



# Sexual Assault Advisory Council

## Annual Report 2016





November 18, 2016

The President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council (the "Council") respectfully submits its 2016 Annual Report as mandated by the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011. Since its initiation, the Council has sought to adjust and respond to the needs of the Peace Corps as the agency has built and institutionalized a Volunteer-centered sexual assault prevention and response program.

The focus of the Council has necessarily evolved alongside the Peace Corps. Initially the Council offered guidance on establishing a new program. This year's Council saw its role shift to one of offering guidance on the incorporation of best and promising practices, and in assessing the efficacy of existing efforts.

As such, several common themes surfaced during this year. The Council recognized the need to adequately resource prevention and response efforts, identify steps to collect and analyze relevant data, and encourage the sustainment of successful practices. We sought to formulate a series of recommendations that, if implemented, will assist the agency with overcoming challenges while taking advantage of improvement opportunities.

Thankfully there is an increasingly vocal debate across the country on what can be done to prevent and respond to sexual assaults. To inform this discussion, we encouraged the Agency to recognize that it is truly emerging as a national leader in this area. Few organizations have implemented such sweeping programs in this limited timeframe. We recommended the Peace Corps offer its practices as examples of what others might consider for a similar journey.

The 2016 Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council offers this report with the hope that it will continue to propel the Agency toward its goal of ensuring all Volunteers live and work free from the threat of sexual assault. We look forward to helping advance this critical goal.

Sincerely,



Suzanne M. Holroyd, PhD  
Council Chair



Lauren A. Ware, MFS  
Council Co-Chair

Enclosure



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose of Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act and Council**

The Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 (“Kate Puzey Act”) detailed the requirements for the implementation of a robust and victim-centered approach for the Peace Corps to establish effective policies and programs as the basis of global sexual assault prevention and response programs for Volunteers. The legislation was named in honor of Kate Puzey, an outstanding and passionate Peace Corps Volunteer who was murdered while serving in Benin in 2009.

To assist in the development of the Peace Corps’ prevention and response efforts, the Kate Puzey Act established the Sexual Assault Advisory Council to review and assess Peace Corps’ efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault. The Council also has an oversight responsibility to prepare this summary report for White House and Congressional review.

#### **Methodology**

Council members, representing a range of areas of expertise, met several times—virtually and in-person—throughout 2016 to review current Peace Corps practices and identify improvements and opportunities for continued expansion. Council members drew on their own subject matter expertise and knowledge of current industry standards and best practices, as well as input from Peace Corps staff and external topic experts to offer recommendations framed around the following topic areas:

1. Prevention
2. Victim Care
3. Training
4. Communications
5. Assessment

Council members also identified gaps in funding and existing staff support that need to be addressed in order to successfully implement these recommendations in a timely and comprehensive manner.

#### **Overview of Sexual Assault Statistics within the Peace Corps**

One of the most critical discussions between the Council and Peace Corps was understanding what is currently known about the statistics related to this crime within the Peace Corps; that is, how many assaults occurred, where, against whom, etc. For 2014 and 2015, there were a total of 223 sexual assaults reported to the Peace Corps in 2015, an 8.6 percent decrease from 2014.

Volunteers have two reporting options if they are victims of a sexual assault: Standard and Restricted Reporting. In both situations, the victim has access to support services; however, under a Restricted Report, only those providing support services know the victim’s name. Under a Standard Report, the victim’s identity is known to those providing support and as well as those at the victim’s post location. Under a Standard Report, the victim can pursue legal options or request a change of host family or site. Of the 223 reported cases in 2015, 57 percent of Volunteers chose restricted reporting, a slight increase from the previous year.

### PREVENTION

In recent years, the Peace Corps has put extensive effort into caring for victims of sexual assault, and while those victim-care programs continue to be institutionalized, the Agency has started to turn toward expanding its prevention efforts. As in many organizations, prevention has historically been tied to



training; however, there are numerous opportunities for the Agency to expand its prevention efforts in order to be more effective across its diverse community.

### **Recommendations**

- Develop clear and reliable metrics for prevalence and reporting.
- Develop a comprehensive sexual assault prevention plan that fully incorporates risk and protective factors and metrics.

### **VICTIM CARE**

The Sexual Assault Advisory Council created the Victim Care Working Group in the spring of 2016 to focus on the effectiveness of current systems and services provided to Volunteers in the aftermath of a sexual assault. The Peace Corps has made many commendable improvements since the introduction of the Kate Puzey Act by implementing new programs, policies, and procedures; however, the committee has identified opportunities for refining the role of Victim Advocates, incorporating tools to enhance the response to Volunteers, and expanding care to secondary victims. The execution of the recommendations below will help to ensure a more fluid and cohesive approach to Volunteers who are sexually assaulted while serving in the Peace Corps.

### **Recommendations**

- Enhance the coordinated response to Volunteers post-sexual assault by refining the role of the Victim Advocate while enhancing the tools utilized to provide ongoing and comprehensive care.
- Provide services for secondary victims of sexual assault.
- Amend the hotel contract to allow for one designated support person/secondary victim to stay with the Volunteer in a hotel post-medevac.

### **TRAINING**

The task of influencing behavior and changing an organization's culture begins first and foremost with training. In the area of the Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault, there are several aspects of this unique offense that must be targeted to achieve this objective. The focus of most prevention training today has shifted from that which previously addressed actions potential victims could take to minimize their risk of being assaulted. Instead, leaders seeking to prevent sexual assault in their organizations are adopting training that targets the main perpetrators of this crime by dispelling myths, empowering bystanders to take action, and systematically dismantling any culture where sexual violence is tolerated.

While the Peace Corps has made significant progress in its training efforts, those efforts, like their policies and procedures, have been implemented for several years and now need to be analyzed for their efficacy and compliance. Evaluating the training efficacy becomes impossible when it cannot be reliably assigned and tracked for all who require it. In order to ensure all key participants in the response to sexual assault receive and successfully accomplish the training they must have to perform their crucial roles, the Peace Corps must obtain a suitable training-management database.

### **Recommendations**

- Require a new Learning Management System that is both compatible with existing digital training-program formats and is capable of integrating with Human Resources databases.
- Sustain Peace Corps efforts to provide foundational and refresher training to Designated Post Staff on an annual basis.
- Sustain Peace Corps efforts to train a Peer Support Network of Volunteers capable of providing support to Volunteers experiencing difficulty coping with duty-associated stressors.
- Create a core "Introduction to American Culture" training program adaptable to specific sites to better educate host communities and consequently reduce the occurrence of sexual assault.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Although the Peace Corps has made significant internal progress in addressing sexual assault prevention and response with new policies and resources, many outside the Agency are unaware of that progress. That lack of education can present many challenges. Audiences may not have the context to understand or question news stories on the topic. There may be unnecessary calls for additional efforts in areas where progress has already been made. Further, the need for resources to support program expansion can potentially be more readily accepted and advanced if audiences are better informed on what is actually underway and where shortfalls exist. Finally, having numerous audiences who are well informed about Agency efforts can only be beneficial in terms of Volunteer recruitment, employee retention, and a number of other areas. To address this need, the Agency should undertake several different key initiatives related to communicating its efforts on sexual assault prevention and response.

### Recommendations

- Create a robust integrated strategic communications plan designed to facilitate the Agency's sexual assault prevention and response efforts.
- Hire a full-time (non-political) senior-level strategic communications manager to facilitate internal and external communications, and advance progress on sexual assault prevention and response.
- Publish a regular public report on Peace Corps' efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault.

## ASSESSMENT

The Kate Puzey Act mandates multiple monitoring and evaluation (M&E) components (Section 8E), including the establishment of goals, metrics, and M&E plans for all Peace Corps programs that incorporate best practices from monitoring and evaluation studies, as well as analyses and annually conducting a confidential survey of Volunteers regarding the effectiveness of Peace Corps programs and staff and the safety of Volunteers.

The Peace Corps has made excellent progress in developing and implementing a comprehensive M&E program and instituting many of the M&E recommendations that were developed last year, despite some considerable challenges and insufficient resources. Some of Peace Corps' particular successes include the development of the new case management system that will allow much of the data currently contained in multiple unlinked systems to be contained in one system; the collection and use of country-specific data to assess modifiable community, structural, and programmatic risk factors for sexual assault in some countries; and the successful collection and analysis of 24 months of data from the Security Incident Questionnaire.

### Recommendations

- Grant designated Peace Corps staff access to data containing personally identifiable information to allow for the linking of data from the same person across programs, countries, and systems.
- Determine what epidemiological data is available to identify modifiable community, structural, and programmatic characteristics that place Volunteers at increased risk of sexual assault.
- Continue working toward integrating Risk-Reduction and Response-Logic Models into unified and coherent "Theory of Change" approaches for the sexual assault prevention and response program.
- Become involved in federal agency efforts to collect data on sexual assault.

## CONGRESSIONAL INPUT

In addition to recommendations for the Peace Corps as a whole, the Council wants to flag specific and pertinent issues for our Congressional leaders interested in the Peace Corps and its ability to provide comprehensive services to prevent and respond to sexual assault of Volunteers as laid out in the



provisions of the Kate Puzey Act. Over the years, the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council has worked closely with the Peace Corps to advance recommendations for improvements in the Peace Corps sexual assault prevention and response programs; however, there are specific challenges which appear to be out of the scope of what the Peace Corps can address within its own purview, which instead should be considerations reviewed by Congress.

### **Recommendations**

- Authorize additional funding to the Peace Corps to foster the implementation and institutionalization of new policies, programs, and training related to sexual assault prevention and response.
- Allow the Council to determine the approach to be addressed in the Annual Report.
- Revise the terms of Council members to allow for longer appointments and varying expertise requirements.

### **WAY AHEAD**

Since the enactment of the Kate Puzey Act of 2011, the Peace Corps has made significant progress in advancing programs and creating a climate supportive of preventing sexual assault and caring for Volunteers who may become victims. As such, the Peace Corps stands as a model for other organizations seeking to put in place relatively quickly a program to address sexual assault.

The Peace Corps' sexual assault program is starting to shift in predictable ways. The early focus was on ensuring that policies, programs, and resources were in place to support victims. With those initiatives well underway, efforts are being expanded to formalize prevention practices. With this evolution, the role of the Council is likely to change as well. Rather than focus solely on identifying gaps and offering recommendations on solutions, future Councils may also work to track the progress of implementation by asking how well this program has been institutionalized.

Probably the most critical need on the horizon is that the prevention and response efforts need to be sufficiently funded and staffed. To date, the Peace Corps has fielded these efforts with no additional funds; however, the process of institutionalizing a global prevention and response program requires expanded funding. Looking ahead, the Council is committed to offering a voice of support in efforts to secure the required financial support to achieve the critical goals of the Kate Puzey Act.

## 2016 COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS CHART

### 1. Prevention

1.1	Develop a comprehensive sexual assault prevention plan that fully incorporates risk and protective factors and metrics.
1.2	Develop clear and reliable metrics for prevalence and reporting.

### 2. Victim Care

2.1	Enhance the coordinated response to Volunteers post-sexual assault by refining the role of the Victim Advocate while enhancing the tools utilized to provide ongoing and comprehensive care.
2.2	Provide services for secondary victims of sexual assault.
2.3	Amend hotel contract to allow for one designated support person/secondary victim to stay with the Volunteer in a hotel post-medevac.

### 3. Training

3.1	Require a new Learning Management System that is both compatible with existing digital training program formats and is capable of integrating with Human Resources databases.
3.2	Sustain efforts to provide providing foundational and refresher training to Designated Post Staff on an annual basis.
3.3	Continue its efforts to train a Peer Support Network of Volunteers capable of providing crisis support to Volunteers experiencing difficulty coping with any stressors associated with Volunteer duty.
3.4	Create a core “Introduction to American Culture” training program adaptable to fit specific sites to better educate host communities and consequently reduce the occurrence of sexual assault.

### 4. Communications

4.1	Create a robust integrated strategic communications plan designed to facilitate the Agency's sexual assault prevention and response efforts.
4.2	Hire a full-time (non-political) senior-level strategic communications manager to facilitate internal and external communications, and advance progress on sexual assault prevention and response.
4.3	Publish a regular public report on the Peace Corps' efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault.

## 5. Assessment

5.1	Grant designated Peace Corps staff access to data containing personally identifiable information.
5.2	Determine what epidemiological data can be used and collected to identify modifiable community, structural, and programmatic characteristics that place Volunteers at increased risk of sexual assault.
5.3	Continue working toward integrating Risk Reduction and Response Logic Models into unified and coherent "Theory of Change" approaches for the overall sexual assault prevention and response program.
5.4	Become involved in federal agency efforts to collect data on sexual assault.

## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose of the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act

The Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011 (“Kate Puzey Act”) detailed the requirements for the implementation of a robust and victim-centered approach for the Peace Corps to establish effective policies and programs as the basis of global sexual assault prevention and response programs for Volunteers. The legislation was named in honor of Kate Puzey, an outstanding and passionate Peace Corps Volunteer who was murdered while serving in Benin in 2009.

### Purpose of the Sexual Assault Advisory Council

To assist in the development of the Peace Corps’ prevention and response efforts, the Kate Puzey Act established the Sexual Assault Advisory Council (“Council”), and mandated the following:

*The Council should meet not less often than annually to review the sexual assault risk-reduction and response training developed under section 8A, the sexual assault policy developed under section 8B, and such other matters related to sexual assault the Council views as appropriate, to ensure that such training and policy conform to the extent practicable to best practices in the sexual assault field.<sup>1</sup>*

In addition to offering program recommendations, the Kate Puzey Act also mandated that the Council serve an oversight function as well:

*On an annual basis for five years after the date of the enactment of this section and at the discretion of the Council thereafter, the Council shall submit to the President and the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives a report on its findings based on the reviews of the sexual assault risk-reduction and response training, the sexual assault policy and other matters related to sexual assault the Council views as appropriate to ensure that such training and policy conform to the extent practicable to best practices in the sexual assault field.<sup>2</sup>*

Council members are appointed by the Peace Corps Director to meet the qualifications set forth in the Kate Puzey Act:

*The Council shall consist of not less than eight individuals. At least one member shall be a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who was a victim of sexual assault, and at least one member shall be a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who was not a victim of sexual assault. The other members shall be governmental and nongovernmental experts and professionals in the sexual assault field. The number of members who are employees of federal, state, or local governments shall not exceed the number of members who are not employees of federal, state, or local governments.<sup>3</sup>*

A complete list of 2016 Council members and their qualifications can be found in the Appendix B.

<sup>1</sup> Kate Puzey Volunteer Protection Act of 2011, P.L. 112–57, Sec 8D.

<sup>2</sup> Kate Puzey Volunteer Protection Act of 2011, P.L. 112–57, Sec. 8D. And 22 U.S.C 2507d.

<sup>3</sup> Sexual Assault Advisory Council Charter and Bylaws, Section 2B. To view a complete list of Council members and their qualifications, see Appendix B.

## **Purpose of the Report**

As required under the Kate Puzey Act, this report addresses the Council's requirement to submit an annual report on its findings following a review of the Peace Corps' sexual assault prevention and response efforts.

## **Methodology**

As directed by the Kate Puzey Act, the Peace Corps Director appointed 13 members to the 2016 Sexual Assault Advisory Council. (Three members serve as Council advisers.) Council membership represents a range of expertise from within the sexual assault prevention and response community, with experts drawn from both the government and civilian sectors and returned Peace Corps Volunteers. All members have numerous years of experience identifying challenges and creating solutions within the sexual assault space. (See Appendix B for Council member bios.)

The 2016 Council efforts began with a conference call in March during which the group received an update of 2015 recommendations and discussed the way ahead for the 2016 cycle. The Peace Corps Director joined the kickoff call to offer her perspective in terms of recent accomplishments and enduring commitment to addressing sexual assault within the Peace Corps. Finally, to facilitate planning for the year ahead, the Council members formed the following working groups based on expertise and topic interest:

- a) Prevention
- b) Victim Care
- c) Training
- d) Communications
- e) Assessment

Council members next met at the two-day in-person session in May held at Peace Corps headquarters. Convened by the Council chair, the May meeting was an opportunity for Council members to receive updates by Peace Corps staff on responses to recommendations offered by the 2015 Council (See Appendix A for listing.). The Council also received overviews of new Peace Corps policies, programs, and legislative initiatives related to sexual assault prevention and response.

Each of the working groups spent several hours with relevant Peace Corps staff to allow for an in-depth discussion of their area of focus and to identify what additional information they would need to provide a thorough and relevant review and make subsequent sound recommendations. The chair asked the members to consider individual improvements that might still be needed, as well as strategic-level actions that could further the process of long-term institutionalization of the desired climate and program support.

During the summer, Council members met by phone on several occasions to provide insights gained from their working group reviews. In addition, rather than meet in-person a second time in late summer as had been done in past years, the chair arranged for individual Council members (namely, the team lead for each section outlined above) to attend a one-on-one meeting with relevant Peace Corps offices to ask specific questions and receive immediate guidance regarding that particular committee's charge.

These sessions allowed for meaningful discussion and collaboration between the Council member and the Peace Corps, and resulted in the mutual identification of areas that required prioritization of the Council's attention. As such, Council working groups were able to focus on the most relevant issues the Peace Corps currently faces. By discussing the working group's emerging recommendations at an early stage, Peace Corps staff identified obstacles or challenges that might complicate or prevent implementation of a specific recommendation. As a result, the working groups could proactively suggest ways to address these

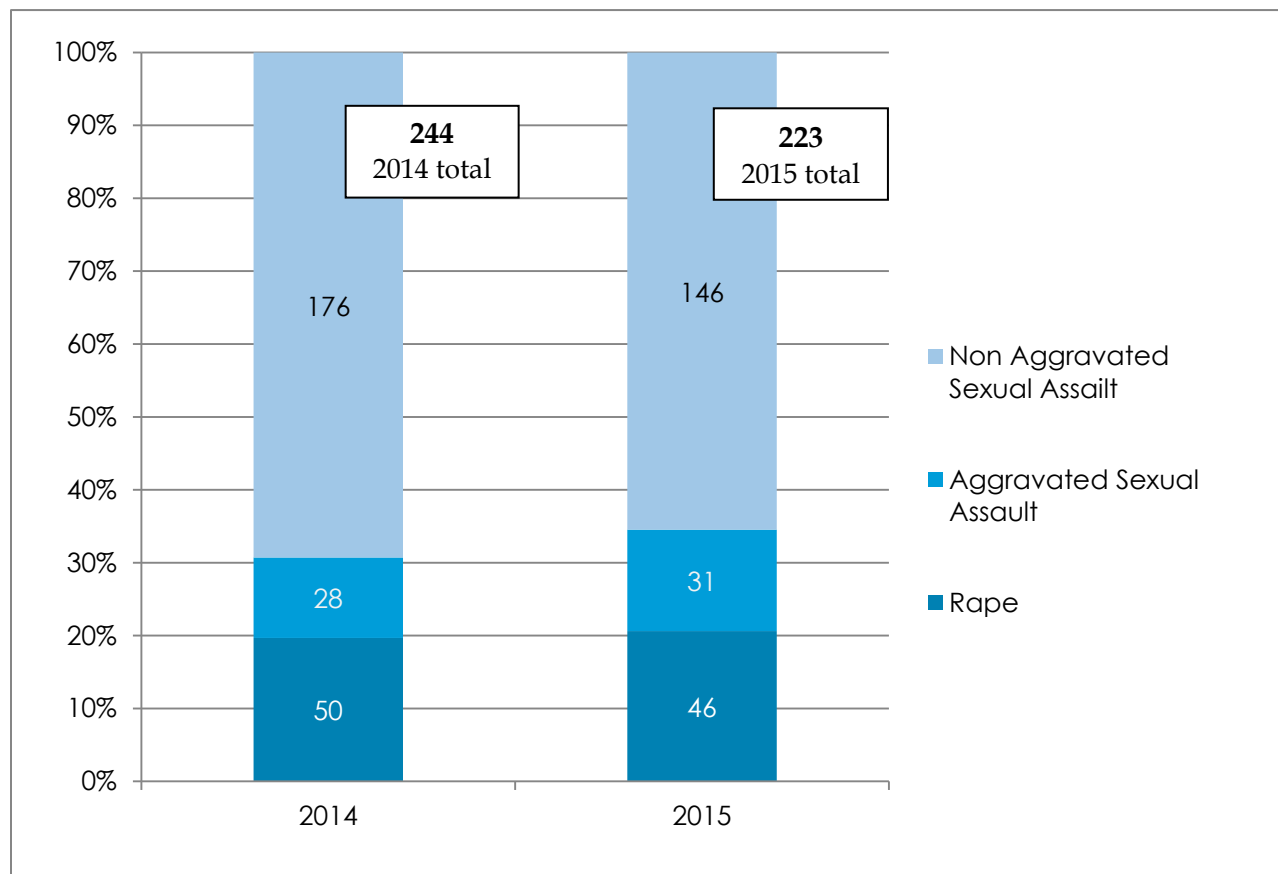
challenges and include proposals to combat these impediments to progress. Council working groups coordinated throughout the summer to further refine their recommendations, drawing upon their own subject-matter expertise, their knowledge of current industry standards and best practices, and importantly, the guidance and perspective from the Peace Corps itself.

### Overview of Sexual Assault Statistics within the Peace Corps

One of the most critical discussions between the Council and the Peace Corps was understanding what is currently known about the statistics related to this crime within the Peace Corps; that is, how many assaults occurred, where, against whom, etc. The Peace Corps provided the following statistics as an overview. Additional information on this data is available on the Peace Corps website.

To offer perspective in reviewing this report, it is important to review statistics related to sexual assault in the Peace Corps. As laid out below in preliminary data provided by the Peace Corps for 2014 and 2015, there were a total of 223 sexual assaults reported to the Peace Corps in 2015, an 8.6 percent decrease from 2014.

### Sexual Assault Reports to Peace Corps



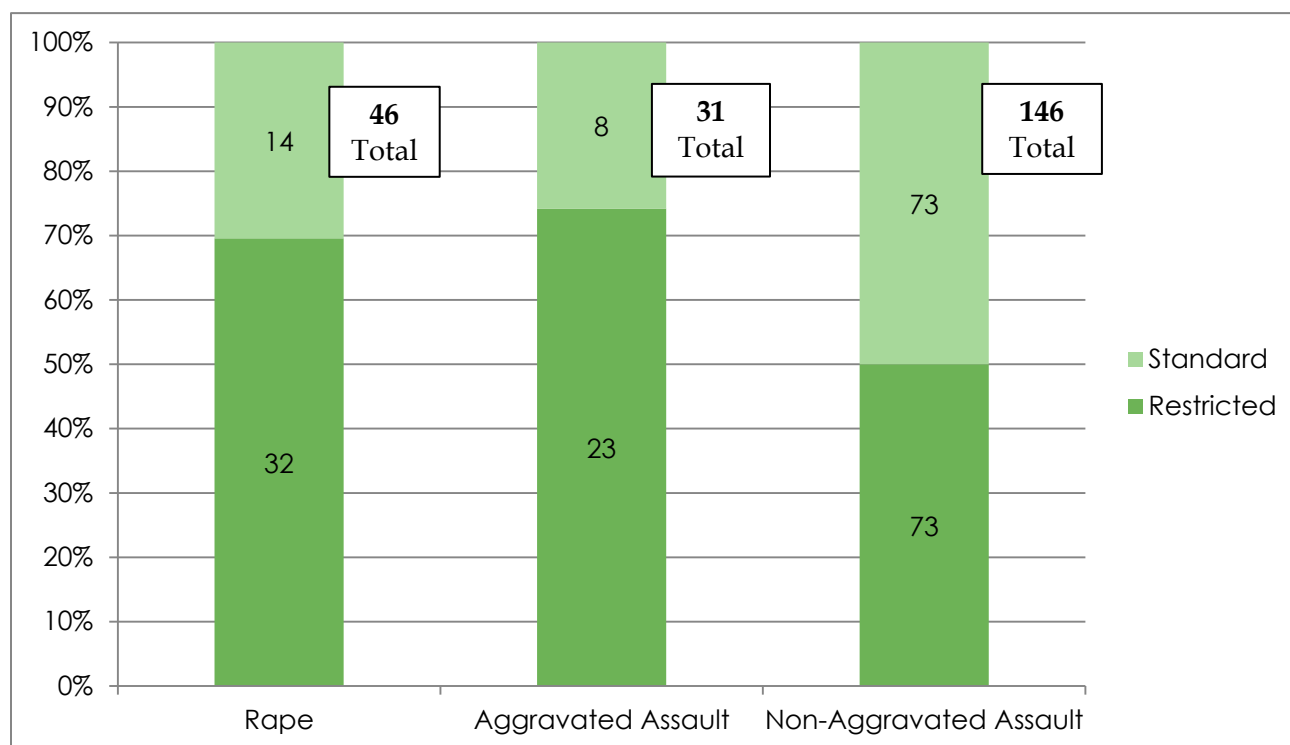
Volunteers have two reporting options if they are victims of a sexual assault: Standard and Restricted Reporting. In both situations, the victim has access to support services; however, under a Restricted Report, only those providing support services know the victim's name. Under a Standard Report, the victim's identity is known to those providing support and as well as those at the victim's post location.



Under a Standard Report, the victim can pursue legal options or request a change of host family or site. A victim can switch from Restricted to Standard Report if desired.

Of the 223 reported cases in 2015, 57 percent of Volunteers chose restricted reporting, a slight increase from the previous year.

## 2015 Reporting Choice by Type of Assault



In all cases, Designated Staff provided support services and ensured that Volunteers were able to make informed decisions. In general, services that were provided included:

- An overview of the available services including the option to file a Restricted or Standard Report (96 percent of all cases).
- A Serious and Imminent Threat Assessment was conducted to identify potential ongoing threats (61 percent of all cases).
- Staff assisted Volunteers with filing a police report (Volunteers chose to report to police in 10 percent of cases.)
- Post-Incident Assessments were reviewed before Volunteers returned to site (45 percent of cases).

As mentioned in the report that follows, the Peace Corps is taking steps to gather additional data related to this crime. Extensive detail on the crimes mentioned above can be found in the annual report prepared by the Peace Corps titled “Statistical Report of Crimes Against Volunteers.”

## PREVENTION

In recent years, the Peace Corps has put extensive effort into caring for victims of sexual assault, and while those victim-care programs continue to be institutionalized, the Agency has started to turn toward expanding its prevention efforts. As in many organizations, prevention has historically been tied to training; however, there are numerous opportunities for the Agency to expand its prevention efforts in order to be more effective across its diverse community.

### Recommendation 1.1

***Develop a comprehensive sexual assault prevention plan that fully incorporates risk and protective factors and metrics.***

**Rationale:** Most organizations focus on training as the most critical component of their sexual assault prevention program. While certainly critical, limiting prevention programs to training alone does not allow for a more comprehensive approach to addressing multiple other factors that can play a role in preventing sexual assault. While the Peace Corps has an extensive training program and other prevention elements in place, there is no overarching prevention plan that relates the various initiatives by audience and desired outcome.

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps should develop a multifaceted sexual assault prevention plan that reflects a variety of risk and protective factors and incorporates metrics to allow for the tracking of progress. The Agency should conduct a systematic review of existing plans used by other organizations as well as those endorsed by leaders in the public health community, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The plan should have policies, prevention programs, and initiatives that are accessible, realistic, and actionable, and should account for every level of activity within the Agency, both at home and abroad. The plan should address social norms and cultural practices that contribute to pre-existing stigmas and misperceptions relating to sexual violence. SAAC members are available to assist the Peace Corps in the development process, with the priority of identifying and supporting primary prevention efforts.

To address "training fatigue," the plan should incorporate social diffusion and instructional communication techniques that have been demonstrated to be more effective at creating behavior change than single-setting, individually focused training and outreach methods. In order to facilitate implementation, the plan should have a detailed timeline reflecting activities that can be implemented in the near, medium, and long term. Metrics should be woven into the plan to help identify areas of success or additional focus in connection with organizational Theory of Change (See Section 5.3.).

### Recommendation 1.2

***Develop clear and reliable metrics for prevalence and reporting.***

**Rationale:** An effective prevention effort will require detailed knowledge of the impact of the program. This includes being aware of the formal reports that are fully addressed by Peace Corps staff. However, those formal reports tell only part of the story because some victims may choose to not report. To be effective, the Agency needs to track both the formal reports as well as the overall prevalence of the crime (whether reported or not). Understanding the prevalence rate can be a significant aid in determining if the right climate exists to support sexual assault victims. If only a small portion of assaults are reported, then

that could be indicative of many different situations, such as a negative climate within the organization or lack of understanding of what constitutes an assault.

**Recommendation:** The Agency currently has efforts underway to gain a better understanding of the prevalence of this crime as well as how to consistently capture reporting. The organization should continue to develop these metrics in such a way that they can be reliably used to depict to external and internal audiences where the program stands. The Peace Corps could turn to many of its federal partners that have developed similar metrics that have stood the test of extensive external scrutiny. Having these reliable statistics is key to prevention because they can indicate specific areas of focus. Further, being able to refer to those statistics will allow greater control of the messaging.

## VICTIM CARE

The Sexual Assault Advisory Council created the Victim Care Working Group in the spring of 2016 to focus on the effectiveness of current systems and services provided to Volunteers in the aftermath of a sexual assault. The Peace Corps has made many commendable improvements since the introduction of the Kate Puzey Act by implementing new programs, policies, and procedures; however, the committee has identified opportunities for refining the role of Victim Advocates, incorporating tools to enhance the response to Volunteers, and expanding care to secondary victims. The execution of the recommendations below will help to ensure a more fluid and cohesive approach to Volunteers who are sexually assaulted while serving in the Peace Corps.

### Recommendation 2.1

***Enhance the coordinated response to Volunteers post-sexual assault by refining the role of the Victim Advocate while enhancing the tools utilized to provide ongoing and comprehensive care.***

**Rationale:** During conversations with staff and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, the SAAC identified opportunities for enhancing the role of the Office of Victim Advocacy and refining the purpose of the Victim Advocates. The ultimate vision is to utilize the Victim Advocate as a “go-to” person for the Volunteer; that is, the Advocates should be engaged at a heightened level to provide continuity of care for Volunteers. Clearly defined roles for the Victim Advocates will have a profound effect on their ability to better serve the Volunteer by ensuring that a relationship is established early and comprehensive case management services are rendered throughout the process. Clearly defined roles can be expected to significantly reduce the impact of the crime and aid the Volunteer in recovery.

Further, case management plays a key role in ensuring comprehensive victim care. Recognizing this need, the Peace Corps launched in winter 2015 a global crime case management system that includes extensive case management records for all staff, including Victim Advocates. There have been nearly 15 trainings to post and Headquarters designated staff and multiple communications to socialize and implement this large-scale case management initiative.

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps currently has articulated Victim Advocate roles and a case management system. However, a review of the current Victim Advocate Job Description revealed gaps in specific roles and responsibilities routinely found in similar position descriptions. Expanding the job description to better articulate these roles and responsibilities, including critical services, will aid in defining best practices and assuring continuity of care for those served. Discussions with Peace Corps staff clarified their intent to implement additional case management tools to ensure streamlined and comprehensive advocacy services. The Council encourages this initiative and will provide examples and guidance throughout the implementation process. The Committee also identified a gap to be bridged between resources within the Peace Corps and potential external partnerships.

Several clear action steps emerged in discussions with Peace Corps staff and external experts:

1. Amend the Victim Advocate Job Description -- Separate “Support Services and Functions Planning and Coordination and Case Management” into isolated categories and include specific core services that may be provided, as appropriate, to the Volunteer post-sexual assault. (See box below for a list of examples of core services and duties which might be included.)
2. Evaluate examples and create case management forms that will enhance the services provided to the Volunteer by the Advocates.

3. Collaborate with local private or public sector entities that provide services to victims of sexual assault; participate in external task forces and coalitions, particularly Sexual Assault Response Teams where they exist. Establish relationships with external partners such as therapists, local rape crisis programs, hospitals, etc. Establish protocols with local partners to enhance services to crime victims.

### VICTIM ADVOCATE SERVICES AND DUTIES

*The following should be considered for inclusion in the Victim Advocate position description:*

- a) Conduct assessment of victim's immediate needs, beyond threat assessment.
- b) Create customized, comprehensive case plan to encourage victim's progress.
- c) Complete safety plan relative to victim's needs.
- d) Ensure victim's voice is heard at all crucial stages throughout post-assault process.
- e) Coordinate counseling; facilitate access to counseling (beyond referral to FECA), including completion of necessary forms.
- f) Serve as liaison for coordinated response; facilitate access to referrals in case plan.
- g) Provide regular and frequent follow-up contact with victim to show support, encourage follow-through with victim's case plan, and reiterate commitment to recovery.
- h) Educate victim on criminal justice system and keep informed throughout process.
- i) Provide specific core services to secondary victims.
- j) Assist victim with financial resources; use Crime Victim Compensation Program through Office of Victims of Crime. (<https://www.ncjrs.gov>)
- k) Complete all data entry into CARS.
- l) Be familiar with and keep current resource lists used by Advocates so all available options are offered to victims.
- m) Represent Peace Corps on task forces and coalitions at local level; participate on Sexual Assault Response Teams.

## Recommendation 2.2

### *Provide services for secondary victims of sexual assault.*

**Rationale:** The fact that family members, domestic partners, co-workers, and friends of sexual assault victims are significantly impacted by their loved one's victimization is well documented.<sup>4</sup> While often overlooked, these "secondary victims" are affected by the trauma and can experience reactions similar to those of an actual assault victim, such as emotional distress, physical responses, and financial hardship, despite not being personally victimized.

In addition to being committed to supporting all victims—either primary or secondary victims—it is important to recognize the crucial role secondary victims can play in the healing process of the primary victim. A friend, family member, etc., are often the ones to whom a victim turns when in need of

<sup>4</sup> Ahrens, C. E., and R. Campbell. "Assisting rape victims as they recover from rape: The impact on friends," Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15(9) (2000): Pages 959–986.

Daane, D. M. "The ripple effects: Secondary sexual assault survivors." In F. P. Reddington and B. W. Kreisel, Eds., Sexual Assault: The Victims, the Perpetrators and the Criminal Justice System. (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2005): Pages 113–131.

support.<sup>5</sup> Without help and advocacy, these support people often do not have the tools and resources they need.

**Recommendation:** As such, it is crucial to offer core services or resources to address those needs. There are many resources online with regard to the necessity of serving secondary victims and the SAAC can provide guidance upon request.

The Council suggests a series of action steps to facilitate the implementation of this recommendation. The first step would be to identify appropriate avenues to provide services for secondary victims and establish a policy mandating core services be offered and/or provided by the Victim Advocate. Examples may include the following:

- Offer advocacy, support, and validation.
- Provide information and referrals, including counseling and support groups.
- Facilitate housing post-medevac to include one support person/secondary victim.

The Council recommends that the Peace Corps promote these additional services by incorporating the new policy and procedures on core services into ongoing training with staff.

### **Recommendation 2.3**

***Amend hotel contract to allow for one designated support person/secondary victim to stay with the Volunteer in a hotel post-medevac.***

**Rationale:** The current procedure for a Volunteer returning to Washington, D.C., for a medevac is to potentially share a hotel room with another Volunteer and does not provide for accommodations for a designated support person. It is best practice to give a sexual assault victim a healthy, safe, and supportive environment in the aftermath of the crime, as is practiced by the Department of Justice Office of Victims of Crime.<sup>6</sup> Currently, the medevac hotel contract is not scoped to allow non-Peace Corps staff accompaniment (i.e., a friend or family member) to stay in the room with a medevacked Volunteer.

**Recommendation:** To facilitate the healing process, the victimized Volunteer should have the option of having a significant other, family member, or friend stay at the hotel for a pre-determined length of time to provide support. Expenses for that support person should be paid by the Peace Corps in keeping with the expense payment provided to the victim. While funding is always a challenge, the scope of the need seems manageable. As illustration, in Fiscal Year 2015, a total of 11 victim Volunteers were medevacked and stayed in Washington, D.C., a number which should not have a substantial financial impact on the Peace Corps.

The Council suggests a series of action steps to facilitate the implementation of this recommendation. The Peace Corps should amend the contract with the hotel to allow one designated support person to stay overnight with the Volunteer for a pre-determined amount of time, in a private room. To ensure clarity for

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime, "Achieving Excellence: Model Standards for Serving Victims and Survivors of Crime." This August 2016 guide is a comprehensive online resource for best practices when serving crime victims, to include guidance on assessment, case management, victim advocate roles and responsibilities, services to secondary victims, and approaches to providing a physically and emotionally safe environment so the victim can begin to heal. (<http://www.ovc.gov/model-standards/index.html>)



all involved, the Peace Corps should establish in policy with specific guidelines to define “support person” and determine an appropriate length of time for the support person to stay with the Volunteer. A minimum number of days should be clearly stated so this is not implemented on an ad hoc basis, which could be subject to interpretation. To ensure funds are available for this type of support, the Peace Corps budgeting process should set aside funds each year as contingency, based on an estimate from the prior year's experiences. All issues would need to be reviewed by Peace Corps’ legal counsel to address any liability issues and likely lead to changes made to the Peace Corps policy covering Staff Travel Procedures.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Under the policy covering Staff Travel Procedures (MS 812 section 25.9) in the event of an extremely serious injury, illness, incapacitation, or severe trauma, the Peace Corps may provide transportation and per diem allowances for two immediate family members of Volunteers to travel to post or a medical facility. The Associate Director, Office of Health Services, must provide a recommendation that the circumstances warrant family members to travel. The Deputy Director or the Chief of Staff are the final approving officials for all Invitational Travel. The Peace Corps Director or the Director's designee may authorize additional family members or other persons not specifically covered in this paragraph at the Director's discretion when circumstances warrant additional transportation at government expense in furtherance of the Peace Corps Act.

## TRAINING

The task of influencing behavior and changing an organization's culture begins first and foremost with training. In the area of the Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault, there are several aspects of this unique offense that must be targeted to achieve this objective. The focus of most prevention training today has shifted from that which previously addressed actions potential victims could take to minimize their risk of being assaulted. Instead, leaders seeking to prevent sexual assault in their organizations are adopting training that targets the main perpetrators of this crime by dispelling myths, empowering bystanders to take action, and systematically dismantling any culture where sexual violence is tolerated.

With regard to the prevention or mitigation of sexual assault of Peace Corps Volunteers, the Peace Corps is uniquely limited, as this organization has little to no authority or influence over the majority of offenders who commit these crimes against Volunteers. The majority of Volunteers who make a Standard Report of a sex crime report the offender as a host-country national. As such, the Peace Corps has focused its attention on educating Volunteers in Risk Mitigation.

In 2016, the Peace Corps developed a staff Risk-Mitigation training that is to be delivered to all Peace Corps posts by October 2016. These trainings are customized so that staff can analyze crime data in each post and then develop country-specific risk-mitigation plans.

The Peace Corps also conducts training for host families in 61 countries. This training is designed to acquaint the host family with American cultural norms and expectations. This is an admirable start, but there may be opportunities to expand this training to others in the host community.

While not relevant for all Peace Corps staff and Volunteers, the personnel responsible for responding to a report of a completed sexual assault must be trained to perform their functions professionally, competently, and sensitively. This victim-centered training has historically been the focus of the Council's training committee, and has indeed grown and evolved to become a sound program that reflects current industry standards with regard to content and best practices for delivery and principles of effective adult learning.

While the Peace Corps has made significant progress in its training efforts, those efforts, like their policies and procedures, have been implemented for several years and now need to be analyzed for their efficacy and compliance. Evaluating the training efficacy becomes impossible when it cannot be reliably assigned and tracked for all who require it. In order to ensure all key participants in the response to sexual assault receive and successfully accomplish the training they must have to perform their crucial roles, the Peace Corps must obtain a suitable training- management database.

### Recommendation 3.1

***Require a new Learning Management System that is both compatible with existing digital training program formats and is capable of integrating with Human Resources databases.***

**Rationale:** The Peace Corps has been working for two years to identify a learning management system capable of meeting the very specific needs of this unique organization. The pool of potential products capable of meeting Peace Corps needs is extremely limited because of its requirements as a federal agency. The Peace Corps is currently utilizing a Moodle-based learning management system in two platforms; one for staff, and one for Volunteers. The staff system is incapable of communicating with

Human Resources databases, which prevents the Peace Corps from efficiently identifying who requires training and who has completed it. In fact, to date, staff members are manually tracking the training requirements, delinquencies, and accomplishments of more than 3,000 people manually. Not only is this time-consuming work, it is extremely vulnerable to human error. Because the learning management system does not communicate with the Human Resources database, out-going staff members are not removed from the system that tracks completion of training requirements; this can produce erroneous reports of training-requirement deficiencies. This misinformation can mislead program managers at Peace Corps headquarters who rely on this data as a form of feedback concerning training compliance and the efficacy of the training material.<sup>8</sup>

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps should receive sufficient funding to purchase an online learning management system capable of tracking varying training requirements of staff and Volunteers, capable of interfacing with current Human Resources databases, and capable of supporting Moodle-based training program material and records. The Peace Corps should conduct research into existing products used by similar government organizations and obtain cost estimates for these systems. The Peace Corps should draft a clear and comprehensive statement of work and launch the RFP. Congress should fund this acquisition.

## Recommendation 3.2

*Sustain efforts to provide foundational and refresher training to Designated Post Staff on an annual basis.*

**Rationale:** The Training Section Committee examined the training material delivered to Designated Staff as dictated in the 2016 Training Plan. Designated staff are defined as those members who play a key role in the prevention and response to sexual assault, and include Medical Officers, Safety and Security Managers, and Sexual Assault Response Liaisons. Both the content and the methods of delivery were examined to ascertain whether they met the industry standard for the response to sexual assault and for adherence to principles of adult learning.

The 2016 Training Plan for Designated Staff is noteworthy in that it has two blocks of foundational awareness instruction that ensures participants in this process operate from a uniform understanding of victim-centeredness and are knowledgeable of how their portion of the response relates to and synchronizes with those of other participants. The plan also identifies office-specific requirements tailored to the unique training needs of each designated staff office. For example, Peace Corps medical officers are assigned mentors and are personally guided through their training to obtain an initial certification. The Sexual Assault Liaisons, however are now provided five webinar training sessions which help ensure they stay current in the skills needed to perform this Volunteer duty, and are in a constant state of readiness to respond to a victim in need. The plan further outlines annual refresher training requirements, which rotate every other year between in-person and online refresher training. Not only does this rotation appeal to adult learners who value efficiency, the use of technology, and autonomous training, it is also financially responsible. In 2016, in each country Peace Corps offered this

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<sup>8</sup> Previous attempts to acquire a new learning management system were not successful, in part, because of the incompatibility between Moodle and most commercially available and federally sanctioned learning management systems. The Peace Corps' existing computer-based training modules were constructed using a Moodle-based platform; this program is not compatible with many of the more cost-efficient learning management systems available today. If the Peace Corps is directed to purchase a learning management systems that is not compatible with Moodle, it will have to re-accomplish every one of its computer-based training programs; this will consume resources in the form of staff work hours, time, and content development.

live, new, multilevel sexual assault staff refresher training to all post staff as well as detailed training to designated staff.

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps should sustain its use of the 2016 Training Plan for Designated Staff and utilize the feedback generated from those sessions to further refine the content of the training to ensure it remains relevant, accurate, and useful.

### Recommendation 3.3

*Sustain efforts to train a Peer Support Network of Volunteers capable of providing support to Volunteers experiencing difficulty coping with duty-associated stressors.*

**Rationale:** It has long been understood that human beings naturally feel a sense of membership in groups with whom they identify, and that groups may be based upon a variety of factors: familial connections, language, physical appearance, nationality, or creed, to name a few. It is also understood that members within these groups feel a connection with one another, and are therefore much more likely to trust those within the group with their private thoughts and vulnerabilities. Peace Corps Volunteers are a very connected group of people who care about one another and can offer personal understanding and genuine empathy for the unique struggles a Volunteer may experience during his or her tour of duty.

Peer Support Networks (PSNs) have existed in Peace Corps countries intermittently over the last three decades. In 2016, the Peace Corps took steps to standardize the PSN Program. Currently, it is optional for a Peace Corps post to have a PSN, and as of October 2016, 41 of 61 countries currently have PSN programs. Volunteer “Peer Supporters” receive two days of training, whether in person or via Skype, and participate when possible<sup>9</sup> in quarterly coaching sessions with the Counseling and Outreach Unit.

**Recommendation:** The content of the training appears rooted in sound theory and current best practices. The feedback from those using the Peer Network is positive and appears to validate the need for this program. However, this is once again an initiative that is unfunded and the cost of managing another program and providing additional training to Peer Volunteers will need to be assessed. The Peace Corps should stay abreast of ongoing developments in the realm of law enforcement where such organizations are just recently recognizing the need for peer support and crisis intervention. The increasing demand for training and management of these peer teams has produced a number of commercially available products that may meet Peace Corps’ needs as well. As such, Internet-based peer support training, coaching, debriefing, and record-keeping services currently available may prove a more cost-effective solution moving forward.

The Peace Corps should sustain its efforts to start and support Peer Support Networks at all posts, train its Volunteers to respond to others within their group for Volunteer support as needed, and research the most cost-effective mechanism to manage this vital program. Exceptions to the full implementation of this program should be carefully reviewed for opportunities to facilitate adoption as soon as possible. Congress should provide additional funding to assist in sustaining this initiative.

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<sup>9</sup> It should not be expected that everyone can attend, as the Volunteers have other duties. Many are likely to have an extensive network of peers and could not possibly get everyone together at the same time. Recognizing this, the Peace Corps has set up these counseling sessions on a regular schedule so that peers can decide on their own if they have the need and time to join the discussions.

**Recommendation 3.4**

***Create a core “Introduction to American Culture” training program adaptable to fit specific sites to better educate host communities and consequently reduce the occurrence of sexual assault.***

**Rationale:** The Peace Corps requires that each post provide customized training for families selected to host Peace Corps Volunteers. This training occurs in the majority of its country programs. (The major exceptions are the few countries where Volunteers do not have host families.) Host-family training helps set an expectation for the host family so they better understand American culture, morals, laws, and behaviors. The training mirrors that given to the Volunteers to help them know what to expect with their host family and the culture into which they are about to be submerged. This training has definitely served its purpose in laying a solid foundation for a productive relationship between the Volunteer and his or her host family.

There is not, however, any requirement for the host family to share this knowledge with others in their communities. While some host families elect to provide additional training to their communities, others do not. The Peace Corps has contributed training material for host families to use, but this is not formalized or standardized.

**Recommendation:** The Council recommends creating a uniform training program that focuses on key learning objectives to acquaint host communities with information regarding the Peace Corps’ expectations for Volunteer safety and security, and provides cultural awareness training for the communities receiving the Volunteer. The Peace Corp should further consider making this host-family community-training initiative a requirement of any family volunteering for host duty.

The Council believes this to be the Peace Corps’ only training opportunity to reach potential offenders and bystanders before a sexual assault occurs in the community. For this reason, it would be a wise expenditure of resources to construct an easy-to-use template for training that can be provided to host families. The Peace Corps may also consider assigning a training “coach” to help host families customize the training to fit their specific communities.

## COMMUNICATIONS

While the Peace Corps has made significant internal progress in addressing sexual assault prevention and response with new policies and resources, many outside the Agency are unaware of that progress. That lack of education can present many challenges. Audiences may not have the context to understand or question news stories on the topic. There may be unnecessary calls for additional efforts in areas where progress has already been made. Further, the need for resources to support program expansion can potentially be more readily accepted and advanced if audiences are better informed on what is actually underway and where shortfalls exist. Finally, having numerous audiences who are well informed about Agency efforts can only be beneficial in terms of Volunteer recruitment, employee retention and a number of other areas. To address this need, the Agency should undertake several different key initiatives related to communicating its efforts on sexual assault prevention and response.

### Recommendation 4.1

*Create a robust integrated strategic communications plan designed to facilitate the Agency's sexual assault prevention and response efforts.*

**Rationale:** The development and implementation of a robust strategic communications plan can have numerous benefits to any organization. Most importantly, it allows the organization to better manage how all key audiences understand and react to expected and unexpected developments. As with any issue or situation, not having a plan for how it wants to be able to operate in the future can spell disaster, which is the key reason most organizations have spent time and money developing comprehensive strategic plans to guide operations.

Unfortunately, many organizations have not taken the additional steps needed to create a thorough communications plan that will advance the organization's short- and long-term goals. As illustration, the equivalent in the private sector would be providing extensive funding for research and development of a new product line, but not spending funds on a corresponding communications plan which readies the customer base for this new product. There are numerous examples throughout the federal government of new programs being launched that did not experience desired results. A comprehensive communications plan addresses the right audience(s), raises awareness of the issue or product using consistent and deliberate messaging, and builds in a proactive media publicity plan.

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps should develop and implement a robust integrated communications plan to facilitate its efforts to address sexual assault prevention and response. The Agency has made numerous and significant advances in this critical area, but that progress has largely gone unnoticed by its key audiences. As a result of this gap in the information flow, concerned constituent groups continue to call for broader efforts to address these incidents. Without significant information about what is being done about this issue, criticisms are unlikely to drop off. While criticism can lead to program improvements, it is far more ideal to have a proactive and organized effort. A communications plan puts the power in the hands of the Agency—allowing Peace Corps to set the tone, rather than the public or the media. Further, with no goodwill built up on what has been done, key audiences have no or a limited context with which to understand the next sexual-assault-related crisis that will inevitably occur.

A communications plan should have both an internal and external focus. As the Agency rolls out numerous new initiatives to address sexual assault, it is not sufficient to simply offer the new resource or opportunity. As illustration, a year ago a new policy was put in place allowing Volunteers to ask for two weeks of leave to return home, which presumably could be used to support a victim of sexual assault. A



total of 41 Volunteers have asked for this respite leave and 26 requests were granted. A review of those denied the leave suggests a lack of understanding of the policy guidelines, which in turn creates an opportunity for expanded communications on this critical benefit.

Likewise, the Council was told that the new hotline—PC SAVES Helpline—run by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) has had lower than expected usage. Again, this is a very promising resource for Volunteers, but if lack of awareness is a reason for low usage, than that should be addressed. Since the Helpline was launched on June 1, 2015; the Helpline staff has supported 71 telephone phone calls and 22 online chats. Considering the 16 months since it was launched (June 2015–September 2016), that usage averages to just more than four calls a month and slightly more than one online chat per month. While it is difficult to be specific on desired usage rates, the equivalent of one phone call a week does not seem like an effective use of resources. Instead, a comprehensive communications plan should identify key communities of potential users and build support.

Further, all Agency platforms should be supporting this new program, but the most outwardly facing resource—the Agency's website—offers an article from 2011 on the Peace Corps' partnership with the RAINN as the most current link when "sexual assault hotline" is typed into the search box. (Users were able to find the website, as it has been visited 694 times and the mobile app has been downloaded on 184 devices.) but external audiences are not aware of these efforts. By comparison, the DoD's Safe Helpline, a similar hotline for sexual assault victims, is featured on numerous externally facing websites.

The external focus should encompass targeted efforts to reach organizations and individuals who can promote the message on the progress made by the Peace Corps on this issue, as well as provide insights into potential additional policies and services. These third-party influencers (e.g., End Violence Against Women International and National Organization for Victim Advocacy) can be instrumental in reaching the widest range of audiences and ensuring that the message-messenger-delivery techniques are appropriately aligned.

The external focus should encompass targeted efforts to reach organizations and individuals who can carry the message on the progress made by the Peace Corps on this issue, as well as provide insights into potential additional policies and services. These third-party influencers ( e.g., End Violence Against Women, National Organization of Victim Advocates, Department of Justice) can be instrumental in reaching the widest range of audiences and ensuring that the message-messenger-delivery techniques are appropriately aligned.

The first step in this effort would be to conduct a communications audit to determine where and to whom sexual assault messages are now being conveyed, and if possible, determine the effectiveness of those efforts. Those findings would then feed into the development of a comprehensive communications plan, which should have a well-articulated goal, objectives (with associated audiences, impact, and time frame), and tactics. Given the demographic of the current and potential Volunteer pool, social media should be incorporated as a key component of this plan.

#### **Recommendation 4.2**

***Hire a full-time (non political) senior-level strategic communications manager to facilitate internal and external communications and advance progress on sexual assault prevention and response.***

**Rationale:** Increasingly, organizations in both the public and private sectors are seeing the benefits of having senior-level experienced strategic communications counsel serve as one of the key inner circle advisers to organization leadership. In this day of fast-changing news cycles, few organizations can afford

to not take advantage of opportunities to create positive news, and at the same time, be poised to head off potentially negative situations or react swiftly and consistently in a crisis situation.

Most organizations have in-house or contracted media teams, but those individuals are typically not in a position that reports directly to senior leadership. It is critical to incorporate someone who will be a regular participant in senior-level discussions. However, media relations are just one facet of an integrated strategic communications effort. Because of a lack of access and expertise, such organizations are not able to fully benefit from informed insights that can help weave together systemwide plans and help ensure consistent messaging and delivery. In addition, a senior-level strategic communications professional is able to directly address leadership and offer unfiltered opinions on how proposed plans or messaging may align with the organization's overall goals.

Finally, while leadership within organizations often change on a regular basis, a robust strategic communications team can serve a key role in continuity planning and implementation for both internal and external audiences. A smooth transition of leadership can benefit all audiences because there is less disruption. A newly arrived leader benefits from immediate access to experienced internal counsel on key issues, and at the same time, the organization can continue to move forward on agreed-upon plans which had already been set in motion.

**Recommendation:** Although the Peace Corps has an internal media relations team, the recommendation is to hire a senior-level strategic communications expert. This individual should not be a political appointee; rather, this individual should be seen as an enduring resource for current and future agency leaders. Further, the individual should oversee a comprehensive, integrated, strategic communications effort in which media relations is just one of the moving parts. That effort should involve a multilayered media plan that weaves together multiple audiences and varied messaging, all supported by a robust evaluation approach.

This consistent, senior-level resource becomes especially important in addressing topics such as sexual assault. The complexity of the sexual assault topic typically leads organizations to be risk adverse and operate in reaction mode rather than a forward-leaning one, in an effort to create an informed and supportive dialogue. The Peace Corps has made numerous and significant advancements in addressing sexual assault, and those accomplishments should be a key part of how the organization proactively presents itself. While steps to more broadly communicate those accomplishments should be laid out in an integrated strategic communication plan, that effort would need a senior-level staff member to oversee its implementation across the breadth of the agency, collaborate with legislative affairs, Volunteer recruitment, etc., and to communicate with outside audiences.

Numerous examples exist within both the public and private sectors in which senior-level strategic communications experts play a critical role in organization development. In all those examples, two of the keys to success are skill set and access. Examples of position descriptions for "strategic communications" exist within the federal hiring network. Several nonprofit organizations, such as the Public Relations Society of America, could serve as a resource to clarify the desired skill set. Equally important is the reporting chain for this individual, because having direct access and involvement with other senior leaders is a critical component of success.

**Recommendation 4.3*****Publish a regular public report on the Peace Corps' efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assault.***

**Rationale:** A key factor in a successful communications program is delivering consistent messages to key audiences. That focus allows for much more useful discussion on a topic, as opposed to each audience pursuing unique pieces of information about an organization. This is in no way a means to limit discussion, but instead ensures that interested parties are using the same baseline data for their comments. This "one set of data" or one-focused message concept is extremely important when trying to demonstrate progress on an issue. As illustration, the White House "It's On Us" campaign was solely focused on educating all audiences on the importance of consent.

Further, a report on organizational progress in a challenging or delicate topic area sends a clear signal of transparency. If the report highlights what is working, what did not work, and what needs to change, then audiences get a strong sense that the organization is taking a clear, unfiltered look at the situation.

Finally, a report published on a regular basis (The Council recommends an annual publication.) will serve as a historical record of activity for both internal and external audiences. It becomes a key tool in organizational accountability.

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps should develop and publicize a report that highlights the Agency's activities in addressing sexual assault prevention and response in order to inform a wide range of audiences on its efforts and remaining challenges. The Agency does not currently have a comprehensive document highlighting statistics on sexual assaults, locations, outcomes, etc., that is available to the public. In addition, such a report could address advances in training, victim care, and other responses that demonstrate Agency commitment to this critical issue.

In contrast to being risk-averse to publicizing such statistics, presenting the data allows the organization to continue to be a trusted leader in this field. As it stands now, it would be hard to imagine that any of the Agency's key audiences have a clear understanding of what the Agency has done on this issue—or has left to be done. Further, if the Agency does not publicize its statistics on numbers of reports and other data points, then each audience is left to guess at numbers, which in turn greatly complicates the implementation of an effective communications plan.

Numerous examples of such reports exist throughout the federal government. For example, the Department of Defense is mandated to prepare such an annual report on sexual assault covering all Service members as well as Military Academies. Although a significant undertaking, those reports have helped give internal and external audiences a single point of focus on this issue.

## ASSESSMENT

The Kate Puzey Act mandates multiple monitoring and evaluation (M&E) components (Section 8E), including the establishment of goals, metrics, and M&E plans for all Peace Corps programs that incorporate best practices from monitoring and evaluation studies and analyses as well as annually conducting a confidential survey of Volunteers regarding the effectiveness of Peace Corps programs and staff and the safety of Volunteers.

The Peace Corps has made excellent progress in developing and implementing a comprehensive M&E program and instituting many of the M&E recommendations that were developed last year, despite some considerable challenges and insufficient resources. Some of Peace Corps' particular successes include the development of the new case management system that will allow much of the data currently contained in multiple unlinked systems to be contained in one system; the collection and use of country-specific data to assess modifiable community, structural, and programmatic risk factors for sexual assault in some countries; and the successful collection and analysis of 24 months of data from the Security Incident Questionnaire.

### Recommendation 5.1

***Grant designated Peace Corps staff access to data containing personally identifiable information.***

**Rationale:** The ability of M&E to truly measure effect depends on the establishment of valid baseline data and the measurement of changes in that data over time. Unfortunately, the Peace Corps has not been able to establish baseline Volunteer comprehensive data across the support delivery offices due to stringent regulations that do not allow M&E staff to access data with personally identifiable information (PII). Without access to PII, the Peace Corps must count every event, service, security concern, or problem from across different programs, countries, and systems as individual events (event-based data), despite the fact that many of them may be duplicate entries or that many of them are linked to the same person. Event-based data results in an inflation of data that does not accurately reflect what is occurring at the level of the Volunteer and limits the Peace Corps' understanding of what support services, in what dose, leads to greater satisfaction and a successful completion of service.

**Recommendation:** M&E staff should be allowed to develop de-identified databases with unique ID numbers that can link data from the same person across programs, countries, and systems. A de-identified database will allow Peace Corps to transform less useful event-based data into more accurate person-based data and perform true evaluations of the Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response Program.

PII may be shared with employees if recipient need for the information is related to an individual's official duties. The provisions in the Privacy Act of 1974, the foundation of U.S. public sector privacy law that applies to federal agencies, includes the ability to disclose PII data to those who need access to perform authorized work. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Privacy Rule was enacted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in 2000 to set national standards for protecting the privacy of health information (PHI), while balancing individual needs with those of society. DHHS recognized the importance of sharing PHI to accomplish essential public health objectives and activities such as program operations, public health surveillance, and program evaluation. Therefore, the Privacy Rule expressly permits PHI to be shared for specified public health purposes.

In terms of challenges that M&E faces, security and confidentiality training and protocols and nondisclosure and rules of behavior agreements must be adapted and/or created. M&E staff need only temporary access to data with PII to create de-identified databases that link data across systems using unique IDs. Moving forward, M&E staff should develop a comprehensive plan for assigning unique IDs to Volunteer data so that access to PII is no longer needed.

## Recommendation 5.2

***Determine what epidemiological data is available to identify modifiable community, structural, and programmatic characteristics that place Volunteers at increased risk of sexual assault.***

**Rationale:** Successful M&E programs collect data that is used to directly inform their activities and programs. Effective sexual assault prevention strategies should address multiple levels of influence for sexual assault victimization and perpetration, including community-level, structural, and programmatic (non-individual) risk factors.

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps should continue to assess what country- or region-specific factors place Volunteers at higher risk of sexual assault, including factors such as serving in a new site versus an established site, the number of prior Volunteers at site, characteristics of Volunteers' living facilities (walls/doors), presence/characteristics of a courtyard, the distance to latrine or water source, the presence of/characteristics of Volunteer host families, the presence of/characteristics of Volunteers' counterparts, the distance to closest neighbor, and Volunteers' length of service and type of work. Results of these analyses can then be used to better target prevention and risk-reduction activities.

Some types of data might be difficult to obtain from sites. The large number of countries to be included is challenging. Identified strategies might not be appropriate for all countries. Given the large number of regions/countries, the Peace Corps should gradually phase in this recommendation.

## Recommendation 5.3

***Continue working toward integrating Risk-Reduction and Response Logic Models into unified and coherent "Theory of Change" approaches for the sexual assault prevention and response program.***

**Rationale:** As in many organizations, the Theories of Change (TOC) guide the monitoring and evaluation work of Peace Corps Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response Program. The Peace Corps has developed and currently utilizes two TOCs for its Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response work: one for Risk-Reduction and another for Response. While the current Risk-Reduction TOC maps the connections between challenges, requirements, strategies, interventions, expected results, and assumptions, it lacks solid indicators and an implementation plan. Conversely, while the current Response TOC has a solid implementation plan with mapped out indicators, metrics, and data sources, it lacks a fully realized logic model.

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps should consolidate the Risk-Reduction and Response Theories of Change into one single Theory of Change (TOC). The TOC should include prioritized measurement areas based upon existing and preliminary data as well as expected/desired outcomes. The effort should contain a consolidated measurement and evaluation plan with explicit strategy informed by "Peace Corps' Spectrum of Prevention: A Strategy to Reduce Risk of Sexual Assaults Against Volunteers." The desired end point is that the Peace Corps would have a comprehensive Theory of Change that both guides its

Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response program and provides clear pathways to monitoring and evaluation of this program. All aspects of the program would be mapped onto the Theory of Change and, if prioritized, have the potential to be monitored and evaluated.

Consideration should be given to streamlining and reducing the number of constructs and indicators that are prioritized through data-driven decision making, based upon existing and preliminary data and qualitative exploration. It would be important to have the underlying assumptions mapped onto it, particularly where both theory failure or success have already presented themselves, for the purposes of exploring the influence of assumptions on evaluation results. If need be, the effort should include qualitative methods and analysis with relevant groups and stakeholders to determine unaddressed assumptions and factors.

Key staff involvement is an important component of this effort. When using participatory methods, participants may need an introductory informational or training session on theories of change or logic models and their purposes. Outcomes should be developed that are feasible to measure. The Peace Corps has already concurred with this recommendation and is committed to continuing its implementation into FY17. In 2016, the Peace Corps researched prevention best practices and conducted a data analysis of the characteristics that place Volunteers at increased risk of sexual assault. The next steps (including assembling the appropriate team to develop both the strategy and TOC) will be influenced by leadership transitions at Peace Corps. Those efforts will continue into FY17.

## Recommendation 5.4

### *Become involved in federal agency efforts to collect data on sexual assault.*

**Rationale:** Increasingly, agencies across the federal government are realizing the importance of addressing the issue of sexual assault within their organizations. Agencies such as the Department of State and Defense have been focused on this issue for several years; however, other federal agencies—such as the National Park Service and Department of Homeland Security—are reaching out to those established programs to gather information about what programs might be needed and the challenges that might lie ahead.

A key part of this collaboration is the establishment of common terms and data in order to ensure that all speak from the same point of reference. To understand what is under way in terms of this data collaboration, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report in August 2016 which looked at two questions:

1. What federal efforts are under way to collect data on sexual violence, and how, if at all, do these efforts differ?
2. How do any differences across the data collection efforts affect the understanding of sexual violence, and to what extent are federal agencies addressing any challenges posed by the differences?

The GAO report, titled “Violence Data: Actions Needed to Improve Clarity and Address Differences Across Federal Data Collection Efforts,”<sup>10</sup> detailed a review involving four large federal agencies

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<sup>10</sup> “Sexual Violence Data: Actions Needed to Improve Clarity and Address Differences Across Federal Data Collection Efforts,” GAO-16-546: Published: Jul 19, 2016. Publicly Released: Aug 18, 2016 (<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-546>)



(Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice) as well as academic literature and subject matter experts such as those at CDC. The report concluded that more interagency collaboration on this issue needs to occur and encouraged the Office of Management and Budget to establish a working group to facilitate that collaboration.

**Recommendation:** The Peace Corps should become involved in these interagency efforts to better define and collect data that reflects the state of progress relative to sexual assault. Establishing a common frame of reference will help with both internal and external audiences as the Peace Corps seeks to broaden its messaging on the progress it is making on sexual assault prevention and response.

If an interagency working group is developed, the Peace Corps should make every effort to become an integral part of the discussion. The benefit could flow both ways: The Peace Corps' assessment efforts might be informed by what is being done within other agencies. In the other direction, if the Peace Corps is able to advance its efforts to identify risk and protective factors, it could be at the forefront of the field and help inform other agencies. In addition to assisting assessment efforts, such involvement should become a key strategic communication message because it conveys the Agency's commitment to draw on insights and expertise from across the federal government in order to address its shared challenges.

Finally, while this interagency group is being formed, the Peace Corps could certainly proactively reach out to other major federal partners one-on-one to lay out the broad concepts of the Peace Corps' program. Many of the Council members represent agencies that might be helpful in this discussion, and in some cases (e.g., Department of Defense), the Peace Corps has already reached out to establish that dialogue. Other organizations, such as the CDC, could be very useful partners, especially as the Peace Corps develops a robust prevention plan as recommended earlier (Prevention Section, Recommendation 1.1).

## CONGRESSIONAL INPUT

In addition to recommendations for the Peace Corps as a whole, the Council wants to flag specific and pertinent issues for our Congressional leaders interested in the Peace Corps and its ability to provide comprehensive services to prevent and respond to sexual assault of Volunteers as laid out in the provisions of the Kate Puzey Act. Over the years, the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council has worked closely with the Peace Corps to advance recommendations for improvements in the Peace Corps sexual assault prevention and response programs; however, there are specific challenges that appear to be out of the scope of what the Peace Corps can address within its own purview, and instead should be considerations reviewed by Congress.

### Recommendation 1

***Authorize additional funding to the Peace Corps to foster the implementation and institutionalization of new policies, programs, and training related to sexual assault prevention and response.***

**Rationale:** Since the Kate Puzey Act was passed, the Peace Corps has been drawing on its existing funding allocation to implement an increasingly complex system of programs designed to address the requirements of the Act. The Peace Corps overall budget has not risen sufficiently to address the needs of a global program appropriately staffed and supported. However, the institutionalization of a comprehensive program to address both prevention and response requires significant designated funding to allow for sufficient growth and long-term monitoring and improvement. Examples exist throughout the federal government in which additional funds have been allocated to specifically address sexual assault program needs. At the Department of Defense, for example, each of the budgets of the military services and the Office of the Secretary of Defense have growing allocations specifically associated with their sexual assault prevention and response programs.

**Recommendation:** An increase in budget could have positive impacts across the entire sexual assault prevention and response program. Staffing gaps could be addressed, as well as funds allocated to implementing a variety of pilot programs that might be appropriate to consider. As illustration, no additional funds were provided to address the staffing requirements associated with supporting the Council's efforts. As another example, the Council has made recommendations in the past related to expanding the use of telemedicine. The Peace Corps currently uses a variety of telemedicine techniques (e.g., video teleconferences with counselors), but given the expansion of this approach throughout the medical and care community, there might well be other opportunities to consider. Given additional funding, the Peace Corps might use those funds to conduct a feasibility study to determine whether to expand its telemedicine usage and how that implementation might occur. Several of the recommendations included in this year's Council report call for specific senior-level expertise that would require additional funding to support.

### Recommendation 2

***Allow the Council to determine the approach to be addressed in the Annual Report.***

**Rationale:** In past years, the Council has delivered a unique series of recommendations each year. However, due to the Council's planning cycle, typically the following year, the Council has little opportunity to thoughtfully consider the progress in implementing past recommendations. This has

complicated the Council's role of accountability and oversight, and in some cases, leads to consideration of "new" ideas that may well already be underway.

**Recommendation:** The Council has been told that discussions are under way for the continuation of the Sexual Assault Advisory Council beyond its mandate ending in late 2018. The Council is fully supportive of this continuation and recommends continuing the requirement to present the President and Congress an annual report on its findings. The format of that approach should be driven by the Council allowing Council members to determine if new recommendations are needed, or if the Council should spend its time that year focusing on the Peace Corps response to past recommendations, or a mixture of both. Whether reviewing past work or offering new recommendations, those reviews should also consider proposed timelines for evaluation, implementation, and assessment.

### **Recommendation 3**

***Revise the terms of Council members to allow for longer appointments and varying expertise requirements.***

**Rationale:** Currently, Council members typically serve a two-year term. However, depending on the Council member's familiarity with the Peace Corps, that may not be sufficient time to acclimate to the organization in order to offer substantive and productive recommendations. Another consideration is ensuring that the Council always has seasoned members representing needed disciplines, and recognizing that those disciplines may change over time.

**Recommendation:** To address both concerns, an alternative appointment schedule might be three-year terms for those with subject matter expertise (with staggered start times) and a two-year term for Council members appointed because they are a recently returning Volunteer. The Director should have the option of asking a Council member to extend his/her term one year if that individual has critical expertise related to a new or ongoing Council or Peace Corps initiative.

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## WAY AHEAD

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Since the enactment of the Kate Puzey Act of 2011, the Peace Corps has made significant progress in advancing programs and creating a climate supportive of preventing sexual assault and caring for Volunteers who may become victims. The Sexual Assault Advisory Council first met in 2012, and in just a few short years has seen major developments within the Agency toward addressing this issue. New programs have been created, policies have been written, and specially trained staff have been hired. In many organizations, such changes would have taken—and have taken—much longer to implement. As such, the Peace Corps stands as a model for other organizations seeking to relatively quickly put in place a program to address sexual assault.

The Peace Corps' sexual assault program is starting to shift in predictable ways. Rightfully so, the early focus was on ensuring that policies, programs, and resources were in place to support victims. With those initiatives well under way, efforts are being expanded to formalize prevention practices beyond the mandatory training that seeks to infuse the attitudes that support a climate of prevention (one of dignity and respect) throughout all aspects of Peace Corps operations.

With this evolution, the role of the Council is likely to change as well. Rather than focus solely on identifying gaps and offering recommendations on solutions, future Councils may also work to track the progress of implementation by asking how well this program has been institutionalized. That tracking includes identifying and capturing appropriate metrics and establishing transparent feedback procedures. No doubt new gaps will be identified, but with those, new opportunities for improvement will emerge as well.

As the Peace Corps continues to refine its program, several needs have emerged which are identified in this report. Probably the most critical is the need to ensure that the prevention and response efforts are sufficiently funded and staffed. To date, the Peace Corps has fielded these efforts with no additional funds; however, the process of institutionalizing a global prevention and response program requires expanded funding. Looking ahead, the Council is committed to offering a voice of support in efforts to secure the required financial support to achieve the critical goals of the Kate Puzey Act.

## APPENDIX A: SEXUAL ASSAULT ADVISORY COUNCIL 2015 RECOMMENDATIONS

*As of September 2016*

### Peace Corps Response

The following pages provide a brief update of 2015 Sexual Assault Advisory Council recommendations. In FY16, Peace Corps implemented several significant initiatives related to the Sexual Assault Risk-Reduction and Response Program (SARRR) which have strengthened and/or will strengthen the services and support we provide to victims of sexual assault. These included:

- Designing and delivering new staff training in sexual assault response and risk reduction in 65 countries
- Launching the global CARS case management system (an extensive case management system for the coordination all crimes against Volunteers)
- Delivering training to the 538 users of that case management system
- Compiling and presenting the documentation necessary for the Office of Inspector General evaluation of the SARRR Program (890+ documents and 27 interviews)
- Launching of both a global designated-staff survey and a revised Volunteer victim-response quality survey

At the annual May 2015 Sexual Assault Advisory Council meeting, the Council acknowledged the current workload of Peace Corps units responsible for implementing the SARRR Program initiatives. The Council suggested the Peace Corps look toward implementing recommendations over a several year period. All of these factors led to the Peace Corps prioritizing SARRR Program initiatives and planning the implementation of several recommendations over several years. This is reflected in the status of some of the recommendations. This recognition and suggestion from the Council has been appreciated by the SARRR team. It allows for a more reasonable and thoughtful plan for the implementation of the numerous recommendations that the team has received. The phasing of recommendation implementation also allows for recommendations to be considered in concert with all other institutional priorities. This results in a more strategic use of resources—human and financial.

An additional impacting factor to consider is that the Agency has transitioned the SARRR Program Team Lead from a temporary position to a full-time, permanent position of SARRR Program Director as of FY17. This reflects a benefit derived from the position over the last two years and recommendations received from both the Sexual Assault Advisory Council and the Peace Corps Office of Inspector General. In relation to some of the recommendations, a decision has been made to wait to determine the implementation plan until the permanent Program Director is in place, which is forecasted for November 2016.

## 1. Promoting and Supporting Institutional Change

2015 Recommendation	Peace Corps Response <i>Council Comment</i>
<b>1.1</b> Align values across Agency to reflect a focus by leadership, staff, and PCVs on sexual assault prevention and response.	<b>CONCUR</b> This was originally done for the SARRR Program in 2012. A new position of SARRR Program Director is in the hiring process, with an estimated start date FY17 Q1. The new Director will lead this alignment in FY17 Q2.
<b>1.2</b> Include elements of the Kate Puzey Act into Agency's five-year strategic plan.	<b>CONCUR</b> When this recommendation was made the Agency was within its the current five-year plan (2014–2018). Setting the groundwork for including elements of the SARRR Program in the upcoming five-year plan will be addressed FY17 Q2.
<b>1.3</b> Create a strategic communications plan.	<b>CONCUR</b> This is included in new SARRR Program Director job description; timeline is dependent on hiring. To be started no later than FY17 Q2 with rollout no later than FY17 Q4.  <i><b>Council Comment:</b> The Council strongly recommends reconsideration of this approach because strategic-communications planning skills do not fall within the expertise of a sexual assault prevention and response program professional. That sexual assault expert is certainly key in the implementation of the plan, but the strategic communications approach needs to be developed by a senior-level communications professional who would weave communication efforts across the Peace Corps into one cohesive coordinated plan with associated timelines, metrics, and measurement.</i>  <i>See 2016 recommendation calling for the hiring of a senior-level communications professional to address this effort.</i>
<b>1.4</b> Consolidate two SARRR Theories of Change into one model.	<b>CONCUR</b> Postponed to FY17 Q1. To create a combined Theory of Change model, the Peace Corps first needed to research prevention best practices and conduct a data analysis of the characteristics that place Volunteers at increased risk of sexual assault. That research and analysis was completed in August. The next steps (leadership buy-in and assembling the appropriate team to develop both the strategy and TOC) are influenced by leadership transitions at Peace Corps and the fall staff travel schedule (delivering training at posts by the end of FY). For these reasons the TOC development was moved to FY17 Q1.

## 2. Policy and Training

2015 Recommendation	Peace Corps Response <i>Council Comment</i>
<b>2.1</b> Revise policies, procedures, and training to ensure a more <u>victim-centered</u> approach throughout prevention and response to sexual assault. Recommendations include but are not limited to the following:	<b>CONCUR</b> PST training revision begins FY17 Q1 and new materials released to posts FY17 Q3.
2.1.a) Develop expanded reporting options, to include mechanisms for victim-centered third-party or alternative reporting.	<b>CONCUR</b> Completed. The Peace Corps revised Procedures for Responding to Sexual Assault outline Restricted, Standard, and third-party reporting and also present the PCSAVES hotline option for receiving information about options and services without choosing to make a report. The PCSAVES Hotline has been promoted to Volunteers through several venues.
2.1.b) Utilize victim-sensitive terms in surveys, guide sheets, checklists, etc., so that victims can make informed choices/understand processes.	<b>CONCUR</b> The Revised Volunteer Preference Form (part of the Procedures for Responding to Sexual Assault) is the key document used to inform Volunteers who have been sexually assaulted of their options. This was revised by staff and RPCVs and reviewed by SAAC members. Both in wording and physical layout, it was improved to be more user friendly. It went from a four-page detailed narrative to a two-page form. The biggest change in tone was to present options in terms of services available rather than in terms of two types of reporting (as on old form). As new deliverables are created on demand, Peace Corps will incorporate victim-sensitive terms.
2.1.c) Create Peace Corps recommended strategies for sexual assault survivors interacting with the media following publicity resulting from an event.	<b>CONCUR</b> To be addressed FY17 Q3 with development of Communications Plan.



<p>2.1.d) Honor victim's preferences at critical steps of response process and ensure the victim's best interest/desires pertaining to the investigation are considered throughout the process.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b></p> <p>The Peace Corps is tracking if Volunteers' preferences are being considered. The 2015 Response Quality Survey (RQS) results indicate victims' preferences are being honored with current processes. The RQS is an optional survey sent to all Volunteers who have been sexually assaulted. In 2015, 96 percent of Volunteers who completed the RQS agreed that even if the outcome was not what they wanted, their preferences were taken into account. Most of the Volunteer respondents (85 percent overall) reported that staff listened to them and understood things from their perspective.</p> <p>All sexual assault cases must be reported and tracked in the CARS case management system. In the CARS CMS there are fields to indicate when a Volunteer has requested a service and when that service has been received.</p>
<p><b>2.2.</b> Enhance Agency policies, procedures, and training to refine itself as a trauma-informed organization. Recommendations include but not limited to:</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b></p> <p>Comprehensive plan with timelines to be developed by new SARRR Program Director FY17 Q1. Launch date TBD.</p>
<p>2.2.a) Institute a Crisis Intervention and Response Peer Team.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b></p> <p>In FY 2016 Peace Corps standardized its Peer Support Network (PSN) Program. As it is optional for a Peace Corps post to have a PSN, 41 of 61 countries currently have PSN programs. Volunteer "Peer Supporters" receive two days of training, whether in person or via Skype, and participate when possible in quarterly coaching sessions with the Counseling and Outreach Unit.</p> <p><i><b>Council Comment:</b> The Peace Corps should consider removing the "option" of not having a Peer Support Network Program, and instead make the program a requirement. Exceptions to having this program should be formally requested and approved. In current form, the Council views this recommendation as "partially" implemented.</i></p>

<p>2.2.b) Explore an expanded role for the Sexual Assault Response Liaisons (SARLs).</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b></p> <p>Within the past year, the Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA) has explored several avenues for expanding the role of SARLs and increasing their use. The revised SARL training, October 2015, included a new session titled Marketing the (SARL) Role. The session was intended to empower SARLs to devise more creative ways to increase their visibility at their posts as a way to influence Volunteer awareness of the role and increase utilization. The marketing session encouraged strategies such as presenting at Volunteer support events, working with their Country Directors and Designated Staff (PCMOs and SSMs) to co-facilitate trainings related to sexual assault and response, and adding the SARL title to their email signatures. SARLs were very enthusiastic in this session, devising many marketing tactics of their own such as hosting Sexual Assault Awareness activities in April, sending out monthly newsletters, and including their names in emergency contact cards and brochures for their Volunteers.</p>
<p>2.2.c) Require cross-office review of draft policies/guidelines to ensure procedures for one entity are not counterproductive for another.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b></p> <p>Ongoing. The Senior Policy Committee (SPC) is responsible for: 1) managing and coordinating the development of Peace Corps policies and procedures; 2) making recommendations to the Director on new policies and revisions to existing policies in the Peace Corps Manual; and 3) approving the adoption of procedures to implement policies in the Peace Corps Manual. The SPC meets monthly. Membership consists of the Director and the following senior officers: the Deputy Director, Chief of Staff, Associate Director for Global Operations, General Counsel, Associate Director for Volunteer Support, Associate Director for Volunteer Recruitment/Selection, Associate Director for Management, Chief Financial Officer, Associate Director for Safety and Security, and the three Regional Directors. The Chief Compliance Officer serves as the Secretariat and acts as the liaison between the Office of Inspector General and the SPC.</p>
<p>2.2.d) Augment stalking, screening, and response policy to ensure coverage and consideration of intimate-partner violence factors as precursors to other violent sexual crimes.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b></p> <p>The Agency currently screens all applicants. SARRR team staff designed and delivered live intimate-partner violence (IPV) training to all Safety and Security Managers in FY16. Beginning Fall 2016 IPV training will also be delivered to new hire overseas staff during Overseas Staff Training.</p>

<p>2.2.e) Explore the potential to extend or increase post-service care for victims of sexual assault, as well as affected family members.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> The Office of Health Services (OHS), the Post-Service Unit (PSU), and the Office of Victim Advocacy (OVA) have participated in efforts to increase post-service care to victims of sexual assault by partnering via the newly chartered Post Service Health Care Taskforce. In 2015, OHS chartered this task force to tackle the challenges faced by RPCVs seeking post-service health care and Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) assistance through the Department of Labor. On this group OVA represents the challenges and frustrations of RPCVs who have been victims of sexual assault related to FECA claims, lack of in-network providers, and the 127c voucher process. In an effort to continue improving overall post-service care to Volunteer victims, OVA has also initiated regular meetings with the PSU Director and staff in order to cross train, improve channels of communication, and develop a more streamlined process for providing referrals to Volunteers needing PSU assistance after experiencing a sexual assault. In September 2016 the Peace Corps received a “Valued Partner Agency” recognition from FECA which acknowledges Peace Corps’ work to improve the FECA claim process for Volunteers.</p>
<p>2.2.f) Establish partnerships with external organizations to enhance post-sexual assault response, such as case management and therapeutic resources.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> All PCMOs must follow Peace Corps medical/mental health Technical Guidelines (TGs), which include establishing and maintaining partnerships with in-country sources for SAFE and therapeutic resources. Adherence to these TGs are assessed during periodic PCMO in-country reviews and annual Performance review.</p>
<p><b>2.3</b> Review policies to ensure Volunteer-centered confidentiality and reporting procedures related to sexual orientation and gender identity, to include:</p>	<p><i>See discussion below.</i></p>
<p>2.3.a) Research and ensure communication to all staff and PCVs regarding legal issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sexual assault.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> Office of General Counsel works with the Office of Safety and Security to make the Legal Environment Survey gender-inclusive as it relates to all crimes, particularly sexual assault, and to identify how the host country law addresses same-sex sexual assault, irrespective of the victim’s gender identity or orientation.</p>

<p>2.3.b) Create and/or maintain safe pathways for reporting about same-sex and transgender assaults, such as a self-selected staff member(s) and availability of an out-of-country hotline, both of which are sensitive to issues faced by sexual-orientation and gender-identity minorities.</p>	<p><b>PARTIAL CONCUR</b> The Peace Corps does not require Volunteers to identify transgender status or sexual orientation when <u>reporting</u> crimes. The Agency is committed to creating and maintaining safe pathways for <u>supporting</u> same-sex and transgender assaults. Will promote resources in revised PST training to be released FY17 Q3.</p>
<p>2.3.c) Make available self-help resources for victims of sexual assault that can be accessed without the knowledge of anyone but the user.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> Will be included in revised PCV Workbook and PST training, to be released FY17 Q3.</p>
<p><b>2.4</b> Review Agency sexual-orientation and gender-identity policies and training to ensure LGBT issues are appropriately reflected. Specific improvements could include:</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> This task is part of the mandate of the Agency Diversity Council, an inter-departmental Peace Corps working group, and is a goal in the Agency's recently released Diversity &amp; Inclusion Strategic Plan for 2016–2020. There is not a more detailed implementation timeline for this at this time.  <i>Council Comment: As 2016 comes to a close, the Peace Corps should be developing an aggressive timeline to implement this new strategic plan regardless of leadership changes in 2017.</i></p>
<p>2.4.a) Increasing staff competency toward PCVs who identify as LGBT and determining how to handle fluidity in gender identity and sexual orientation.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> The Inter-Cultural and Diversity Initiative (ICDI) trained 31 posts in FY 16; 20 more scheduled to be trained in FY17.</p>
<p>2.4.b) Ensuring gender-neutral language of training and policy materials.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> SARRR team staff have met with the ICDI leader and created timeline to collaborate on this. Development of materials to be done FY17 Q2.</p>
<p>2.4.c) Ensuring that differences between sexual orientation and gender identity are addressed properly in training materials (i.e., transgender issues are not assumed as the same as sexual orientation issues).</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> SARRR team staff have met with the ICDI leader and created timeline to collaborate on this. Development of materials to be done FY17 Q2.</p>

2.4.d) Formulating examples, role plays, interactive activities, etc., as inclusive of sexual-orientation and gender-identity minorities that speak to diverse experiences.	<b>CONCUR</b> Will develop FY17 Q3 with PST revision.
2.4.e) Having Peace Corps posts explore their ability to offer environments that are inclusive to sexual-orientation and gender-identity minorities, such as with signage and language.	<b>CONCUR</b> Peace Corps sees this as a critical issue that will be addressed by the ICDI and Diversity Council in FY17.
2.4.f) Incorporating language and training on how to be an LGBT ally into staff, Volunteer, and sexual assault risk-reduction and response training.	<b>CONCUR</b> SARRR team staff have met with the ICDI leader and created timeline to collaborate on this. Will include in PST training, to be released FY17 Q3.

### 3. Prevention and Collaboration

2015 Recommendation	Peace Corps Response <i>Council Comment</i>
<b>3.1</b> Create a comprehensive sexual assault prevention strategy.	<b>CONCUR</b> In progress, research completed FY17 Q1, project team formed FY16 Q4. The planning team includes Global Operations, Health Services (including Counseling and Outreach Unit), Safety and Security, Victim Advocacy, and the three Regional Safety and Security Advisers. Plan to be launched FY17 Q3.
<b>3.2</b> Identify and address risk and protective factors for sexual assault.	<b>CONCUR</b> In progress, to be completed FY17 Q1.

<p><b>3.3</b> Develop a pilot for multinational collaboration.</p>	<p><b>PARTIAL CONCUR</b>  The recommendation reads: “<i>To determine what level and type of collaboration might be possible with other U.S. government or nongovernmental organizations, the Peace Corps should employ a country-specific collaboration model that could be piloted in a small number of countries (three to five) that are currently reporting a high number of sexual assault cases.</i>” Collaborations among government and NGOs occur at every Peace Corps post. Peace Corps country programs collaborate and meet regularly with U.S. government, host government, and nongovernmental organizations that are important stakeholders in the country program meeting its critical functions (e.g., medical, training, development, and safety and security). The agency listed “partial concur,” as it is outside the scope of the mission of the Peace Corps to create and lead a country-specific collaboration model that could be piloted in a small number of countries (three to five) that are currently reporting a high number of sexual assault cases.</p> <p><i><b>Council Comment:</b> The Council notes the limitations on the scope of the mission of the Peace Corps in this area. Next year’s Council could review this further for potential recommendation to expand scope in concert with other federal agencies.</i></p>
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#### 4. Medical and Mental Health

2015 Recommendation	Peace Corps Response
<p><b>4.1</b> Create an Agency-specific training curriculum for PCMOs.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b>  Completed. Reviewed by Council in 2015.</p>
<p><b>4.2</b> Institute the use of telemedicine technology to provide trauma-informed care and victim advocacy services to Volunteers.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b>  Victim advocacy and mental health services are provided through technology as appropriate for Volunteers and their respective country of service. This includes Skype, text messages, phone, and email.</p> <p>“Appropriate” means what works according to bandwidth and other technology access issues in Volunteer sites. The Council recommendation states: “<i>Telemedicine allows real-time face-to-face contact between health providers and patients via videoconference technology.</i>” Our mental health providers do this when possible (based on technology access of Volunteers.)</p>
<p><b>4.3</b> Create a plan to foster staff resilience.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b>  Plan to launch in FY17 proposed to Agency Director in FY16 Q4.</p>
<p><b>4.4</b> Create a single package of support information for PCVs victims of sexual assault.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b>  To be completed by OVA FY17 Q1.</p>

<p><b>4.5</b> Identify cadre of mental health providers who are able to provide post-service counseling to RPCVs who experienced sexual assault during service.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> The Office of Health Services maintains and updates the list of providers who provide support to current Volunteers. Volunteers have the option of rating these providers via the Health Care Provider survey. The Office of Victim Advocacy refers RPCVs to the RAINN.org database of sexual-violence support centers nationwide. These centers can provide RPCVs with information on counseling, support groups, medical resources, and even emergency shelter. Resources are searchable by location. If there are more specific concerns, RAINN also offers a full list of state coalitions on sexual assault that we can connect with in order to try to meet a client's specific needs. RAINN is responsible for maintaining and updating this list.</p>
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## 5. Monitoring and Evaluation

2015 Recommendation	Peace Corps Response
<p>5.1 Develop indicators for trauma-informed practice and organization.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> Once a strategy for providing a trauma-informed practice and organization is developed, the Peace Corps will then create indicators for that strategy. Will do FY17 once strategy developed.</p>
<p>5.2 Improve and streamline data collection and management. The following specific recommendations should be considered priorities: 5.2.a) Develop specific policies and procedures related to what data is collected, how it is collected, who collects it, and who will have access to it.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> In FY16 Peace Corps revised MS 243 Annex: Procedures for Monitoring and Evaluation. This SARRR Program Monitoring and Evaluation plan outlines how the SARRR activities will be tracked and how the program outcomes assessed. The plan includes process and outcome indicators related to implementation, response quality, and outcomes. It guides the process by which Monitoring and Evaluation staff will collect and analyze data from Peace Corps staff and Volunteers via surveys, individual and group interviews, and data entered into Peace Corps databases (e.g., case management systems). The CARS Case Management System has its own procedures that specify what data is entered, by whom, and who has access to that data.</p>
<p>5.2.b) Shorten Response Quality Survey and map core questions to revised indicators.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> Completed. Survey now projected to take 14 minutes and consists of 29 questions.</p>



<p>5.2.c) Revise the communication and dissemination plan for the Response Quality Survey.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> Completed. In FY16 Peace Corps made changes to improve the response rate to the RQS. The survey instrument itself was revised (See above.) Messaging to Volunteers when the RQS is sent out has been revised to promote a more favorable response (This letter was reviewed by select SAAC members.) and reminder prompts are now sent to fill out the survey. A launch email for the revised survey was sent globally to the designated staff team at each post to encourage Volunteers who are sexually assaulted to fill out the survey.</p>
<p>5.2.d) Review data collection and case management systems to determine if needed information is being gathered.</p>	<p><b>CONCUR</b> Completed. CARS CMS piloted globally March 2016. There have been several systemwide meetings to test and determine if needed information is being gathered. Mandatory global use of CARS CMS begins October 1, 2016.</p>
<p>5.3 Grant appropriate Monitoring and Evaluation staff access to data containing PII.</p>	<p><b>PARTIAL CONCUR</b> The CARS Case Management System launched Winter 2016 is a database that allows users access to PII as needed, based on role and permissions. The case management system allows Monitoring and Evaluation staff to link information across program components. However, monitoring and evaluation staff do not have access to all data within the case management system.</p>

## APPENDIX B: ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

### 2016 Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council

#### Council Chair

##### **Suzanne Holroyd, PhD**

*Senior Prevention Program Manager, Department of Defense, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office*

Dr. Holroyd is the senior prevention program manager for the Department of Defense's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office. This office is responsible for the oversight and policy development of DoD programs on sexual assault prevention and response designed to implement the department's comprehensive sexual assault prevention strategy. Dr. Holroyd oversees a wide variety of prevention-related initiatives designed to educate internal and external audiences on DoD prevention policy and programs. In addition, she identifies promising practices from sexual assault programs, as well as other issue areas, that can be adopted and adapted for DoD use. She chairs a department-wide collaborative forum with the military services to foster information sharing. She coordinates with federal civilian organizations to establish collaborations for leveraging existing sexual assault prevention practices. Prior to working with the department, Dr. Holroyd was a consultant with Booz Allen Hamilton and a senior-level instructor at the Defense Information School in Fort Mead, Maryland. She also worked as a research analyst for The RAND Corporation. Dr. Holroyd joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2014 and served as the Council's 2015 Co-Chair.

#### Council Co-Chair

##### **Lauren A. Ware, MFS**

*Chief, Forensics & Special Investigative (FSI) Skills Branch, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center*

Ms. Ware is the chief of the FSI Branch of the Investigative Operations Division at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), Glynco, Georgia. As the branch chief of FSI, Ms. Ware supervises a team of senior law enforcement officers and agents with vast experience in various forensic disciplines. Prior to her current position, Ms. Ware spent 10 years as an active duty special agent with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (OSI). She served as a forensic science consultant, responsive to all major and complex crimes on Air Force installations or involving U.S. service members throughout Asia and the Pacific. This included numerous sex crime allegations among military members, their dependents, and their host nation counterparts. Ms. Ware also led the Advanced Training Division of the Air Force Special Investigations Academy, and served as the forensic science subject matter expert, providing training to all OSI special agents in advanced criminal investigations, forensic applications to crime scene investigation, child forensic interviewing, and sex crimes investigations. Ms. Ware also continues to serve as an OSI special agent and Reserve major in the United States Air Force. Ms. Ware joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

#### Council Members

##### **Joanne Archambault**

*Executive Director, End Violence Against Women (EVAW) International*

In 2003, Ms. Archambault founded EVAW International, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing affordable training for all disciplines with an emphasis on law enforcement investigation and proper criminal justice responses to sexual assault and domestic violence. In 2010, Ms. Archambault was honored by then-U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder for her decades of work on behalf of sexual assault victims with a National Crime Victims' Service Award for Allied Professionals. In October 2010, Ms. Archambault was invited to meet with President Obama and Vice President Biden for the first assembly on violence against women to ever be held at the White House. Prior to full-time consulting work, Ms.

Archambault worked for the San Diego Police Department for almost 23 years, until her retirement in October 2002. Ms. Archambault has written and co-authored numerous articles and chapters on the criminal justice response to sexual assault crimes. They address topics such as the role of law enforcement, the forensic examination, the impact of DNA, and overcoming a consent defense. She has lectured extensively to multidisciplinary audiences on the role of law enforcement in the investigation of sex crimes throughout the U.S. and abroad. Ms. Archambault joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

### **Matthew Bakko**

*Research Manager and Instructional Specialist, Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement, Washington University in St. Louis.*

Matthew Bakko, MA, MSW, is the Research Manager and Instructional Specialist at the Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement at Washington University in St. Louis, where he directs the assessment and evaluation efforts of the institute, while also overseeing faculty engagement and support regarding Community-Engaged Teaching. In addition, Matthew co-teaches a civic leadership program. He has served as a special issue editor for the Graduate Journal of Social Science. As a Peace Corps Volunteer (Kyrgyz Republic, 2008–10), his primary assignment was developing programming that served the health and social needs of the local LGBT community. He also served the Peace Corps as a Peace Corps Volunteer trainer, Volunteer advisory committee president, and peer support network member and trainer. Mr. Bakko's professional background as a social worker includes work in community organizing, public housing, and HIV prevention. Mr. Bakko joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

### **Mark Hathaway, MD, MPH**

*Senior Technical Adviser for Family Planning and Reproductive Health, MCSP/Jhpiego*

A board-certified OB/GYN, Dr. Hathaway was on Washington Hospital Center's OB/GYN faculty from 1997–2013 developing and leading the Community Outreach Section, Family Planning Section, Ryan Residency Program, and Family Planning Fellowship. He currently serves as Senior Technical Adviser for Family Planning and Reproductive Health at Jhpiego, an international nongovernmental organization focused on global maternal and child health and Director of Family Planning Services at Unity Health Care Inc. He has served on several national-level working groups, including the Institute of Medicine Standing Committee on Family Planning and National Contraceptive Metrics Workgroup, and holds appointments at Georgetown University as assistant professor and The George Washington University as associate clinical professor. Previously, he was on the board of directors of the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association and currently is on the board of the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals. He served in the Peace Corps as agricultural extensionist Volunteer and program coordinator in Paraguay for nearly four years. Named one of the "Best Doctors in America," Dr. Hathaway lectures and advocates for family planning and maternal and child health-care access issues. In September 2013, he left his full-time faculty position to concentrate on international and national advocacy and trainings. In 2014, he volunteered with Doctors Without Borders in Aweil, South Sudan, directing and teaching in a large maternity ward. Dr. Hathaway joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

### **Nicole Irwin**

*Independent Contractor*

For the past 20 years, Ms. Irwin has dedicated her career to providing services to victims of crime, developing and enhancing programs, and providing leadership to organizations involved in sexual assault victim advocacy. She began her career as a victim advocate in the Office of the State Attorney for Florida's 9th Judicial Circuit, assisting victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse as their cases proceeded through the judicial system. Ms. Irwin was recruited to work for the Florida Attorney General as a victim services program specialist, representing his office in 10 counties for all

victim services-related priorities, including participation in the administration of the Victim of Crime Act grants, facilitation of citizen-review teams for funding recommendations, and monitoring programs for technical compliance. She received high honors for her contributions to several sexual assault response teams and the creation of a children's advocacy center. Ms. Irwin served on a statewide committee that authored updated Florida Sexual Assault Protocol recommendations. She worked in the nonprofit sector as the executive director of the Victim Service Center of Central Florida Inc., responsible for all aspects of victim advocacy case management, medical intervention, and therapeutic programming. She managed the Orange County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), producing the first SART protocol in the Orlando metro area. She served on the Florida Council Against Sexual Violence, Statewide Sexual Assault Response Team Advisory Council. Ms. Irwin joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

### **Sally J. Laskey**

*CEO, International Association of Forensic Nurses*

Ms. Laskey has 25 years of violence prevention and victim service management experience. She joined the International Association of Forensic Services in September 2016 and served on the staff of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center for 15 years. Her work focuses on strengthening trauma-informed services for sexual assault survivors and building effective and sustainable multidisciplinary responses to sexual assault. Ms. Laskey received her bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of New Hampshire, and her master's in community psychology and social change from Pennsylvania State University. Ms. Laskey joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

### **Monica Patton**

*Medical Epidemiologist, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

Dr. Patton is a board-certified pediatrician who has worked at CDC since 2012. She started her work at CDC in the Division of Sexually Transmitted Diseases Prevention and moved to the Division of Bacterial Diseases in 2016. Her work has focused on evaluating meningococcal vaccinations among persons with HIV infection, evaluating appropriate testing and treatment of gonorrhea among high-risk individuals and communities, investigating the epidemiology of and risk factors for herpes, syphilis, and HPV infections in pregnancy and neonates, and monitoring national syphilis trends. Prior to completing her medical education, Dr. Patton served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Burkina Faso and started a civic engagement nonprofit organization for which she later served as executive director. Dr. Patton joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

### **Aurelia Sands Belle**

*Executive Director, Durham Crisis Response Center*

Ms. Belle draws on more than 30 years of professional experience in human service delivery and advocacy as executive director of Durham Crisis Response Center in Durham, North Carolina, which assists victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Her past positions include director of the Victim-Witness Assistance Program for the Metropolitan Atlanta Crime Commission, which developed victim services after the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games; interim director of the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault; and executive director of the Rape Crisis Volunteers of Cumberland County in Fayetteville. Ms. Belle is on the End Violence Against Women, International Board of Directors, North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission, and served on the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission, Georgia Governor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and Georgia Commission on Family Violence and was president of Georgians for Victim Justice. She is a founding director of Justice Solutions Inc. of Washington, D.C. Ms. Belle provides consultation and training to agencies and organizations across the country on program services, victim advocacy, and faith-based and culturally specific issues, and presents workshops on team building, establishing community collaborations, diversity training, and women's self-empowerment. Her many awards include the 2014 Remarkable Women of Durham, Margery Fry Award from the National Organization for Victim Assistance and the

U.S. Presidential Award for Outstanding Service and Commitment to Crime Victims. Ms. Belle joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

### **Lillian Schoer**

*Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Panama*

Ms. Schoer, originally from Shepherd, Montana, served as a community environmental conservation Volunteer in La Bonga, Panama. During her time in Panama, she taught community members to compost, recycle, and reuse their trash, and taught several classes at the local school. She also served as her region's seeders representative and safety and security warden and as editor for the Peace Corps/Panama magazine, La Vaina. Ms. Schoer joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

### **Council Advisors**

#### **Alex Amarin**

*Clinical Director, Sexual Assault Resource Agency (SARA)*

Ms. Amarin is a licensed clinical social worker specializing in trauma. As the clinical director at SARA, Ms. Amarin works with children and adults impacted by sexual violence, supervises clinical staff, serves as an expert witness in criminal and civil cases, and is a first responder in acute cases of sexual assault with a forensic nurse examiner. Ms. Amarin is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Vanuatu, 2009–11), where she served with her husband. Ms. Amarin joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

#### **Meg Biallas**

*Senior Director, Digital Communications, First Focus*

Ms. Biallas works as the Senior Director of Digital Communications for First Focus, a nonpartisan advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families the priority in federal policy and budget decisions in the areas of health, safety, and education. She previously led digital strategy for RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), where she managed RAINN's digital channels, edited the monthly newsletter, and created multimedia assets to spread awareness of sexual assault issues, policies, and news. With nearly eight years of experience advocating on behalf of women and children, Ms. Biallas has worked with industry leaders to create best practices for social media strategy and digital advocacy. Ms. Biallas joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.

#### **Jen Markowitz**

*Forensic Nursing Consultant*

Dr. Markowitz is a forensic nursing consultant who specializes in issues related to sexual assault, domestic violence, and strangulation. She is spending 2015 working with the United States Army to revise their sexual assault medical management curricula and create a standardized certification process for health-care providers. Her recent projects include consultation to the Peace Corps on its multidisciplinary sexual assault response, content development for the newly released SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) Sustainability iPhone/iPad app, and development of an intimate partner violence medical-forensic examination curriculum for the Tribal Forensic Healthcare Training Project. A forensic nurse examiner since 1995, Dr. Markowitz regularly serves as faculty and expert consultant at trials for the Judge Advocate General's Corps across all of the military services. Her past activities include working with the Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women to develop a national protocol and training standards for sexual assault forensic examinations, with the Department of Defense to revise the Sexual Assault Evidence Collection kit and corresponding documentation forms, and as advisory board member to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. In 2012, Dr. Markowitz served as president of the International Association of Forensic Nurses. She is board certified as a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner and as a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (Adult/Adolescent). Dr. Markowitz joined the Peace Corps Sexual Assault Advisory Council in 2015.



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