

2019 Host Country Staff Survey Summary Report

Office of Strategic Information, Research, and Planning



2019 Host Country Staff Survey Table of Contents

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I. Introduction

Introduction (1 of 2)

Building on the success of five previously administered surveys starting in 2014, the 2019 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 staff training needs and additional insight into the work of Volunteers.

The HCSS solicits feedback from staff whose work is vital to Peace Corps operations but whose viewpoints were previously unavailable to agency management at headquarters, prior to 2014. 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 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. While many of the earlier questions were preserved in the 2018 HCSS, extensive changes were nevertheless made based on stakeholder feedback.

Introduction (2 of 2)

The 2019 Host Country Staff Survey retained all core questions from the 2018 survey and broadened the themes slightly by adding 3 questions.

The following concepts have been added to the 2019 questionnaire:

- US Direct Hire support when expressing concerns related to PCVs.
- Country Director support when expressing concerns related to PCVs.
- PCTs arrive with appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to serve.

Lastly, in addition to offering the survey in English, Spanish and French, the 2018 and 2019 HCSS was also offered in Russian.¹

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

II. Top-Line Findings

2019 HCSS Top-Line Findings

The 2019 HCSS received responses from 56% of its total population, an increase of five percent from the rate of staff responses in 2018. It is important to note that all subsequent references to “staff” in this report refer only to those who participated in the 2019 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.**
- **7 out of 10 staff members are satisfied with their overall job training.**
- **About 90 % of staff members feel confident responding to volunteer safety and security incidents.**
- **Nearly 85% of staff feel that members of their team work well together and also work well with other teams at post.**
- **Only 51% of staff believe that trainees arrive with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to serve.**
- **86% of staff believe that PCVs integrate into their communities.**
- **When asked about the number of Volunteers at their post, half of all staff indicated that the best 5-year plan is to increase their Volunteer numbers.**
- **More than 80% of staff believe that they are treated fairly by senior staff.**
- **8 out of 10 staff feel supported by their Country Director when expressing concerns about PCVs.**
- **99% of staff believe that Peace Corps has a positive impact on their country.**

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 believe that their training needs are assessed, they have developed their job skills, and they are satisfied with job training.

Overall satisfaction with job training was on par with last years' numbers at 70%.

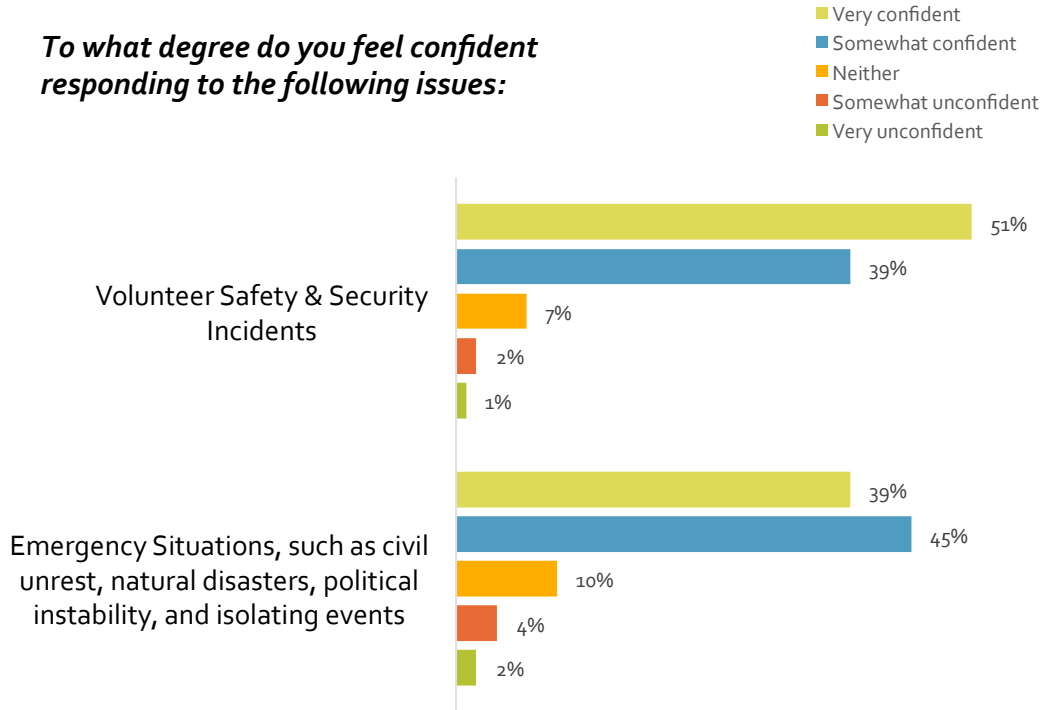
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:



Over 9 in 10 staff reported feeling confident responding to Volunteer Safety & Security incidents.

Similar to the results from last year's HCSS, over 85% of staff reported feeling confident in responding to emergency situations such as civil unrest, natural disasters, political instability, and isolating events.

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

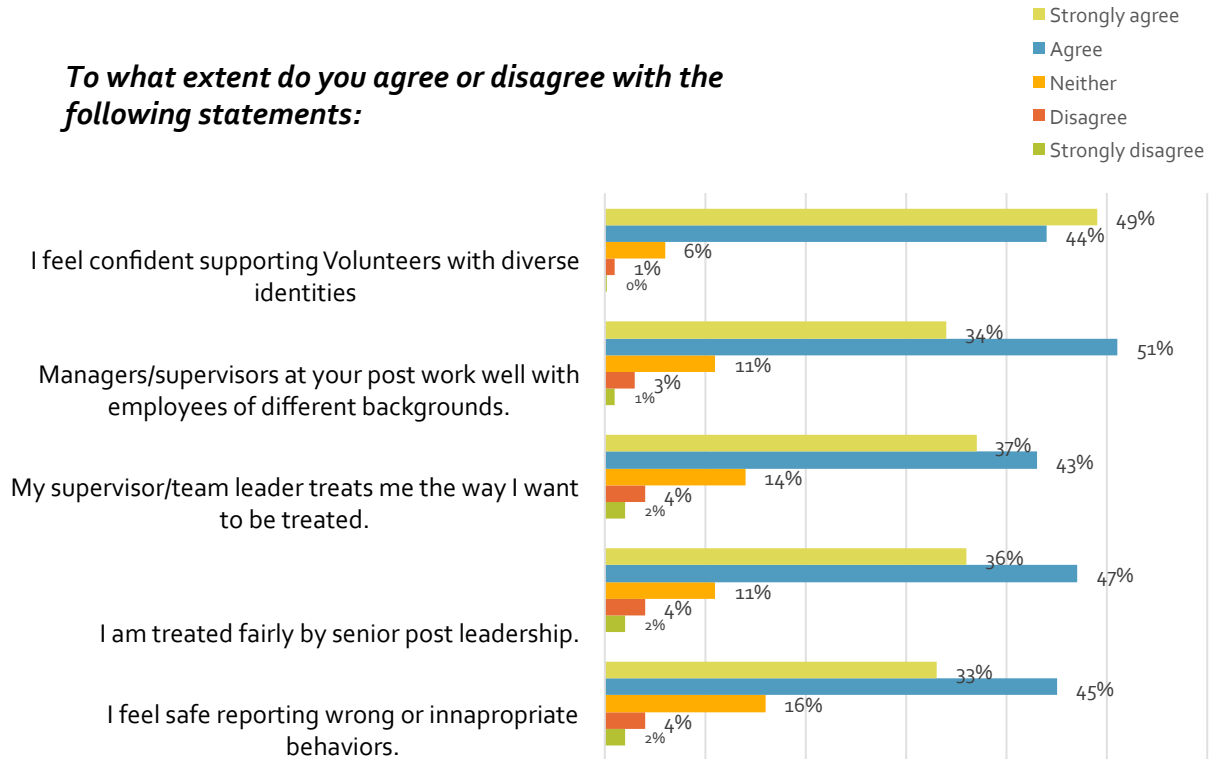


IV. Engaging Staff

More than 80% of staff report that they are treated fairly by senior post staff.

Following feedback from agency stakeholders, the 2019 survey was updated to include questions addressing diverse identities of staff and Volunteers. 93% of staff reported feeling confident supporting volunteers with diverse identities.

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

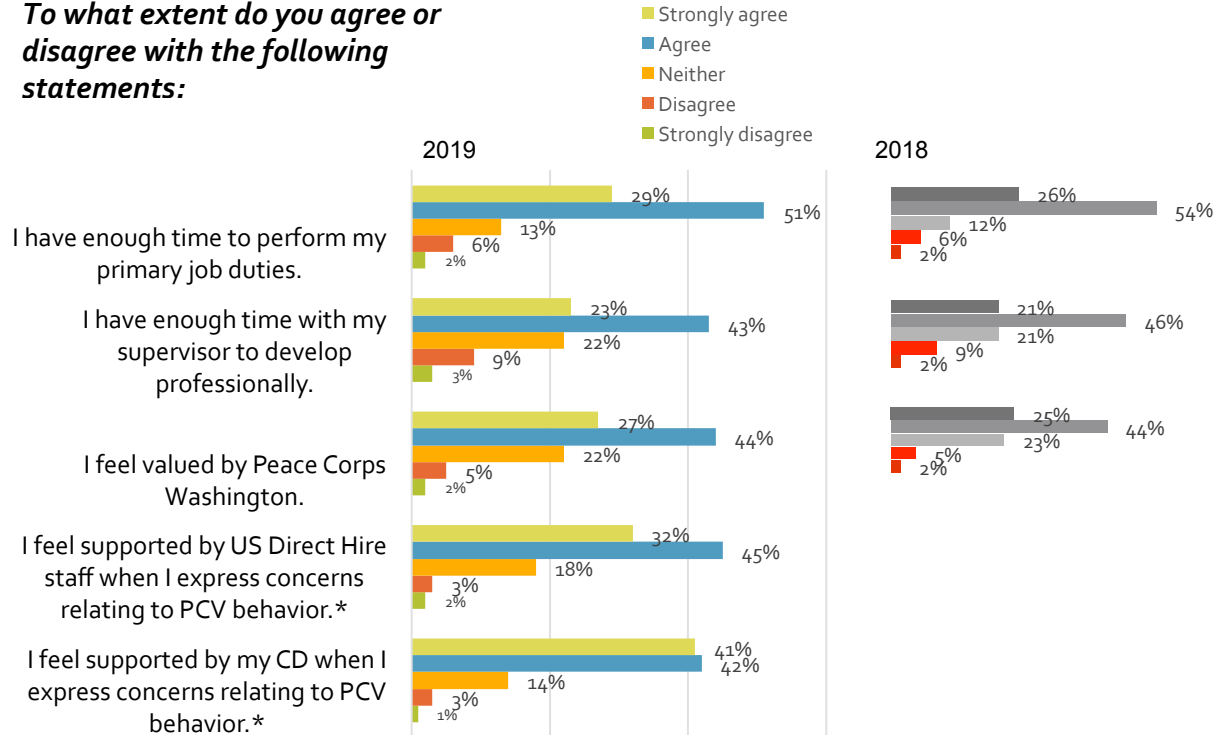


More than 80% of staff report that they feel supported by their Country Director when expressing concerns relating to the behavior of PCVs.

Stakeholder groups requested the addition of two questions focused on staff feelings of being supported by USDH staff, and more specifically the Country Director, when expressing concerns about volunteer behavior.

In 2019 80% of staff “strongly agree” or “agree” that they have enough time for primary duties.

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



* These questions were not asked in 2018.

Over 8 out of 10 staff members report that members of their team work well together.

Findings show a positive work environment for staff. Over 70% of staff reported having input into decisions that affect their work, while 75% reported supervisors encouraging teams to work together, and 83% agreed that teams work well with other teams at post.

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

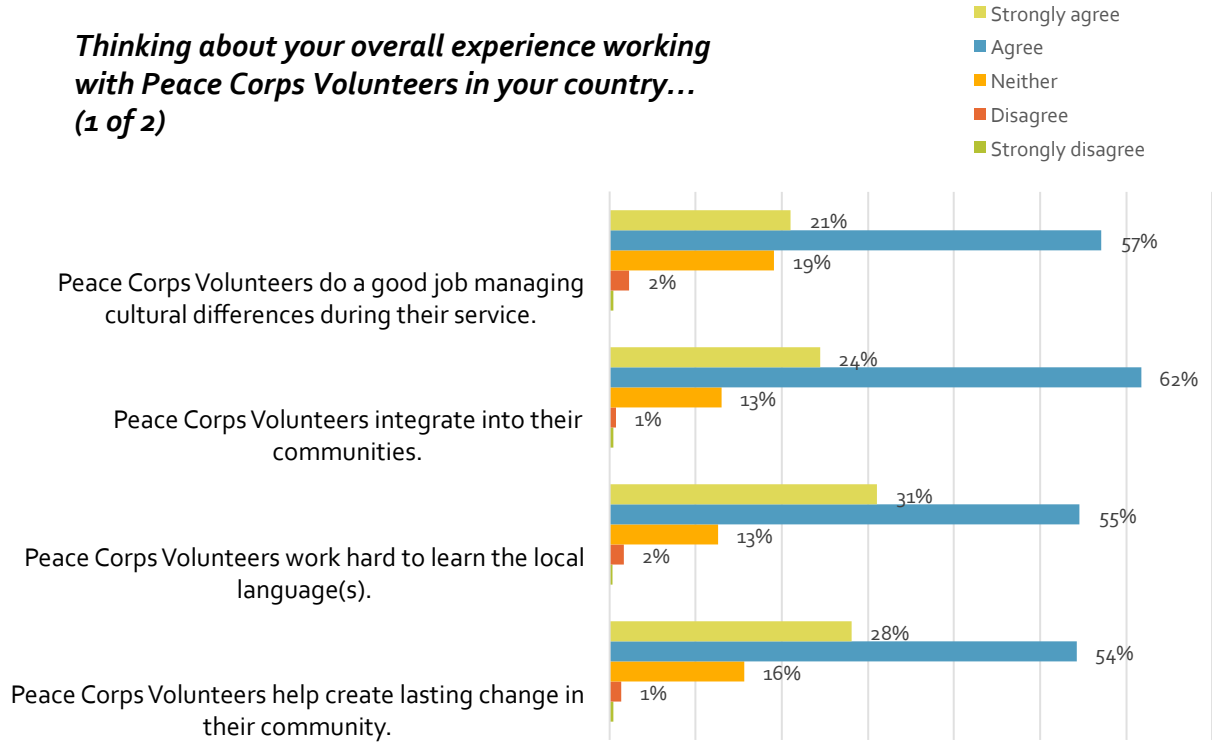


V. Working with Peace Corps Volunteers

Over 85% of staff agree that Volunteers integrate into their communities.

Staff perception of Volunteers is positive. Staff agreed that Volunteers do well in all categories including, managing cultural differences, integrating into communities, learning local language, and creating lasting change (each category >80%).

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

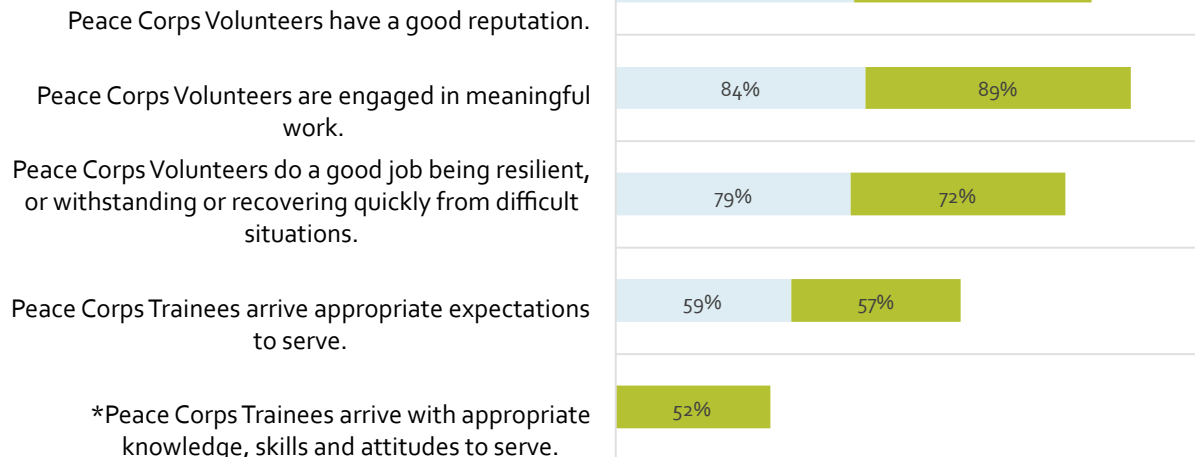


Nearly 90% of staff report that PCVs are engaged in meaningful work in their country.

80% of staff report that Volunteers have a good reputation. 57% of staff report that trainees arrive with appropriate expectations to serve, a slight drop from last year. There was also a 7% drop of staff who reported that PCVs do a good job being resilient (72%).

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

■ 2018 (Strongly Agree/Agree)
■ 2019 (Strongly Agree/Agree)



* This question was not asked in 2018.

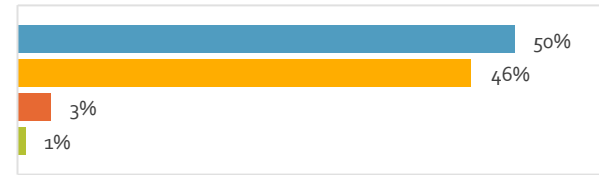
99% of staff believe that Peace Corps has a positive impact on people in their country.

Half of all respondents believe that the best 5-year plan for the number of Volunteers is to increase the number at post. Only 4% of staff think that reducing or phasing out volunteers completely over the next 5-years is the best plan. In addition, just 1% of staff believe Peace Corps has no impact on their country.

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

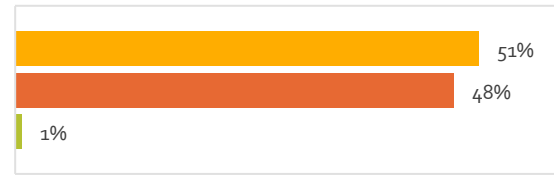
What do you think is the best 5-year plan for the number of Volunteers at your post?

- Increase the # of volunteers
- Maintain the current # of volunteers
- Reduce the # of volunteers
- Phase-out Volunteers completely



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

- Strong positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No impact

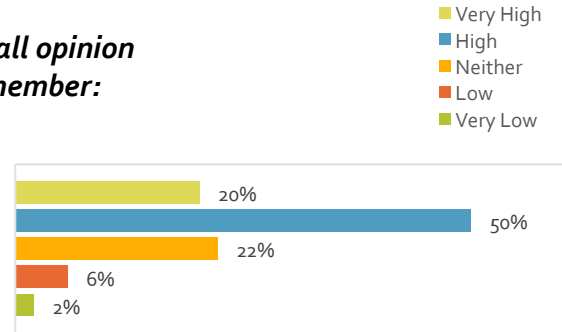


7 out of 10 staff members reported that morale and overall confidence among staff is “very high” or “high”.

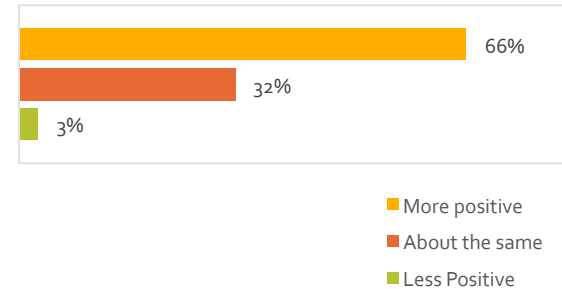
70% of staff reported that the morale, or feeling of confidence and enthusiasm among staff is “high” or “very high”. The overall opinion about Americans among staff has become more positive (66%).

Thinking about morale and your overall opinion of Americans as a Peace Corps staff member:

Morale, or the overall feeling of confidence and enthusiasm at work, among staff at your post is...



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

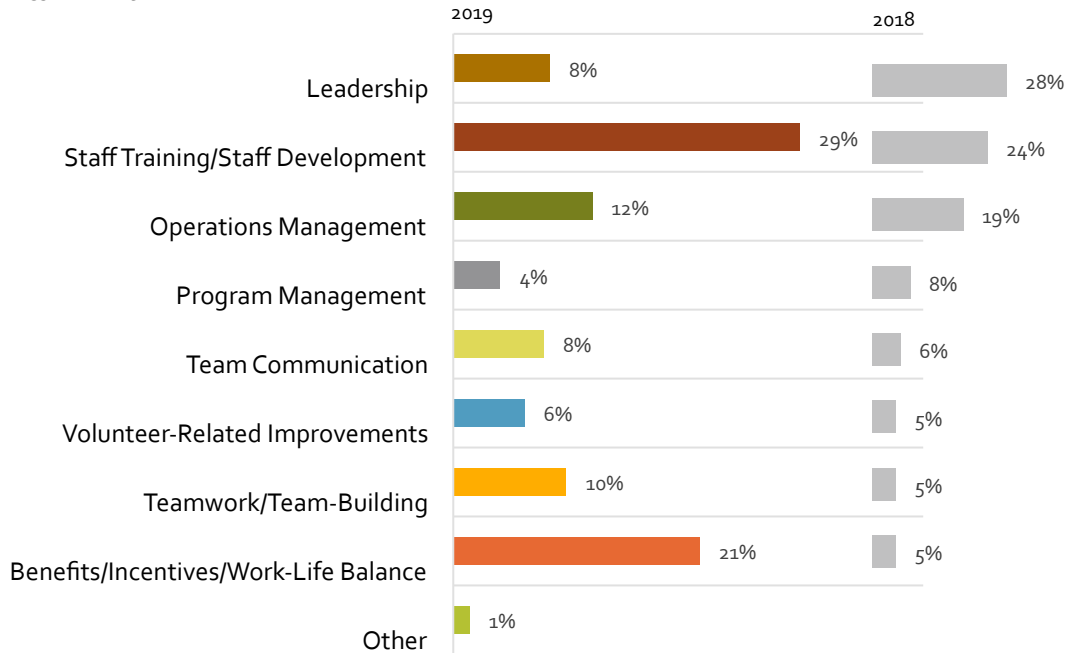


VI. Improving Post Operations

1 in 4 members of staff believe that staff trainings/development would make operations run more smoothly.

29% of respondents think that staff training and staff development would make operations run more effectively. Staff used a write-in option to specify the need for training and development which includes defining clearer responsibilities, and PC procedures and cultural awareness training. 21% think that operations would improve with more benefits, including higher salaries and more per diem during travel.

Topics for improvements that would make operations run more effectively at post.



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

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 best efforts were made to accurately translate the survey into 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. There is always a possibility that concepts may not translate sufficiently clearly 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.

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 75 % of the staff with an active peacecorps.gov email address that was provided to the researchers responded to the FY 2019 survey, they constitute just over half (56%) 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 staff satisfaction and performance. While individual circumstances may vary among staff at different posts, the insights that are received from staff 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, but global-level results can offer insights where respondents display consensus around results.

Surveying Method

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 19% of the responses to the 2019 survey. See Appendix B for response rates broken out by language.

In 2019, email addresses for 74% of all host country staff were identified by the research team. Of those staff members who received the HCSS, 1,565 overall responses were received, or 75% of those surveyed—a 5% increase since 2018. In total, 56% of all host country staff globally responded to the survey.²

²In 2018, 51% of all eligible staff or 70% of all identified email addresses. In 2017, 52% of all eligible staff or 72% identified email addresses. In 2016, 55% of all eligible staff or 78% with identified email addresses. In 2015, 52% of all eligible staff or 71% with identified email addresses responded to the survey. In 2014, 37% of all eligible staff or 58% of staff with identified email addresses responded to the survey.

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 2,081 of all 2,809 eligible staff (74%) were available for distribution of the survey. The HCSS received responses from 1,565 staff for a response rate of 75 % of reachable staff and 56 % of all eligible staff, an increase of 5% from last years HCSS.

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate	Population Members	Population Response Rate
GLOBAL	1565	2081	75%	2809	56%
English	1272	81%	19% Non-English	LANGUAGE TYPE	
Spanish	174	11%			
French	73	5%			
Russian	46	3%			

Respondent Rates by Region (Africa)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate
AFRICA	667	950	70%
BENIN	23	31	74%
BOTSWANA	23	29	79%
CAMEROON	40	48	83%
COMOROS	10	13	77%
ETHIOPIA	30	55	55%
GAMBIA	15	32	47%
GHANA	29	40	73%
GUINEA	22	40	55%
LESOTHO	24	31	77%
LIBERIA	33	41	80%
MADAGASCAR	28	43	65%
MALAWI	27	38	71%
MOZAMBIQUE	38	61	62%
NAMIBIA	29	38	76%
RWANDA	30	41	73%
SENEGAL	48	78	62%
SIERRA LEONE	18	32	56%
SOUTH AFRICA	37	46	80%
ESWATINI	21	26	81%
TANZANIA	33	46	72%
TOGO	23	30	77%
UGANDA	42	54	78%
ZAMBIA	44	57	77%

Respondent Rates by Region (EMA)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate
EMA	486	626	78%
ALBANIA	22	26	85%
ARMENIA	31	49	63%
MYANMAR	18	18	100%
CAMBODIA	21	26	81%
CHINA	23	32	72%
GEORGIA	26	37	70%
INDONESIA	19	27	70%
KOSOVO	17	30	57%
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	26	29	90%
MOLDOVA	24	41	59%
MONGOLIA	25	28	89%
MOROCCO	29	36	81%
NEPAL	23	26	88%
NORTH MACEDONIA	26	37	70%
PHILIPPINES	50	61	82%
SRI LANKA	9	9	100%
THAILAND	30	34	88%
TIMOR LESTE	14	19	74%
UKRAINE	53	61	87%

Respondent Rates by Region (IAP)

	Sample Responses	Sample Members	Sample Response Rate
IAP	412	505	82%
BELIZE	17	24	71%
COLOMBIA	26	29	90%
COSTA RICA	27	40	68%
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	26	36	72%
EASTERN CARIBBEAN	19	22	86%
ECUADOR	36	41	88%
FIJI	17	17	100%
GUATEMALA	37	39	95%
GUYANA	20	22	91%
JAMAICA	16	20	80%
MEXICO	17	22	77%
NICARAGUA	11	14	79%
PANAMA	33	39	85%
PARAGUAY	30	42	71%
PERU	36	47	77%
SAMOA	11	12	92%
TONGA	14	18	78%
VANUATU	19	21	90%

IX. Appendix C

The 2019 HCSS Questionnaire in English, French, Russian and Spanish

The 2019 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:

[HCSS 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, government-wide initiatives.

Acknowledgments

OSIRP developed this survey to systematically tap into the enormous wealth of experience of a critically important segment of the Peace Corps family: our host country staff. The interest and support from the Peace Corps staff in the countries where this survey was conducted were critical to this endeavor. Our sincere appreciation is extended to the Office of Global Operations for reviewing the survey materials and to the country directors at each post for their assistance in promoting participation in this survey. Finally, we would like to extend special thanks to all of the post staff who helped to make the 2019 Host Country Staff Survey a success by participating in the survey.

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