capacity for staff in both primary and secondary projects
- Staff perception of Peace Corps Washington support
- Staff perception of overall morale and improvement capacity
- Staff perception of Peace Corps Volunteers' ability to be resilient and effective
- Staff recommendations for post operations and 5-year plan
- Staff perception of their ability to support non-traditional Volunteers
- Staff perception of fair treatment and safe reporting

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

II. Top-Line Findings

2018 HCSS Top-Line Findings

The 2018 HCSS received responses from over half of its total population, on par with responses from eligible staff in 2017.² It is important to note that all subsequent references to “staff” in this report refer only to those who participated in the 2018 HCSS and do not reflect the views and opinions of all overseas staff. Survey results must be viewed in light of the constraints and limitations outlined in Appendix A. The staff who participated in this year’s survey overwhelmingly reported that they were satisfied with their job training and the work of Peace Corps Volunteers in their country. In addition:

- **Nearly 8 in 10 staff agree or strongly agree they have enough resources to develop their job skills.**
- **Just over 9 in 10 staff report feeling confident responding to Volunteer safety & security incidents.**
- **More than 1 in 4 staff “strongly agree” they have enough time to perform their primary job duties.**
- **More than 80% of staff agree that their team works well together both within and among other teams at their post.**
- **Nearly 90% of staff report that Volunteers are engaged in meaningful work in their country.**
- **While staff are less likely to agree that Trainees arrive with appropriate expectations to serve, 87% feel Volunteers integrate into their communities.**
- **When asked about the number of Volunteers at their post, nearly half of all staff indicated that the best 5-year plan is to increase their Volunteer numbers.**
- **Slightly more than 80% of staff agree that they are treated fairly by senior post leadership.**
- **7 out of 10 staff report that morale among staff at their post is “high” or “very high”.**
- **Nearly 1 in 4 staff believe more training and development opportunities would improve post operations.**
- **Under the theme of “leadership to improve post operations”, 1 in 3 staff reported wanting more respect & dignity.**
- **Under the theme of “operations management”, nearly 40% of staff reported that an increase in budget and resource allocations would improve post operations.**
- **Under the theme of “program management”, around 7 in 10 staff stated aligning Volunteer and program needs would improve operations at post.**

² 70 percent of staff with a valid email address and 51 percent of the total eligible pool responded in 2018. 76 percent of staff with a valid email address and 52 percent of the total eligible pool of staff responded in 2017. 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.

III. Creating a High-Performing Learning Agency

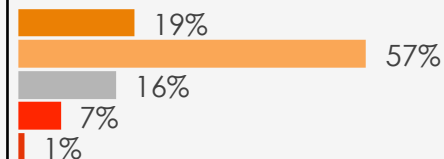
Nearly 8 in 10 staff agree or strongly agree they have enough resources to develop their job skills.

Around 70% of staff feel they have enough resources, are satisfied with their job training and agree that their training needs are assessed. Although down slightly over last year, 69% of staff report being satisfied with their job training overall.

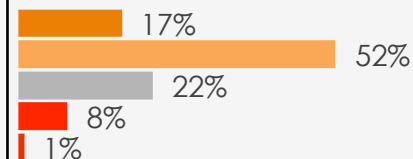
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither
Disagree
Strongly disagree

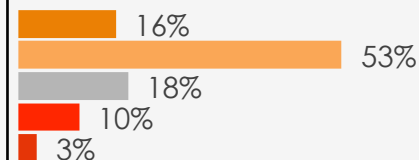
I have enough resources to develop my job skills.



I am satisfied with my job training overall.*



My training needs are assessed.



* Scale and Text Modified from "satisfaction" with job training overall

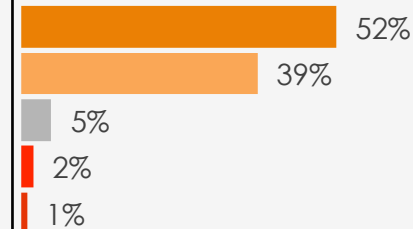
Just over 9 in 10 staff report feeling confident responding to Volunteer safety & security incidents.

Over 90% of staff report feeling confident in responding to Volunteer safety & security incidents. Assessing staff confidence in safety & security and emergency situations is a new concept for the HCSS. This question was added after receiving stakeholder input from the Office of Safety & Security.

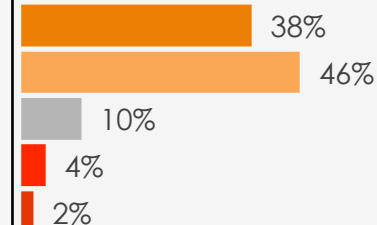
To what degree do you feel confident responding to the following issues:

Very confident
Somewhat confident
Neither
Somewhat unconfident
Very unconfident

Volunteer Safety & Security Incidents



Emergency Situations, such as civil unrest, natural disasters, political instability, and isolating events



IV. Engaging Employees

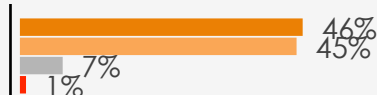
Slightly more than 80% of staff agree that they are treated fairly by senior post leadership.

More than 90% of staff feel confident in their ability to support diverse Volunteers. In 2017, 87% of staff agreed their supervisor/team leader treated them with respect. Following guidance from agency stakeholders, the 2018 survey updated its language to "treats me the way I want to be treated" with 79% of staff agreeing.

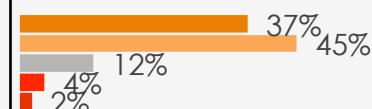
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

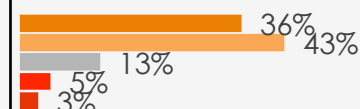
I feel confident in my ability to support diverse Volunteers



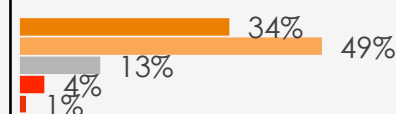
I am treated fairly by senior post leadership.



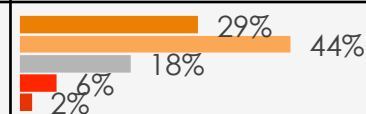
My supervisor/team leader treats me the way I want to be treated.



Managers/supervisors at your post work well with employees of different backgrounds.



I feel safe reporting wrong or inappropriate behaviors.*



* Don't know/Not applicable: 1%

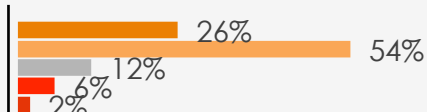
More than 80% of staff agree they have enough time to perform their primary job duties.

Staff are most likely to “agree” or “strongly agree” they have enough time to perform their *primary* job duties, while 16% of staff “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that they have enough time to perform their *secondary* job duties.

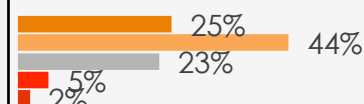
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly agree
 Agree
 Neither
 Disagree
 Strongly disagree

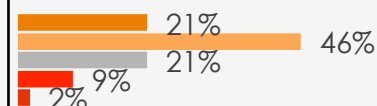
I have enough time to perform my primary job duties.



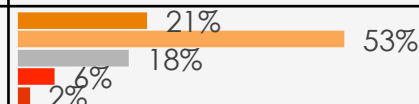
I feel valued by Peace Corps Washington.*



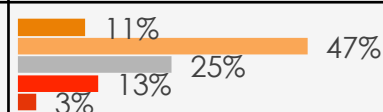
I have enough time with my supervisor to develop professionally.



I have appropriate input into decisions that affect my work.



I have enough time to perform my secondary job duties.*



* Don't know/Not applicable: 2%

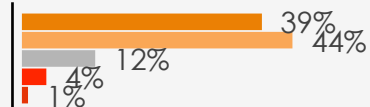
More than 80% of staff agree that their team works well together both within and among other teams at their post.

Nearly 85% of staff “agree” or “strongly agree” that their supervisor encourages my team to work with other teams at my post. When it comes to managing change as an organization, 18% of staff feel neutrally about whether PC does a good job.

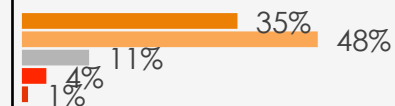
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither
Disagree
Strongly disagree

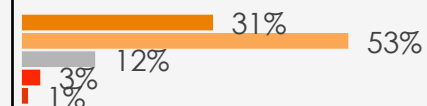
My supervisor encourages my team to work with other teams at my post.



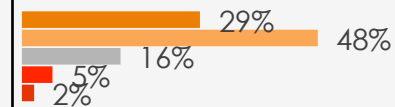
Members of my team work well together.



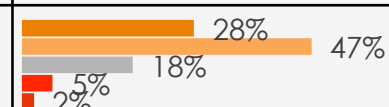
My team works well with other teams at my post.



I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.



I feel Peace Corps as an organization does a good job managing change.



V. Working with Peace Corps Volunteers

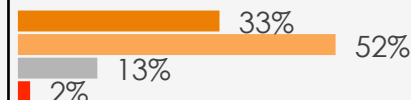
Nearly 90% of staff report that Volunteers are engaged in meaningful work in their country.

Staff perception of working with Volunteers in their country overall is very positive. Just over 80% of staff report Volunteers have a good reputation in their country. Building on Strategic Plan 2019-2022, questions about whether Volunteers are engaged in meaningful work and have a good reputation were added to the survey.

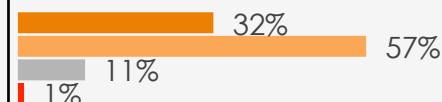
Thinking about your overall experience working with Peace Corps Volunteers in your country...
(1 of 2)

■ Strongly agree
■ Agree
■ Neither
■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

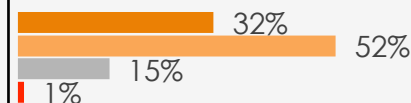
Peace Corps Volunteers work hard to learn the local language.



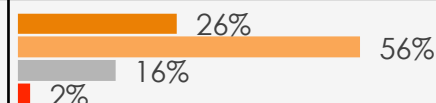
Peace Corps Volunteers are engaged in meaningful work.



Peace Corps Volunteers help create lasting change in their community.



Peace Corps Volunteers have a good reputation.



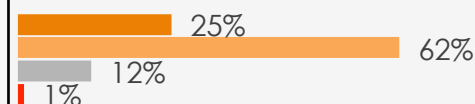
While staff are less likely to agree that Trainees arrive with appropriate expectations to serve, 87% feel Volunteers integrate into their communities.

1 in 4 staff “strongly agree” PC Volunteers integrate into their communities. Staff are less likely to agree PC Trainees arrive with appropriate expectations to serve. Staff were more likely to report that PC Volunteers integrated into their communities after the question was updated in 2018 from “easily integrate” to “integrate”.

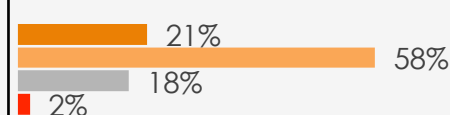
Thinking about your overall experience working with Peace Corps Volunteers in your country...
(2 of 2)

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither
Disagree
Strongly disagree

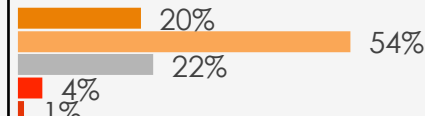
Peace Corps Volunteers integrate into their communities.



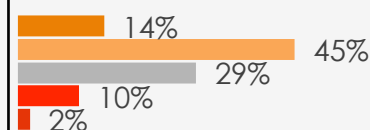
Peace Corps Volunteers do a good job managing cultural differences during their service.



Peace Corps Volunteers do a good job being resilient, or withstanding or recovering from difficult situations.



Peace Corps Trainees arrive with appropriate expectations to serve.



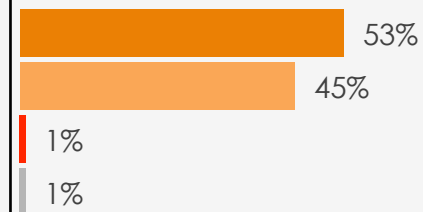
When asked about the number of Volunteers at their post, nearly half of all staff indicated that the best 5-year plan is to increase their Volunteer numbers.

Nearly half of all staff think the best 5-year plan for the number of Volunteers is to *increase* the number of Volunteers at their post. Only 5% of staff believe Peace Corps should reduce or phase-out the number of Volunteers at their post over the next 5 years.

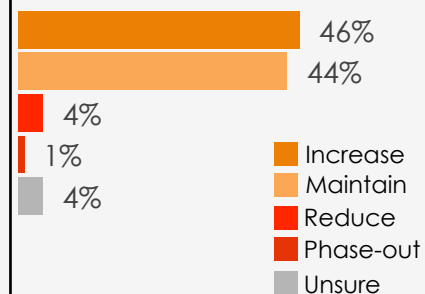
Thinking about your overall experience working with Peace Corps Volunteers in your country...

Strong positive impact
Somewhat positive impact
No impact
Not sure

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



What do you think is the best 5-year plan for the number of Volunteers at your post?



7 out of 10 staff report that morale among staff at their post is *high or very high*.

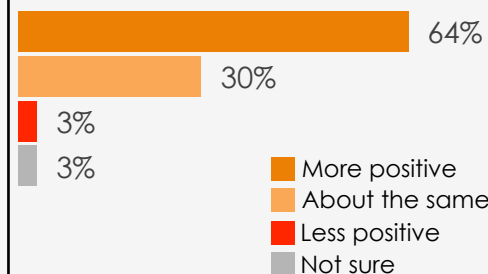
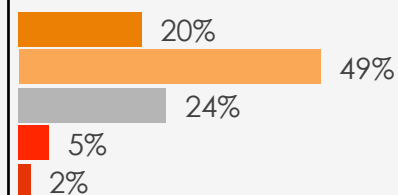
Nearly 70% of staff report morale at their post is “very high” or “high”. On par with results from 2017, nearly 95% of staff believe they have a more positive opinion of Americans since becoming a Peace Corps employee.

Thinking diversity and inclusion and overall morale at your post...

Morale among staff at your post is...

How has your overall opinion about Americans changed since you became a Peace Corps employee?

Very high
High
Neither high nor low
Low
Very low



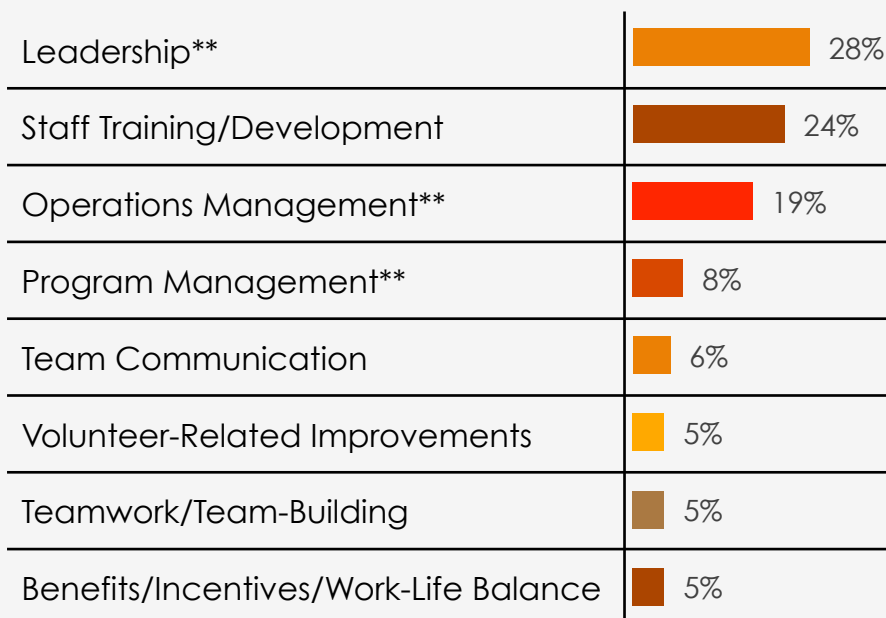


VI. Improving Post Operations

Nearly 1 in 4 staff believe more training and development opportunities would improve post operations.

Leadership improvements, staff training/development, and operations management were the three most prevalent themes staff reported when asked how to improve operations at their post. Under Leadership, 33% staff reported wanting more respect & dignity from leadership.

Please give one recommendation that you think would make operations run more effectively at your post:*



*Please note this question utilized an open-ended text box that allowed staff to answer in three hundred and fifty characters or less. An open-end analysis was then performed using an internal OSIRP team to analyze and group these responses into the eight primary themes and corresponding sub-themes for leadership, operations management, and program management.

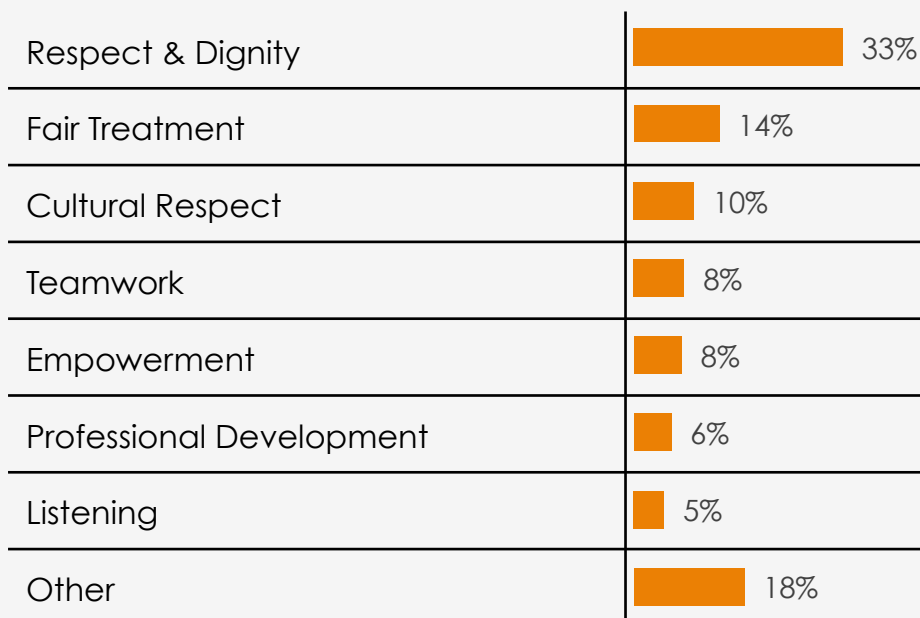
**Primary theme disaggregated in proceeding slides

Under the theme of leadership to improve post operations, 1 in 3 staff reported wanting more respect and dignity.

Following greater respect & dignity, staff recommended more fair treatment and cultural respect. Staff quote: *"Host Country Staff have knowledge and understanding of host country needs. They should be consulted and appreciated while making decisions. Sometimes Supervisors don't consult staff... Staff are a big asset for PC if they can be used effectively in decision making."*

Please give one recommendation that you think would make operations run more effectively at your post:*

LEADERSHIP (28% of total)











*Please note this question utilized an open-ended text box that allowed staff to answer in three hundred and fifty characters or less. An open-end analysis was then performed using an internal OSIRP team to analyze and group these responses into the eight primary themes and corresponding sub-themes for leadership, operations management, and program management.

Under the theme of operations management, nearly 40% of staff reported that an increase in budget and resource allocations would improve post operations.

Post staff consistently reported needing a bigger post budget and more resources. Staff quote: *"It seems that despite budget cuts for Peace Corps as an organization, the staff is meant to do the same amount of training and provide the same support with fewer resources (related to the budget)...It has been a struggle for the post as a whole."*

Please give one recommendation that you think would make operations run more effectively at your post:*

OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT (19% of total)

Budget/Resource Allocations	 39%
Policy Consistency/Improvement	 12%
Support/Workload Management	 11%
Process Improvement	 9%
Staffing Improvement/Position Review	 8%
Time Management	 6%
Administrative Management	 5%
Other	 10%

*Please note this question utilized an open-ended text box that allowed staff to answer in three hundred and fifty characters or less. An open-end analysis was then performed using an internal OSIRP team to analyze and group these responses into the eight primary themes and corresponding sub-themes for leadership, operations management, and program management.

Under the theme of program management, around 7 in 10 staff stated aligning Volunteer and program needs would improve operations at post.

Staff believed a greater effort needed to be made in aligning Volunteer to program needs. Staff quote: *"I think operations at my post will run more effectively if Peace Corps volunteers are deployed in Agriculture and Health to serve two years as it is with the Education volunteers. Annual training needs to be conducted for staff members both locally and internationally."*

Please give one recommendation that you think would make operations run more effectively at your post:*

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT (8% of total)

Aligning Volunteer and Program Needs



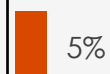
Improve Program Partnerships



M&E/Performance Improvement



Support/Workload Management



*Please note this question utilized an open-ended text box that allowed staff to answer in three hundred and fifty characters or less. An open-end analysis was then performed using an internal OSIRP team to analyze and group these responses into the eight primary themes and corresponding sub-themes for leadership, operations management, and program management.

VII. Appendix A

Acronym List

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

AFR	Africa Region
EMA	Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region
EVS	Employee Viewpoint Survey
FSN	Foreign service national
HCN	Host country national
HCS	Host country staff
HCSS	Host Country Staff Survey
IAP	Inter-America and the Pacific Region
OSIRP	Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning
PG	Performance goal in the agency's Strategic Plan
PSC	Personal services contractor
USDH	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 using 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, Russian 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 “LGBTQ+” 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.³

³To 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 15 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 on duty and able to receive the message during the survey window; (3) were sufficiently literate in computers and English, French, Russian or Spanish to take the survey; and (4) chose to respond.

While 70 percent of the staff with an active peacecorps.gov email address that was provided to the researchers responded to the FY 2018 survey, they constitute just over half (51 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,⁴ but global-level results can offer insights where respondents display consensus around results.

⁴ 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, Russian and Spanish. French, Spanish, and Russian accounted for 17 percent of the responses to the 2018 survey. See Appendix B for response rates broken out by language.

In 2018, email addresses for 73 percent of all host country staff were identified by the research team. Of those staff members who received the HCSS, 1,537 overall responses were received, or 70 percent of those surveyed—a four percent decrease since 2017. In total, 51 percent of all host country staff globally responded to the survey.

⁵ In 2017, 52 percent of all eligible staff or 72 percent identified email addresses. In 2016, 55 percent of all eligible staff or 78 percent with identified email addresses. 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.

The HCSS Questionnaire: Intercultural Surveying

The HCSS Questionnaire was originally designed as an extension of the FEVS and closely mirrors 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 U.S. cultural and governmental norms. 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 languages⁸ 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.

⁸Translations were completed by the GSA Office of Language Services and checked by internal Peace Corps employees who were familiar with agency operations and also fluent in the languages employed.

VIII. Appendix B

Global Respondent Rates and 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 facts 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. Resulting from the collaboration of all three offices, email addresses for 2,188 of all 3,005 eligible staff (73%) were available for distribution of the survey. The HCSS received responses from 1,537 staff for a response rate of 70 percent of reachable staff and 51 percent of all eligible staff.

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate	Population Members	Population Response Rate
GLOBAL	1537	2193	70%	3005	51%
English	1272	83%	17% Non-English	LANGUAGE TYPE	
Spanish	171	11%			
French	69	5%			
Russian	25	2%			

Respondent Rates by Region: Africa (1 of 3)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate
AFRICA	658	983	67%
BENIN	24	32	75%
BOTSWANA	26	33	79%
CAMEROON	38	48	79%
COMOROS	9	13	69%
ETHIOPIA	23	54	43%
GAMBIA	23	36	64%
GHANA	29	43	67%
GUINEA	25	36	69%
KENYA*	0	2	0%
LESOTHO	20	30	67%
LIBERIA	30	39	77%
MADAGASCAR	33	46	72%
MALAWI	29	44	66%
MOZAMBIQUE	36	64	56%
NAMIBIA	29	37	78%
RWANDA	29	40	73%
SENEGAL	40	78	51%
SIERRA LEONE	19	32	59%
SOUTH AFRICA	36	45	80%
ESWATINI	20	26	77%
TANZANIA	32	50	64%
TOGO	22	31	71%
UGANDA	40	60	67%
ZAMBIA	46	64	72%



Respondent Rates by Region: EMA (2 of 3)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate
EMA	441	642	69%
ALBANIA	22	27	81%
ARMENIA	24	33	73%
MYANMAR	17	19	89%
CAMBODIA	27	29	93%
CHINA	26	31	84%
GEORGIA	23	52	44%
INDONESIA	20	31	65%
KOSOVO	16	29	55%
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	23	38	61%
MACEDONIA	25	36	69%
MOLDOVA	27	39	69%
MONGOLIA	20	31	65%
MOROCCO	26	35	74%
NEPAL	22	25	88%
PHILIPPINES	44	66	67%
THAILAND	27	42	64%
TIMOR LESTE	16	22	73%
UKRAINE	36	57	63%

Respondent Rates by Region: IAP (3 of 3)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate
IAP	438	568	77%
BELIZE	10	19	53%
COLOMBIA	26	28	93%
COSTA RICA	30	35	86%
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	26	35	74%
EASTERN CARIBBEAN	21	26	81%
ECUADOR	32	40	80%
FIJI	14	18	78%
GUATEMALA	38	45	84%
GUYANA	18	23	78%
JAMAICA	18	23	78%
MEXICO	17	25	68%
FSM/PALAU	2	11	18%
NICARAGUA	30	45	67%
PANAMA	35	46	76%
PARAGUAY	37	53	70%
PERU	41	46	89%
SAMOA	10	12	83%
TONGA	13	16	81%
VANUATU	20	22	91%

IX. Appendix C

The 2018 HCSS Questionnaire in English, French, Russian and Spanish

The 2018 Host Country Staff Survey was designed in English and then translated into French, Russian and Spanish by GSA translation services in order to increase the number of staff who could be reached.

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

[Host Country Staff Resource Page](#)

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.

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