A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND COMPASSION

PEACE CORPS

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

FISCAL YEAR 2006

- Letter from the Director
- Agency Strategic Plan
- Budget Information
- Safety and Security
- The Volunteer
- Domestic Programs
- Regional Summaries
- Country Program Profiles
- GPRA

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Front cover:

A Peace Corps Volunteer in Kazakhstan reviews a geography lesson with her Kazakh counterpart and a group of students.

Photos, overleaf: Volunteers in Benin, Tonga, and the Kyrgyz Republic

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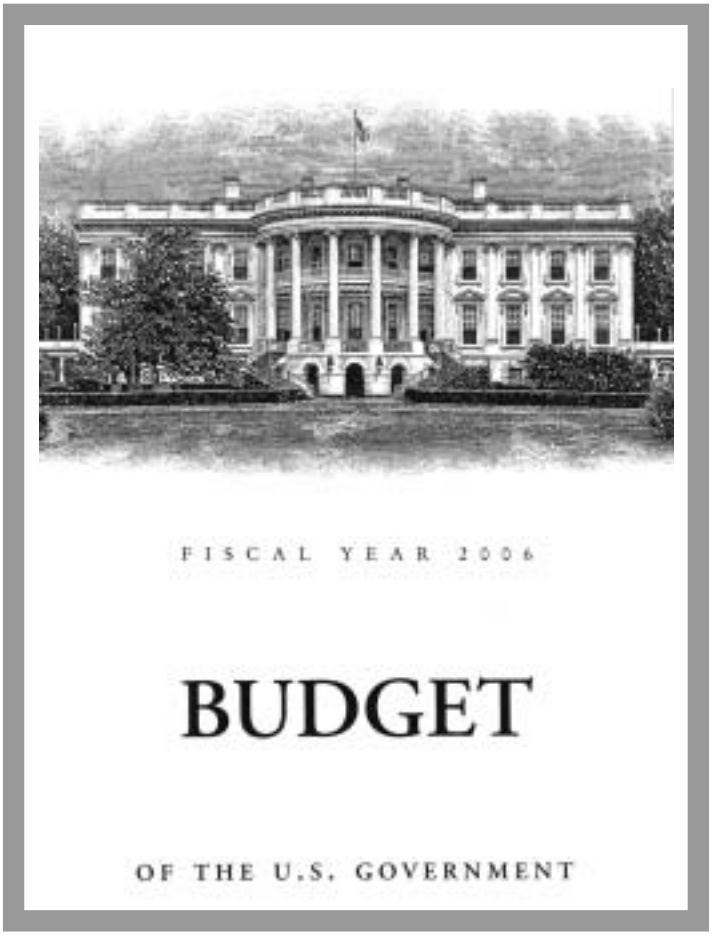


Peace Corps FY 2006 Budget Request

The Peace Corps budget request for FY 2006 is $345,000,000, an increase of $25,000,000 over the FY 2005 Appropriation of $320,000,000[1]. The FY 2006 request will enable the Peace Corps to maintain the existing number of Americans serving abroad at 7,850 by September 30, 2006; provide for the safety and security of the Volunteers and staff; open two new programs; and broaden and strengthen the activities and strategies initiated in 2005 to include the development of innovative responses to crises around the world.

[1] *The FY 2005 Appropriation of $320,000,000 was reduced by a rescission of $2,560,000.*

THE DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS
WASHINGTON, DC

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the Americans currently serving in 72 countries all around the world as Peace Corps Volunteers, I am privileged to submit the Peace Corps' fiscal year 2006 budget request of $345 million. This funding level continues to reflect President Bush's commitment to the Peace Corps in his second term, the importance of the agency's mission abroad, and our goals for expansion.

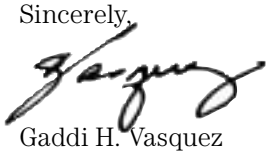
While more than 178,000 Volunteers have served in 138 countries since the inception of the Peace Corps in 1961, thousands more are eager to serve America by promoting the Peace Corps' mission of world peace and friendship. With continued congressional support for our funding, the Peace Corps is positioned to expand our ranks of Volunteers who are carrying out the Peace Corps' three goals of: 1) helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women; 2) helping to promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and 3) helping to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

The sentiments of many host government officials toward American Peace Corps Volunteers are reflected in the comments of Botswana President Festus Mogae at the swearing-in ceremony for new Volunteers: "In this country, Peace Corps Volunteers have translated their lofty ideals into effective, on-the-ground delivery. In the process, they have forged lasting bonds of friendship with many Batswana. Living as we all do in an often cynical world, one can only admire the enduring spirit of Peace Corps." By immersing themselves in the daily life, culture, and challenges of the people they are serving, Peace Corps Volunteers gain the respect of local communities and are better able to transfer their skills in ways that will have long-term, life-changing consequences.

As we assess the changes in the world and what the face of America looks like in large cities and tiny villages around the globe, we can be proud of the more than 7,700 Peace Corps Volunteers who are committed to grass-roots development efforts to empower people in developing countries to take charge of their future. These Americans share their time and talents by serving as teachers, business advisors, information technology consultants, health and HIV/AIDS educators, and agriculture workers. These men and women—young and old, married and single, and from an array of ethnic backgrounds—are informal ambassadors of the United States to the far reaches of the globe.

I remain proud of your constituents who are serving as Peace Corps Volunteers and grateful for the ongoing bipartisan support that the Peace Corps receives from Congress. I look forward to working with you throughout the appropriations process.

Sincerely,



Gaddi H. Vasquez
Director

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Congressional Budget Justification
Fiscal Year 2006

Executive Summary

The Peace Corps provides practical assistance to developing countries by sharing America's most precious resource—its people. The close interaction between Peace Corps Volunteers and local communities has allowed the Peace Corps to establish an admirable record of service that is recognized around the world. For 44 years, Peace Corps Volunteers have helped build the path to progress with people who want to build a better life for themselves, their children, and their communities. Around the world, Peace Corps Volunteers continue to bring a spirit of hope and optimism to the struggle for progress and human dignity. More than 178,000 Americans have served in 138 countries since the agency's establishment.

While times have changed since the Peace Corps' founding in 1961, the agency's mission—to promote world peace and friendship—has not. The three core goals of the Peace Corps are as relevant today as they were 44 years ago:

- To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
- To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

In fiscal year 2006, the Peace Corps will continue to build on its accomplishments. These accomplishments include reaching a 29-year high of 7,733 Volunteers serving in the field at the close of fiscal year 2004; opening a new program in Mexico; having 20 percent of Volunteers working in 18 predominantly Muslim countries; participating in 10 of the 15 focus countries as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief; expanding recruiting activities at community colleges; and increasing the recruitment of Volunteers from diverse backgrounds.

The proposed budget request of $345 million will allow the Peace Corps to enter two new countries, gradually expand the number of Volunteers in the field, and seek innovative programming responses to natural disasters and humanitarian crises. The agency will continue to pursue its strategic goals by increasing the number of underrepresented ethnic and age groups applying to the Peace Corps, reducing the 12-month Volunteer early termination rate, improving Volunteers' health care satisfaction and perception of personal safety, improving American's understanding of other peoples by increasing the number of returned Peace Corps Volunteer visits to schools and community organizations, and reducing the overall application time for those applying for Volunteer service.

The safety and security of each Volunteer will remain the agency's top priority and the staff of the Office of Safety and Security will continue their commitment to research, planning, training, and compliance. Volunteer programming and training will also undergo additional reviews to find better methods of preparing Volunteers for their service and assist in the development of feasible project plans and local community acceptance.

This budget will allow the Peace Corps to focus on the gradual expansion of Volunteers within each region and develop innovative responses to natural disasters and humanitarian crises via Crisis Corps—such as the Indian Ocean tsunami and the ongoing HIV/AIDS pandemic. An anticipated trainee input in FY 2006 of approximately 4,300 future Volunteers will require the hiring of additional medical screening nurses, placement officers, and other support staff. Furthermore, country assessments and program ramp-up costs will be required for the two new country entries.

Additionally, the FY 2006 budget request will provide the necessary funds to implement congressionally mandated upgrades to the Peace Corps' financial system and ensure agency compliance with new auditing requirements. Expenditures include continued funding for the overseas rollout of the Odyssey Financial System and overall system enhancements. In the area of information technology and centrally managed resources, notable investments will be made to update the antiquated Volunteer Delivery System, revise Volunteer incident reporting templates, and comply with new HIPPA reporting procedures. The budget also reflects the reimbursements required to the Department of State for the Capital Security Cost-Sharing Program and the increase in expenditures to the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services.

Encouraging service and volunteerism among the American people is part of a long tradition in the United States and of this Administration. More than 100,000 people contact the Peace Corps each year seeking information about serving as a Volunteer. When Volunteers complete their overseas service, many continue their commitment to volunteerism or use their skills and experience to enhance careers and make contributions to our society in virtually every sector. It is the people-to-people relationships Peace Corps Volunteers forge with their host country colleagues and communities that serve as a crucial foundation for world peace, cross-cultural exchange, and understanding—and make a lasting investment for the United States.

"Make the choice to serve in a cause larger than your wants, larger than yourself — and in your days you will add not just to the wealth of our country, but to its character."

President George W. Bush
Inaugural Address
January 20, 2005

The Peace Corps Strategic Plan: A Legacy of Service and Compassion

Opportunity in the Twenty-First Century

The Peace Corps is pleased to present the agency's strategic plan for fiscal years 2003 to 2008. Not only does the strategic plan reflect the agency's long-standing commitment to the unique role that its Volunteers perform to further the three goals set forth in the Peace Corps Act, but it institutionalizes a comprehensive safety and security approach and furthers the modernization of the agency's support infrastructure to help achieve the vision to meet the growing needs of the world in this century.

The mission of promoting world peace and friendship, as well as the three goals of the Peace Corps, have remained the same since its inception. Development indicators suggest that there will be even greater challenges for nations on all continents in the years ahead as they deal with the demands for improved development, information technology, agriculture, education, sanitation and environment, health management, and business.

Recognizing the strategic relevance of the Peace Corps in the 21st century, President Bush declared in his 2002 State of the Union Address and in numerous speeches over the past three years that "…the United States remains committed to ensuring a future of peace, hope, and promise for all people, and the Peace Corps is playing a critical role in these efforts."

President Bush's frequent references to the Peace Corps and the agency's new drive to reacquaint the American people with the mission of the Peace Corps has resulted in a significant increase in the number of Americans seeking to serve. At the end of 2004, inquiries were up by 18 percent, new applications rose by 6 percent, and the Peace Corps website had a 33 percent increase in visitor sessions, for a total of 7.6 million visitor sessions. Since January 2002, the Peace Corps has had pending requests for programs in over 30 countries, has conducted 25 country assessments, and has entered or reentered 21 countries.

In September 2004, the Peace Corps achieved a 29-year high of 7,733 Volunteers serving in 72 countries. The Peace Corps is pleased with its growth to date; however, the amounts provided in the appropriations process for the past three years have fallen significantly short of that needed to meet the goal of doubling the number of Volunteers over five years. Thus, the agency will seek to modestly expand into new countries, maintain the existing number of Volunteers in the field, and develop new programming in response to natural disasters and humanitarian crises, while preserving the quality of the Peace Corps Volunteer experience and focusing on safety and security.

Vision

The Peace Corps' vision is to assist interested countries around the world while providing an effective and satisfying Volunteer experience for a diverse group of Americans in a safe and secure environment, and to build an operational infrastructure to efficiently and effectively support the Volunteer in the 21st century.

Mission

The mission and three goals of the Peace Corps are as relevant today as they were 44 years ago when they were first defined in the Peace Corps Act of 1961. The Peace Corps combines development with people-to-people relationships that Volunteers forge with host country colleagues and communities.

The Peace Corps Mission and Three Goals:

The purpose of the Peace Corps is to promote world peace and friendship by

- Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
- Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
- Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of all Americans.

This serves as a crucial foundation for peace and friendship for generations to come.

Strategic Planning Process

The Integrated Planning and Budget System (IPBS) is the Peace Corps' primary strategic planning mechanism. IPBS is consistent with the planning process defined by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). It features a multilevel strategic planning process that requires each Peace Corps office and sub-office to set goals and establish measurable objectives and specific tasks—in essence, a performance plan—with related timelines. IPBS is based on a three-year planning cycle, and every Peace Corps office and overseas post is required to define its goals and objectives and develop a strategic plan and budget that will enable the office to meet them. These plans are based on projected levels of funding; however, they are adjusted accordingly if these levels are not realized through actual appropriations. This is possible through the annual update of the three-year plan. IPBS begins with an assessment and evaluation of the previous year's plans and projects. It then identifies lessons learned, potential improvements, and plans for the future.

In concert with IPBS, the Peace Corps also requires overseas posts to develop plans for their Volunteer projects that describe the goals, objectives, and life span of the project. The status of each project is reviewed annually in December. Each project's strengths and weaknesses are assessed, and the plan is reaffirmed or altered based on lessons learned in the planning process.

The agency's planning process begins each winter with the issuance of Director Gaddi H. Vasquez's guidance. In addition to reaffirming the agency's mission and goals, the offices are requested to specifically address the impact of, and plan for the heightened focus on, safety and security of Volunteers and staff. The offices align their individual plans to the agency's overall direction and each strategic plan submission is presented to the director and reviewed. Upon concluding these review activities, each overseas post, sub-office, and major office assembles its respective performance plan with an emphasis on defining the outcome and performance goals together with accompanying performance indicators.

The director has also established the inter-office Quality Statements and Indicators Project (QSIP) to measure strategic outcomes through the Peace Corps Volunteer Survey. QSIP complements the agency's strategic plan under GPRA by helping to determine if performance goals and plans actually result in higher quality operations and service.

For example, each office's individual strategies under GPRA are designed to support, complement, or enhance the agency's strategic goals. These goals drive how the Peace Corps operates and performs. Offices determine that to meet the GPRA goals, they must conduct certain training, provide certain services, etc. QSIP provides a means by which the Peace Corps can measure if these plans actually work by asking for feedback from Volunteers about the quality of their experience. QSIP developed quality statements and performance indicators for recruitment and placement, programming, training, Volunteer support, third goal and domestic activities, and management and administration. The main vehicle for evaluating progress in these areas is the biennial Peace Corps Volunteer Survey because this survey is completed by approximately 70 percent of serving Volunteers. It is, therefore, a useful source of feedback by which Peace Corps can track its progress.

The Peace Corps Strategic Plan for Responding to the President's Challenge

Strategic Goal 1
Assist interested countries with their identified needs by gradually expanding the number of Volunteers in the field to 8,000 by FY 2008, at a rate consistent with funding levels and infrastructure support.

Strategic Goal 2
Improve the health and safety of Volunteers by improving the Volunteer health care satisfaction rate and increasing Volunteers' perception of their personal safety where they live.

Strategic Goal 3
Improve Americans' understanding of other peoples by increasing returned Peace Corps Volunteers' visits to schools and community organizations.

Strategic Goal 4
Reduce the overall response time for those applying to Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps' Goals for Fiscal Years 2003-2008

In response to President Bush's challenge to increase the size of the Peace Corps, the agency focused on growth in FY 2003 and FY 2004, achieving the highest number of Volunteers serving abroad in 29 years, while providing a positive experience for Volunteers in a safe and secure environment. However, given the funds provided in the appropriations process, since FY 2003, the Peace Corps is no longer on track to double in size. This has required the Peace Corps to modify Strategic Goal 1. This document continues to present the four strategic goals the Peace Corps seeks to achieve from FY 2003 through FY 2008, with minor modifications. Each strategic outcome goal is followed by a set of measurable performance goals with accompanying means and strategies; a discussion of the relationship to the agency's annual performance goals in the performance budget; key factors potentially affecting achievement of goals; and the methods used to assess achievement.

Strategic Goal 1

Assist interested countries with their identified needs by gradually expanding the existing number of Volunteers in the field, at a rate consistent with funding levels and infrastructure support, up to 8,000 Volunteers by September 30, 2008.

Strategic Goal 2

Improve the health and safety of Volunteers by improving the Volunteer health care satisfaction rate by 7 percent, from 75 percent in FY 2002 to 82 percent by FY 2008; and increasing Volunteers' perception of their personal safety where they live by 3 percent, from 86 percent in FY 2002 to 89 percent by FY 2008.

Strategic Goal 3

Improve Americans' understanding of other peoples by increasing returned Peace Corps Volunteers' visits to schools and community organizations by 29 percent, from 7,000 in FY 2003 to 9,000 by FY 2008.

Strategic Goal 4

Reduce the Peace Corps' overall response time for those applying to the Peace Corps by 5 percent from 223 days in FY 2003 to 212 days by FY 2008.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Assist interested countries with their identified needs by gradually expanding the existing number of Volunteers in the field, at a rate consistent with funding levels and infrastructure support, up to 8,000 Volunteers by September 30, 2008.

Strategy

The Peace Corps is committed to maintaining the approximate number of Volunteers in the field at the FY 2003 level. This will require modest expansions in trainee input, which is both strategically and incrementally implemented. These input requirements will be balanced with the need to preserve the core values of the Peace Corps and provide the infrastructure necessary to support the work of the Volunteers and the business of the agency. To meet the challenges of the 21st century, the Peace Corps is focusing action items in the following areas.

Infrastructure Support

Under the direction of the Offices of the Chief Information Officer and Chief Financial Officer, the Peace Corps is developing the necessary technical infrastructure to streamline current operational processes that will support the Volunteers in the field. In addition, management is reviewing personnel practices to identify and analyze trends and future needs among Volunteers and staff that will be used to inform workforce processes and resource allocations. These analyses will also inform policy decisions and maximize resource efficiency and quality of service.

Recruitment

While four-year institutions have been the main source for Volunteers over the years, the Peace Corps is now working with the American Association of Community Colleges to expand recruiting activities at community colleges. Assignment areas, such as health and information technology, can often be filled by community college graduates who are trained in these qualifying skills.

Efforts to expand the applicant pool also include reaching out to those of diverse age groups and ethnic backgrounds who have previously been under-represented in the Peace Corps. In 2002, the Director established a diversity task force composed of senior officials and other agency staff to provide guidance and assistance in increasing the diversity of Volunteers. The Peace Corps is currently identifying venues, such as national conferences or publications, and developing partnerships with key agencies and organizations to assist with recruitment. In addition, the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research has developed a "diversity starter kit" to be used in pre-service training to better educate Volunteers about American diversity and constructive coping and support strategies for use during their time in the field. Efforts to expand the number of older Americans serving in the Peace Corps involve identifying senior Peace Corps officials and returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who can be spokespersons at national conferences and other speaker forums. The Office of Medical Services (OMS) is developing materials for use in informing older Volunteers about issues of interest to them, such as the impact on retirement benefits, insurance, and medical benefits.

Communications

The Peace Corps launched the new awareness and recruitment campaign "Life is calling. How far will you go?" in September 2003. This campaign included the placement of a significant number of public service ads in both English and Spanish in strategic venues. To date, this campaign has earned over 9.2 million dollars in free media and has garnered over 1.5 billion audience impressions.

Retaining Applicants and Volunteers

Significant effort has been made to retain applicants, trainees, and Volunteers from the time that they apply until the time they close their service. The Pre-Departure Online Training project provides a means by which applicants can start preparing for their service using online educational tools. During the application process, the training modules can help them get a head start in learning about culture, languages, and the personal respon-

sibility requirements, which increase their chances for success. The Peace Corps also completed an applicant dropout study and a newly expanded early termination study to help identify reasons that applicants and Volunteers drop out of the system. This helps enhance the agency's systems and addresses issues that negatively impact retention rates.

In addition, the programming and training as well as the recruitment and placement QSIP committees have developed performance goals to ensure that Volunteers are satisfied and effective. To achieve this, Volunteers are trained to live and work successfully in the context of their assignments and cultural environment. Their satisfaction will be measured by questions in the 2006 Peace Corps Volunteer Survey and the newly designed close-of-service study. Outcome goals related to the satisfaction levels of Volunteers in this area will be established in 2005.

Outcome Goal 1.1

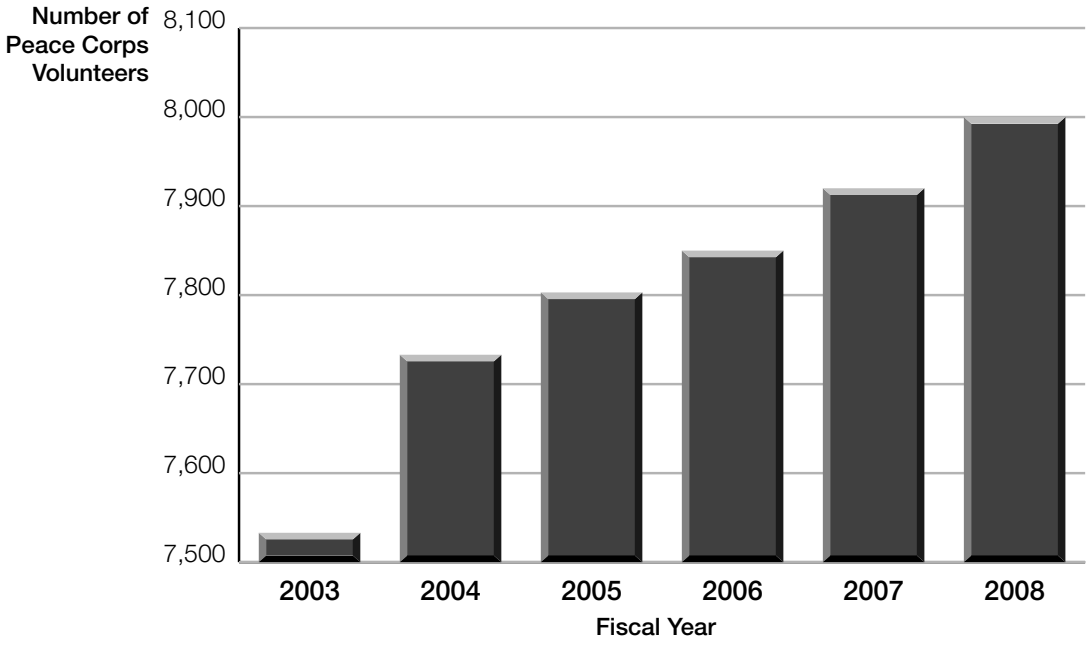
Maintain the approximate number of Volunteers in the field from the FY 2003 level of 7,533 to 8,000 (6.2%) by FY 2008, assuming full funding for FY 2006 and future requests, and incrementally expand Volunteer programming to include the development of innovative responses to natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

Performance Goal

1.1.1 Incrementally increase in subsequent performance years Volunteers/trainees on board from the FY 2003 level of 7,533 to 8,000 (6.2%) by FY 2008.

- 1.1.1.1 Increase the number of Peace Corps Volunteers to 7,733 (2.7%) over FY 2003 level by FY 2004.
- 1.1.1.2 Increase the number of Peace Corps Volunteers to 7,803 (3.6%) over FY 2003 level by FY 2005.
- 1.1.1.3 Increase the number of Peace Corps Volunteers to 7,850 (4.2%) over FY 2003 level by FY 2006.
- 1.1.1.4 Increase the number of Peace Corps Volunteers to 7,920 (5.1%) over FY 2003 level by FY 2007.
- 1.1.1.5 Increase the number of Peace Corps Volunteers to 8,000 (6.2%) over FY 2003 level by FY 2008.

Figure: Projected increase in the number of Peace Corps Volunteers in the field, FY 2003–2008



Outcome Goal 1.2

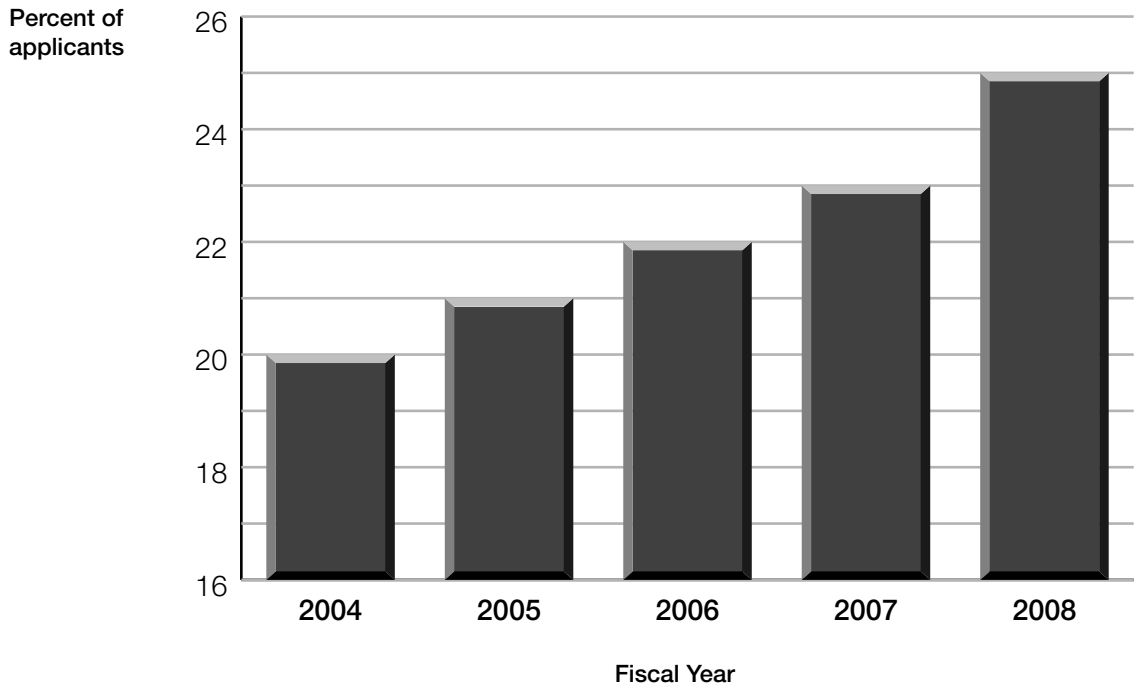
Increase the combined number of applications to the Peace Corps from underrepresented ethnic and age groups from 19% to 25% by FY 2008 in order to provide Volunteers to interested countries that better reflect American diversity.

Performance Goal

1.2.1. Increase the combined number of underrepresented ethnic and age groups applying to the Peace Corps from 19% to 25% by FY 2008.

- 1.2.1.1 20% of applicants will be from underrepresented groups by FY 2004.
- 1.2.1.2 21% of applicants will be from underrepresented groups by FY 2005.
- 1.2.1.3 22% of applicants will be from underrepresented groups by FY 2006.
- 1.2.1.4 23% of applicants will be from underrepresented groups by FY 2007.
- 1.2.1.5 25% of applicants will be from underrepresented groups by FY 2008.

Figure: Increase in the percentage of underrepresented ethnic and age groups applying to the Peace Corps, FY 2004–2008



Outcome Goal 1.3

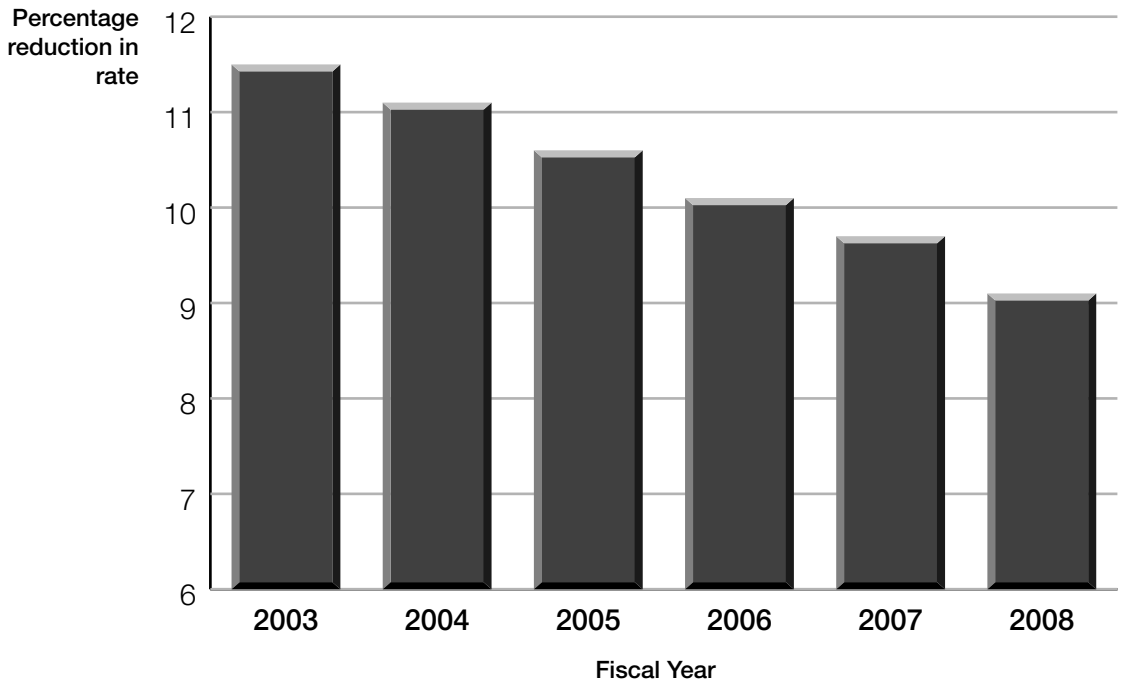
Reduce overall 12-month Volunteer early termination (ET) rate by 2.5% from the FY 2003 level of 11.6% to 9.1% by FY 2008 through improved matching of Volunteers' skills and primary assignment, and improved satisfaction rate of Volunteer health and safety.

Performance Goal

1.3.1. Reduce the overall 12-month Volunteer ET rate by 2.5% from FY 2003 level of 11.6% to 9.1% by FY 2008.

- 1.3.1.1 Reduce the overall 12-month ET rate to 11.1% by FY 2004.
- 1.3.1.2 Reduce the overall 12-month ET rate to 10.6% by FY 2005.
- 1.3.1.3 Reduce the overall 12-month ET rate to 10.1% by FY 2006.
- 1.3.1.4 Reduce the overall 12-month ET rate to 9.6% by FY 2007.
- 1.3.1.5 Reduce the overall 12-month ET rate to 9.1% by FY 2008.

Figure: Projected reduction in early termination rate of Peace Corps Volunteers, FY 2003–2008



STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Improve the health and safety of Volunteers by improving the Volunteer health care satisfaction rate by 7%, from 75% in FY 2002 to 82% by FY 2008; and increasing Volunteers' perception of their personal safety where they live by 3%, from 86% in FY 2002 to 89% by FY 2008.

Strategy

Because the Peace Corps Volunteer Survey in 2002 captured these data, the baselines have been set. The Peace Corps will continue to measure performance against the results of the survey to determine if target outcomes are met. If they are not met, however, the following areas can be used to evaluate and reassess processes and practices and implement changes to ensure that these targets are achieved.

Office of Medical Services Technical Guidelines

OMS recognizes that technical guidelines are established to provide comprehensive health services and preventive education to Volunteers. These guidelines provide for rigorous training requirements, licensing and certification, and performance standards for medical staff. They also establish critical guidelines for training and medical care for Volunteers. Finally, these policies ensure that screening guidelines are based on current research, best practices, and knowledge of the field, all of which are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Emergency Care

OMS provides medical evacuation and support to Volunteers who require medical and/or psychological care beyond what is available in-country. To achieve this, the medical staff conducts prompt field consults (within 48 hours) and responds to the immediate medical and emotional needs of the Volunteer or trainee in-country. Medevaced Volunteers also receive timely and quality medevac care, and, if appropriate, may return to their country of service.

Special Services for Volunteers

The Office of Special Services provides comprehensive services and training to Volunteers that advocate for and promote healthy emotional adaptation to their Peace Corps service. This is critical to ensuring that Volunteers have a positive and productive experience in-country and the support necessary to handle crises and challenging situations.

Safety and Security Personnel

The new Office of Safety and Security, in coordination with post-level and regional safety and security personnel, provides for a safety and security framework for Volunteers. This involves training in how to maintain one's safety while serving in a foreign country as well as assistance in addressing any safety related issues. When Volunteers feel adequately prepared and have access to guidance and assistance from safety and security staff, they are more likely to feel safe at home and at work.

Safety Policies

The safest and most secure Volunteer is one who is at site, well-known, accepted, and integrated into his or her community. This comes by learning the local language, the culture, working in a well-designed project, and staying close to host families. Safe Volunteers take responsibility for their own behavior and know how to minimize personal risks. The recent Volunteer survey indicates that these policies are being followed, and that most of the time, Volunteers feel safe where they live and work. The Peace Corps will, however, always continue to review and enhance its safety and security policies.

Outcome Goal 2.1

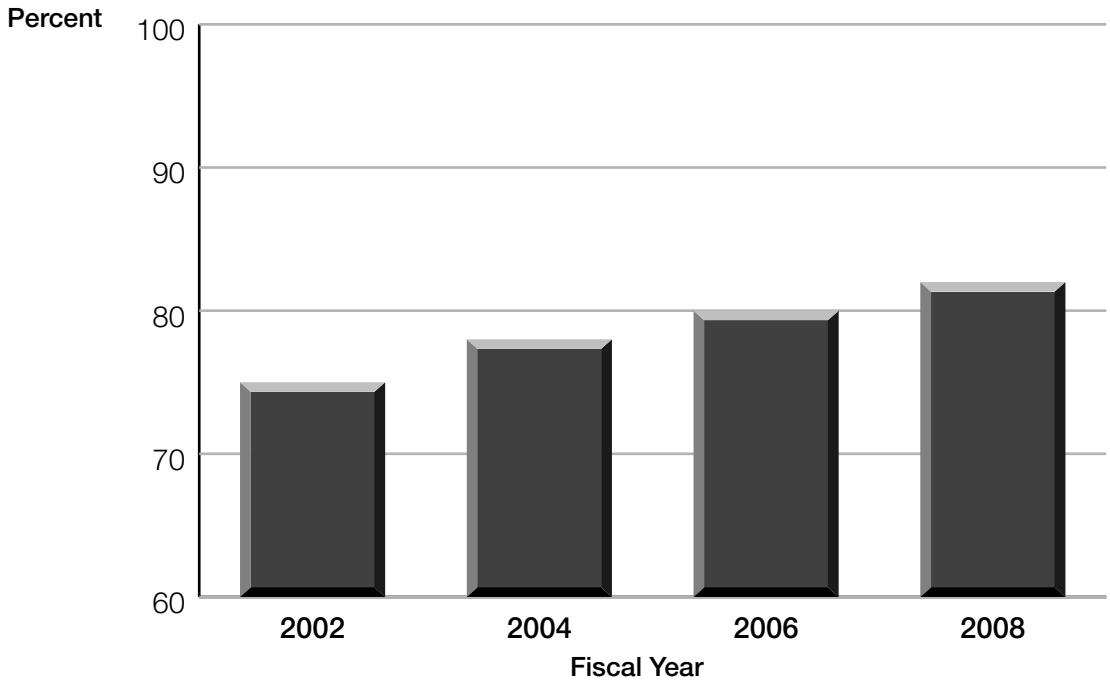
Increase the percentage of Volunteers indicating feeling "well" or "completely" satisfied with their in-country health care from the FY 2002 level of 75% to 82% by FY 2008.

Performance Goal

2.1.1 Incrementally increase the percentage of respondents to the biennial Peace Corps Volunteer Survey indicating feeling "well" or "completely" satisfied with their in-country health care.

- 2.1.1.1 75% Volunteers' satisfaction rate on their health care by FY 2002.
- 2.1.1.2 78% Volunteers' satisfaction rate on their health care by FY 2004.
- 2.1.1.3 80% Volunteers' satisfaction rate on their health care by FY 2006.
- 2.1.1.4 82% Volunteers' satisfaction rate on their health care by FY 2008.

Figure: Projected increase in the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteers indicating feeling "well" or "completely" satisfied with their in-country health care, FY 2002–2008



Outcome Goal 2.2

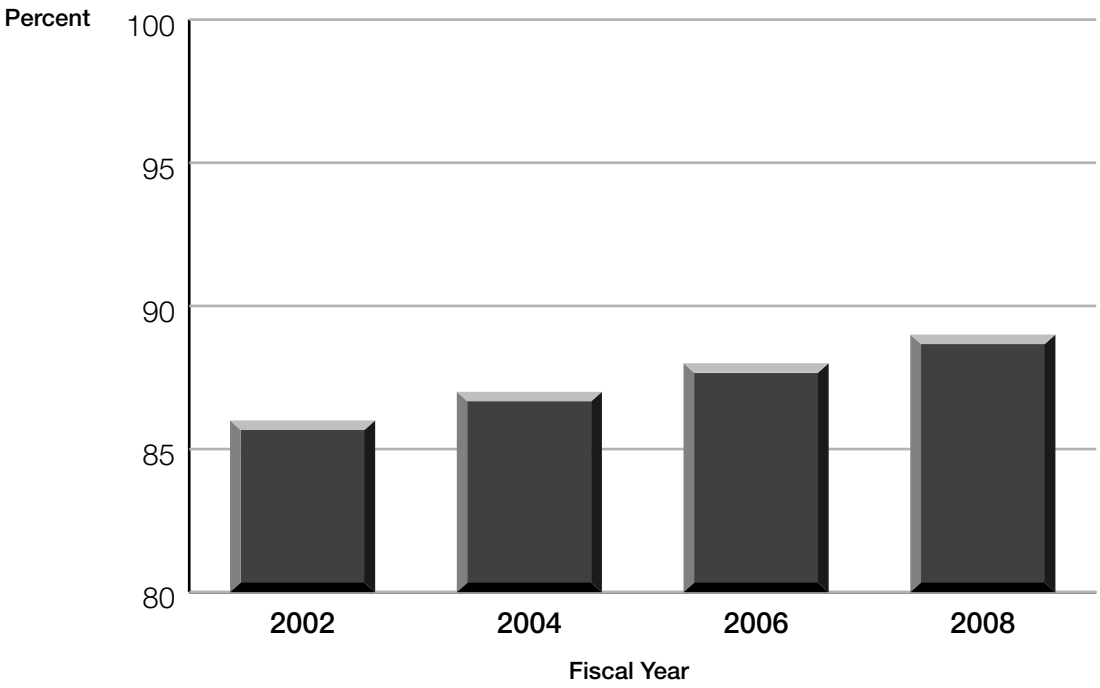
Increase the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteer Survey responses indicating that Volunteers feel safe most of the time where they live from the FY 2002 level of 86% to 89% by FY 2008.

Performance Goal

2.2.1 Incrementally increase the percentage of respondents to the biennial Peace Corps Volunteer Survey indicating that Volunteers feel safe most of the time at home.

- 2.2.1.1 86% of the Volunteers feel safe most of the time where they live by FY 2002.
- 2.2.1.2 87% of the Volunteers feel safe most of the time where they live by FY 2004.
- 2.2.1.3 88% of the Volunteers feel safe most of the time where they live by FY 2006.
- 2.2.1.4 89% of the Volunteers feel safe most of the time where they live by FY 2008.

Figure: Projected increase in the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteers indicating that they feel safe most of the time where they live, FY 2002–2008



STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Improve Americans' understanding of other peoples by increasing returned Peace Corps Volunteers' visits to schools and community organizations by 29%, from 7,000 in FY 2003 to 9,000 by FY 2008.

Strategy

The Peace Corps achieves its third goal of improving Americans' understanding of other peoples by providing opportunities and resources to RPCVs and educators to promote a better understanding among Americans about other cultures and other people around the world. The Peace Corps seeks to increase these opportunities by increasing the number of colleges and universities participating in the Fellows/USA programs. This goal is also achieved by ensuring that RPCVs have the information about and support they need to engage in third goal activities.

Outcome Goal 3.1

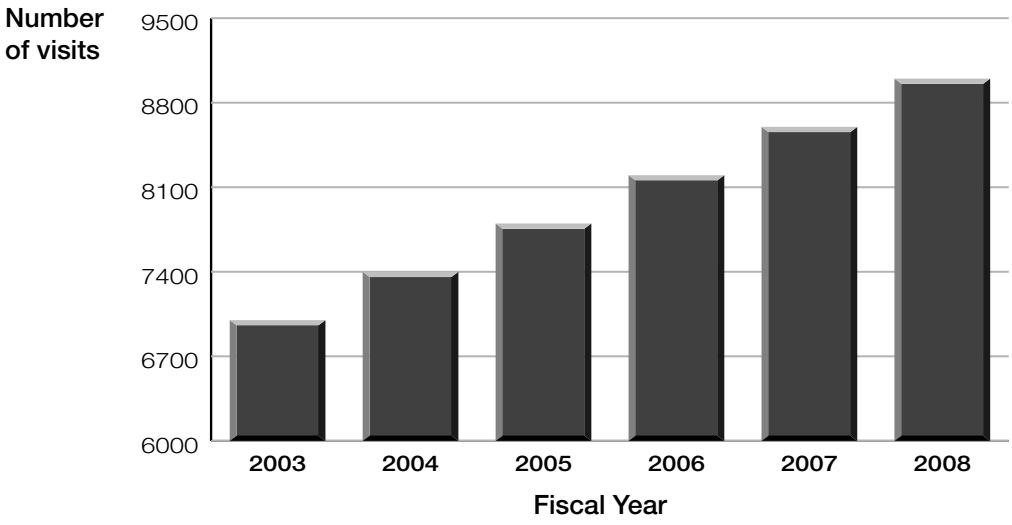
Increase the number of RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 29% from the FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 9,000 by FY 2008.

Performance Goal

3.1.1 Increase the number of RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 29% from the FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 9,000 by FY 2008.

- 3.1.1.1 Increase the number of RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 400 from the FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 7,400 in FY 2004.
- 3.1.1.2 Increase the number of RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 800 from the FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 7.800 in FY 2005.
- 3.1.1.3 Increase the number of RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 1,200 from the FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 8,200 in FY 2006.
- 3.1.1.4 Increase the number of RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 1,600 from the FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 8,600 in FY 2007.
- 3.1.1.5 Increase the number of RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 2,000 from the FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 9,000 in FY 2008.

Figure: Projected increase in the number of returned Peace Corps Volunteers' visits to schools and organizations, FY 2003–2008



STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Reduce the Peace Corps' overall response time for those applying to the Peace Corps by 5% from 223 days in FY 2003 to 212 days by FY 2008.

Strategy

The application process to become a Volunteer can be lengthy and efforts are being made to reduce the application time. However, because the Peace Corps must determine if a potential Volunteer would be suited for two years of service overseas, it must assess each applicant thoroughly. These assessments include medical and psychological screenings as well as comprehensive skills assessments. In order to streamline this process and reduce the application time, the following areas are being targeted for enhancement.

Application Redesign and Use of Online Application Forms

Online applications have increased dramatically and currently comprise over 75 percent of all applications. The agency is continually reviewing opportunities for more efficiencies and greater user compatibility.

Medical Screening

OMS and Volunteer Recruitment and Selection (VRS) have established regionally based medical screening and placement teams to better identify matches between future Volunteers and potential countries. They have reviewed the mental health screening process to reduce screening time; clarified mental health guidelines so screening nurses can make most decisions without mental health care professionals; reduced the number of mental health reviews per applicant; and moved alcohol and drug suitability determinations to VRS. In addition, the redesign of the health status review form and its availability online have significantly reduced the processing time.

Enterprise Architecture

The CIO has worked closely with VRS to prioritize new software and hardware requirements for the Volunteer delivery system. This review has included: updated activity models; data models; organizational interfaces; and information exchanges that make the application process more efficient and less labor intensive.

Outcome Goal 4.1

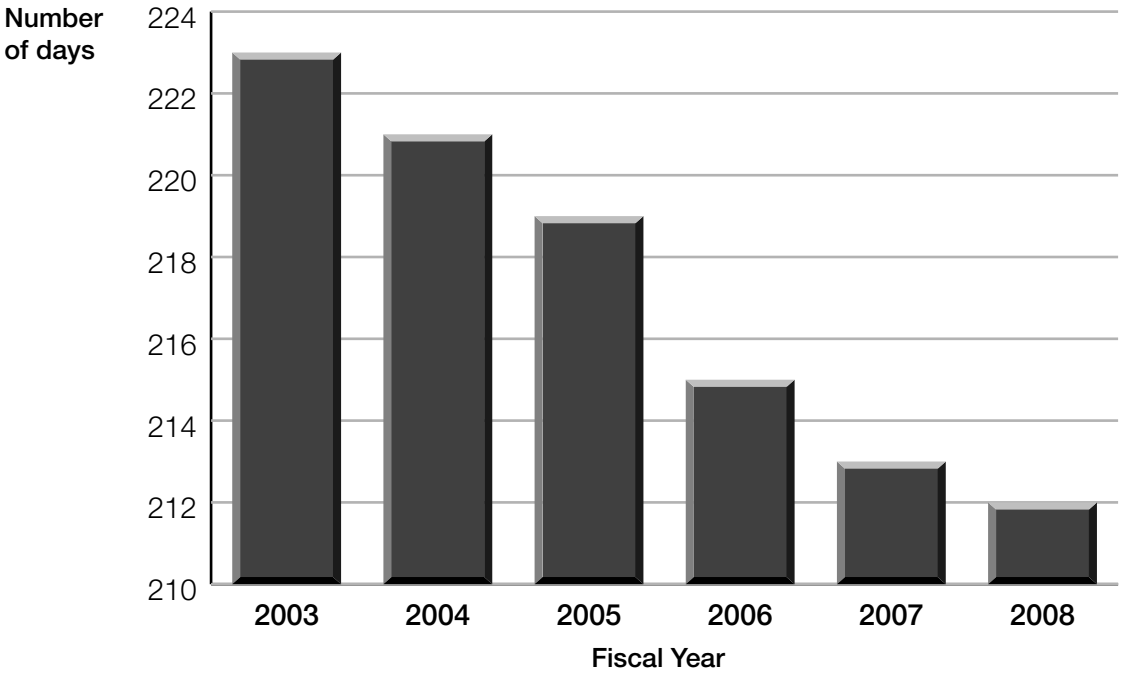
Reduce overall Peace Corps applicant response time by 5% by September 2008 through evaluation and integration of new technology and recruitment and placement of staff structures.

Performance Goal

4.1.1 Reduce overall response time to applicants by 5% from FY 2003 level of 223 days to 212 days by FY 2008.

- 4.1.1.1 Reduce overall response time to applicants by 1% (to 221 days) by FY 2004.
- 4.1.1.2 Reduce overall response time to applicants by 2% (to 219 days) by FY 2005.
- 4.1.1.3 Reduce overall response time to applicants by 3% (to 215 days) by FY 2006.
- 4.1.1.4 Reduce overall response time to applicants by 4% (to 213 days) by FY 2007.
- 4.1.1.5 Reduce overall response time to applicants by 5% (to 212 days) by FY 2008.

Figure: Projected reduction in the Peace Corps' response time to applicants, FY 2003–2008



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Budget Information

Peace Corps Appropriations Language

For necessary expenses to carry out the provisions of the Peace Corps Act (75 Stat. 612), including the purchase of not to exceed five passenger motor vehicles for administrative purposes for use outside of the United States, $345,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2007: Provided, That none of the funds appropriated under this heading shall be used to pay for abortions: Provided further, That the Director may transfer to the Foreign Currency Fluctuations Account, as authorized by 22 U.S.C. 2515, an amount not to exceed $2,000,000 in funds in excess of the needs of the Peace Corps overseas operations as a result of fluctuations in foreign currency exchange rates or changes in overseas wages and prices (Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Act, 2005)

Peace Corps FY 2006 Budget Request by Program Operations

(in thousands of dollars)

Direct Volunteer Operations

	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Estimate	FY 2006 Request
Overseas Operational Management			
Africa	62,450	66,937	68,669
Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia	43,692	46,453	50,055
Inter-America and Pacific	52,289	56,200	57,275
Crisis Corps	638	933	941
United Nations Volunteers	168	111	112
Subtotal, Overseas Operational Management	**159,238**	**170,634**	**177,053**
Overseas Operational Support			
Volunteer Support Operations	6,847	7,390	8,112
Federal Employees' Compensation Act	10,923	10,482	10,701
Medical Services Centrally Shared Resources	14,024	13,706	14,080
The Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research	5,684	6,081	6,659
Volunteer Recruitment and Selection	14,275	14,621	15,501
Private Sector Initiatives	607	602	626
Centrally Processed Overseas Equipment and Supplies	2,878	5,208	4,887
International Financial Operations	2,966	2,790	2,981
Volunteer Readjustment Allowance	21,065	20,899	21,110
Reimbursements to Department of State	5,669	6,912	8,148
Subtotal, Overseas Operational Support	**84,938**	**88,690**	**92,807**
SUBTOTAL, DIRECT VOLUNTEER OPERATIONS	**244,175**	**259,324**	**269,859**

Volunteer Operations Support Services

Third Goal Programs			
World Wise Schools	562	654	677
University Programs	340	641	696
Returned Volunteer Services	865	682	696
Subtotal, Third Goal Programs	**1,767**	**1,977**	**2,069**
Agency Administration			
Director's Office, General Counsel, Congressional & Press	4,195	5,441	5,480
Communications	1,946	2,379	2,440
Safety and Security	1,819	2,018	2,080
Office of Planning, Budget and Finance	9,593	11,257	12,465
OPBF Centrally Managed Resources	1,635	1,712	1,752
Acquisitions & Contracts	1,085	1,567	1,590
Office of the Chief Information Officer	7,178	8,402	8,994
Information Technology Centrally Managed Resources	10,660	11,153	16,196
Office of Management	4,319	4,932	5,489
Office of Management Centrally Managed Resources	13,674	13,337	13,683
Inspector General	2,460	2,862	2,955
Subtotal, Agency Administration	**58,565**	**65,061**	**73,123**
SUBTOTAL, VOLUNTEER OPERATIONS SUPPORT SVCS	**60,332**	**67,037**	**75,192**

	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Estimate	FY 2006 Request
GRAND TOTAL AGENCY	**304,507**	**326,361**	**345,052**
APPROPRIATED RESOURCES	310,000	320,000	345,000
RESCISSION	-1,829	-2,560	
TOTAL ENACTED	**308,171**	**317,440**	**345,000**
UNOBLIGATED BALANCE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	2,880	8,736	0
UNOBLIGATED BALANCE FROM EMERGENCY FUND	2,132	132	0
TOTAL APPROPRIATED RESOURCES	**313,183**	**326,308**	**345,000**
MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES	853	853	853
RESERVE FOR UNRECORDED OBLIGATIONS	-661	-800	-800
EST UNOBLIGATED BALANCE EMERGENCY FUND	-132	0	0
ESTIMATED UNOBLIGATED BALANCE AT END OF YEAR	-8,736	0	0
TOTAL AVAILABLE BUDGETARY RESOURCES	**304,507**	**326,361**	**345,052**

(Details may not add due to rounding.)

Description of the Peace Corps' Operational Areas

Direct Volunteer Operations

Overseas Operational Management

Regional Operations

Overseas operations are organized and administered through a regional structure composed of three offices: Africa; Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia; and Inter-America and the Pacific. These offices provide general oversight and direction to Peace Corps country programs, or posts. Post budgets include Volunteer allowances (living, settling-in, and leave), training for Volunteers, in-country travel for Volunteers and staff, return travel for Volunteers, and in-country medical costs, including the health unit. Before qualifying to serve as a Volunteer, a trainee must participate in a pre-service training of 10 to 12 weeks. This training includes intensive language instruction, cross-cultural training, technical skill enhancement, and training in personal health and safety. Most of the time, this training is contiguous. However, in some situations, a split pre-service training is preferred in which technical skills are enhanced and more detailed training provided shortly after Volunteers have had thorough exposure to their actual work sites. Volunteers also receive training during their service to increase their job effectiveness and satisfaction.

In addition, overseas budgets cover the costs of maintaining the posts: local staff, rents, communications, utilities, supplies, and equipment. They also cover the costs to headquarters of managing overseas operations. These costs include salaries and benefits of overseas American and headquarters' regional staff, assignment travel for staff and Volunteers, and certain pre-service training costs borne by headquarters.

Crisis Corps

The Crisis Corps sends extending and former Volunteers on short-term assignments to assist with disaster relief and humanitarian response efforts.

United Nations Volunteers

The Peace Corps participates in the United Nations Volunteer program by recruiting American Volunteers and providing them with some financial and logistical support.

Overseas Operational Support

Volunteer Support

This office provides medical support for Volunteers, medical screening oversight for applicants, and initial and ongoing training for medical contractors.

Safety and Security Division

This division, part of the Office of Safety and Security established in 2002, and formerly part of Volunteer Support Operations, coordinates all efforts to ensure the safety of Volunteers worldwide. Costs include support of regional safety and security officers posted overseas, monitoring compliance with agency policies, and development of programs and materials to train Volunteers in maintaining their safety.

FECA

Under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act, the Peace Corps reimburses the Department of Labor for disability payments and medical costs for returned Volunteers and staff who experience service-related injuries or sickness. A vast majority of these costs relate to Volunteers' claims; staff claims are a very small proportion.

Medical Services Centrally Shared Resources

These are direct Volunteer medical expenses, including care and travel for medical evacuations and the costs of pre- and post-service physical examinations.

The Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research

This office supports programming and training in the field. It identifies and disseminates best practices in Volunteer programs and training, collects and analyzes data from Peace Corps projects, applies technology to the promotion of innovation and learning, manages partnerships and reimbursable agreements with other agencies, provides training and development opportunities to overseas field staff, and manages the pre-departure orientation Volunteers receive in the United States before leaving for overseas pre-service training.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

This office oversees the recruitment of Volunteers through 11 offices across the United States. It assesses the technical and personal skills of applicants and matches qualified persons to specific Volunteer projects. Applicants go through a multifaceted and competitive screening process that includes interviews, evaluations, and reference checks.

Private Sector Initiatives

This office manages private sector funds and in-kind contributions received by the Peace Corps. These funds are used to support Volunteer projects.

International Financial Operations

This division of the Office of Planning, Budget, and Finance provides direct financial management support to overseas posts.

Centrally Processed Overseas Equipment and Supplies

Overseen by the Office of Management, this account funds the purchase of vehicles for overseas Volunteer support and supplies for Volunteers such as medical kits, eyeglasses, and mosquito nets.

Volunteer Readjustment Allowance

An allowance of $225 per month of service is provided to Volunteers upon termination of service to assist them when they return to the United States.

Reimbursements to the Department of State (ICASS)

These are payments the Peace Corps makes to the Department of State for administrative support. Some financial management support is also included here, although the Peace Corps has directly provided most financial management support to its overseas posts since the end of fiscal year 1998.

Volunteer Operations Support Services

Third Goal Programs

Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools

This program allows current and former Peace Corps Volunteers to share their overseas experiences with American schoolchildren and young adults. Nearly 3 million students in all 50 states have communicated directly with Volunteers serving in 100 countries since the program's inception in 1989.

Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program

This program is a public-private partnership that provides graduate fellowships to returned Volunteers who make a commitment to serve in degree-related internships in local, underserved U.S. communities.

Returned Volunteer Services

This office assists Volunteers with the readjustment process when they return to the United States by providing job and other practical information. It also serves as a liaison with private returned Volunteer groups and with Peace Corps offices that collaborate with former Volunteers.

Agency Administration

Director's Office, General Counsel, Congressional Relations, Compliance Officer, and Press Office

These offices provide general policy direction, legal advice, and compliance verification to the agency. They also coordinate all external communication and serve as a liaison to Congress and other federal agencies. The Director's Office also includes the American Diversity Program and the Office of Planning, Policy, and Analysis.

Office of Communications

This office manages all official internal communications, marketing and advertising, video production and photography, the external website, and agency publications. In addition, the office produces recruitment tools that support the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection.

Office of Planning, Budget, and Finance

This office maintains the financial planning, oversight, and internal controls necessary to ensure that the agency operates in a fiscally sound manner.

Office of Planning, Budget, and Finance Centrally Managed Resources

These resources are primarily for staff costs such as unemployment compensation, severance pay, terminal leave payments, and overseas staff medical evacuation.

Acquisitions and Contracts

This office is responsible for agency procurement policies and procedures, ensuring compliance with the Federal Acquisition Regulations and the Peace Corps Act. It provides technical guidance and advice to agency staff worldwide on procurement matters and handles all procurement actions for domestic offices.

Office of Management

This office provides administrative support for headquarters, U.S. field, and international operations through its offices of Human Resource Management and Administrative Services.

Office of Management Centrally Managed Resources

These funds include General Services Administration rent for headquarters and domestic recruiting offices, employee MetroPool benefits, mail services, and building maintenance and security services.

Office of the Chief Information Officer

This office provides leadership for and management of the development and application of information technology resources and methodologies in support of the Peace Corps' mission at headquarters, U.S. regional offices, and overseas posts. It serves as the primary source of information technology advice and counsel to the agency director.

Information Technology Centrally Managed Resources

These funds include the costs of telecommunications, data center operations, mainframe and distributed computing environments, disaster recovery, and enterprise information architecture.

Inspector General

This office fulfills the mandates of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

Peace Corps Authorizations and Appropriations FY 1962–FY 2006

(thousands of dollars)

Fiscal Year	Authorized	Budget Request[a/]	Appropriated[a/]	Trainee Input	Volunteers and Trainees On Board[b/]
1962	$40,000	$40,000	$30,000	3,699	N/A
1963	63,750	63,750	59,000 [c/]	4,969	N/A
1964	102,000	108,000	95,964 [c/]	7,720	N/A
1965	115,000	115,000	104,100 [c/]	7,876	N/A
1966	115,000	125,200	114,000	9,216	N/A
1967	110,000	110,500	110,000	7,565	N/A
1968	115,700	124,400	107,500	7,391	N/A
1969	112,800	112,800	102,000	6,243	N/A
1970	98,450	109,800	98,450	4,637	N/A
1971	94,500	98,800	90,000	4,686	N/A
1972	77,200	71,200	72,500	3,997	6,632
1973	88,027	88,027	81,000	4,821	6,194
1974	77,000	77,000	77,000	4,886	6,489
1975	82,256	82,256	77,687	3,296	6,652
1976	88,468	80,826	81,266	3,291	5,825
Transition Qtr	27,887	25,729	24,190	—	—
1977	81,000	67,155	80,000	4,180 [d/]	5,590
1978	87,544	74,800	86,234	3,715	6,017
1979	112,424	95,135	99,179	3,327	5,723
1980	105,000	105,404	99,924	3,108	5,097
1981	118,531	118,800	105,531	2,729	4,863
1982	105,000	121,900	105,000	2,862	4,559
1983	105,000	97,500	109,000	2,988	4,668
1984	115,000	108,500	115,000	2,781	4,779
1984/5 Supp	2,000	2,000	2,000	—	—
1985	128,600	115,000	128,600	3,430	4,828
1986	130,000	124,400	124,410 [e/]	2,597	5,162
1987	137,200	126,200	130,760	2,774	4,771
1987/8 Supp	7,200	—	7,200	—	—
1988	146,200	130,682	146,200	3,360	4,611
1989	153,500	150,000	153,500	3,218	5,214
1990	165,649	163,614	165,649 [f/]	3,092	5,241
1991	186,000	181,061	186,000	3,076	4,691
1992	—	200,000	197,044	3,309	4,927
1993	218,146	218,146	218,146	3,590	5,414
1994	219,745 [g/]	219,745	219,745 [h/]	3,541	5,644
1995	234,000	226,000	219,745 [i/ j/]	3,954	5,884
1996	—	234,000	205,000 [k/ m/]	3,280	6,086
1997	—	220,000 [l/]	208,000 [n/]	3,607	5,858
1998	—	222,000	222,000 [o/]	3,551	5,757
1999	—	270,335	240,000 [p/]	3,835	5,729
2000	270,000 [q/]	270,000	245,000 [r/]	3,919	7,164
2001	298,000	275,000	267,007 [s/ t/]	3,191	6,643
2002	327,000	275,000	278,700 [u/ v/]	4,047 [w/]	6,636
2003	365,000	317,000	297,000 [x/]	4,411	7,533
2004	—	359,000	310,000 [y/]	3,812	7,733
2005	—	401,000	320,000 [z/]	4,019 est.	7,803 est.
2006	—	345,000		4,283 est.	7,850 est.

NOTES:

a/ Starting in FY 1992, funds to remain available for two years.

b/ For FY 1972 through FY 1999, this is the average number of Volunteers throughout the year. For FY 2000 through FY 2004, this is the number of trainees and Volunteers on board on 30 September of the fiscal year, including Crisis Corps and United Nations Volunteers.

c/ Includes reappropriated funds in 1963 ($3.864 million), 1964 ($17 million) and 1965 ($12.1 million).

d/ Includes Trainee Input from Transition Quarter.

e/ Excludes $5.59 million sequestered under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177).

f/ Excludes $2.24 million sequestered under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (P.L. 99-177) and a $725 thousand reduction related to the Drug Initiative (P.L. 101-167).

g/ Authorization included report language of a $15 million transfer to the Peace Corps from assistance funds for the Newly Independent States (NIS).

h/ In addition, the Peace Corps received a transfer of $12.5 million for assistance to the NIS.

i/ In addition, the Peace Corps received a transfer of $11.6 million for assistance to the NIS.

j/ Appropriation of $219,745 thousand was later reduced by a rescission of $721 thousand.

k/ In addition, the Peace Corps received a transfer of $13 million for assistance to the NIS. An additional $1 million of NIS funds, intended for FY 1996, was received in FY 1997.

l/ In addition, the president requested a transfer of $5 million for assistance to the NIS.

m/ Appropriation of $205,000 thousand was later reduced by a rescission of $296 thousand.

n/ In addition, the Peace Corps received a transfer of $12 million for assistance to the NIS. An additional $1 million of NIS funds, originally intended for FY 1996 in addition to the $13 million received that year, was received in FY 1997.

o/ In addition, the Peace Corps received a base transfer of $3,581 thousand from the Department of State for the Peace Corps' participation in International Cooperative Administrative Support Services.

p/ Appropriation of $240,000 thousand was later reduced by a rescission of $594 thousand. In addition, the Peace Corps received a transfer of $1,269 thousand from Economic Support Funds for security; $7,500 thousand from the FY 1999 Emergency Appropriations Act ($7,000 thousand for security and $500 thousand related to the Kosovo conflict); $6,000 thousand from the Central American and Caribbean Disaster Recovery Fund; and $1,554 thousand from the Business Continuity and Contingency Planning Fund for Y2K preparedness.

q/ Four-year authorization bill by Congress, FY 2000 of $270M, FY 2001 of $298M, FY 2002 of $327M and FY 2003 of $365M.

r/ Appropriation of $245,000 thousand was reduced by a rescission of $931 thousand.

s/ Appropriation of $265,000 thousand was reduced by a rescission of $583 thousand.

t/ The Peace Corps received a transfer of $2,590 thousand of Emergency Response Fund monies in support of program evacuations in four countries and the relocation of the New York City regional recruiting office.

u/ The Peace Corps received a transfer of $3,900 thousand of Emergency Response Fund monies in support of potential future evacuations.

v/ Appropriation of $275,000 thousand was reduced by a rescission of $200 thousand.

w/ Due to the September 11th events, the departure of 417 trainees was delayed from late FY 2001 to early FY 2002.

x/ Appropriation of $297,000 thousand was reduced by a rescission of $1,930.5 thousand. OMB later reallocated $1,200 thousand in Emergency Response Fund monies from the Peace Corps to another U.S. government agency.

y/ Appropriation of $310,000 thousand was reduced by a rescission of $1,829 thousand. The Peace Corps received a transfer of $1,131 thousand to implement activities under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

z/ Appropriation of $320,000 thousand was reduced by a rescission of $2,560 thousand.

Safety and Security: The Overarching Priority

"If there ever was a time that we need to advance the ideal of peace and friendship and promote an understanding of Americans, that time is now. Yet, as we make great strides, we must remain ever vigilant that safety and security be the number one priority of the Peace Corps. I suspect that those volunteers who served some years ago would note a significant difference in the Peace Corps of today. It's substantial. It's momentous. We have implemented many new systems, processes and programs to encourage the volunteers to put into practice conduct, behaviors, and personal habits — where they live and where they work — to ensure that they achieve a safe and secure experience. As we move forward, the Peace Corps will continue to do whatever it takes to make the volunteer experience as productive, meaningful and safe as possible."

Gaddi H. Vasquez
Peace Corps Director

Safety Partnerships

Maximizing the safety and security of Volunteers is the top priority of the Peace Corps. Because Volunteers serve at the grass-roots level worldwide, in urban centers, very remote areas, and everything in-between, health and safety risks are an inherent part of Volunteer service. Peace Corps staff and Volunteers work together to create a framework that safeguards Volunteers' well-being to the greatest extent possible, enabling Volunteers to carry out the Peace Corps' mission. The Peace Corps takes responsibility for ensuring that safety and security information is fully incorporated in all aspects of Volunteer recruitment, training, and service and that safety and security policies and training curricula are adjusted as situations change. Volunteers do their part by taking personal responsibility for their behavior at all times and by integrating successfully into their host communities. Volunteers can also reduce risks by following recommendations for locally appropriate behavior, exercising sound judgment, and abiding by Peace Corps' policies and procedures.

The U.S. embassy is an integral part of each Peace Corps post's network for maintaining safety and security. Each Peace Corps country director is a regular participant in weekly country team meetings and a member of the embassy's emergency action committee, which meets as often as necessary during emergency situations.

The country director also communicates regularly with the embassy's regional security officer. This officer represents the U.S. government's interests in any safety and security situation and is the first line of contact with local law enforcement offices. The regional security officer reviews with the country director any situation that is deemed of importance to the Peace Corps as well as any travel advisories or other issues of concern.

Office of Safety and Security

While all Peace Corps staff members—domestic and overseas—play a role in promoting the safety and security of Volunteers, coordination of these activities falls primarily to the Peace Corps Office of Safety and Security, which was established in 2002. This office fosters improved communication, coordination, oversight, and accountability for all the Peace Corps safety and security efforts. The Office of Safety and Security is involved with the training and mentoring of safety and security coordinators at each post, collecting and analyzing data related to Volunteer safety, emergency preparedness planning, and training for domestic and overseas operations, and the activities of the regionally based Peace Corps safety and security officers. There are currently nine regional safety security officers with subregional responsibilities.

The Office of Safety and Security tracks and analyzes information related to the safety of Volunteers on an ongoing basis. The office employs a research psychologist to develop protocols for reporting violence and other crimes against Volunteers and to compile and analyze the data that are received. The data analysis is used to enhance existing policies and procedures or to develop new ones as needed. Improvements in safety reporting have allowed the Peace Corps to identify associated risk factors (time of day, location, alcohol use, modes of transportation, etc.) and to develop strategies to help Volunteers address these factors. Throughout this process, pertinent information is provided to recruiters and discussed in Volunteer application materials, in informational booklets and educational videos, in a two-day pre-departure orientation, and as part of in-country training for all Volunteers.

Finally, the Office of Safety and Security publishes an annual Volunteer safety report that provides summary statistics on all assault events against Volunteers for each calendar year as well as information on historical trends in the three Peace Corps regions. The twofold objective of the publication is to identify and analyze trends in safety conditions among in-service Volunteers; and to provide useful feedback on the noted trends to support the safety and security training and education of Volunteers and staff.

Volunteer Safety Training

The safest and most secure Volunteers are those who take personal responsibility for their behavior and who are often at their sites, well-known in their communities, integrated into the culture, able to speak the local language, work on well-designed projects, and reside with or close to host families. The Peace Corps, therefore, takes an integrated approach to Volunteer training. Through language, cross-cultural, and health and safety instruction, Volunteers learn about their new environment and are shown how to effectively cope with the many challenges they will face. They are also given the tools to adopt a safe and appropriate lifestyle and instruction about Peace Corps' policies and procedures and their responsibility to abide by these. Throughout pre-service and in-service training (which is provided regularly during their entire tour of service), Volunteers develop skills and receive information that help them understand their surroundings, cope with unwanted attention, and develop personal safety strategies.

Assessing the Safety of Peace Corps Countries

A thorough safety and security assessment is conducted for every country that the Peace Corps considers entering. A team from the Peace Corps composed of representatives from several offices previews work and housing sites to assess the ability of the Peace Corps to provide a safe, secure, healthy, and productive environment for Volunteers. Representatives from other government agencies and organizations also help the Peace Corps assess safety and security conditions, potentially including:

- The U.S. Department of State's Office of Diplomatic Security
- The U.S. Department of State's regional security officer in-country
- The ambassador and other embassy officials
- Local and national police

- United Nations agencies in-country
- Other nations' volunteer organizations
- Humanitarian relief agencies

Peace Corps in-country staff is responsible for assessing the availability of safe and secure housing and work sites in the communities where Volunteers will be placed. Site selection is based on established safety and security criteria that reflect consideration of site history; access to medical, banking, postal, and other essential services; access to communication, transportation, and local markets; availability of adequate housing and living arrangements; and the potential for obtaining and maintaining the acceptance and consent of host country authorities and the population at large. Peace Corps program managers and medical staff members visit Volunteers periodically at their sites to monitor the continued suitability of site assignments. If a Volunteer's safety or well-being is at risk or compromised, Peace Corps staff tries to resolve the situation or move the Volunteer to another location.

Emergency Communications and Planning

Volunteers typically live and work in communities at some distance from the Peace Corps office. Volunteers are expected to stay in touch with the Peace Corps office on a regular basis. They are required to report their whereabouts when they travel away from their sites and to receive the Peace Corps' authorization if they intend to leave the country for any reason.

The Peace Corps addresses larger security concerns through country-specific emergency action plans. These plans, developed to address serious events such as natural disasters or civil unrest, set forth the strategies developed by each Peace Corps country to prepare for, respond to, and recover from such crises. The Peace Corps works closely with the U.S. embassy to share information, develop strategies, and coordinate communications in a crisis. If a decision is made to evacuate Volunteers from a country, the Peace Corps commits every available resource to safely move them and staff members out of harm's way.

In 2003, the Peace Corps established a fully equipped "situation room" dedicated to the handling of emergencies as they arise. The room, located at headquarters, includes computer access to emergency contact information and descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of emergency task force members. Staff training for handling emergencies is ongoing, using material drawn from the Peace Corps' extensive experience with emergency situations and the agency's *Evacuation Support Guide.* A "virtual situation room" containing emergency information is available through the agency's Intranet both to those in the situation room and to those at certain outside locations. These redundant communication systems enable the agency to provide uninterrupted support of post operations in an emergency at headquarters. The facility was used on numerous occasions in FY 2004—from the evacuation of Volunteers in Haiti due to civil unrest to the monitoring of the series of hurricanes that hit the Caribbean islands.

"Peace Corps volunteers are examples of the great compassion of our Nation… Your selfless efforts to bridge cultures, to promote education, health, and economic opportunity, and to strengthen ties of goodwill among the poorest of the world contribute to a more hopeful future for all."

Holiday Message to Peace Corps Volunteers
December 2004
President George W. Bush

The Volunteer

Program Priorities: How Peace Corps Volunteers Serve Around the Globe

Volunteers are the heart of the Peace Corps program. They learn to appreciate a community's cultural traditions, speak the local language, respond to a community's needs, and are involved in a wide variety of host country projects. Peace Corps' work worldwide falls into six general sectors: agriculture, business development, education, environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth. Additionally, Volunteers do meaningful work in information and communication technology (ICT), and Women in Development and Gender and Development (WID-GAD) which often occurs as part of the projects in the six program sectors described below. A discussion of each sector's work objectives and examples of Volunteer activities follow.

Agriculture

Food security and poverty remain enduring challenges in communities where Volunteers work. Natural disasters, regional conflicts, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic increase the urgency of critical rural food and livelihood security issues. Peace Corps Volunteers work with communities to improve the availability and variety of agriculture products, establish and manage related enterprises, and adopt sustainable agricultural practices to protect the fragile resource base. Peace Corps projects in this sector focus on:

- identifying critical issues and solutions through participatory community analysis;
- providing extension services alongside government agents and nongovernmental organization (NGO) staff;
- helping farm families establish demonstration plots;
- training leader-farmers and extension agents to develop, utilize, and disseminate successful farming practices; and
- assisting local government institutions and NGOs with technical issues.

Agriculture Volunteers enhance the sustainability of their efforts by living and working in rural communities and concentrating on building capacity among local groups. They work with service providers in local NGOs and government agencies, cooperative and producer associations, and with schoolchildren and men and women in the farm communities they serve. Currently, Volunteers and their counterparts are:

- improving traditional field-crop systems by introducing farmers to better practices and technologies, such as new soil conservation techniques, crop diversification and agroforestry strategies;
- expanding the availability and acceptance of nontraditional crops by promoting and strengthening vegetable gardening and fruit tree production while raising awareness about the nutritional value of the foods produced;
- increasing knowledge and skills needed for small-animal husbandry, such as poultry, rabbits, fish, and honey production; and
- helping producers increase the value of agricultural products through improved storage, greater distribution, and more effective management and marketing.

During FY 2004, Almost 500 agriculture Volunteers provided agricultural assistance through 16 projects.

Business Development

Projects in the business development sector seek to alleviate poverty by increasing the capacity of people and microenterprises to access opportunities and resources. Volunteer activities help strengthen business development, microfinance institutions, NGOs, and municipal governments. Peace Corps business development projects contribute to sustainable economic development by:

- expanding activities in ICT;
- conducting market assessments for product and services;
- providing relevant technical training to counterparts and local business personnel; and
- building capacity of organizations and service providers through stronger collaborative practices; and
- strengthening ecotourism.

Peace Corps business Volunteers often work in transitional economies where economic factors such as inflation, currency devaluation and industry instability largely affect the livelihood of individuals. Volunteers provide non-financial technical assistance through business trainings and market linkages. They are sometimes placed with mayors' offices or in municipal offices, providing opportunities to work broadly within the community. Examples of Volunteer work in business projects include:

- training entrepreneurs in marketing, business planning, and bookkeeping;
- helping artisan cooperatives market their handmade goods;
- advising women's groups about access to credit;
- educating young people to enter the workforce and participate in the market economy;
- helping businesses find markets for traditional and value-added products;
- teaching financial management to NGOs; and
- working with specific ecotourism project planning through community-based resource management.

In FY 2004, more than 1,200 business development Volunteers helped strengthen the local economy through 39 projects.

Education

Education is critical for economic development and human advancement. Still, in much of the developing world, access to basic education is limited. Educational systems suffer from a lack of resources—both human and financial—and many students, particularly girls, are unable to attend school beyond the elementary level.

Education remains the Peace Corps' largest program sector; in truth, Volunteers in all sectors are to some extent "educators." Worldwide, education projects in the Peace Corps focus primarily on:

- building capacity by training teachers and mentoring counterparts;
- developing curricula and teaching materials;
- promoting community resource centers;
- teaching in subject areas such as math, science, English, special education, early childhood education, deaf education, and ICT;
- engaging in nonformal education activities, community development projects, parent-teacher organizations; and
- supporting adult education.

Governments are requesting the assistance of Peace Corps Volunteers with technological skills to help them participate in the 21st-century information age. New technologies are reaching the world's most remote communities and are providing tools for economic development. Schools with Internet access and community information centers that function like public libraries were unimaginable just a few years ago. Recognizing the significant need for technology training and the valuable contribution

Volunteers are making in this area, the Peace Corps has identified ICT in general, and computer skills specifically, as an ongoing high priority.

ICT can broaden access to education, make learning more interactive, provide teachers with access to classroom materials, and enable classrooms around the world to communicate and collaborate. Nearly half of all Peace Corps education projects integrate ICT into teaching and learning. Volunteers incorporated ICT into activities in education projects by:

- conducting computer training in a variety of ways to many different audiences;
- helping to develop websites and to use the Internet to improve lesson plans, classroom activities;
- promoting distance learning;
- working with radio stations to teach English and HIV/AIDS prevention; and
- utilizing television and video to help students and teachers improve English language skills.

Volunteers are making significant contributions in girls' education. They promote activities that help expand girls' educational opportunities in both formal and nonformal settings. Volunteers conduct summer leadership camps for girls, support community awareness of girls' achievements and potential, encourage girls' participation in the classroom, establish safe environments for after-school study, and organize career fairs for women. In FY 2004, more than 2,600 Volunteers in the education sector participated in 61 projects.

Environment

Volunteers working in environment projects help strengthen a community's ability to conserve and use natural resources in a sustainable manner. Peace Corps activities help to build stronger communities and increase local capacity by:

- developing environmental awareness and education activities and programs in communities and schools;
- demonstrating practices and techniques that slow or reverse the degradation of resources such as the soil, water, and forests;
- encouraging sustainable livelihood activities that generate income from renewable natural resources and provide alternatives to dependence on practices that weaken the environment; and
- promoting stronger community planning for the use and management of natural resources.

In many developing countries, people are directly dependent on their local environment, and its degradation can have enormous and unintended consequences on their livelihood. In the context of sustainable development, well-planned natural resource projects can work toward growing the economy while protecting the environment. In work related to environmental activities, Peace Corps Volunteers:

- teach classes in schools, conduct teacher training seminars, and develop curricula related to environmental topics;
- support nonformal environmental education, such as summer camps, eco-clubs, theater dramas, and celebration of international events such as Earth Day;
- help strengthen the management of community-based organizations and NGOs in protected areas;
- promote reforestation and soil and water conservation with individual land owners; and
- endorse specific ecotourism projects in newly defined protected areas.

Volunteers work primarily at the community grass-roots level focusing on human needs and sustainable alternatives. To strengthen understanding about the environment, Volunteers help communities make informed choices to protect precious natural resources. In FY 2004, more than 1,200 environment Volunteers participated in 40 projects worldwide.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Worldwide, 20 percent of all Peace Corps Volunteers are assigned in health and HIV/AIDS projects, and 60 percent of all Peace Corps projects incorporate some HIV/AIDS activities. In addition to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, more than 1 billion people around the world cannot obtain safe drinking water and more than 2 billion lack access to adequate sanitation facilities. To address these worldwide health problems, Volunteers serving in the health and HIV/AIDS sector promote:

- increased HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care;
- expanded peer education to urge youth and other groups to reduce risky behavior;
- expanded maternal and child health;
- enhanced health, nutrition, and hygiene education at the individual, family, and community level; and
- improved infectious disease prevention through improved water and sanitation services.

Volunteers urge the participation of individuals, families, and communities in activities to improve health. Examples of this Peace Corps work include:

- teaching, formally and informally, about HIV/AIDS prevention and care;
- promoting healthy lifestyles, especially for youth;
- supporting youth and orphan activities and care;
- providing nutrition and hygiene education classes in the community;
- assisting in maternal and child health clinics;
- strengthening NGO health delivery systems;
- constructing and managing water systems; and
- supporting community sanitation efforts.

No area of development remains safe from the impact of HIV/AIDS. The spreading pandemic has indelibly impacted individuals, families, communities, countries, and regions. Its long-term effects can already be seen in many developing countries. Schools have closed because teachers have died or are too sick to continue working. Traditional agriculture methodology cannot be passed from one generation to the next because parents die before their children are old enough to grasp the technical intricacies. Small businesses have failed and whole industries are suffering. Scarce health resources have been exhausted as AIDS patients occupy most of the beds. Peace Corps Volunteers have been responding to HIV- and AIDS-related issues since 1987. None of the Peace Corps sectors has remained untouched by the far-reaching implications of HIV/AIDS.

Volunteers are uniquely suited to work in HIV/AIDS prevention and education because they live and work in local communities and can present information in culturally sensitive ways. In addition, the Peace Corps is collaborating with the Department of State's Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator to support the U.S. government's worldwide HIV/AIDS care, prevention, and treatment commitment.

Each year, an increasing number of Volunteers are joining the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the Peace Corps plans to continue expanding its commitment to HIV/AIDS programs in FY 2005. In FY 2004, more than 1,500 Volunteers worked in 57 health and HIV/AIDS projects worldwide.

Youth

In many countries, young men and women between the ages of 10 and 24 constitute 40 percent or more of the population. Peace Corps youth projects and activities focus primarily on:

- family life and healthy lifestyles, including HIV/AIDS prevention;
- Sports, recreation, drama, and the arts;
- employment skills and the world of work;
- computer proficiency, technical vocational skills, entrepreneurial expertise; and
- literacy, leadership, and citizenship responsibility.

Critical issues affecting youth throughout the world include the enormous need for daily living skills for AIDS orphans and street children, improved employment skills for disenfranchised, out-of-school young men and women, and support to youth to help them avoid drugs and prostitution. Serving as mentors to young people and as counterparts in youth service organizations, Volunteers are uniquely positioned to provide learning opportunities to girls and boys at the grass-roots level. The overarching purpose of youth development work is to help young men and women maintain healthy lifestyles, and to prepare them for their roles in the world of work, in family life, and as good citizens.

The Peace Corps is responding to the growing demand for Volunteer activities that work with youth in positive ways through schools, sports, and clubs to:

- increase employability skill training;
- provide parenting training; and
- promote leadership and citizenship development.

Youth development projects continue to grow. During FY 2004, 231 youth development Volunteers worked in 22 projects worldwide.

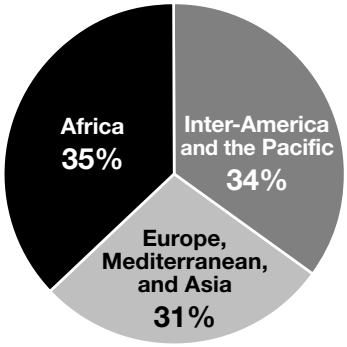
"We will only send abroad Americans who are wanted by the host country—who have a real job to do—and who are qualified to do that job. Programs will be developed with care, and after full negotiation, in order to make sure that the Peace Corps is wanted and will contribute to the welfare of other people."

President John F. Kennedy
March 1, 1961

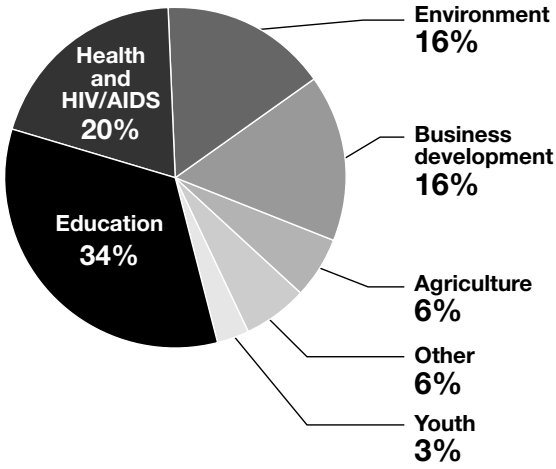
Volunteer Statistics

Volunteer Statistics

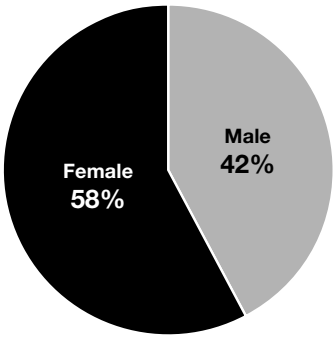
Volunteers by Region

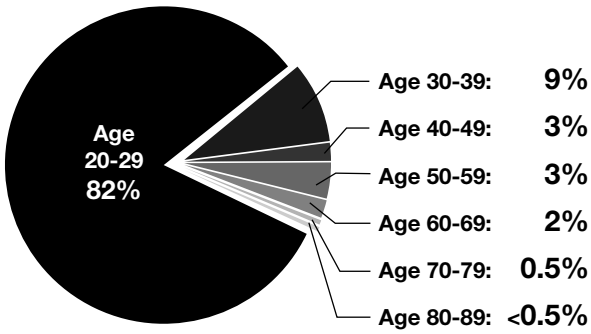


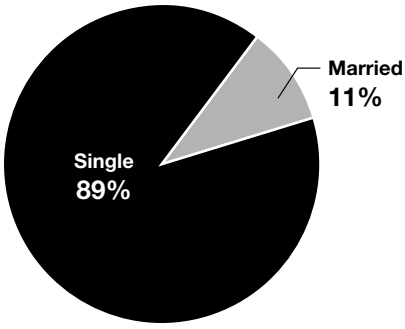
Volunteer Projects

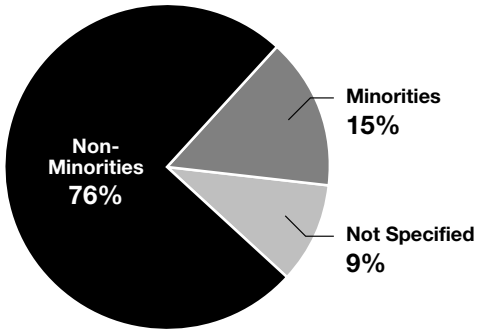


Volunteer Profile*









*Totals may not add to 100 percent because of rounding. Data current as of September 30, 2004.

Number of Peace Corps Volunteers Working in HIV/AIDS Activities FY 2004

AFRICA

Country	Volunteers
Benin	57
Botswana*	45
Burkina Faso	77
Cameroon	130
Cape Verde	39
Chad	14
Gabon	28
Ghana	80
Guinea	89
Kenya*	167
Lesotho	94
Madagascar	124
Malawi	80
Mali	63
Mauritania	79
Mozambique*	63
Namibia*	87
Niger	67
Senegal	59
South Africa*	85
Swaziland	56
Tanzania*	89
The Gambia	51
Togo	100
Uganda*	50
Zambia*	137
TOTAL	**2,010**

INTER-AMERICA AND THE PACIFIC

Country	Volunteers
Belize	14
Bolivia	6
Costa Rica	9
Dominican Republic	45
East Timor	2
Eastern Caribbean[1]	41
Ecuador	62
El Salvador	40
Fiji	13
Guatemala	14
Guyana*	62
Haiti*[2]	79
Honduras	96
Jamaica	56
Kiribati	18
Micronesia	4
Nicaragua	38
Panama	30
Paraguay	14
Peru	2
Samoa	48
Suriname	6
Tonga	5
Vanuatu	29
TOTAL	**733**

EUROPE, MEDITERRANEAN, AND ASIA

Country	Volunteers
Albania	3
Armenia	26
Bangladesh	6
Bulgaria	26
Georgia	1
Kazakhstan	13
Kyrgyz Republic	1
Macedonia	25
Moldova	71
Mongolia	27
Morocco	55
Phillipines	2
Nepal	22
Romania	2
Thailand	32
Turkmenistan	11
Ukraine	12
Uzbekistan	28
TOTAL	**363**

Grand Total: **3,106**

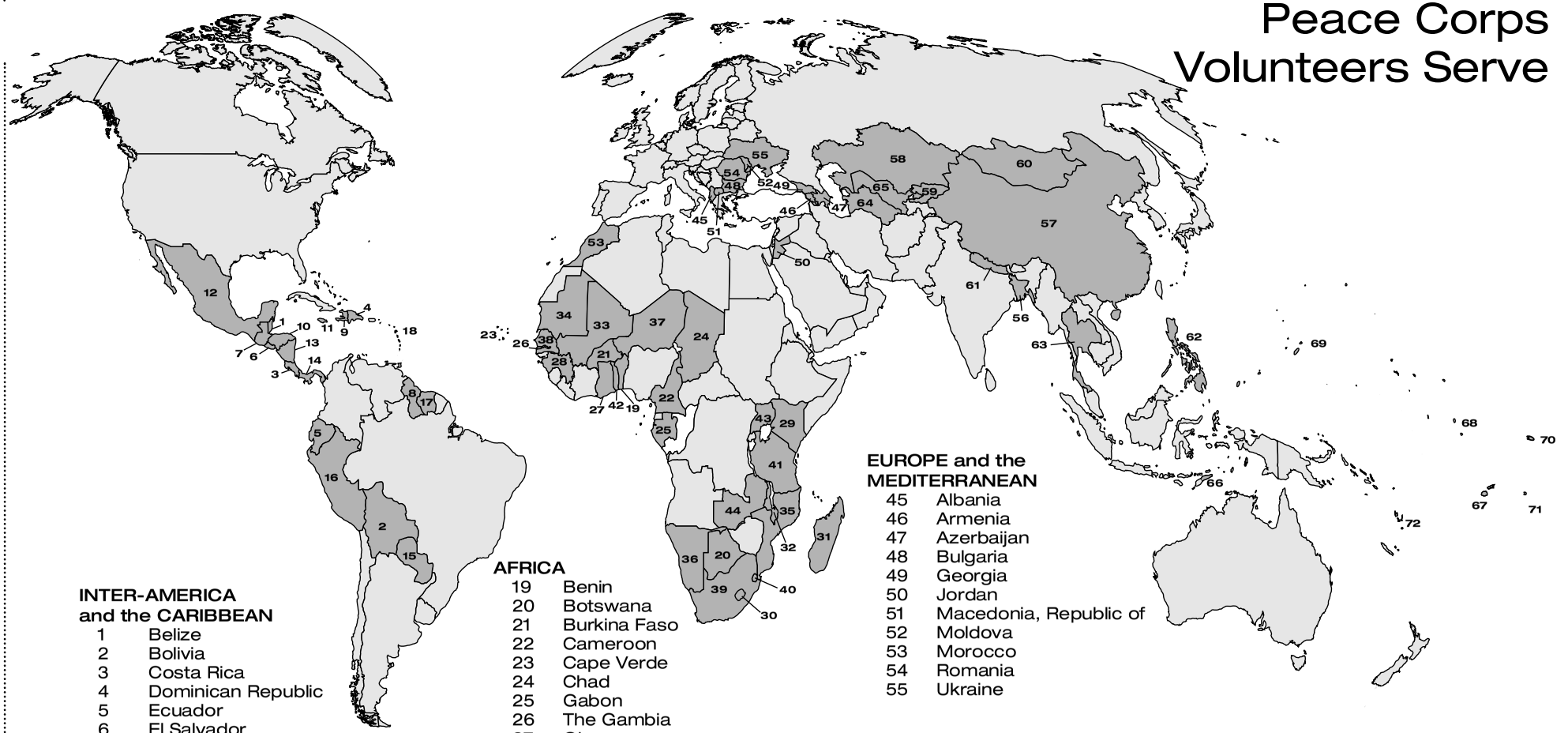
Notes

* *Countries participating in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief*

[1] *Eastern Caribbean includes Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

[2] *Program was suspended from February through July in 2004*

Countries Where Peace Corps Volunteers Serve



INTER-AMERICA and the CARIBBEAN

1 Belize
2 Bolivia
3 Costa Rica
4 Dominican Republic
5 Ecuador
6 El Salvador
7 Guatemala
8 Guyana
9 Haiti
10 Honduras
11 Jamaica
12 Mexico
13 Nicaragua
14 Panama
15 Paraguay
16 Peru
17 Suriname
18 Eastern Caribbean:
Antigua/Barbuda
Dominica
Grenada/Carriacou
St. Kitts and Nevis
St. Lucia
St. Vincent/Grenadines

AFRICA

19 Benin
20 Botswana
21 Burkina Faso
22 Cameroon
23 Cape Verde
24 Chad
25 Gabon
26 The Gambia
27 Ghana
28 Guinea
29 Kenya
30 Lesotho
31 Madagascar
32 Malawi
33 Mali
34 Mauritania
35 Mozambique
36 Namibia
37 Niger
38 Senegal
39 South Africa
40 Swaziland
41 Tanzania
42 Togo
43 Uganda
44 Zambia

EUROPE and the MEDITERRANEAN

45 Albania
46 Armenia
47 Azerbaijan
48 Bulgaria
49 Georgia
50 Jordan
51 Macedonia, Republic of
52 Moldova
53 Morocco
54 Romania
55 Ukraine

CENTRAL and EAST ASIA

56 Bangladesh
57 China
58 Kazakhstan
59 Kyrgyz Republic
60 Mongolia
61 Nepal*
62 Philippines
63 Thailand
64 Turkmenistan
65 Uzbekistan

The PACIFIC

66 East Timor
67 Fiji
68 Kiribati
69 Micronesia, Federated States of, and Palau, Republic of
70 Samoa
71 Tonga
72 Vanuatu

* Program suspended in FY 2004

Languages Spoken by Peace Corps Volunteers Across the World

Africa

Benin
Adja
Bariba
Dendi
Ditemari
Fon
French
Goun
Gourmatche
Ife
Kotafon
Mina
Naténi
Yom
Yoruba (Nagot)

Botswana
Setswana

Burkina Faso
French
Fulfudé
Gulmancema
Jula
Lobiri
Moré

Cameroon
Bamun
Bulu
Duala
pidgin English
Fang
Fe-Fe
French
Fulfudé
Ghom alà
Hausa
Kako
Tupuri

Cape Verde
CV Criolo
Portuguese

Chad
Chadian Arabic
French

Gabon
Fang
French
Mitsogo
Nzebi
Obamba
Punu
Teke

The Gambia
Jola
Mandinka
Pulaar
Wolof

Ghana
Buli
Guruni
Dagare
Dagbani
Dangme
Ewe
Fanté
Ga
Gonja
Hausa
Kasem
Kusaal
Mampruli
Moar
Nankam
Nzema
Sisaali
Taleni
Twi
Waale
Wassa

Guinea
French
Guerzé
Kissi
Malinke
Pulaar
Soussou
Toma

Kenya
Kalenjin
Kenyan Sign Language
Kikuyu
Kiswahili
Luo
Luyha

Lesotho
Sesotho

Madagascar
French
Malagasy

Malawi
Chichewa
Chilomwe
Chisena
Chitonga
Chitumbuka
Chiyao

Mali
Bambara
Dogon
French
Fulfudé
Malinke
Minianka
Senoufou
Songhay

Mauritania
Arabic
French
Hassynia
Pulaar
Soninke
Wolof

Mozambique
Bitonga
Portuguese
Ronga
Shangan
Shona
Tonga

Namibia
Afrikaans
Damara/Nama
Oshikwanyama
Oshindonga
Otji Herero
Rukwangali

Niger
French
Fulfudé
Hausa
Kanuri
Zarma

Senegal
French
Jaxanke
Mandinka
Pulaar
Seereer
Wolof

South Africa
Isi Ndebele
Isi Zulu
Sepedi
Setswana
Siswati
Northern Sotho
Venda

Swaziland
Siswati
Tsonga
Zulu

Tanzania
Kiswahili

Togo
Akposso
Bassar
Cotocolis
Ewe
French
Gourma
Ife (Ana)
Kabiye
Komkonba
Lamba
Mina
Moba
Naodem (Losso)
Tchamba
Tchokossi

Uganda
Ateso
Dhopadhola
Luganda
Lugwere
Lumasaaba
Lusoga
Runyakore
Runyole
Runyoro-Rutoro
Uhopadhola

Zambia
Bemba
Kaonde
Lunda
Nyanja
Tonga
Tumbuta

Languages Spoken by Peace Corps Volunteers Across the World

Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia

Albania
Albanian

Armenia
Armenian

Azerbaijan
Azerbaijani (Azeri)

Bangladesh
Bangla

Bulgaria
Bulgarian

China
Mandarin

Georgia
Georgian

Jordan
Arabic

Kazakhstan
Kazakh
Russian

Kyrgyz Republic
Kyrgyz
Russian

Macedonia
Albanian
Macedonian

Moldova
Romanian
Russian

Mongolia
Mongolian

Morocco
Arabic
French
Tamazight
Tarifit
Tashelheet

Nepal
Nepali

Philippines
Aklanon
Asi
Bilol
Bikol-Albay
Bikol-Naga
Cebuano
Hiligaynon
Ilonggo
Loocnon
Romblomanon
Sorsoganon
Tagalog
Waray-waray

Romania
Hungarian
Romanian

Thailand
Thai

Turkmenistan
Russian
Turkmen

Ukraine
Russian
Ukrainian

Uzbekistan
Russian
Uzbek
Tajik

Inter-America and the Pacific

Belize
Creole
Spanish

Bolivia
Ayamara
Guarani
Quechua
Spanish

Costa Rica
Spanish

Dominican Republic
Haitian Creole
Spanish

Eastern Caribbean
English Creole
French Creole (Kweyol)

East Timor
Tetun

Ecuador
Quechua
Spanish

El Salvador
Spanish

Fiji
Fijian
Hindustani

Guatemala
Cakchiquel
Kek'chi
Spanish

Guyana
Creole

Haiti
Haitian Creole

Honduras
Spanish

Jamaica
Creole (Patois)

Kiribati
I-Kiribati

Mexico
Spanish

Micronesia and Palau
Chuukese
Halls Island
Kapingamarangi
Kosraean
Namonuito
Nukuoro
Palauan
Pingilapese
Pohnepeian
Sapwuafik
Satawalese
Ulithian
Woleain
Yapese

Nicaragua
Spanish

Panama
Embera
Kuna
Ngobe
Spanish
Woun-Meu

Paraguay
Guarani
Spanish

Peru
Quechua
Spanish

Samoa
Samoan

Suriname
Aucan
Dutch
Ndjuka
Saramaccan
Sranan Tongo

Tonga
Tongan

Vanuatu
Bislama

Applicant

Recruitment
Regional recruiters use marketing strategies to identify and encourage a diverse pool of qualified Americans to apply to the Peace Corps.

Application
Recruiters interview applicants to assess their motivation, emotional maturity, cultural adaptability, and technical skills. Recruiters convey that Volunteers are expected to adopt safe and culturally appropriate lifestyles to maximize security and minimize risk.

Clearances
Peace Corps staff ensure that superior candidates meet legal and medical requirements.

Placement
Placement officers match candidates to countries and projects based on their skills, experience, interests, and host country needs.

Trainee

Orientation (Staging)
Staff conduct a two-day staging before trainees depart for their overseas assignments. Safety and security training is woven throughout the orientation.

Pre-Service Training
Staff prepare trainees for service by conducting two to three months of training in language, technical skills, and cross-cultural, health, and personal safety and security issues. After successful completion of training and testing, trainees are sworn in as Volunteers.

The Phases of the Volunteer

How the Peace Corps Supports Volunteers From Recruitment Through Their Two-Year Service and Beyond

Volunteer

Volunteer Assignment
The Volunteer is assigned to a project that has been designed by Peace Corps and host country staff that meets the development needs of the host country.

Site Selection
The Peace Corps' in-country staff ensure that Volunteers have suitable assignments and adequate and safe living arrangements.

Living Allowance
The Peace Corps provides Volunteers with a monthly allowance to cover housing, utilities, household supplies, food, clothing, and transportation.

Health
The Peace Corps' in-country medical officers provide Volunteers with health information, immunizations, and periodic medical exams.

Volunteer Security
Peace Corps headquarters and post staff work with the State Department to assess and address safety and security risks and ensure Volunteers are properly trained in safety and security procedures.

In-Service Training
Post staff conduct periodic training to improve Volunteers' technical and language skills and to address changing health and safety issues.

Links With U.S. Students
Through the Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools correspondence program, Volunteers communicate with schools to expand students' awareness of other countries and cultures. Volunteers can also be linked to classrooms through the Partnership Program in which students raise funds for a specific development project.

Links With the Private Sector
Headquarters staff secure private financial contributions for qualified Volunteer projects and match interested Volunteers with potential donors of textbooks, sports equipment, and other resources.

Service Extension
A limited number of Volunteers who have unique skills and an outstanding record of service may extend for an additional year.

Returned Volunteer

Career Planning
Information on careers and higher education is distributed to Volunteers before the end of their service.

Readjustment Allowance
At the end of service, Volunteers receive $225 per month served to help finance their transition to careers or further education.

Health Insurance
Volunteers are covered by a comprehensive health insurance plan for the first month after service and can continue the plan at their own expense for up to 18 additional months.

Returned Volunteer Services
Each of Peace Corps' 11 regional offices are equipped with computers and other resources to assist returned Peace Corps Volunteers in obtaining career and educational information. The Peace Corps publishes the "Hotline," a bi-weekly jobs bulletin, as well as manuals focusing on careers in teaching, business, the environment, agriculture, and international development. The *Career Information Consultants* directory offers current and former Volunteers access to the expertise of returned Peace Corps Volunteers from various professions.

Crisis Corps
Headquarters staff recruit, train, and place experienced Volunteers in short-term disaster relief and humanitarian response positions.

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Photo:
Returned Volunteer, New York City

Domestic Programs

Domestic Programs: "Bringing the World Home"

In 1989, in pursuit of the third goal of the Peace Corps—to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans—then Peace Corps Director Paul D. Coverdell established the World Wise Schools program, which now carries his name. The program seeks to give American schoolchildren a chance to learn about the world's diverse peoples, cultures, and geography from currently serving Peace Corps Volunteers through a correspondence match program. The program pairs Volunteers serving overseas with U.S. classrooms, facilitating the exchange of letters, photographs, artifacts, and telephone calls, as well as visits from the Volunteers once they have returned to the United States.

The Coverdell World Wise Schools program produces educational materials for U.S. classrooms that promote cross-cultural understanding and the ethic of community service. The World Wise Schools program offers not only an award-winning series of country-specific videos with accompanying teachers' guides but also Volunteer-written literature and culture-based lesson plans based on those writings. These materials are published in book form and are also available on the Web for free downloading. Some of the titles available: *Insights From the Field: Understanding Geography, Culture, and Service; Voices From the Field: Reading and Writing About the World, Ourselves, and Others; Building Bridges: A Peace Corps' Classroom Guide to Cross-Cultural Understanding* and *Uncommon Journeys: Peace Corps Adventures Across Cultures.*

Since its inception, the Coverdell World Wise Schools program has helped nearly 3 million U.S. students communicate directly with Peace Corps Volunteers all over the world. Currently, about 4,000 Volunteers relate their experiences through correspondence exchanges, and approximately 380,000 students—in all 50 states—benefit from some aspect of the program.

Peace Corps Fellows/USA

Fellows/USA develops and maintains educational partnerships that place former Volunteers in internships in high-need U.S. communities as they pursue graduate degrees. Approximately 300 returned Volunteers pursue graduate studies annually as Peace Corps Fellows at more than 35 partner universities throughout the United States. Fellows study at reduced cost with fellowships provided by the universities and private funders.

During their studies, Fellows work as public school teachers or as interns in community or economic development, nursing, or environmental education with local nonprofits, working on projects of critical importance to local communities. Fellows/USA engages former Volunteers both in university communities and at the grass roots of urban and rural America, where they share the knowledge and use the skills and competencies they developed during their Peace Corps service to benefit their fellow Americans.

Fellows/USA programs are based in communities in 22 states and the District of Columbia. Since the program's inception in 1985, approximately 2,000 Peace Corps Fellows have worked to improve the lives and to raise international awareness of thousands of Americans.

Master's International Program

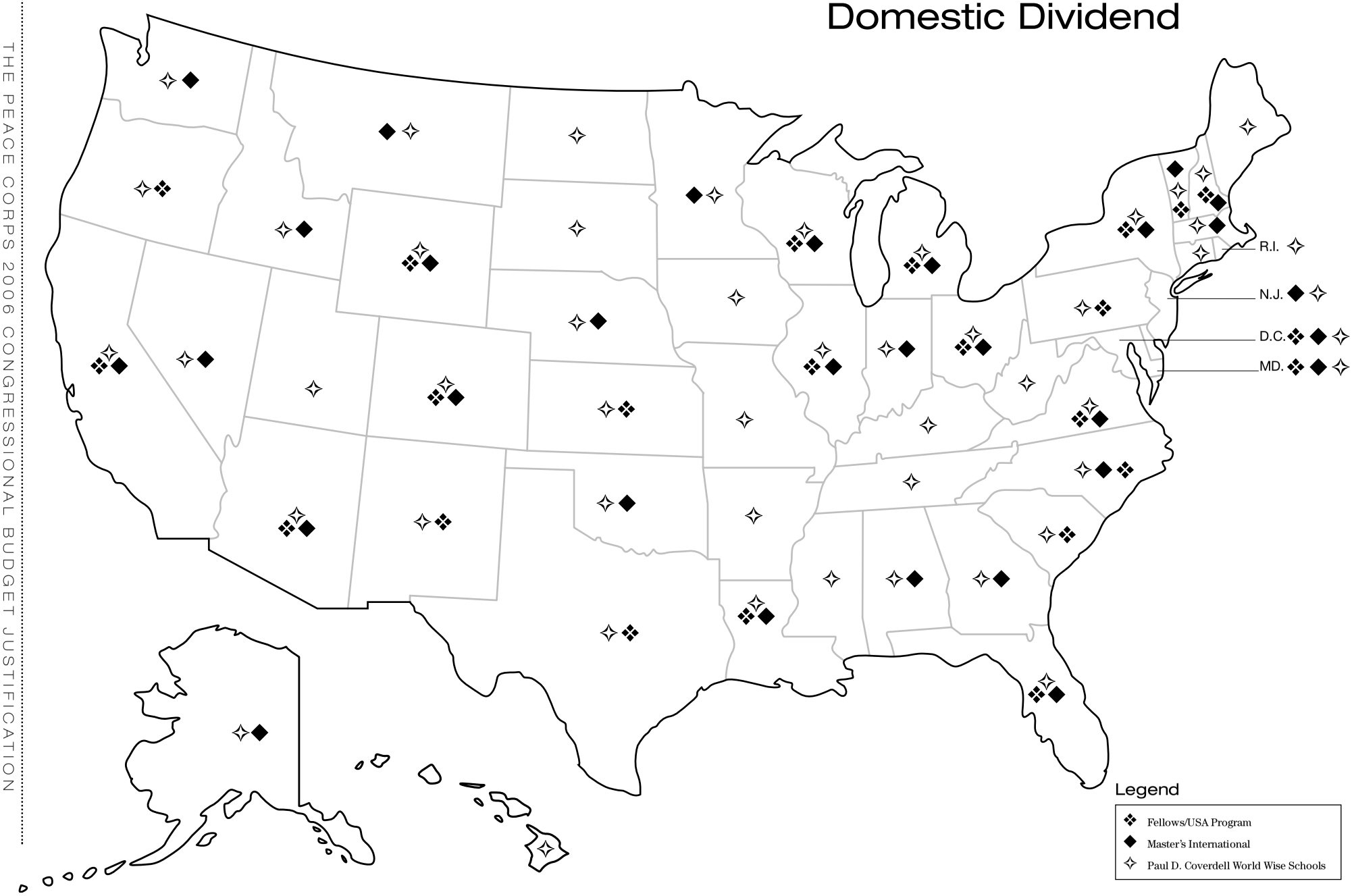
Through partnerships with 50 colleges and universities across the United States, the Master's International (MI) program currently offers 525 students the opportunity to incorporate Peace Corps service into a master's degree in 82 different programs. Participating graduate schools establish and monitor academic requirements, and the Peace Corps places MI students overseas as Volunteers. Students apply to both the Peace Corps and to a participating graduate school, and they must be accepted by both. Requirements vary by school. MI students complete one or, in a few cases, two years of course work before starting their Peace Corps assignment overseas. Assignments are developed by overseas Peace Corps' staff at the request of host countries.

During their Peace Corps service, Volunteers participating in the MI program work on a thesis, professional paper, or other culminating project under the direction of the school's faculty and with the approval of Peace Corps overseas staff. Participating faculty recognize that while serving overseas, an MI student's primary responsibility is his or her Volunteer duties. Rather than determining a research topic in advance, MI students allow their Volunteer assignment to shape the fulfillment of their overseas academic requirement.

The Peace Corps provides MI students with a unique opportunity to apply what they learn on campus to benefit a host country community. Like all Volunteers, MI students seek ways to creatively apply their knowledge and skills to the assignment in which they are placed. Through the MI program, students graduate with a unique combination of an advanced degree and two years of substantive professional experience in an international setting.

This Master's International student (top row, second from left) at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA, is pursuing his MBA while serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines. He is standing with facilitators for a Youth Deaf Camp 2004.

The Peace Corps' Domestic Dividend



The Peace Corps' Educational Partnerships in the United States

States	Master's International Colleges/Universities	Fellows/USA Colleges/Universities
Alabama	University of Alabama–Birmingham	
Alaska	University of Alaska–Fairbanks	
Arizona	Arizona State University East	Northern Arizona University University of Arizona
California	California State University at Sacramento Humboldt State University Loma Linda University Monterey Institute of International Studies University of California–Davis University of the Pacific–Stockton	Loma Linda University *(in development)*
Colorado	Colorado State University–Fort Collins University of Colorado–Denver University of Denver	University of Denver
Florida	Florida International University Florida State University–Tallahassee University of South Florida–Tampa	Florida Institute of Technology
Georgia	Emory University Georgia State University–Atlanta University of Georgia–Athens	
Idaho	University of Idaho–Moscow	
Illinois	Illinois State University–Normal	DePaul University Illinois State University Western Illinois University
Indiana	Purdue University	
Kansas		Wichita State University
Louisiana	Tulane University	University of New Orleans Xavier University of New Orleans
Maryland	Johns Hopkins University University of Maryland–Baltimore County	Johns Hopkins University University of Maryland–Baltimore University of Maryland–Baltimore County
Massachusetts	Boston University	
Michigan	Michigan Technological University Western Michigan University	Michigan Technological University
Minnesota	University of Minnesota–Twin Cities	
Montana	University of Montana–Missoula	

The Peace Corps' Educational Partnerships in the United States

States	Master's International Colleges/Universities	Fellows/USA Colleges/Universities
Nebraska	University of Nebraska–Lincoln	
Nevada	University of Nevada–Las Vegas	
New Hampshire	Southern New Hampshire University	Southern New Hampshire University
New Jersey	Rutgers University	
New Mexico		New Mexico State University–Las Cruces Western New Mexico University
New York	Bard College Cornell University	Columbia University Fordham University New School University
North Carolina	North Carolina State University–Raleigh North Carolina A&T State University–Greensboro	Duke University
Ohio	University of Cincinnati	University of Cincinnati
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State University–Stillwater	
Oregon		University of Oregon
Pennsylvania		Carnegie Mellon University Duquesne University Seton Hall University Temple University
South Carolina		University of South Carolina–Columbia
Texas		University of North Texas
Vermont	School for International Training St. Michael's College	University of Vermont *(in development)*
Virginia	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University George Mason University	George Mason University
Washington	University of Washington–Seattle Washington State University–Pullman	
Wisconsin	University of Wisconsin–Madison University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point	Marquette University University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point
Wyoming	University of Wyoming	University of Wyoming
District of Columbia	American University George Washington University	George Washington University

Home States of Peace Corps Volunteers

as of September 30, 2004

State	Today	Since 1961	State	Today	Since 1961
Alabama	54	794	Montana	67	1,086
Alaska	36	911	Nebraska	61	940
Arizona	136	3,046	Nevada	36	742
Arkansas	35	760	New Hampshire	62	1,216
California	873	24,266	New Jersey	166	3,741
Colorado	279	5,755	New Mexico	57	1,996
Connecticut	130	2,461	New York	395	11,097
Delaware	24	341	North Carolina	194	3,174
District of Columbia	47	3,198	North Dakota	25	416
Florida	253	6,110	Ohio	295	4,947
Guam	0	85	Oklahoma	58	922
Georgia	136	2,559	Oregon	222	5,001
Hawaii	21	1,267	Pennsylvania	316	5,807
Idaho	57	1,022	Puerto Rico	9	329
Illinois	352	6,330	Rhode Island	33	779
Indiana	132	2,237	South Carolina	68	1,053
Iowa	98	1,540	South Dakota	22	462
Kansas	90	1,141	Tennessee	80	1,185
Kentucky	59	1,089	Texas	342	5,401
Louisiana	32	969	Utah	52	820
Maine	71	1,427	Vermont	42	1,266
Maryland	233	5,110	Virgin Islands	2	79
Massachusetts	212	7,047	Virginia	341	6,114
Michigan	269	5,101	Washington	357	7,541
Minnesota	261	5,048	West Virginia	27	518
Mississippi	19	375	Wisconsin	289	4,409
Missouri	131	2,390	Wyoming	28	381

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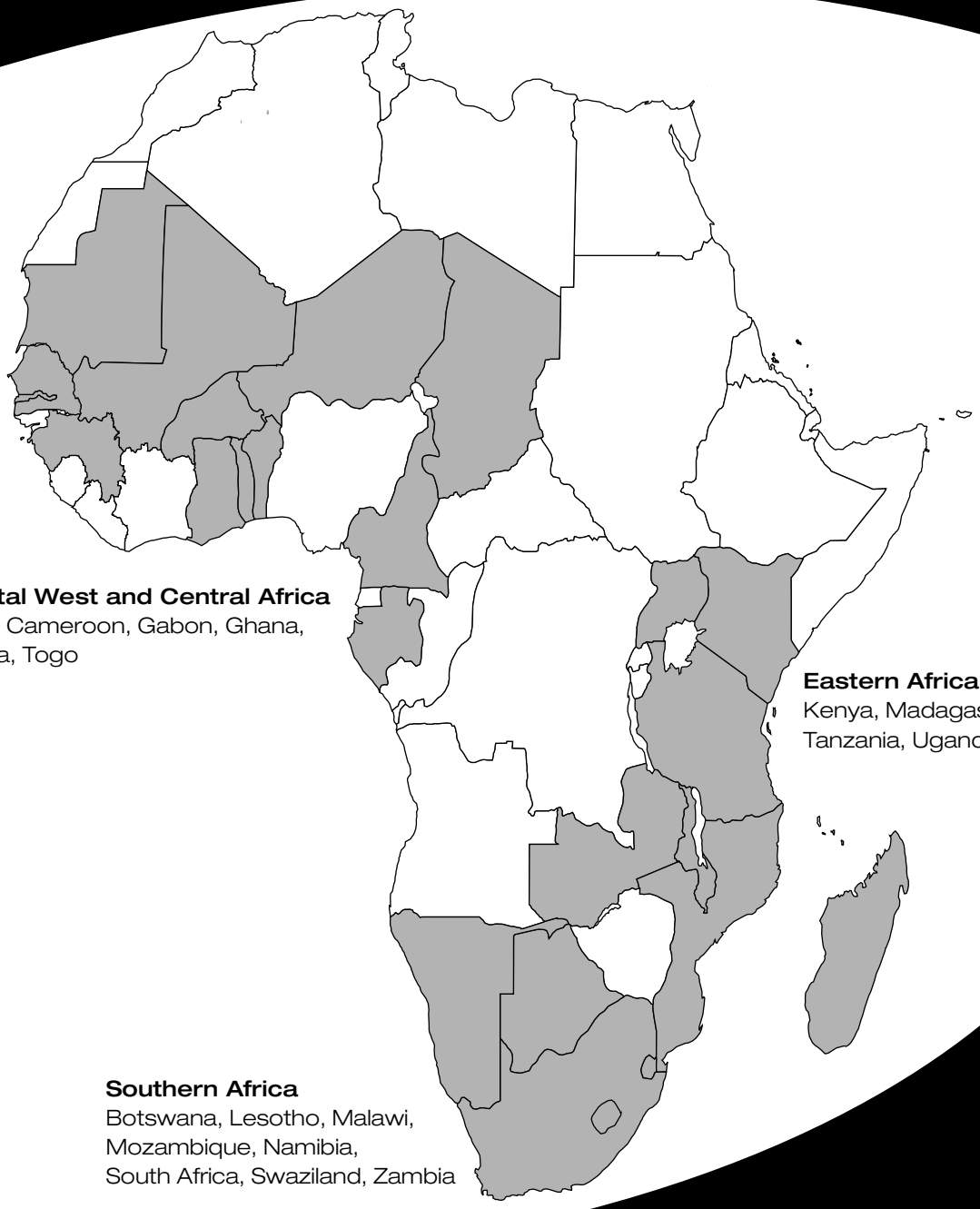
Regional Summaries



Sahel
Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal

Coastal West and Central Africa
Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Togo

Eastern Africa
Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda

Southern Africa
Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia

Africa Region

" I warmly acknowledge Peace Corps Volunteers who selflessly give of their time and the best of themselves to the education of our children... They strive to dedicate themselves completely, in close collaboration with other teachers, to making our students intelligent and enlightened citizens, equally conscious of their rights and responsibilities."

Mrs. Rafiatou Karimou
Minister of Education
Benin

Africa Region

The Africa region has the distinction of having received the very first Peace Corps Volunteers at the inception of the program in 1961. Since that time, some 60,000 Americans have served in 46 African countries. The Peace Corps continues to enjoy strong cooperation with the people of this region. At the end of fiscal year 2005, 2,711 Volunteers and trainees will be on board and working in 26 countries in all six of the program sectors—agriculture, environment, business development, education, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth. In addition, many Volunteers are engaged in projects involving information and communications technology (ICT). With real potential for expansion in these sectors and projects, the Africa region of the Peace Corps is poised for substantial growth. In 2004, the Peace Corps received multiple requests for new country entries in Africa, and country assessments were conducted in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia.

The Africa region continues to make the safety and security of Volunteers its number-one priority. Thirty employees are dedicated strictly to safety and security, and each of the 26 posts has a designated safety and security coordinator. In addition, the Africa region's safety and security desk officer located at Peace Corps headquarters ensures effective communication and compliance related to issues of safety. There are three additional regional Peace Corps safety and security officers located on the Africa continent. These officers—located in Lesotho, Togo, and Uganda—provide advice and support to country directors in all areas of safety and security. Finally, in early fiscal year 2004, the Africa region held a safety and security workshop for its new safety and security coordinators in eastern and southern Africa, enhancing the skills of the participants and sharing best practices related to Volunteer safety and security.

Africa remains the epicenter of the AIDS pandemic. Working with President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Peace Corps has a strong commitment to fighting the spread of this terrible disease. The Peace Corps trains new Volunteers in HIV/AIDS awareness, with an emphasis on prevention, capacity building of local AIDS service providers, care of orphans and children, and support to people living with AIDS. Volunteers are uniquely suited to work in the field of HIV/AIDS because they live and work in the communities where they serve. They are trained in the local language and can share information in a culturally sensitive way. In addition to committing new Volunteers to targeted African countries, the Peace Corps trains all Volunteers bound for Africa, regardless of their primary assignment, in HIV/AIDS prevention and education.

While all Volunteers in the Africa region are impacted by the multiple health, social, and economic consequences of HIV/AIDS, some Volunteers work directly to combat the disease. For example, in Botswana, health and HIV/AIDS Volunteers are assigned as counterparts to district AIDS coordinators. These Volunteers provide assistance to the district AIDS committees in developing multi-sector, district-wide responses to HIV/AIDS. Other Volunteers working in village health clinics seek to increase the uptake in services to prevent mother-to-child transmission. In Ghana, two health Volunteers are working directly with local groups of people living with AIDS and engage them in educational outreach programs. In Kenya, one Volunteer helped her community establish a new orphanage for children whose parents have died of AIDS.

Additionally, Volunteers continue to establish peer educator groups, organize vaccination campaigns, and develop seminars for village health workers. In 2004, health Volunteers in Cameroon alone trained nearly 500 peer educators on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted disease (STD) issues and educated more than 13,000 community members on the prevention of HIV and STDs.

Volunteers also work to improve basic health care in the areas of child survival, nutrition, disease prevention, environmental health, orphan care, home-based care, youth and at-risk groups, and women's health. For instance, Volunteers in Ghana helped communities plan, acquire, operate, and manage their own water and sanitation facilities. Additionally, one-third of all health Volunteers there are working to eradicate the debilitating Guinea

worm disease. In Lesotho, Volunteers are working in permaculture in rural communities to promote sustainable practices that increase the diversity of food and improve nutrition. Volunteers in Mauritania were involved in a door-to-door campaign to vaccinate children against polio. Health Volunteers work with community-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and host country local governments to raise awareness of health issues and improve education in healthy living.

Peace Corps Volunteers are involved with business development in 12 countries across Africa. Their efforts are focused on teaching business skills to youth, farmers, artisans, NGOs, credit institutions, and universities. Volunteers in Burkina Faso work with tour guides and hotel and restaurant owners to develop hospitality skills and enhance the tourism industry. In Cameroon, Volunteers work to improve the business, credit, and loan portfolio management skills of bank staff, clients, and the general public.

Education remains the Peace Corps' largest program sector in Africa, with education projects in 21 countries. Among the subjects taught by Volunteers are English, mathematics, science, arts, information technology (IT) and life skills. Volunteers use community content-based instruction to incorporate HIV/AIDS, environmental, and gender-specific themes into their lesson plans and presentations. Many Volunteers also work with schools and communities to develop libraries and other resource centers. Volunteers help their fellow teachers use these expanded resources, thus raising the standard of teaching in the community. Volunteers are often involved in other activities, including computer training, income-generating projects, and youth development in outreach to their local community. For example, in Cape Verde, Volunteers are using local radio programs to teach English to children and adults across the country. In Tanzania, Volunteers promote environmental awareness on school farms.

Volunteers in the agriculture and environment sectors continue to improve agricultural practices and promote environmentally friendly approaches. They also help increase access to resources that can help local communities generate income and improve their diets. This effort to improve agricultural outputs occurs within the context of education in natural resource management and conservation. Volunteers and their counterparts address environmental issues by promoting environmental education in schools and in educating farmers. In Niger, a group of Volunteers worked with NGOs to train village-level animal health workers and provide vaccinations. In Zambia, Volunteers helped the Department of Fisheries develop fish-farming projects to improve livelihoods in rural communities.

Across Africa, youth are a major focus of Volunteers. In Cape Verde, Volunteers work in municipal youth centers where they train youth in information technology, English, music, leadership and life skills. In Lesotho, Volunteers provide at-risk youth with training for income generation and job creation. In Niger, Volunteers provide environmental education and awareness sessions in schools and for rural youth. Youth are also one of the primary recipients of HIV/AIDS awareness training across the continent.

Volunteers in every project sector are using ICT to help improve the training, capacity, and abilities of the African people in all aspects of life. Many education Volunteers offer courses to improve use of ICT by students and faculty. For example, in Benin, the efforts and training of a group of Volunteers has allowed their school to now use the computer system to print report cards, tests, and other important documents. Volunteers helped to establish the first distance learning/virtual class ever offered in The Gambia, bringing together students from China, Sweden, the United States and The Gambia. In Mali, Volunteers are helping to strengthen existing computer centers and establish Internet cafes. A new initiative works with a nationwide network of community learning and information centers to provide training in basic computer and Internet skills to young Malians.

In 2004, Peace Corps joined forces with the Least Developed Countries Initiative, a partnership among Cisco Systems, Inc., the United Nations Development Programme, the U.S. Agency for International

Development, the International Telecommunications Union, and United Nations Volunteers, to increase and enhance IT training and awareness. As a result, Peace Corps/Africa and the Cisco Networking Academy Program have formed working partnerships in seven countries throughout Africa, supporting the enhancement of ICT education, encouraging the regular exchange of technical resources, and encouraging female participation in IT development. Volunteers in Senegal, Mauritania, and Lesotho have already been assigned to work with Cisco Networking Academies. A Volunteer in Senegal is currently working to improve recruitment and marketing strategies to encourage women to enter the ICT field. Several Volunteers in Lesotho are teaching basic computer skills and also encouraging female participation in the Academy Program. Kenya, Cameroon, Cape Verde, and Uganda are slated to assign Cisco Networking Academy Program Volunteers in the near future.

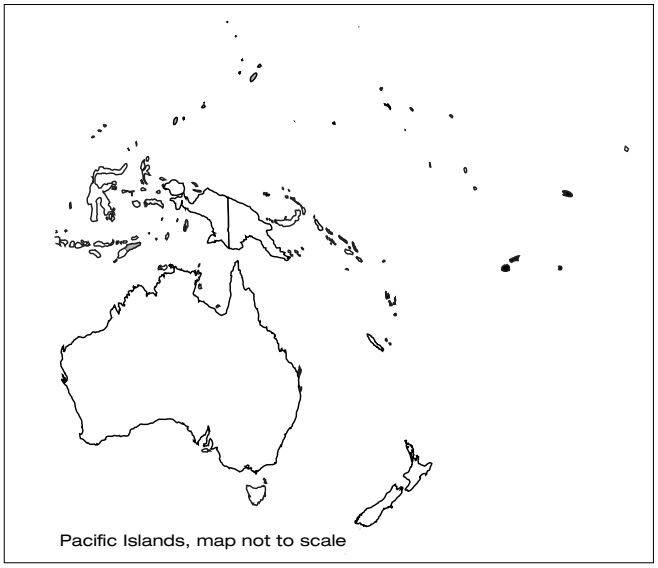
Since the opening of the first Peace Corps program in Ghana in 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers have worked to transfer skills to Africans and to promote a better understanding of Americans. Returned Volunteers bring their knowledge of life in Africa back to the United States and share their experiences with their fellow Americans. Peace Corps' work in Africa continues to leave a long and positive legacy.

Health sector Volunteer working in Benin

Caribbean
Dominican Republic,
Eastern Caribbean
Islands, Haiti, Jamaica

Central America
Belize, Costa Rica,
El Salvador, Guatemala,
Honduras, Mexico,
Nicaragua, Panama

South America
Bolivia, Ecuador,
Guyana, Paraguay,
Peru, Suriname



Pacific Islands, map not to scale

Pacific
East Timor, Federated
States of Micronesia
and Republic of Palau,
Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa,
Tonga, Vanuatu

Inter-America and the Pacific Region

"The Peace Corps is a living example of man's humanity to man. No area has been too remote... for the [Volunteers] to venture in and give of their time and skills, inspiring our people to improve not only their living conditions but also realize their hopes and expectations."

Sir Howard Cooke
Governor General
Jamaica

Inter-America and the Pacific Region

Since the Peace Corps' inception in 1961, more than 72,000 Volunteers have served in the Inter-America and Pacific (IAP) region. They have served in more than 32 countries in the Inter-Americas and 14 countries in the Pacific Islands. At the end of fiscal year 2005, 2,530 Volunteers will be working in 25 posts in all six of the agency's sectors: agriculture, business development, education, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth.

Under the Partnership for Prosperity initiative of President Bush and Mexican President Vincente Fox, the Peace Corps entered Mexico in 2004. The Mexico/Peace Corps program is a unique partnership that provides the first opportunity for the Peace Corps to recruit highly specialized, technically trained and experienced Volunteers to work side-by-side with Mexican counterparts. The first Volunteers arrived in October 2004 and they are working in the areas of environment/water engineering, business development, and technical research and development.

In 2004, the IAP region also reopened operations in St. Kitts and Nevis, making it the sixth island nation within the Eastern Caribbean post. Volunteers are working in youth development, with a focus on healthy lifestyles, social skills development, and vocational and entrepreneurial training. The IAP region continues to be in dialogue with additional countries, such as the Marshall Islands, that have expressed interest in receiving Peace Corps Volunteers.

The region is committed to ensuring the safety and security of all Volunteers. All IAP posts have safety and security coordinators. In addition, three regional Peace Corps safety and security officers located in El Salvador, Fiji, and Peru help posts assess risks and ensure appropriate training for staff and Volunteers. Each post has an emergency action plan, which is tested at least annually and revised when necessary.

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is a five-year, multi-billion-dollar initiative to combat the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. Under the auspices of PEPFAR, in Haiti, Volunteers are developing and delivering HIV/AIDS prevention education in clinics, schools, and rural communities. To ensure sustainability of these efforts, Volunteers will develop curriculum and train HIV/AIDS educators. Other Volunteers will work to mobilize communities to attend health education outreach sessions to encourage community members to be tested in HIV/AIDS testing facilities. These testing facilities will help lower mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. In Guyana, Volunteers are also focusing on community mobilization strategies to prevent HIV/AIDS and improve access to existing services. Combating HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases is one of the top priorities for Guyana's Ministry of Health. Volunteers are working with health centers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help Guyana address the HIV/AIDS problem and diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and dengue.

Many Volunteers in the IAP region work in traditional sectors, such as water and sanitation. Volunteers in El Salvador are helping their communities to increase access to potable water and improve sanitation conditions. Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Mitch in 1998, destroyed latrines and water management systems and damaged roadways in El Salvador. Salvadorans have had limited access to potable water due to contaminated water sources. Volunteers there are providing training to community members on water systems and latrines, including their maintenance, management and monitoring.

In Peru, Volunteers in the small business development project address high levels of poverty and underemployment, particularly in rural areas. Volunteers work with farmers, artisans, ecotourism businesses, and computer centers. Together with their counterparts, Volunteers guide the development of business plans, marketing strategies, quality control, and product diversification. One business Volunteer helped weavers develop new designs and provided training in product pricing, packaging, and general marketing. The weavers have since diversified their market and increased income.

In many IAP countries, the Peace Corps' traditional sectors, such as environmental education and

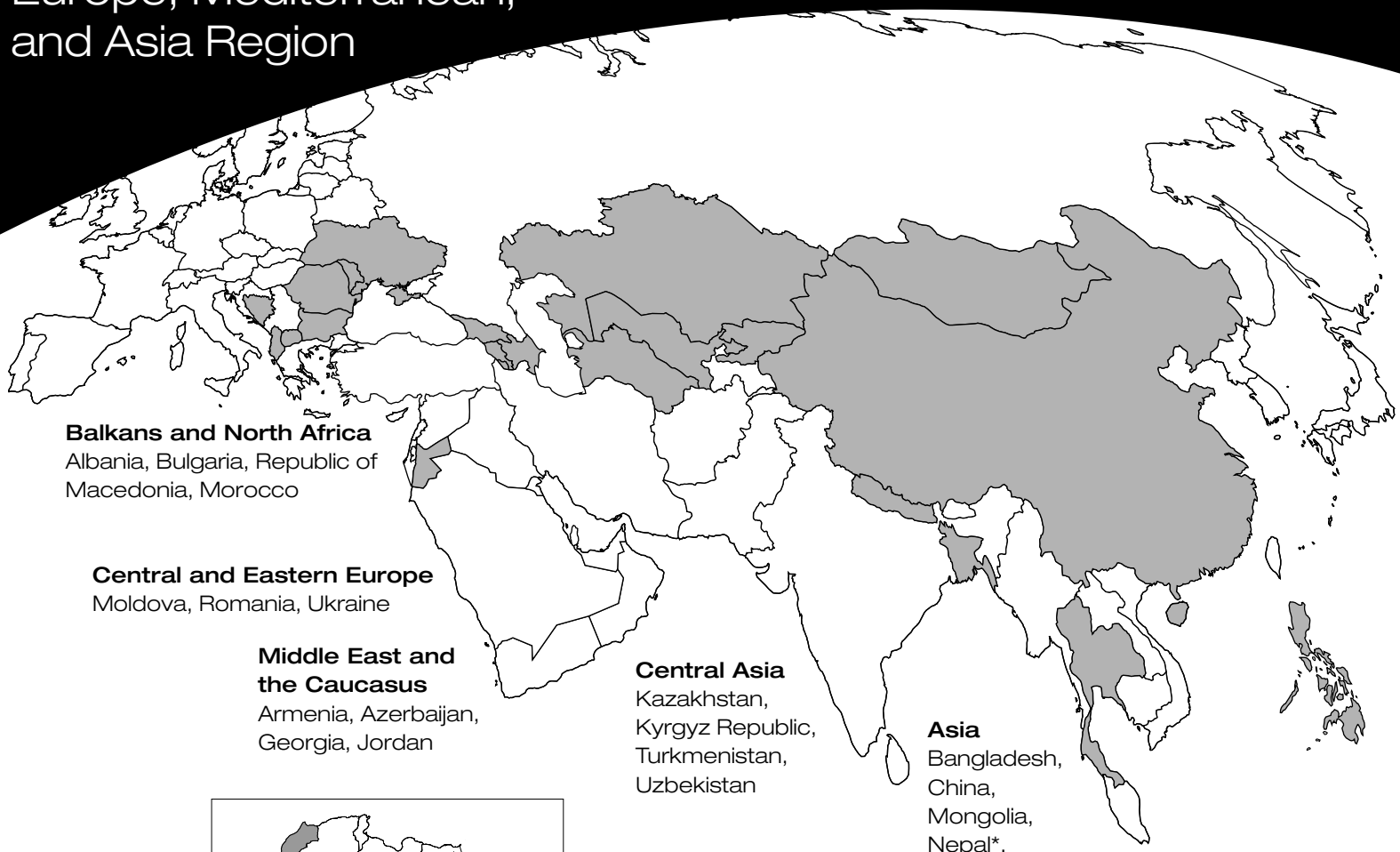
resource management have a youth component. In Fiji, for example, Volunteers who live and work in communities with environment projects train youth in environmental management practices and help them organize around local social needs. Fiji Volunteers are training youth groups to plan and implement income-generation projects. One Volunteer is developing an environmentally sustainable project that will reduce waste disposal on the Coral Coast by 30 percent.

In Belize, information communication technology is a focus of the education project. In schools and libraries, Volunteers provide outreach support, such as hardware/software installation and training, repairs, and Internet setup. A Volunteer assigned to the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired helped them set up their computer system. This Volunteer has also started a project to allow persons who are blind or visually impaired to use computers by utilizing screen-reading software.

Volunteers have a significant legacy of service to countries in the IAP region. The Peace Corps has partnered with some countries for more than 40 years and will continue to work to the benefit of people in the Inter-Americas and the Pacific.

Agriculture sector Volunteer working in Tonga

Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region



Balkans and North Africa
Albania, Bulgaria, Republic of Macedonia, Morocco

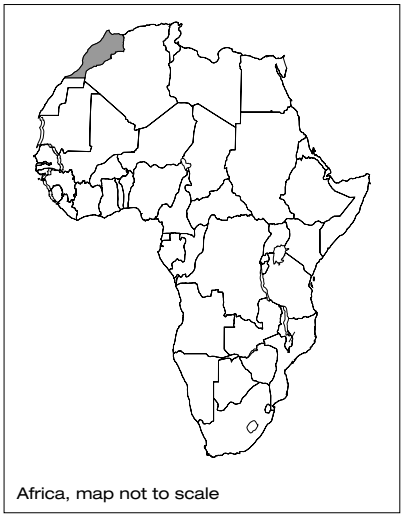
Central and Eastern Europe
Moldova, Romania, Ukraine

Middle East and the Caucasus
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Jordan

Central Asia
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Asia
Bangladesh, China, Mongolia, Nepal*, Philippines, Thailand

* Program suspended



Africa, map not to scale

"The current Peace Corps Volunteers are terrific. Through teaching at schools and working with community organizations, they are making visible changes in the skill levels of the local people. What's more, they are working as cultural ambassadors in the communities they serve."

Government Official
Ministry of Education
Bangladesh

Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia Region

More than 46,400 Volunteers have served in the Europe, Mediterranean, and Asia (EMA) region since 1961. At the end of fiscal year 2005, EMA will have 2,541 Volunteers and trainees working in 20 countries, and most of these nations are undergoing rapid economic and social changes. Throughout the region, Volunteers work to provide needed technical expertise and promote cross-cultural understanding—in conjunction with governments, local organizations and communities—to meet changing needs in education, health, business, agriculture, and the environment.

The Peace Corps continues to stress the importance of safety and security among its Volunteers, recognizing that their safety is best ensured when they are integrated into their local communities, valued and protected as extended family members, and viewed as contributors to development. Both Volunteers and staff receive ongoing training, and each country monitors safety and security according to agency guidelines. Based on favorable safety and security assessments during the past year, the Peace Corps re-entered China and Jordan, two extremely important countries with strong Peace Corps programming and support. At the same time, the program in Nepal was suspended in September 2004 due to escalating violence.

Many countries in the EMA region are making considerable strides toward playing a larger part in the global economy. Hampered by antiquated technologies, unstable monetary systems, and difficult transitions to free-market economies, governments are hard pressed to adequately support effective development. Volunteers address these needs by providing practical business skills, revitalizing English language teaching, creating environmental awareness, and improving health-care systems.

Education continues to be the largest sector in the region with teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) identified as the primary activity. Programs also focus on special education, teacher training, and resource and community development. Education Volunteers and their counterparts collaborate in teaching at the primary, secondary, and university levels; supporting the professional development of host country teachers; and promoting school/community activities to identify and address local needs.

Education Volunteers continue to incorporate cross-sector knowledge and skills into their English classes and out-of-school activities. Through community content-based instruction, Volunteers help students expand their knowledge about HIV/AIDS awareness, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, life skills, civic responsibility, conflict resolution, leadership, and information technology (IT).

In the business sector, Volunteers are active in both practical and academic business education for emerging entrepreneurs, with a special emphasis on women and youth. They help strengthen the management of local business development organizations such as chambers of commerce, local governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other community organizations, all of which are becoming increasingly more important as governments struggle with issues of decentralization.

Volunteers have been particularly successful in incorporating IT and providing guidance on how communities might use IT in business, education, and community development projects. Volunteers across all project sectors continue to find that computers and Internet technology increases the impact of their work, though they are also successfully utilizing other media formats, such as radio, television and film. Capacity-building efforts concentrate primarily on training people to use basic software applications, such as word processing, spreadsheets, and databases. While many Volunteers are conducting skill-building exercises, others are expanding their work to a more complex level by focusing on the training of trainers. Additionally, Volunteers have established computer centers, e-commerce training courses, and Internet research and usage curricula. They have led training workshops, designed websites to promote tourism, and expanded Web-based marketing.

A Volunteer in Romania produced a film documentary series funded by the United States embassy.

The documentary series entitled, O Zi Din Viata (A Day in the Life), explores minority life in Romania through the eyes of youth. Four young ethnic Romanians were invited to live with four minority families (Roma, Hungarian, Turkish, and a family with a handicapped member) for a three-day period and had their experiences documented on film. The film will be presented to 5,000 students in schools across Braila county. Accompanying the film series will be a book of 25 lesson plans created by a team of teachers and students supported by the Volunteer and funded by USAID. The new curriculum complements the film and stresses the importance of tolerance and diversity.

In Bulgaria, a Peace Corps business Volunteer and his wife (an education Volunteer) worked with groups in their community to create an Internet crafts shop that sells products of unemployed Bulgarian artisans. They worked with a women's group to set up a weaving and sewing cooperative, providing jobs for 64 women, and helped a local government agency set up an Internet connection to provide a one-stop information service linking seven remote villages. In Kazakhstan, Romania, and Bulgaria, Volunteers helped schools and universities in their communities set up career centers that provide students with career education and skills development opportunities, including consultation and resources for job opportunities, resume building, and interviewing practices. The centers also assist local businesses, organizations, and state offices in filling their vacancies with better qualified candidates.

Youth development activities are increasingly important in the EMA region where half the population is under the age of 25. Projects are flourishing in Bulgaria, Jordan, Morocco, and Bangladesh, and are being developed in Ukraine and Mongolia. The need for young people to have positive channels of economic, social, and political opportunities is more critical than ever. Volunteers have a meaningful effect on how young people and their communities view the youth as an important asset and an agent of change. Volunteers work to engage and prepare youth for their roles within family life, the workforce, and as active citizens. Important areas of activity include youth employment; entrepreneurship and life-skills training; promoting tolerance and conflict resolution; and advocating for youth participation in community development through service-learning programs.

Many Volunteers work with young people in the classroom or through after-school clubs, to support school-to-work transitions and to make learning relevant to real-life priorities. Other Volunteers work with marginalized young people to build their capacity to create a positive future in a region where human trafficking, street children, drug and alcohol use, prostitution, and lack of schooling plague youth.

The EMA region has 13 health projects and 23 projects with HIV/AIDS elements in them. Most of the health projects strengthen health education, whether in schools, teaching institutions, or communities, using a preventative health-care approach. Volunteers also work with communities to obtain basic resources for health, such as cleaner water systems. Countries served by health activities include Albania, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Romania, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Throughout the region, Volunteers work with students and community members to strengthen environmental awareness. To increase the durability of their efforts, many focus on reinforcing the capacity of organizations and enterprises working on environmental issues. Volunteers also work with farmers and government counterparts to ensure improved management of natural resources and protected areas. One environmental management and training Volunteer in Bulgaria worked with his municipal government on a variety of projects including ecotourism development and water-testing education. For one project, the Volunteer won a silver prize in the International Green Apple Awards presented at Britain's House of Commons for his work in outdoor leadership and environmental education.

Volunteers in the region use participatory community development tools to increase community members'—especially women and youth—participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives. In pre-service training, trainees in Turkmeni-

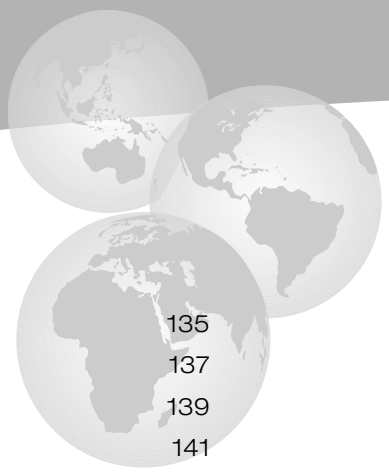
stan learn to analyze gender relations in their families and at their work sites. During in-service training in Bangladesh, Volunteers and community members study gender analysis tools, and how they can best be used to determine gender needs when designing and implementing projects. Programs often give special focus to the empowerment of girls who are often more disadvantaged than boys, especially in the areas of education, leadership skills, and self-esteem. The highest percentage of Peace Corps-supported girls' leadership camps is in the EMA region, stemming from the Soviet tradition that youth camps are an integral part of society.

In addition, Volunteers in EMA have the highest percentage of anti-trafficking activities. Every country in the EMA region is a source, transition point, and/or destination country for human trafficking; as such, this is a high-priority development issue. In Romania, the Association for Social Alternatives has been working to combat the trafficking of women since 1997. The organization provides social, psychological, and legal counseling to repatriated victims of trafficking. One Volunteer helped the association form a partnership with the International Organization for Migration. One result of this partnership has been the establishment of a safe house that offers specialized counseling, treatment, and re-integration assistance to repatriated victims.

EMA continues to develop and refine Volunteer programs to address the most urgent developmental needs of host countries, to assure that Volunteers gain a broader understanding of other cultures, and that other cultures gain a better understanding of the United States and its diversity.

Education sector Volunteer participating in a cultural event in Kazakhstan

Country Profiles



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Albania

Capital ..... Tirana

Population ..... 3 million

Annual per capita income $1,450

GDP growth 4.7%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 1%
Female: 2%

Infant mortality rate ..... 22 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 98%
Measles: 96%

Foreign direct investment ..... $135 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 99%
Rural: 95%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.01%

Religions ..... Islam: 70%
Albanian Orthodoxy: 20%
Roman Catholicism: 10%

Official language ..... Albanian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	74	64
Program funds ($000)	1,787	1,914

Country Overview

Program dates	1992–1997 2003–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Albania has started on a path to a democratic, pluralistic system, but much work remains to be done. There is a general distrust of government and institutions at all levels. The country overwhelmingly approved a new constitution in 1998, which was a step toward strengthening democracy. Local elections in 2000 and 2003 demonstrated additional progress, but parliamentary elections scheduled for June 2005 will be a test of the country's commitment to building democracy. Debates over whether the 2003 elections were free and fair still go on. The international donor community, along with international and domestic nongovernmental organizations, is active in economic and trade development and democracy building.

Albania is very poor by European standards but is beginning to make the transition to a more open-market economy. The government is taking measures to curb crime and revive economic activity and trade, with integration with the West as the central tenet of its foreign policy. The major challenges are low living standards, widespread poverty, and high unemployment. Remittances from Albanians working abroad (more than $600 million annually) supplement the economy and allow many families to survive. Lack of sufficient fertile land, land disputes, the remoteness of schools and health centers, lack of agricultural equipment, poor transportation systems, and very limited rural credit have led to urban migration, especially among the younger population. The demographics in Albania are changing rapidly as the rural population surges into the urban areas to seek work and educational opportunities. In the poorer mountainous areas, some families live in virtually medieval conditions.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps initiated a program in Albania in 1992, and 73 Volunteers were serving in the country by 1997, assisting in secondary English teaching, small business development, and agroforestry development. In 1997, some fraudulent pyramid

savings schemes collapsed, causing many Albanian investors to lose their life savings. The resulting breakdown in civil order and public safety led the Peace Corps to evacuate its Volunteers and American staff members in March 1997 and to suspend the program that summer. The Peace Corps returned to Albania in 2003, and currently has Volunteers serving in three projects throughout the country, many in the smaller, needier communities. The focus is on helping communities build their capacity to address local issues more effectively. Albania is slowly decentralizing responsibilities and resources from the national government to local governments, and communities are gaining control over their roads, schools, clinics and public services for the first time. Volunteers work with city halls, community organizations, resource centers, universities, schools, and clinics.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

The business development Volunteers were the first to come to Albania since the Peace Corps reopened. They are working with local governments and development associations to improve the organizational and management capabilities of local government staff members, and to strengthen collaborative activities with local nongovernmental organizations, businesses, and citizen groups. Tourism is becoming more economically important to Albania and several Volunteers are working with their communities to improve both tourism promotion and services. The Volunteers and their Albanian colleagues have formed a tourism committee to share information and resources across the country. Two Volunteers recently collaborated with several local organizations and school groups to hold a castle clean-up day to kick off a campaign to clean up a city to make it more attractive for tourists. Another Volunteer worked with the tourism and information department of a city hall to prepare attractive promotional materials in preparation for a cross-border festival to begin the tourist season.

Volunteers also work to overcome the skepticism of communities about doing things differently or trying out new ideas. A Volunteer and his university colleagues held a successful job fair for students at the secondary and university levels. Another Volunteer helped to organize a project to repair and paint attractive murals on the walls of a school compound. The success of the project led to another project involving the city hall, regional government, and local organizations to repair and paint the buildings and park at the entrance to the city.

Education

Education Volunteers teach English as a foreign language in secondary schools and work with the teachers of English to improve their skills. They are also developing school and community activities to promote the use of conversational English. During the summer after their training, many of the Volunteers helped to staff a camp that brought groups of young Albanians together from a wide region for activities to build their leadership and citizenship skills, as well as to practice English.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The Volunteers working in the health and HIV/AIDS sector work with local clinics, schools, and community groups to provide education on maternal and child health, water and sanitation, drug awareness, HIV/AIDS prevention, and other local health issues. Volunteers also help develop health education programs and materials for use at the local level. One Volunteer who works in a rural health clinic that lacks even basic supplies is helping to organize a donor program that the community can continue. Another Volunteer is helping to organize a women's support group in a traditional, conservative community.

"Building friendships and trust with the Albanian people is one of the most important steps in the development process. The fabric of infrastructure here is based, first and foremost, upon the Albanians' incredibly strong relationships with their families and friends, and we can learn from each other by following these shared values."

Albania Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Armenia

Capital ..... Yerevan

Population ..... 3 million

Annual per capita income $790

GDP growth 12.9%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 0%
Female: 1%

Infant mortality rate ..... 30 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 94%
Measles: 91%

Foreign direct investment ..... $111 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 87%
Rural: 45%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.20%

Religion ..... Armenian Apostolic Christianity

Official language ..... Armenian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	85	84
Program funds ($000)	1,717	1,743

Country Overview

Program dates	1992–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Armenia was one of the most industrialized republics of the Soviet Union, exporting industrial, military, and high-technology goods to the other republics and, in turn, relying heavily on them for key inputs. The break-up of the Soviet Union combined with the collapse of its trade, payment, and financial systems dealt crippling blows to Armenia's industries, many of which were essentially non-viable in the absence of the Soviet command economy. Economic effects of a 1988 earthquake that killed 25,000 and left 500,000 homeless are still felt. A blockade resulting from the conflict with Azerbaijan has devastated the economy and intensified dependence on external supplies of energy, food, and materials. Armenia's transition to a free market has been characterized by a plunge in living standards with growth benefiting few and income disparities widening. Half of Armenians live in poverty; more than one in six lives in extreme poverty.

Program Focus

Armenia is in the midst of historic change. Despite a war, blockades, turmoil, an earthquake, and power shortages, the country is slowly transitioning to a market economy and democratic society. Private sector activities are emerging, and wide-scale entrepreneurship needs to be supported through training and education. Armenians recognize the importance of English to link themselves to economic, educational, and technological opportunities. More attention is being given to health education and prevention as an alternative to the traditional curative approach. Armenians are starting to recognize the importance of the environment as a priceless and threatened national resource.

The Peace Corps is supporting Armenia's ability to address many developmental challenges by providing programs in business development, English, health, and environmental education.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

A key challenge facing Armenia is how to initiate and sustain new industries, technologies, and services that can grow, attract investments, create new export markets and jobs, raise living standards, and allow the country and its citizens to flourish within a broader regional and international market. Peace Corps Volunteers help develop Armenian organization and community capacity by providing a diverse range of consulting and technical assistance services to business centers and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Volunteers provide training in project design and management, marketing, finance, organizational development, project monitoring and evaluation.

One business Volunteer initiated and developed an information and community resource center proposal for his host organization. The counterpart and Volunteer designed, wrote, and supervised all aspects of the proposal and project, including budgeting, delegation of responsibilities, and evaluation of the project from inception to completion. Together, they successfully oversaw construction of a major capital improvement to their organization's facilities.

Education

The teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) program increases the quality of English education throughout Armenia. Volunteers teach in secondary schools, colleges, universities, training centers, and educational NGOs. Instruction is provided in schools and through nonformal educational activities, such as after-school clubs. Volunteers provide professional development for teachers through team teaching, and workshops. One-third of education Volunteers work on information and communication technology projects.

One Volunteer initiated a civic education project (CEP) at the state university where her English students planned and organized the first CEP regional conference in that region. With her guidance, students planned and organized the conference, wrote proposals, delivered papers — and ultimately took great pride in offering such an important and successful event at their university.

Environment

Armenia has a rich natural environment. However, environmental degradation, as a legacy of the Soviet era and as a consequence of the economic crisis, is a significant issue. Awareness activities have been initiated on governmental, public, and educational levels, but they lack coordination and resources. As a result of the convergence of interest and an increase in activities by Armenians and by Volunteers, Peace Corps/Armenia initiated a new environmental project in 2003.

One Volunteer helped to establish an environmental club with her counterpart organization. Club members attend weekly meetings where they are creating a survey about perceptions of the environment and drawing a community map of pollution/environmental problems in their town.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers organize health classes, seminars, clubs, community and professional lectures, and discussion groups on topics such as general health and hygiene, women's health, self-esteem and life planning, nutrition, exercise, and physical therapy. Health Volunteers also train health workers in clinics and hospitals enhancing their professional development.

One Volunteer, working with her counterpart health-care foundation, developed health and nutrition pamphlets for the community and booklets for village nurses and doctors. After a few weeks, 80 percent of the nurses improved scores on related tests, and half the pamphlets were distributed to patients. Using a survey, the Volunteer and counterparts identified a need for medical resources for regional health professionals. With the Volunteer's assistance, the NGO applied and received a grant to create a library.

Married Volunteers serving in Armenia

Azerbaijan

Capital ..... Baku

Population ..... 8 million

Annual per capita income $710

GDP growth 10.6%

Adult illiteracy rate 3%

Infant mortality rate ..... 76 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 97%
Measles: 97%

Foreign direct investment ..... $1,392 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 93%
Rural: 58%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions ..... Islam: 93.4%
Russian Orthodoxy: 2.5%
Armenian Orthodoxy: 2.3%
Other: 1.8%

Official language ..... Azerbaijani

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	85	104
Program funds ($000)	1,527	1,729

Country Overview

Program dates	2003–present
Program sector	Education

Azerbaijan's government has three branches. The executive branch is composed of a president, a prime minister, and the council of ministers. The legislative branch consists of the 125-member parliament (Milli Majlis), whose members are elected for five-year terms, 100 of them elected from territorial districts and 25 elected from party lists. Finally, the judicial branch, headed by a constitutional court, is nominally independent.

In October 2003, Azerbaijan held presidential elections, selecting Ilham Aliyev, son of former President Heydar Aliyev, to follow in his father's footsteps. The election did not meet international standards, and critics of the new administration still argue that it has much to do to support building, both domestically and internationally.

Reopening negotiations with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjoining territories captured by Armenia remains high on the agenda of the new regime, as does addressing the problems of an economy dependent upon the as-yet-unfulfilled promise of revenues from oil and gas reserves. A U.S.-sponsored development project to develop agribusiness was launched in 2004 to help diversify Azerbaijan's economy. This effort will be reinforced by another USAID rural agribusiness development project. The British Petroleum-led consortium of oil and gas producers is similarly launching efforts to fund development projects along the route of its newly laid oil pipelines.

Program Focus

The first group of Volunteers in Azerbaijan arrived in September 2003 and completed training in December 2003. They are English language teachers who are teaching at the secondary and university levels. Secondary education in Azerbaijan includes grades 2 through 12, but most schools introduce English (and other foreign languages) in the fifth grade. The initial cohort was 25 strong and the Volunteers were posted at sites outside the capital. A second cohort of English language teachers arrived in July 2004, and they augment both the secondary school and teacher training efforts.

With more than 2,200 schools offering or hoping to offer English courses, there is considerable scope for growth within the education sector. In addition, preliminary discussions are underway to explore additional programs, particularly in the areas of business development and agriculture.

Volunteer Focus

Education

The popularity of and need for the education program are reflected by the hundreds of schools that submitted applications requesting a Volunteer. Indeed, more than 700 schools have applied for the 50 plus Volunteers in-country. When asked why a Peace Corps Volunteer is needed in a certain village, the head English teacher replied, "Look around you. All of my colleagues were my students in this very school. We are all Soviet trained. We love our children and we love English but we have taken our learning as far as we can go. We need your Volunteers to help us teach spoken English and to introduce new methods to us."

Volunteers began their assignments when the Azerbaijani English language curriculum was undergoing significant change. This change was characterized by a shift from rote memorization of literature and grammatical rules to a communicative and generally interactive process. Most Azerbaijani English language instructors have never had native English speakers as teachers. Team teaching with a native speaker who can assist in the transition to an emphasis on spoken English is an opportunity that scores of Azerbaijani teachers are eager to grasp.

In addition to their teaching duties, Volunteers have been remarkably inventive in augmenting their classroom responsibilities with a wide range of supportive activities. Fifteen Volunteers created after-school English conversation clubs that involve their students, parents, and teachers wishing to learn English. One Volunteer, teaching in a school with a faculty that speaks only Russian, developed an English language program for her colleagues. Three other Volunteers combined their talents and their students to promote innovative secondary school teacher training for university students. They convened some 50 students from two secondary schools and divided them into classes that enabled future Azerbaijani teachers to hone their English teaching skills.

Summer programs have been equally impressive. Three Volunteers developed a drama camp for 30 children in their community. Introducing the students to English as well as set design, costume preparation, and rehearsals, this summer-long effort culminated in a presentation of *Snow White* that ran to full houses for several days. Moreover, one athletically inclined Volunteer developed a swimming program for young women in her community that has grown into a community-wide weekend sports program; a group of Volunteers developed a successful day camp; and two Volunteers ran a highly successful GLOW (Girls leading Our World) camp, promoting self esteem for young Azerbaijani women.

"For me, a really defining moment occurred this summer during my "civic engagement" project, when my (university student) participants realized that they could actually do something to affect change. That something as 'simple' as teaching English to unemployed job seekers could make a difference gave the recipients a sense of hope and gave the university students a sense of empowerment."

Azerbaijan Volunteer
Education Sector

"Everything I have heard about the progress of the Peace Corps is excellent. These English teachers are doing a wonderful job and the people of Azerbaijan deeply appreciate their contribution."

Ilham Aliyev
President

Bangladesh

Capital ..... Dhaka

Population ..... 136 million

Annual per capita income $380

GDP growth 4.4%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 50%
Female: 69%

Infant mortality rate ..... 48 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 85%
Measles: 77%

Foreign direct investment ..... $47 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 99%
Rural: 97%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions ..... Islam: 88.3%
Hinduism: 10.5%
Christianity: 0.3%
Buddhism: 0.6%
Others: 0.3%

Official language ..... Bangla

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	130	140
Program funds ($000)	1,759	1,776

Country Overview

Program dates	1998–2001 2002–present
Program sector	Education Youth

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, and the needs of its people are substantial. Efforts to improve the standard of living are hampered by political instability, corruption, cyclones, and floods. Nonetheless, positive indicators of development include self-sufficiency in rice production and a significant decline in infant mortality. The government also continues to support women's participation in the political process and girls' education. Consequently, primary school enrollment has increased considerably, with girls comprising 2.5 times as many students as they did in 1971.

Bangladeshi politics have been characterized by a continual struggle between the current ruling party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and the main opposition party, the Awami League, which was voted out of office in the October 2001 parliamentary elections. Both parties have frequently resorted to denunciations, intermittent strikes, and occasional violence to discredit each other. Still, Bangladesh is one of the most democratic states in the Muslim world and a leading voice among the least-developed countries. It also has taken on an increasingly active role in international peacekeeping operations.

Bangladesh has experienced steady economic growth. The agriculture sector continues to support most of the population. While rice and jute are the primary crops, wheat and tea are assuming greater importance. Approximately 80 percent of the country's export earnings come from manufacturing of ready-made garments. This provides employment for more than 1.5 million people, many of whom are women. However, change is imminent. When the current quota is lifted in 2005, U.S. importers will be able to buy their goods from any country, forcing Bangladesh to compete with countries with cheaper labor and better manufacturing skills. Women provide about one-quarter of the earned income, often aided by microcredit loans given by the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, small nongovernmental organizations, and other

innovative credit methods. Although the industrial sector is growing, unemployment and underemployment remain serious problems.

Program Focus

The first group of Volunteers in Bangladesh arrived in November 1998 as English teacher trainers. The program was expanded the following year to include assignments at technical training centers and youth training centers. As a result of election-related violence and the increased concern for the safety of Americans abroad after the events of September 11, 2001, the Peace Corps suspended operations in Bangladesh on October 20, 2001. In August 2002, a group of 11 trainees arrived to resume their service as Volunteers, all of them assigned to youth development centers. Since then, 110 Volunteers have served as English language teachers in both youth development centers and government secondary schools. At the end of 2004, Volunteers will be working in 54 districts.

Volunteer Focus

Education

The education program responds to a strong need to enhance English language skills throughout the country. In 1971, East Pakistan fought a war of independence against West Pakistan, which had been triggered, in part, by the central government's planned imposition of Urdu as the official language of all Pakistan. As a matter of national pride, public schools switched from teaching in English to teaching entirely in Bangla. For 30 years, teachers and students had little opportunity to study and work in English. This created an acute need for English instruction, which the government of Bangladesh has come to view as an essential tool for integrating the nation and its people into the global economy and into a rapidly changing technological world. Thus, Volunteers serving as English language teachers in secondary schools will be an important part of equipping Bangladeshi schoolchildren for the future.

One TEFL Volunteer has worked with a teaching counterpart to test community wells for arsenic. For groups using contaminated wells, he and his counterpart have developed information sessions on using alternative sources of water. In addition, the Volunteer has learned to build and use a pond-water filtration system to make potable water.

Youth

Thirty percent of the population of Bangladesh is in the 15- to 30-year-old age group. The government recognizes that youth need to play a major role in the country's social and economic development. It is committed to empowering youth and other segments of the society, such as women, who have not previously had a voice in local decision-making. One of the ways the government wants to accomplish this is through youth development centers, which will provide young men and women with training to help them earn a living. This, in turn, will allow them to assume a larger role in meeting local needs.

Peace Corps/Bangladesh currently provides English instruction, as well as some vocational and other training, at youth development centers. Volunteers provide education in areas such as health and hygiene, computer skills, embroidery, fabric dying, and block printing. Because the centers provide a venue for community impact through the education of youth and women, it is a rich opportunity for Peace Corps to introduce this new programming appropriate to community needs.

One Volunteer works with a youth group from a community of indigenous tribal peoples who inhabit one of the last remaining forests of Bangladesh. The Volunteer is working on a natural resources management project supported by the government of Bangladesh and USAID that will train youth to create and maintain tourist trails in the forest.

"Peace Corps/Bangladesh has opened my eyes to the world, instilled confidence, challenged my values, given me invaluable international experience, and allowed me to grow close to devout Muslims, which is critical for post 9/11 when Islam is so misunderstood."

Bangladesh Volunteer
Youth Sector

Belize

Capital	Belmopan
Population	253,000
Annual per capita income	$2,970
GDP growth	3.7%
Adult illiteracy rate	24%
Infant mortality rate	22 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 87% Measles: 82%
Foreign direct investment	$ 34 million
Access to safe water	90.9%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.5%
Religions	Christianity Islam Hinduism Buddhism
Official language	English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	58	54
Program funds ($000)	1,718	1,685

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present
Program sectors	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Belize, which encompasses approximately the same land area as El Salvador, is the most sparsely populated nation in the Central American peninsula. Though Belize has historically focused its development on export of tropical crops, the country has recently begun to widen its focus to include ecotourism. The pace of development is quickening with an increase in foreign investment. At the same time, however, Belizeans are becoming more aware of the environmental costs associated with development. As the central government moves toward privatization and decentralization of services, towns and rural communities are challenged to prioritize, finance, and manage their own affairs. Building the capacity of rural communities to develop good governance practices and sustainable livelihoods for their constituents is becoming a priority for the development community.

The Pan American Health Organization, recognizing the steady increase in HIV/AIDS cases in Belize, has designated it as the country with the highest number of people affected by HIV/AIDS in Central America. This sparked the government's creation of a National AIDS Commission, which is charged with coordinating Belize's strategic plan for HIV/AIDS eradication.

Belize's Caribbean coastline is annually affected by tropical storms. The government has struggled to address their impact on the growing rural population and the resulting lack of access to basic services. With the national focus moving toward ecotourism, there has been a push to ensure that communities living close to national parks are incorporated into planned income-generating activities.

Program Focus

In response to the diverse issues facing Belize, Peace Corps programming focuses on a wide variety of projects in two main sectors: education and the environment. Peace Corps/Belize is moving away from placing Volunteers with government agencies and toward placing them with NGOs and in community councils. This has facilitated Volunteers' integration with their communities.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Volunteers provide education in literacy, HIV/AIDS education and prevention strategies, computer skills, small project development and management, and computer training and support for teachers. Information communication technology Volunteers are providing outreach support, including hardware/software installation and training, repairs, and Internet setup for 25 schools and libraries. One Volunteer assigned to the University of Belize is working on a network and computer laboratory using open-source software for the Ministry of Education. Another Volunteer, assigned to the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired (BCVI), has helped the agency set up their computer system. Recently the Volunteer started a project to allow blind or visually impaired people to use computers by utilizing screen-reading software. This is innovative technology for the agency, and the clients are excited about this new development and opportunity.

Environment

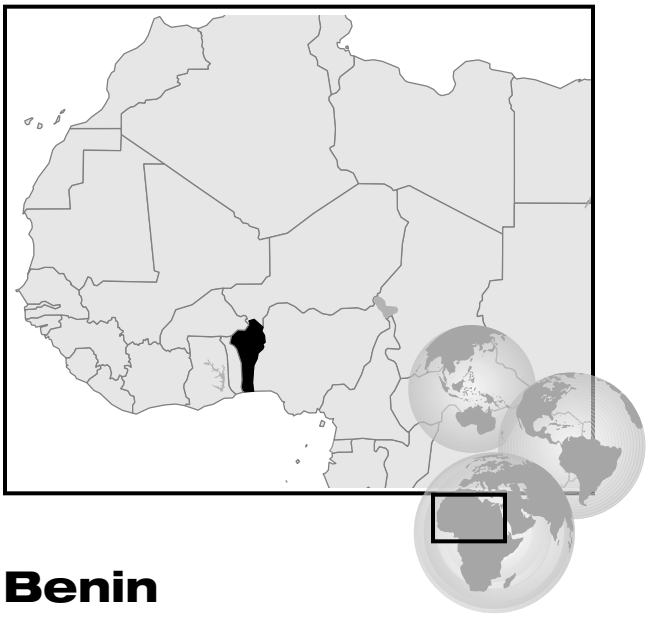
Belize boasts a diverse natural resource base, from tropical forests to the second largest barrier reef in the world. Peace Corps/Belize is committed to helping Belizeans protect that base. To accomplish this, the Peace Corps actively participates in the national environmental education program, which first focused on primary schools, but is now directed to the general population. Peace Corps/Belize is also supporting new conservation NGOs in their environmental education efforts and with their co-management of protected areas. Volunteers also assist a wide spectrum of local conservation NGOs, community-based development organizations, and government agencies responsible for environmental management and protection. Activities include organizing, assessing priority needs, programming and fundraising, and, most recently, viable business planning for eco-tourist initiatives. An environmental Volunteer, assigned to a community-based organization committed to protecting the Sibun River's ecosystems, works as a community development officer in the watershed's 11 villages. In that capacity, the Volunteer has created a mobile watershed classroom, organized a workshop for teachers on the watershed and freshwater ecosystems, trained 23 villagers in community-based water-quality management, and collaborated with the Belize Zoo in conducting a teachers' workshop on wetlands.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Education Volunteers with a focus on HIV/AIDS have provided assistance to the National AIDS Commission, district AIDS committees, the School Health and Physical Education Services of the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Health, and local NGOs. HIV/AIDS education Volunteers implemented prevention training for nearly 9,000 students and teachers and trained close to 800 service providers and community members from 25 organizations. Training covered prevention strategies and working with and supporting persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs). One HIV/AIDS education Volunteer assigned to the Belize Family Life Association (BFLA) taught HIV/AIDS prevention classes in 13 Stann Creek villages to 800 students; assisted the Dangriga AIDS Society with presentations to banana, citrus, and shrimp farm workers; and trained a group of at-risk, out-of-school youth as HIV/AIDS peer educators.

"I have worked extensively with four Peace Corps Volunteers on the implementation of the IT program here in the Toledo District. The initial phase of the project saw the intensive contribution of valuable Volunteer IT skills and expertise. The IT thrust will, in time, expand as more schools move from a single PC to network computer labs. This will ensure the development of sustainability, which is one of the main objectives of the program. Any success in IT can be accredited to the valuable contribution of the Volunteers that work at the district education center."

Glenford Parham
IT Coordinator
Ministry of Education and Sport



Benin

Capital ..... Porto-Novo

Population ..... 7 million

Annual per capita income $380

GDP growth 6.0%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 45%
Female: 74%

Infant mortality rate ..... 93 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 79%
Measles: 78%

Foreign direct investment ..... $41 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 74%
Rural: 55%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 3.6%

Religions ..... Indigenous beliefs: 50%
Christianity: 30%
Islam: 20%

Official language ..... French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	121	143
Program funds ($000)	3,266	3,544

Country Overview

Program dates	1968–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Benin has emerged as a beacon of democracy and one of the most stable countries in Africa. The country has held three consecutive presidential elections, which were generally viewed as free and fair. The government continues to reform the educational system, provide opportunities for private economic initiatives, improve health-care delivery, and decentralize its functions. While Benin has experienced economic growth during the past few years, it remains among the world's poorest countries. However, the government has managed to reduce fiscal expenditures and deregulate trade, initiate the privatization of key energy and telecommunications infrastructures, and implement a broad liberalization program in the cotton sector, a primary source of foreign exchange.

Program Focus

Although the government has demonstrated success in its commitment to improving the well-being of the Beninese people, the country's human and material resources are often insufficient to provide qualified teachers in sufficient numbers, provide adequate health education and HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns (particularly in rural areas), preserve and restore the natural environment, and promote and provide training and credit facilities for small business owners. Peace Corps Volunteers are addressing these needs with a broad range of activities in business development, education (teaching English), environment, and health and HIV/AIDS. Regardless of sector, Volunteers receive training in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and micro-entrepreneurs need assistance with basic management skills. Volunteers work directly with entrepreneurs, village associations, women, and NGOs to teach marketing, accounting, busi-

ness management, and organizational techniques. Credit unions in most towns have no computerized system to track credit. This can delay recovery of debts by two months or more. Volunteers created a database in Microsoft Access that helps track credit and is now used in the Federation of Credit Unions throughout the country.

One Volunteer founded a "Junior Entrepreneurs' Club" to provide local children under 12 with guidance on forming their own small businesses and to teach them business skills, such as accounting and marketing. The club started a business catching birds and making cages to sell at the market and one selling lemonade on the street. The club also developed its own savings system so that it can buy improved traps.

Education

The education project continues to evolve to meet the need for qualified educators for an increasing student population. Volunteers work in secondary schools teaching English and incorporating HIV/AIDS education and prevention into their lessons. Volunteers also transfer innovative and participatory methodologies to their colleagues. The Network of Professional Women, which assumed the gender and development activities from Peace Corps in 2003, is now assisting Peace Corps/Benin's Scholarship Program by giving 100 scholarships to needy girls. Several Volunteers have organized girls' camps during the long vacation period.

One Volunteer trained his colleagues in computer skills on computers donated by his predecessor. The school now uses the computer system to print report cards, tests, and other important documents.

Environment

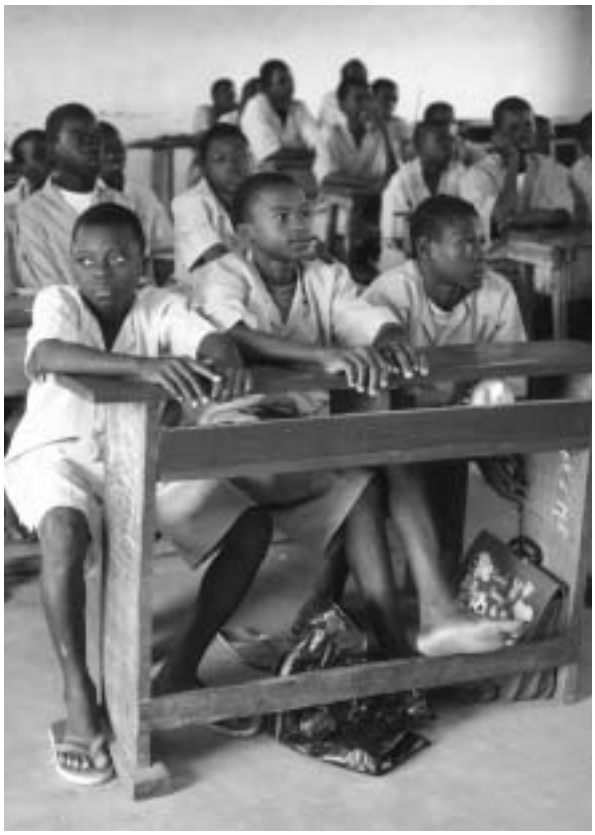
Seventy percent of the population works in agriculture, and Benin faces serious environmental consequences as a result of deforestation and rapid reduction of soil fertility. In response, the Peace Corps has strengthened its environment project, expanding its scope to include environmental education. In the future, Volunteers will focus on environmental education, tree production techniques, and project design and management.

Health and HIV/AIDS

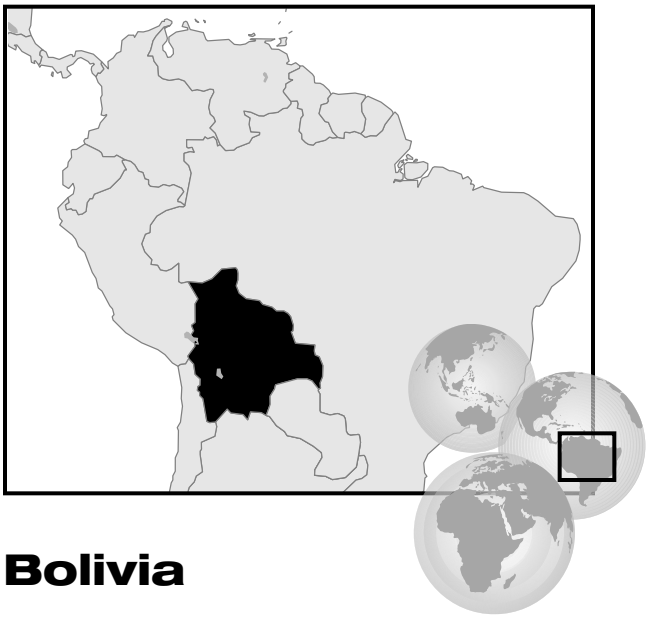
Rural communities in Benin face many health issues. Volunteers collaborate with social service centers throughout the country to conduct health education, particularly on maternal and child health issues. Peace Corps/Benin's HIV/AIDS peer education program, "Project Panther," allows Volunteers to continue to partner with peer educators from their communities. While the leadership of the project has changed, Volunteers continue this important work that significantly increases youth involvement in HIV/AIDS education. Volunteers work with their communities to select two youth peer educators (one female, one male) and a community advisor to conduct a variety of HIV/AIDS education activities targeting youth who do not attend school. Future emphasis in this sector will be on family nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and health education, particularly regarding malaria and diarrhea.

"Coming to Africa is the best thing I ever did."

Benin Volunteer
Education Sector



Students in a Benin Volunteer's math class



Bolivia

Capital ..... La Paz

Population ..... 9 million

Annual per capita income $900

GDP growth 2.8%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 3%
Female: 19%

Infant mortality rate ..... 56 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 81%
Measles: 79%

Foreign direct investment ..... $677 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 95%
Rural: 64%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religion ..... Roman Catholicism: 95%

Official language ..... Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	145	132
Program funds ($000)	2,958	2,931

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–1971 1990–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Bolivia has faced several years of political change and challenges. With a stagnant economy, rising unemployment rates, escalating civil unrest among indigenous populations, and mounting antipathy between the executive and legislative branches of government, the political situation in Bolivia remains precarious.

Bolivia's main exports are natural gas, tin, zinc, gold, silver and soybeans. Although the nation has experienced macroeconomic stability over the past decade, approximately 80 percent of Bolivia's rural population lives below the poverty line; the Bolivian GDP/person is $870—only 31 percent of the average GDP/person in Latin America. The United Nations Development Program's human development index ranks Bolivia as the least developed country in South America. Though unemployment remains high, the economy grew by around 2.5 percent in 2003. Inflation is estimated at about 2.6 percent.

Program Focus

From 1962–1971, approximately 1,550 Volunteers served in Bolivia. In December 1987, the government of Bolivia formally requested that the Peace Corps, after a long absence, return to Bolivia. In 1990, the Peace Corps resumed operations. Today, there are approximately 135 Volunteers in-country, working in health, agriculture, business development, education, and environmental projects. Where appropriate, the Peace Corps integrates information technology into projects to expand technology access to Bolivian youth, farmers, entrepreneurs, and municipalities.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Bolivia's farmers face serious challenges in meeting basic needs for both adequate nutrition and income. Agriculture Volunteers help farmers gain

skills in sustainable agriculture and soil conservation techniques. The agriculture project focuses on both traditional agricultural extension and business and marketing. The project helps farmers improve crop production; increase family income through improved farm management; and commercialize agricultural products.

Through a USAID small projects assistance grant, one Volunteer is working with local farmers to build a water-conserving irrigation system. The system will improve production of organic crops, including lettuce, carrots, and strawberries, which are popular in local markets and sell at three times the price of nonorganic produce. This Volunteer is also working to help local women develop nontraditional honey products, such shampoos and soaps.

Business Development

To address endemic rural poverty, Volunteers help communities develop income-generating activities and business skills. Volunteers help improve microenterprise practices to create greater economic opportunities for poor people in rural and peri-urban areas. This includes training local artisans, teaching basic business skills, and developing local tourism plans.

One business Volunteer trained indigenous women weavers in basic business practices through capacity-building workshops given in Quecha, the region's native language. As a result, the women increased family income through cost analysis, improved handicraft product development, and increased market access.

Education

Volunteers help reduce child mortality rates by training families, students, educators, and communities to improve poor nutrition and hygiene habits. The project combines nutritional habits, healthy lifestyle practices, and nonformal education skills in an integrated strategy aimed at improving family health. Volunteers train school districts and classroom educators in nonformal education techniques and other ways to incorporate health education curricula in the classroom. These activities aim to improve student health practices and strengthen Bolivia's educational reform efforts.

A Volunteer in the Cochabamba Valley is working with teachers and handicapped students. In addition to training teachers on interactive teaching methodologies that can be adapted to special-needs students, the Volunteer is training students in cooking, hygiene, and sanitation.

Environment

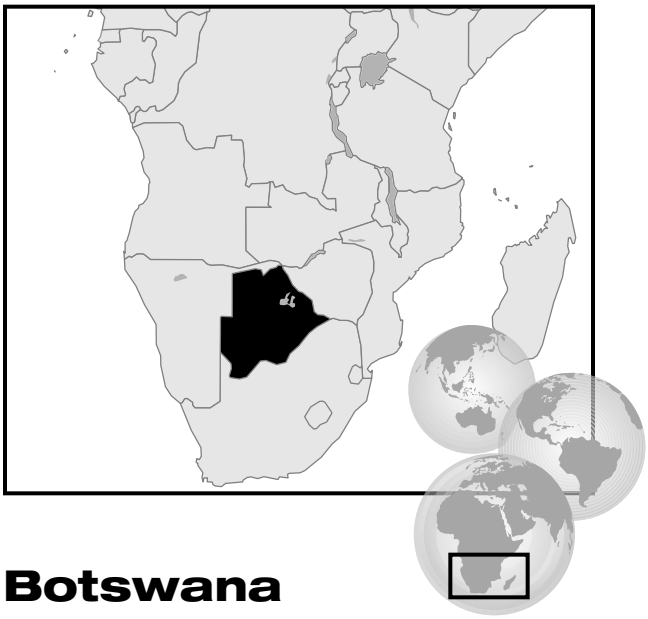
Bolivia faces rapidly deteriorating natural resources resulting from both mineral extraction and agricultural practices that deplete soil and water resources. The natural resources management project aims to protect the environment and create an ethic of environmental stewardship. Volunteers work with local communities on soil conservation, watershed management, and re-vegetation activities. Youth conservation clubs and teacher training focused on environmental sciences and conservation help expand conservation practices and develop a stewardship ethic.

One Volunteer is promoting environmental protection through youth clubs. Working with her counterpart, she helps teachers design an environmental education curriculum component, and has successfully formed three youth ecology clubs in rural communities. Club members have conducted a variety of activities, including Earth Day celebrations, tree plantings, and environmental health fairs.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Access to potable water and latrine systems is a major development challenge in Bolivia. Partnering with a range of local and national organizations, Volunteers are improving sanitary conditions by designing and constructing water systems and providing potable water to poor communities in rural areas. Volunteers organize and train local water boards in administration, maintenance, and environmental protection issues associated with potable water, and they help strengthen the ability of municipalities to meet ongoing local water needs. Volunteers have also spearheaded Peace Corps' efforts to improve solid-waste management, focusing on recycling and composting practices.

In Bolivia's drought-stricken Chaco area, one Volunteer is working with community members to construct nearly 700 family rainwater catchment systems. The Volunteer initiated a training and certification program for local masons and other community members, allowing this technology to be replicated at significantly reduced costs. Families now have reliable access to clean water in their homes.



Botswana

Capital	Gaborone
Population	2 million
Annual per capita income	$3,010
GDP growth	3.1%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 24% Female: 18%
Infant mortality rate	80 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 97% Measles: 90%
Foreign direct investment	$37 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 100% Rural: 90%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	38.80%
Religions	Christianity: 60% Indigenous beliefs: 40%
Official language	English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	61	62
Program funds ($000)	1,747	2,006

Country Overview

Program dates	1966–1997 2003-present
Program sector	Health and HIV/AIDS

The Republic of Botswana is a multiparty democracy with a stable and progressive political climate. National politics is dominated by the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which has won every presidential election since independence in 1966. Seretse Khama, Botswana's first president, was elected under the banner of the BDP. Quett Ketumile Masire, who retired in March 1998, succeeded him in an orderly transition. The country's current president is Festus Mogae.

Botswana has maintained one of the world's highest economic growth rates since independence. Through fiscal discipline and sound management, the nation has transformed itself from one of the poorest countries in the world to a middle-income country. Diamond mining has fueled much of this economic expansion. Other important economic activities include tourism and beef production. Despite its high GDP, however, Botswana suffers from high unemployment and income disparity.

The government has managed the country's resources prudently. In addition, revenue from diamonds and profits from the large foreign-exchange reserves of the Bank of Botswana have largely cushioned Botswana from recessions that have hurt most countries in the region. But while Botswana has experienced extremely high rates of growth, it has also experienced the most acute ravages of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. HIV/AIDS is much more than a health problem in Botswana—it is a development problem that will impact all aspects of Batswana life for years to come.

Program Focus

From 1966 to 1997, Peace Corps projects touched nearly all aspects of Botswana's development, with Volunteers working in education, health, the environment, urban planning, and economics. Volunteers filled significant gaps in human resources and, made important contributions to the steady progress of Botswana. Many leading figures in Botswana today were positively influenced by a Peace Corps teacher or counterpart. Because of Botswana's

economic success, a decision was made in 1997 to close the Peace Corps program.

In 1998, the government of Botswana declared HIV/AIDS a national crisis and President Mogae dedicated his first five years in office to fighting HIV/AIDS, poverty, and unemployment. The president leads the national strategic plan by chairing the National AIDS Council. Such public acknowledgment of the development threat posed by HIV/AIDS and the commitment to action by a head of state gave momentum to Botswana's war on AIDS. The government enlisted international agencies, civil society, other governments, and volunteer organizations in this fight. In 2001, President Mogae asked President Bush to reestablish the Peace Corps program to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Following an assessment by the Peace Corps in 2002, the program reopened, and the first group of Volunteers dedicated to combating HIV/AIDS arrived in March 2003.

Volunteer Focus

Health and HIV/AIDS

Under the guidance of the National AIDS Coordinating Agency, the Peace Corps began its activities in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government, specifically with the AIDS Coordinating Unit. This unit is helping to mainstream HIV/AIDS education and programming at the national, district, and village levels. (All government-sponsored development programs are to include HIV/AIDS training and education for the workforce and the recipient community.) It has deployed AIDS coordinators in 24 health districts throughout the country. Twenty-three Volunteers are assigned as counterparts to these coordinators. The Volunteers provide assistance to the district AIDS committees in developing multisector, districtwide responses to HIV/AIDS. They also help develop village AIDS committees; monitor, evaluate, and document of HIV/AIDS programming and its impacts; and facilitate district plans to ensure that HIV/AIDS activities are integrated into all development projects.

In 2004, Peace Corps/Botswana, in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government, placed Volunteers in two new projects. In the first project, eight Volunteers are working with social worker counterparts at the village level to build capacity for home-based care clients as well as orphans and vulnerable children. In the other new project, 14 Volunteers work at village health clinics providing services to women to prevent mother-to-child transmission. This project is in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Botswana Ministry of Health.

"I have been impressed with the programs and effort given to the fight against HIV/AIDS. I am proud that the Peace Corps was asked to be a part of the effort and think that we can make a contribution. Even though we only get two years to help individually, in the years to come, I hope to look back and see some positive things in Botswana, and I will be happy to have been a part of it. This opportunity is very special and it has inspired me to try the best I can at living up to the Peace Corps mission to promote world peace and friendship."

Botswana Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

Botswana Volunteer teaching technical drawing

Bulgaria

Capital.....Sofia

Population.....8 million

Annual per capita income $1,770

GDP growth 4.8%

Adult illiteracy rate..... Male: 1%
Female: 2%

Infant mortality rate..... 14 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate..... DPT: 94%
Measles: 90%

Foreign direct investment.....$600 million

Access to safe water 100%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions .....Bulgarian Orthodoxy: 82.6%
Islam: 12.2%
Others: 4%
Roman Catholicism: 0.6%
Protestantism: 0.5%

Official language .....Bulgarian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	205	202
Program funds ($000)	3,387	3,496

Country Overview

Program dates	1991–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Youth

Bulgaria continues to transform its political, economic, and social systems. Efforts to create stability, prosperity, and opportunity have begun to pay off, particularly in the larger urban areas. In March 2004, Bulgaria became a member state of the NATO alliance. Full membership in the European Union is projected for 2007, although many observers question whether Bulgaria will achieve all of the steps required for new entrants.

Despite this progress, economic development and structural reform have been frustratingly slow for the many Bulgarians who still feel the pain of the economic collapse of 1996. Approximately 35 percent of Bulgaria's population lives below the poverty line. Paradoxically, during the past four years, inflation has been low while growth in gross domestic product has been steady. This has led multilateral observers of the macroeconomic condition to conclude that Bulgaria is moving in the right direction.

Program Focus

Bulgaria's position in southeastern Europe is critical to regional stability and the evolution of a peaceful and prosperous Balkans. The Peace Corps serves Bulgaria through programs in English language education, business development focusing on community and organizational development, and youth development. In addition to direct skills transfer to adults and children, Volunteers partner with change agents in their communities to identify local needs, create development strategies, and build a civil society through broad-based community cooperation.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers in this sector focus on community and organizational development and strive to build greater cooperation at the grass-roots level as Bulgarian communities work towards a democratic civil

society and improved quality of life. Volunteers build synergies among local governments, NGOs, entrepreneurs, civic groups and individuals. The program relies upon the energy and expertise of Volunteers to identify common priorities, set realistic expectations, and develop and implement strategies that meet community objectives.

Volunteers are catalysts for change. Many Volunteers help communities leverage European Union structural funds through improved project design and management. Others promote volunteerism at the community level, organize informational campaigns, transfer management and organizational skills, and build mechanisms for more effective community resource generation.

In 2004, Volunteers worked on municipal infrastructure projects, assisted with tourism development and promotion, organized environmental education activities, consulted and trained entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized businesses, and taught Junior Achievement classes, among other work.

Education

As Bulgaria continues its economic and social reforms, the need for English language fluency has increased significantly. Volunteers work in primary and secondary schools to improve students' and teachers' English language skills. Beyond their teaching responsibilities, TEFL Volunteers worked in community projects, such as youth camps, adult English courses and diversity training. Many Volunteers are helping to raise awareness of the dangers of human trafficking, which is a growing problem in Bulgaria and the broader region. Volunteers also work with students and counterparts on fundraising and in teaching basic business skills, peer education, HIV/AIDS awareness, and many other community outreach projects.

In 2004, Volunteers taught 8,700 primary and secondary students in 70 schools. They established eight English language resource centers and computer labs in Bulgarian schools. Volunteers also helped to upgrade existing language resource centers and equip them with books, multimedia resources, and other materials.

Youth

Youth development has become an increasingly important focus of policymakers and communities who view the enthusiasm, flexibility, and potential of young people as a major asset as they implement the changes required for European Union accession. The Peace Corps' youth development program supports two of Bulgaria's most important national initiatives—the Ministry of Youth and Sport's initiative to provide all youth with greater opportunities for personal development; and the State Agency for Child Protection's initiative to improve the conditions of the more than 30,000 children living in orphanages and other state institutions.

In 2004, Volunteers mobilized individuals, parents, institution staff, organizations, and communities to provide Bulgarian youth with opportunities, such as organized sports, volunteer community service, health education, ethnic tolerance building, and career development. These activities gave youth greater fulfillment and increased their sense of civic responsibility, helping to develop leadership and life skills for all involved.

"I view of my role in the community as both an observer and representative. I'm an observer of the community, what problems it has, how it functions, and what can realistically be accomplished and then to go about trying to put together the necessary resources to address the issue. I'm a representative by just being myself and by making an active effort daily to get to know people to give them a pragmatic and personal view of what an American is like that typically counters what they have seen from the media...."

Bulgaria Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Burkina Faso

Capital ..... Ouagadougou

Population ..... 12 million

Annual per capita income $250

GDP growth 4.6%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 81%
Female: 92%

Infant mortality rate ..... 107 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 41%
Measles: 46%

Foreign direct investment ..... $8 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 66%
Rural: 37%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 6.50%

Religions ..... Islam: 55%
Christianity: 25%
Indigenous beliefs: 20%

Official language ..... French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	119	148
Program funds ($000)	3,055	3,429

Country Overview

Program dates	1966–1987 1995–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Burkina Faso, then known as Upper Volta, gained independence from France in August 1960. In 1966, the civilian government was overthrown by a military coup, which characterized the mode of government in Burkina Faso for the next 25 years. In 1984, the country's name was changed to Burkina Faso, which means "Country of the Upright/Honorable People." In 1991, a former military ruler, Blaise Compare, was the sole candidate and won the presidency; he was reelected in 1998 with nearly 90 percent of the vote. Since 1991 the country has experienced a high level of stability. Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 175 out of 177 on the 2004 United Nations Human Development Index. The majority of its population is engaged in subsistence agriculture, which is hampered by frequent droughts. Though foreign investment and private sector development are increasing, health care remains inadequate and conditions such as malaria and malnutrition are endemic.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps entered Burkina Faso in 1966. Major projects have included forestry extension, education for young farmers, small enterprise development, secondary education (math and science), well construction, agricultural extension, arts and crafts, and park development. In 1986, the government asked the Peace Corps to cease sending Volunteers because they no longer coincided with Burkina Faso's development goals; the last group completed service in 1987. Volunteers returned in 1995 as part of a newly established health project. One year later, the Peace Corps established a secondary education project in response to the government's urgent request for teachers. In 2003, Peace Corps introduced a small enterprise development project to complement the government's poverty reduction and private sector promotional programs. Currently, nearly 100 Volunteers work throughout the country, primarily in rural areas, and all Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Peace Corps/Burkina Faso works in the small enterprise development sector with a project that promotes business development and tourism. Burkina Faso has many areas that are attractive for tourism and rich in arts and crafts. Volunteers work with entrepreneur associations and cooperatives to market crafts and agribusiness products as well as promote cultural tours and tourism. Volunteers with a marketing background work with tour guides and hotel and restaurant owners to develop hospitality skills. Volunteers with business backgrounds work with savings and credit clubs, handicraft associations, and agribusiness cooperatives to improve business practices and the viability of commercial activities.

One small enterprise development Volunteer helped a women's pottery group to develop pricing and costing skills and enhance their technical pottery skills. The women are expanding their business into nearby community markets and have found funding to construct a workshop and showroom so they can work and sell their products year-round.

Education

Volunteers in the secondary education project are assigned to the Ministry of Education to work in underserved middle and high schools as math and science teachers. Teachers typically have large classes, sometimes with more than 100 students, and they teach up to 25 hours per week. These Volunteers teach all classes in French. Volunteers work with their counterparts in secondary schools to build students' capacities for critical thinking, problem-solving, and real life skills. Volunteers have created innovative lesson plans that enrich the Burkinabé traditional way of teaching.

Education Volunteers collaborate with their communities and schools to conduct secondary projects during school vacations. Primary among these projects is a girls' camp program run in provincial capitals during summer vacation. Girls attend the one-week camp, where they participate in sports, personal health lessons, life skills education, career counseling, and shadowing of professional women. At the camps, Volunteers and their counterparts help increase awareness of basic human rights for women and girls and the importance of their access to education, health care, and mobility.

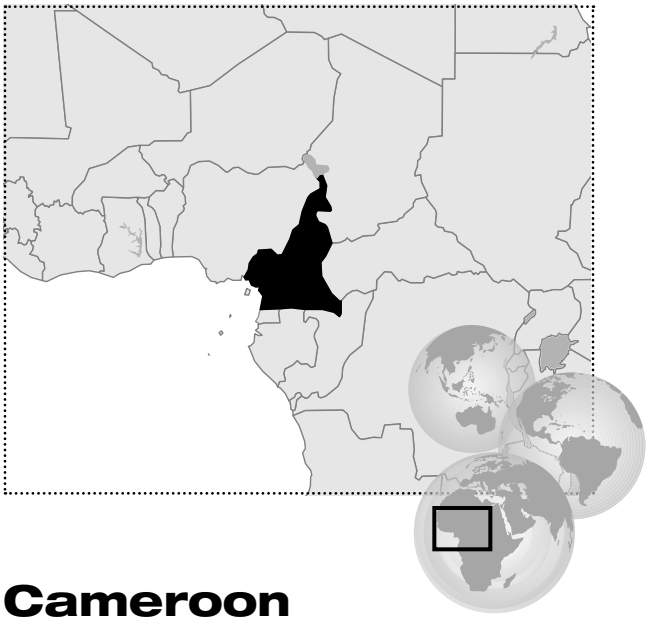
Health and HIV/AIDS

The health project responds to the government's priority of revitalizing its primary health care system through the Bamako Initiative. This initiative emphasizes achieving full community participation in the management and financing of health services. Volunteers are assigned to village-level health and social promotion centers. They work with communities to strengthen local health management committees and help develop health promotion programs in areas such as childhood communicable diseases, malaria, HIV/AIDS education, and Guinea worm eradication. Volunteers work closely with Ministry of Health officials to coordinate the planning and execution of "Guinea Worm Weeks" in endemic zones of Burkina Faso. Ministry officials and international partners in the Guinea worm eradication campaign consistently cite the efforts of Volunteers as being the backbone of the eradication program.

Through training and ongoing day-to-day assistance, Volunteers have built the capacity of local community groups to undertake health promotion activities using primarily their own resources. These community groups include health center management committees and HIV/AIDS groups. The former are groups of villagers elected under the Bamako Initiative to provide local input into health center management; the latter groups were established and trained with the help of Volunteers, and their project, entitled "SIDA Stop" (Stop AIDS), is a grassroots effort with a strong level of commitment from stakeholders.

"I have three friends in Djibasso with whom I can share everything I would share with an American friend—three real, lasting, meaningful, trusting, and deep friendships. We transcended the cultural barrier and found something deeper inside. This is the most meaningful thing I walk away from Burkina Faso with."

Burkina Faso Volunteer
Education Sector



Cameroon

Capital	Yaounde
Population	16 million
Annual per capita income	$550
GDP growth	4.4%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 23% Female: 40%
Infant mortality rate	95 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 48% Measles: 62%
Foreign direct investment	$86 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 78% Rural: 39%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	11.80%
Religions	Christianity: 53% Indigenous beliefs: 25% Islam: 22%
Official languages	French English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	124	122
Program funds ($000)	2,990	2,828

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Cameroon, an independent republic, continues to move toward democracy. Political reforms are having a positive effect and the nation's multiparty system is enabling elections to become more competitive. Cameroon has a national assembly of 12380 members, who serve for five-year terms. The presidential term recently changed from five years to seven years.

Agriculture is the mainstay of Cameroon's economy. It provides a living for 80 percent of the population and accounts for about one-third of gross domestic product and more than one-half of all export earnings. Cocoa and coffee are the main cash crops. Other exports include timber, aluminum, cotton, natural rubber, bananas, peanuts, tobacco, and tea.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps entered Cameroon in 1962 with 20 Volunteers who came as math and science teachers. Peace Corps/Cameroon's program grew and diversified to include inland fisheries, credit union and cooperatives education, English, community forestry, health, and community development.

Currently, four robust projects are executed throughout the 10 provinces of Cameroon: English, math, computer and science education; health and water/sanitation; agroforestry; and small enterprise development. Additionally, all projects have four common themes running through them: focus, counterpart involvement, Volunteer competence, HIV/AIDS awareness and mitigation, and organizational professionalism.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Increasing competition for land in Cameroon has led some farmers to cultivate on steep hillsides and in ecologically important forested areas. Volunteers in the humid highland zone and the Sahel region

are working to establish a network of farmer leaders who understand the benefits of agroforestry and permanent farming systems and can promote these benefits to other farmers. Volunteers helped train farmers in agroforestry techniques by establishing demonstration plots on their farms. They also helped farm families establish 84 nurseries that produced more than 78,000 seedlings and cuttings of agroforestry species. Additionally, 38 seed banks were active during the year.

Business Development

The business development project links Volunteers to microfinance institutions through technical assistance that promotes small enterprise development. Business and credit management are integral components of this project. In 2004, more than 22,000 Cameroonians participated in meetings, workshops, and other training sessions Volunteers organized to improve business, credit, and loan portfolio management skills. Additionally, campaigns to the banking community and the general public promoted the prudent use of credit and the importance of loan recovery. As a result of the efforts of community-based banks, credit unions, and NGOs managing microfinance initiatives, nearly 2,000 Cameroonians are better able to provide credit management and counseling to entrepreneurs and assist financial institutions in their quest to provide secure loans with a minimal delinquency rate. Currently, 28 small enterprise development Volunteers work in 28 microfinance institutions throughout the 10 provinces of Cameroon.

Education

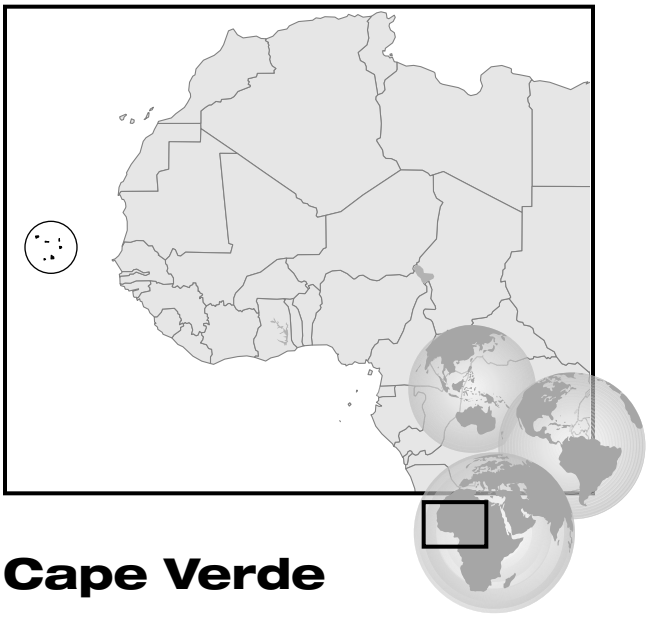
Providing the ever-expanding school-age population with a quality education remains a challenge for Cameroon. Volunteers improve the quality of education through classroom instruction in English, computer science, math, and science and by developing teaching materials applicable to Cameroonian society. Students' classroom knowledge is supplemented with health and environmental education curricula integrated into daily lessons. In the TEFL project, Volunteers have helped develop transferable educational materials, including a manual to upgrade teacher skills and a handbook covering HIV/AIDS education. Many Volunteers have started sustainable tree-planting projects, planting medicinal fruit and shade trees to earn income for their schools. Additionally, Volunteers helped establish libraries, science labs, school-based farms, gardens, wells, pit latrines, and health centers. Overall, education Volunteers taught English and didactics, math, and science skills and knowledge to more than 6,000 student teachers in teacher-training colleges and more than 45,000 secondary school children.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is one of the most pressing public health concerns, with as much as 17 percent of the population infected in certain urban areas. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in prevention, mitigation, and behavior change with regard to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This enables them to be important resources in their communities. In addition, Volunteers receive training in the National AIDS Control Plan of Cameroon to facilitate their active participation in local strategies. In 2004, health Volunteers trained nearly 500 peer educators on HIV/AIDS and STD issues and educated more than 13,000 community members on the prevention of HIV and STDs. Health Volunteers also trained more than 1,200 adolescents in life skills, which will enable them to make positive choices and live healthier lifestyles. Health Volunteers actively integrate other technical areas into their activities. Some focus on building local capacity in information technology; others incorporate environmental education issues, including efforts to conserve Cameroon's rainforest, into their work.

"Applying to the Peace Corps was the best decision I ever made. I entered the country eager, yet timid. Now, in my third year, I am strong-minded and determined. Peace Corps is like nothing else you will ever experience."

Cameroon Volunteer
Education Sector



Cape Verde

Capital	Praia
Population	458,000
Annual per capita income	$1,250
GDP growth	4.6%
Adult illiteracy rate	25%
Infant mortality rate	37 per 1,000 births
Immunization rate	DPT: 94% Measles: 85%
Foreign direct investment	$0.7 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 64% Rural: 89%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.04%
Religions	Roman Catholicism Protestantism
Official language	Portuguese

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	45	44
Program funds ($000)	1,665	1,743

Country Overview

Program dates	1988–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Youth

Cape Verde is a stable, transparent democracy. The African Party for Independence governed the country as a one-party state from the time of its independence in 1975 until its first democratic elections in 1990. The Movement for Democracy party won the 1990 and 1995 elections, but was defeated in 2000, when the African Party for Independence regained control.

Cape Verde has a low per capita gross domestic product (GDP), a result, in large part, of a poor natural resource base, including serious water shortages caused by periods of long-term drought. The economy is service-oriented; commerce, transport, and public services account for almost 70 percent of GDP. Although nearly 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas, agriculture is only a small percentage of GDP. The potential of fishing has not been fully exploited, and about 90 percent of Cape Verde's food supply is imported. Cape Verde runs a high trade deficit annually, which is financed by foreign aid and emigrant remittances. These remittances constitute a supplement to GDP of more than 20 percent. Economic reforms launched in 1991 are aimed at developing the private sector and attracting foreign investment to diversify the economy. In 1998, Cape Verde's constitution was changed to remove state control from all sectors of the economy (except the central bank) and to open the economy to foreign and domestic investment.

Program Focus

The government of Cape Verde initially invited the Peace Corps to participate in the nation's development efforts in 1987. The first group of Volunteers arrived in 1988, and current Volunteers work on seven of the nine inhabited islands. Cooperating closely with the government's stated development goals, Volunteers work in education (teaching English), capacity building at the municipal level (Cape Verde has 17 municipalities), and youth development (including information technology; vocational training; small business and credit; and leadership training, including life skills). Many Volunteers participate in activities of the women and gender and

development program, including career-planning events for girls, training for women by the National Association of Women Lawyers, and the celebration of International Women's Week. The Peace Corps is considered an important player in the nation's program to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and all Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in HIV/AIDS education.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Since the government's shift toward decentralization, municipalities and local communities have had difficulty identifying community needs and developing solutions to community problems. Volunteers continue to promote information technology as a tool to implement sustainable, small-scale community development projects. They also advise small businesses to increase profitability, viability, and access to credit. Vocational education Volunteers teach construction and electrical and mechanical engineering at technical high schools. Because of the high unemployment rate in Cape Verde and the need for vocational skills, vocational education has become an integrated part of the Peace Corps program.

One Volunteer took part in the successful planning, marketing and promotion of "Feira de producto Brazilairos in Cape Verde." This event was promoted by the commerce bureau and more than 1,000 local business people and Brazilian exporters interested in doing business in Cape Verde attended. Another Volunteer helped a local man open up his own businesses by working through the application process of applying for a loan from a local organization. After being approved for the loan and receiving the funds, the applicant opened a shop in his local community. With the success of his business, he has started to pay back the loan.

Education

The education or TEFL project helps the Ministry of Education provide quality learning opportunities to students and teachers, primarily at the high school level. Volunteers teach in the classroom and train teachers. The education project is shifting from primarily teaching English to greater capacity building in the areas of human resource development, parent and community involvement, and materials development. The project advocates gender relationships and promotes women's participation to increase their status and opportunities. It also educates students and the community in life skills and HIV/AIDS awareness. Working with youth groups in sports, summer camps, and community projects are also important components of the project.

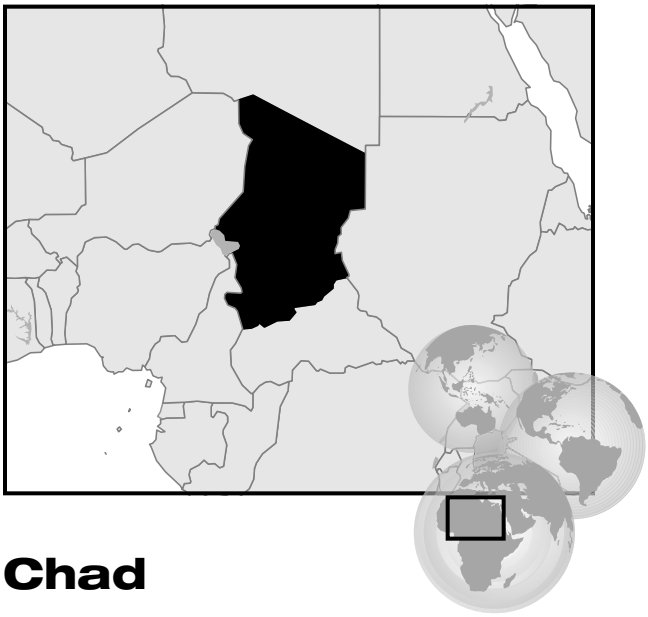
One Volunteer in a small school has started a section in the library composed of American magazines, world maps, and other personal materials for use as resources in lesson plans for teaching English. Another Volunteer is planning to help anchor a local radio program where English will be taught on the air with children and adults calling in from all over Cape Verde. Broadcasting capabilities will include the Cape Verdean community in the United States via the Internet.

Youth

Forty-one percent of the population in Cape Verde is less than 15 years old, so youth are a major focus for Volunteers. The Peace Corps is providing Volunteers in municipal youth centers where they train local staff in organizational development, library development, information technology, and life skills. In addition, Volunteers train youth in information technology, English, music, HIV/AIDS awareness, leadership, and other areas as needed. For example, one Volunteer helped a group develop and implement seven community development projects covering issues such as HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, drugs, and alcoholism.

"While working at the youth center, the youth have taken a very active role in the community and have shown that they are a valuable resource open to both, new and developing ideas."

Cape Verde Volunteer
Youth Sector



Chad

Capital ..... N'Djamena

Population ..... 8 million

Annual per capita income $210

GDP growth 9.9%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 45%
Female: 62%

Infant mortality rate ..... 117 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 40%
Measles: 55%

Foreign direct investment ..... $901 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 31%
Rural: 26%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 3.60%

Religions ..... Islam: 51%
Christianity: 35%
Animism: 7%
Indigenous beliefs: 7%

Official languages ..... French
Arabic

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	46	57
Program funds ($000)	1,709	1,909

Country Overview

Program dates	1966–1979 1987–1990 1990–1998 2003–present
Program sector	Education

Chad, a French colony until 1960, endured three decades of ethnic warfare as well as invasions by Libya before a semblance of peace was finally restored in 1990. The government eventually suppressed, or came to terms with, most rebel political and military groups, settled a territorial dispute with Libya on terms favorable to Chad, drafted a democratic constitution, and held multiparty presidential and national assembly elections in 1996 and 1997, respectively. In 1998, a new rebellion broke out in northern Chad, which continued to escalate until the government and the rebels signed a peace agreement in January 2002. The agreement provides for the demobilization of the rebels and their reintegration into the political system. Despite movement toward democratic reform, however, power remains in the hands of a northern ethnic oligarchy.

More than 80 percent of the population relies on subsistence farming and the raising of livestock for its livelihood. Chad's primarily agricultural economy will be boosted by the major oil field and pipeline projects that began in 2000. Cotton, cattle, and gum arabic currently provide the bulk of Chad's export earnings, but the country began exporting oil in October 2003. The economy has long been handicapped by Chad's landlocked position, high energy costs, and history of instability. The government is now proactively maintaining civil order and internal security, especially the high-profile oil pipeline project.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps is well-known for its assistance in Chad. Since the program began in 1966, Volunteers have provided support in education, health, water supplies, and forestry. Peace Corps operations were suspended three times—from 1979 to 1987 and in 1990 and 1998—over concerns for Volunteers' safety. Before the last suspension in 1998, 32 Volunteers were in Chad working in water and sanitation, community health, and agroforestry projects. Despite these suspensions, Volunteers

created a strong bond with the Chadian people. That bond and a more secure environment are the impetus behind the Peace Corps' return.

The government of Chad has expressed a strong need for TEFL teachers, and the Peace Corps has reestablished its program initially with a TEFL project. This project provides a structural framework for Volunteers and their Chadian counterparts to follow, facilitating the development of future initiatives. All Volunteers in Chad, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Approximately 30 Volunteers teach English at the secondary school level in the Kanem, Lac, Chari-Baguirmi, Mayo-Kebbi, Tandjile, and Guéra prefectures. These regions are centrally located and contain well over a third of the total population. In addition to teaching English, Volunteers incorporate HIV/AIDS education and prevention into their lessons, and they are sharing innovative and participatory methodologies with their colleagues.

One Volunteer leveraged funds through the Peace Corps Partnership Program to build badly needed classrooms at his school. The Volunteer worked closely with community leaders to identify their most pressing needs and developed a plan to address these needs. The host community is contributing well over 25 percent of the resources required for the classroom project.

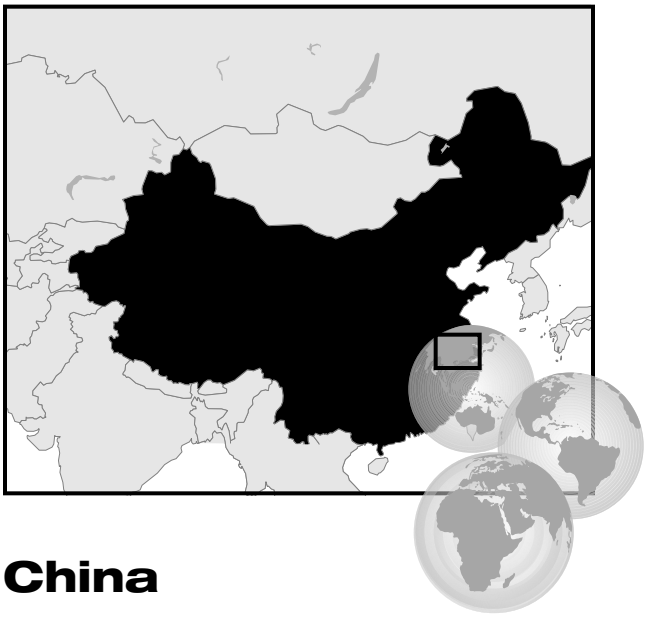
"As a Volunteer in the first group of Volunteers to reopen the Chad program, I have felt warmly welcomed by the Chadian government and people. We are doing work that is highly valued by our communities, and we are clearly achieving Peace Corps' three goals."

Chad Volunteer
Education Sector

"Thanks to their contribution of human resources, the Peace Corps has an impact at the grass-roots level, in both rural and urban areas. They are working not only to improve the quality of education, but the quality of life in their communities. Peace Corps Volunteers are the only foreigners physically present in both urban and rural areas, which is a real contrast to all other international organizations working in Chad."

Ministry of Education Official

Congressman Donald M. Payne and Peace Corps Country Director Nelson Cronyn attended the swearing-in ceremony of new Volunteers in Chad



China

Capital ..... Beijing

Population ..... 1,280 million

Annual per capita income $960

GDP growth 8.0%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 5%
Female: 13%

Infant mortality rate ..... 30 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 79%
Measles: 65%

Foreign direct investment ..... $49.3 billion

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 94%
Rural: 66%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.10%

Religions *(officially atheist)* ..... Buddhism
Christianity
Islam
Taoism

Official language ..... Mandarin

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	103	115
Program funds ($000)	1,476	1,807

Country Overview

Program dates	1993–2003 2004-present
Program sectors	Education Environment

Since 1979, China has been reforming its economy. The Chinese leadership has adopted a pragmatic perspective on many political and socio-economic problems, and has sharply reduced the role of ideology in economic policy. Political and social stability, economic productivity, and public welfare are considered paramount. The government has emphasized raising personal income and consumption and it has introduced new management systems to help increase productivity. It also has focused on foreign trade as a major vehicle for economic growth.

Although these dramatic internal reforms have opened the country to global markets, rapid economic development has left behind many Chinese people who do not have the skills to participate in the new economy, and it has exacerbated China's environmental problems, especially air pollution and soil erosion.

Program Focus

To help address these challenges, Volunteers are assigned to teach English and environmental education, areas in which the Chinese government has identified a need for increased technical skills. The Chinese government first expressed interest in establishing a Peace Corps program in 1988. The Peace Corps then worked with the Chinese Education Association for International Exchange and the U.S. State Department to finalize an agreement satisfactory to both sides. The first group of 18 Volunteers arrived in 1993 as part of a pilot education project in Sichuan province. At that time, they were referred to as "U.S.-China Friendship Volunteers." In 1998, an official country agreement was signed that formalized the program's expansion into more areas. Volunteers have served in the Sichuan, Guizhou, and Gansu provinces and the Chongqing municipality.

In April 2003, the program in China was temporarily suspended after Peace Corps officials evaluated the safety situation in the country in the wake of the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome)

outbreak and determined that suspension was appropriate. The Peace Corps returned to China in the summer of 2004. Currently, 45 Volunteers are at 29 universities, including two medical colleges and two vocational colleges, teaching English and environmental education. English teaching continues to be the top priority for the universities in Western China and the Chinese government.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Development of English language skills is an integral part of China's plan to modernize and participate in the global community. Learning English allows greater access to information available internationally and provides expanded opportunities to learn technical skills, conduct business, and fulfill research projects. Peace Corps/China provides this training to both Chinese educators and students.

Volunteers in the English education project have the primary goal of teaching English to students who are training to become middle school English teachers in rural areas, and to train English instructors at the university levels. Volunteers also teach specialized courses in American culture, history, literature, philosophy and critical theory; and they enhance problem-solving skills among their students. Volunteers work closely with Chinese colleagues to exchange ideas and teaching methodologies. Daily contact with native English speakers helps Chinese teachers become more proficient in English and more confident in their ability to use English in the classroom.

In addition to their regular classroom activities, Volunteers have organized and facilitated workshops for Chinese English teachers that focus on current teaching methodologies. They have also started English language drama clubs for their students and offered community lectures on American culture. One popular communication tool is the "English Corner," where Americans gather on street corners, parks, hallways, and anywhere they can find room to accommodate large groups of people, and they simply speak English for an hour. All English teaching Volunteers in China participate or initiate "English Corners" at their universities.

Environment

The environmental education project is bringing about improvements to the health and living conditions of Chinese people by increasing their knowledge of environmental protection and sustainable development. Volunteers are posted at universities and colleges, where they work with Chinese teachers of English, biology, chemistry, and other topics relevant to the environment. They teach students and train Chinese teachers.

In addition to their classroom activities, Volunteers plan activities, such as Earth Day and tree-planting days that help raise environmental awareness and promote attitudes and behavior that respect and protect local ecosystems.

"I teach six hours of American culture to college juniors. There are quite a few misconceptions about America. It's great for me to teach this course and to give an honest picture of America. It's promoting the understanding of America on the part of Chinese people."

China Volunteer
Education Sector

Volunteer in China exchanging greetings with a host country national

Costa Rica

Capital ..... San Jose

Population ..... 4 million

Annual per capita income $4,070

GDP growth 3.0%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 4%
Female: 4%

Infant mortality rate ..... 9 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT 94%
Measles 94%

Foreign direct investment ..... $662 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 99%
Rural: 92%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.60%

Religions ..... Roman Catholicism: 69%
Evangelical Protestantism: 18%
None: 12%
Others: 1%

Official language ..... Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	82	73
Program funds ($000)	1,732	1,628

Country Overview

Program dates	1963–present
Program sectors	Education Youth

Costa Rica has maintained democratic institutions and an orderly, constitutional system for leadership succession throughout its history. Several factors have contributed to this stability, including enlightened government leaders, comparative prosperity, flexible class lines, educational opportunities that have created a stable middle class, and general access to potable water, electricity, and basic health services.

While Costa Rica has made impressive gains in many social areas, such as life expectancy, education, and health care, there are many families and communities in both urban and rural areas that do not benefit from these social gains. President Abel Pacheco has made the fight against poverty, particularly in rural areas, a focal point of his policies.

Program Focus

Since 1963, more than 2,000 Volunteers have served in Costa Rica in a variety of projects in the health, education, environment, agriculture, small business development, and youth development sectors. The Peace Corps program has changed to respond and adapt to the needs and challenges of Costa Rica and its people. Due to the growing social needs of certain sectors of the population and in light of President Pacheco's priorities, the programming focus is to support the problems of youth and rural community development. Throughout the program's history in Costa Rica, Volunteers have been consistently well-received by Costa Ricans and counterpart agencies.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Education is the newest program in Costa Rica. Volunteers in this sector work on project planning and community development to assist communities to combat the growing gap between the rich and poor and the high levels of poverty in rural areas. Volunteers collaborate with Dirección Nacional de Desarrollo de la Comunidad, the national commu-

nity development agency. The poorest rural areas of Guanacaste, Puntarenas, and Limón provinces and the region of Huetar Norte are the areas targeted for development. Volunteers and their Costa Rican counterparts conduct activities to address goals and objectives in three general areas: organizational development of local associations and governmental and nongovernmental organizations, including women's and youth groups; income generation for small businesses and households; and formal and nonformal education.

Most Volunteers in this program teach English as a second language (ESL) to school students and adult groups in their communities. Eighteen Volunteers are working with Junior Achievement in a program to reduce school dropouts. In addition, Volunteers working in this program have assisted more than 31 local community groups organize and prioritize their needs during the past year. One Volunteer worked with the local community to submit a request for funds to construct a park in the center of the community. The park, as a central recreation point, will enhance community integration and provide youth with a healthy outlet in their leisure time.

Youth

Volunteers assigned to this program address the needs of youth and families living in marginal communities. The program's overall purpose is to promote a national culture in which all children, youth, and families, including those living in conditions of risk, are respected and granted basic human rights. Volunteers provide skill-building and remediation programs to students and family members through the educational system and existing community organizations. They are strengthening the capacity of Patronato Nacional de la Infancia (Costa Rica's child welfare agency) and marginal communities by developing projects that address the needs of youth and families, and they provide information and training to increase awareness of the rights of children and the needs of youth and families.

Most adults in rural communities have not completed their secondary education; many never completed primary school. Therefore, Volunteers work with children, youth, and adults, promoting and supporting a variety of educational programs, organizing academic support programs for students, and working with schools and their organizations to build their capacity for seeking needed resources.

During the past year, 19 Volunteers organized and facilitated recreational activities with children and youth, including theater, arts and crafts, sports groups, and summer camps. One Volunteer worked with the state-run orphanage to create activities that would complement the boys' and girls' class work.

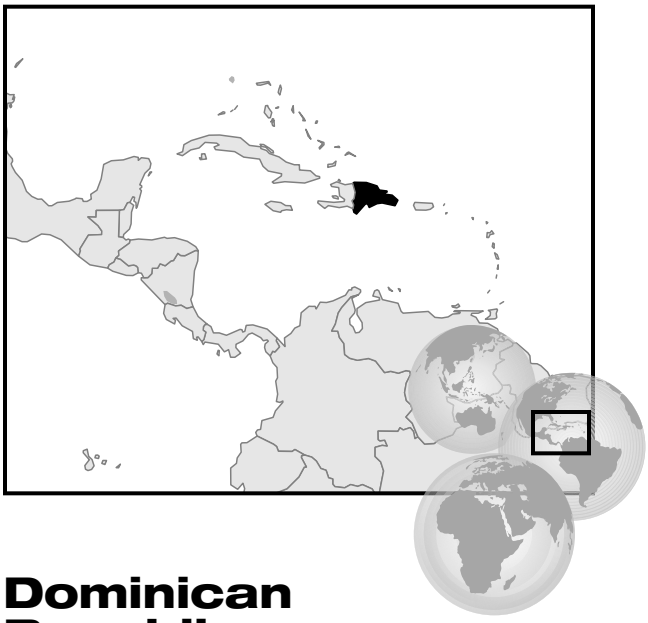
"Since my arrival, I've been working on leadership development with a community youth group, teaching English as a second language in the grade school of 22 students, tutoring in math, and aiding in exam preparations."

Costa Rica Volunteer
Education Sector

"The help that Volunteers have provided in support of new projects has been of enormous value. This collaboration has my full support and projects where Volunteers take part are given top priority."

Annabel Lang, Director
Direccion Nacional de Desarollo Comunal

Youth sector Volunteers with Costa Rican children



Dominican Republic

Capital ..... Santo Domingo

Population ..... 9 million

Annual per capita income $2,511

GDP growth 4.1%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 16%
Female: 16%

Infant mortality rate ..... 32 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 72%
Measles: 92%

Foreign direct investment ..... $961 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 90%
Rural: 78%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 2.50%

Religion ..... Roman Catholicism: 95%

Official language ..... Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	165	142
Program funds ($000)	3,355	3,350

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

The Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean. A country with a relatively stable political environment, it has, in the recent past, experienced peaceful transitions following democratically elected governments. The recent presidential inauguration in August 2004 brought Leonel Fernandez (president from 1996-2000) back to power.

The Dominican Republic's economic success of the 1990s has deteriorated significantly during the past two years. The inflation rate grew by 60 percent in 2003 and more than 50 percent in 2004. Since the change of government, however, the inflation rate has slowed. According to the United Nations Domestic Programme's 2000 Human Development Report for the Dominican Republic, the wealthiest 10 percent of the country receive more than one-third of the income. Poverty incidence in the rural areas is three times higher than in urban areas (exceeding 80 percent), and reaches extreme levels on the Haitian border and in the batey/cane-cutting communities.

Program Focus

Since 1962, 3,800 Volunteers have provided development assistance to the people of the Dominican Republic. Volunteers work in five sectors in rural and marginalized urban areas.

The Peace Corps enjoys a great deal of support from the government of the Dominican Republic. This is not only because of Volunteers' commitment but because they contribute to those areas identified by the government as priorities: assisting the rural and urban poor and striving to improve health, education, the environment, and community economic development. The youth program is both a stand-alone program aimed at youth and families and a common focus of all other programs. Information and communication technology and HIV/AIDS prevention are also major components of Peace Corps programming in-country. The Peace Corps has a

comprehensive strategy to develop environmental, educational, business, and health projects in the border region with Haiti.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

The community economic development project works in urban and rural areas. Volunteers engage in activities that range from business education to strategic planning to technical assistance. In underserved rural communities, Volunteers work with farmers' markets as well as agricultural cooperatives. In urban areas, Volunteers work with micro-entrepreneurs receiving loans from microcredit organizations. Volunteers also promote business and leadership practices to Dominican youth through leadership/education workshops. All Volunteer activities are carried out so they tap all community stakeholders, including organizational staff, entrepreneurs, and community leaders

Education

In October 2001, an information technology initiative was launched. Volunteers work in computer centers training teachers and students in computer use, forming youth technology clubs, and promoting community access to technology. In 2004, Peace Corps/Dominican Republic expanded its collaboration to include the World Links program with which it will expand the Telecentro model of community information and communications technology development and sustainability.

A special education project was launched four years ago. Volunteers train teachers and school counselors in private and public schools to improve teaching methodologies, classroom management, active learning, and to better serve students with special needs. They also work in the community to strengthen parent groups for children with special needs.

Environment

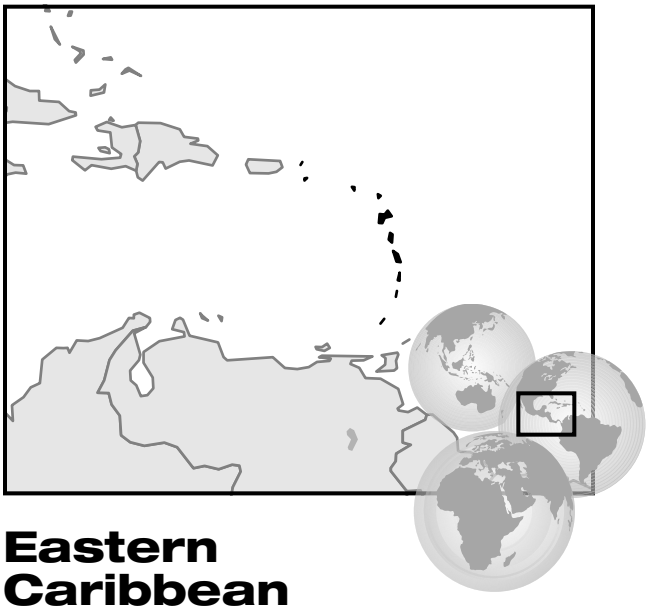
Environmental efforts include conservation, preservation, environmental education, and ecotourism. Volunteers work in agroforestry and environmental education in schools and in national parks. They also promote environmental protection practices with local environmental NGOs and government representatives. During the next year, the post will work more with the sub-secretariat of forestry resources with their new initiative in forest management, especially along the northwestern border with Haiti. The *Brigada Verde* initiative, launched this year, works to create student/youth conservation groups.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers provide assistance in improving sanitation, reducing diarrhea (the leading cause of child mortality), and increasing HIV/AIDS awareness. The World Health Organization ranks the Dominican Republic as ninth in the world in HIV infection. Therefore, all Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness. The HIV/AIDS strategy focuses on training youth as peer educators, and forms part of three interventions in the Healthy Families project. The other two strategies are nutrition education, including production of nutritious foods; and women's reproductive health. Volunteers are continuing efforts in environmental sanitation through the Healthy Environment project. This project aims to reduce water-borne diseases through the development of water/sanitation systems and a strong health educational component. During the past 12 years, Volunteers and their communities built 90 gravity-flow systems benefiting close to 33,000 people with high-quality potable water.

Youth

Volunteers working in this sector are partnering with organizations as they promote the healthy physical, social, and cultural well-being of marginalized youth in rural and urban Dominican communities. The project seeks to strengthen youth, their families and communities in a manner that enhances knowledge and skills, facilitates healthy relationships, and creates potential for positive impact within the community. The program will continue to support the "Don't Call Me a Street Kid" campaign, which started in 2003 as a means to mobilize public support for organizations working with street-based youth.



Eastern Caribbean

Capitals ..... **Antigua and Barbuda:** St. John's
Dominica: Roseau
Grenada/Cariacou: St. George's
St. Lucia: Castries
St. Kitts and Nevis: Basseterre
St. Vincent and the Grenadines: Kingstown

Average population 94,000

Average annual per capita income $4,890

Average GDP growth..... 0.0%

Average adult illiteracy rate 6.7%

Average infant mortality rate ..... 17 per 1,000 live births

Average immunization rate..... DPT: 94%
Measles: 95.6%

Average foreign direct investment .....$45.2 million

Average access to safe water..... 95%

Average HIV/AIDS prevalence.....Not available

Religions..... Protestantism
Roman Catholicism

Official language .....English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	114	107
Program funds ($000)	3,058	2,953

Country Overview

Program dates	1961–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

The Eastern Caribbean enjoys a politically stable environment. Though various attempts to unite the islands politically have failed, the islands were successful 20 years ago in establishing the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, a nine-member group that promotes unity and solidarity. They were also successful 31 years ago in establishing CARICOM, a union that governs trade in the region. All of these governments are committed to providing social services such as free primary and secondary education and health care.

The six nations that make up Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean face special development challenges because of their small domestic markets, scarcity of trained labor, absence of raw materials, and vulnerability to natural disasters. With a combined population of approximately 500,000, the per capita cost of economic and social infrastructure is high in each island nation. Hurricanes and floods regularly reverse economic gains by destroying fixed investments and disrupting economic activities, particularly in the agriculture and tourism sectors. The recent hurricane that debilitated Grenada not only devastated that country, but, in turn, affected the Eastern Caribbean as a whole. The loss of European preferences on banana exports further threatens economic development of these single-crop economies.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps began working in the Eastern Caribbean in 1961 when St. Lucia became one of three pilot posts worldwide. Since then, some 3,310 Volunteers have served on various island nations throughout the region. Most recently, Peace Corps/Eastern Caribbean placed new Volunteers on the island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis in February 2004.

Many social and economic problems face Eastern Caribbean youth, who make up about 60 percent of the population. Consequently, Peace Corps programs focus on their educational, health, employment, and life-skills needs. Volunteers work under the umbrella of one youth and community development project in several sub-sectors: special education, health and

HIV/AIDS, information communication technology, and small business development.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers help nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), village councils, and other community-based organizations develop business plans and improve management, communication systems, and entrepreneurial and marketing training. Volunteers are collaborating with NGOs to establish an umbrella agency that will enable organizations to network and effectively use available resources. Volunteers focus on innovative ways to build capacity and transfer skills, rather than working on ways to fund physical infrastructure. In St. Kitts and Nevis, the Peace Corps collaborated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Organization of American States to launch a project that fights poverty by exploring and fostering youth's ability to become top business executives through training in the economic and social spheres of life.

Education

Volunteers in the Eastern Caribbean have been instrumental in getting special education placed on the agenda of the ministries of education. Not only are there now classes dedicated to persons with learning disabilities and other special needs, but ministries now recruit staff specifically responsible for special education. Volunteers also transfer teaching techniques and methodologies to their counterparts in schools and provide support to parents.

Volunteers work with youth outside of school through school-based programs, such as 4-H and Junior Achievement; and with out-of-school youth in NGO programs, community centers and vocational schools. This work focuses on life skills, creative expression through art and music, conflict resolution, and building self-esteem.

Health and HIV/AIDS

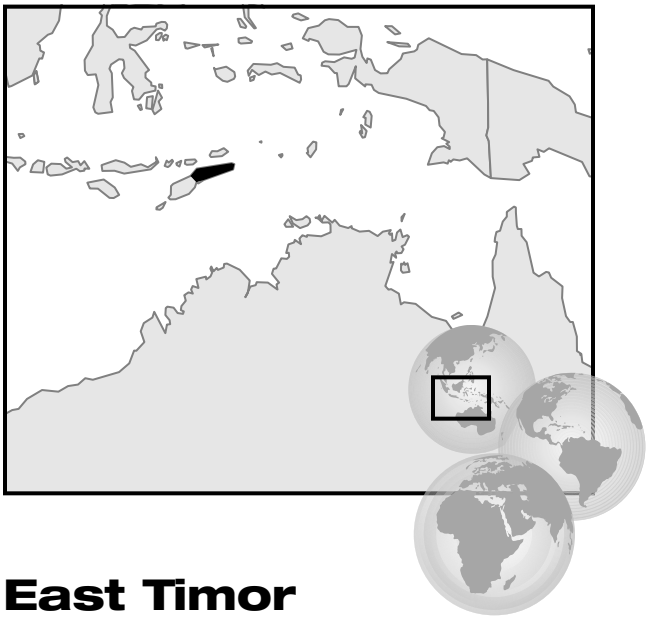
Volunteers work with ministries of health to develop national HIV/AIDS policies. In primary health-care centers, Volunteers train and disseminate information to health professionals. Three Volunteers produced a health education manual covering primary health care and HIV/AIDS. This manual has been approved by the government for use in schools and health centers on one island, and plans are moving forward to circulate it throughout the region. Another Volunteer has developed a life skills manual to help students with issues such as assertiveness, decision-making, behavior modification, and HIV/AIDS. The manual is used by teachers and Volunteers in St. Lucia, and the Ministry of Education is sharing the manual with other island nations.

Youth

Many communities are composed predominantly of out-of-school and out-of-work youth, so Volunteers focus on providing life skills to them, capturing their imagination and energy in after-school programs. On the island of Antigua, for instance, a Volunteer is working in the Big Brother/Big Sister program, promoting mentoring throughout the community. Mentoring raises the youths' self-esteem and self-confidence and improves their interpersonal skills. The mentored youth are less likely to use drugs and skip school. Another Volunteer worked with the Drug Demand Reduction Program in Antigua, which trains youth in drug education and life skills, and provides training for them to serve as peer counselors. In the Caribbean, males are increasingly marginalized, and a Volunteer in Dominica has been working to engage young men in his community in constructive activities through education, sports, and culture.

"Peace Corps Volunteers have been working together with the youth development division to create a better future for Dominica's youth. They partner with communities and youth at the grass-roots level to build a more optimistic future especially for the marginalized males in the community. This is done through training for employment, self-esteem, and general life skills. Many leave a lasting impression on the youth and community."

Ministry of Education, Youth, Sport and Human Resource Development, Dominica



East Timor

Capital ..... Dili

Population 780,000

Annual per capita income $520

GDP growth ..... Not Available

Adult illiteracy rate 59%

Infant mortality rate ..... 124 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... Not Available

Foreign direct investment ..... Not available

Access to safe water 46.3%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.64%

Religion ..... Catholicism: 98%

Official languages ..... Portuguese
Tetum

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	51	63
Program funds ($000)	1,402	1,583

Country Overview

Program dates	2002–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

East Timor achieved independence on May 20, 2002, after a long struggle for independence and three years of governance by a United Nations' transitional administration, whose mandate was to help the Timorese form their own government. While that mission was largely accomplished, the United Nations still has a presence in East Timor.

East Timor's domestic economy is growing slowly and is based on the cultivation of coffee (for export) and rice (for both local consumption and export). According to the 2004 U.N. Human Development Index, East Timor ranks 158 of 177 countries, and it is the poorest nation in eastern Asia. More than 50 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, with an average income of $1 or less per day. The Timorese are pinning most of their hopes on the considerable gas and oil deposits found offshore, midway to neighboring Australia. At a minimum, the East Timorese government should recover nearly $180 million in royalties annually from oil sales during the next five years, although treaties with the Australian government are still being negotiated. Though there may be oil and gas deposits on the island itself, no economically exploitable fields have been identified.

Program Focus

The first group of 19 Volunteers arrived in East Timor in 2002 to work in municipal development and health promotion. Volunteers were the first international group to be trained in the local language, Tetun, and they work at the grass-roots level in rural towns and villages. The language training manual developed by the Peace Corps is now widely used by international agencies and nongovernmental organizations to teach their own staff.

A second group of 18 Volunteers arrived in 2003 to continue this work. With the arrival of 31 Volunteers in 2004, the Peace Corps expanded its health project to include water and sanitation. It also refocused the municipal development project to village community development with a strong emphasis on improving food security through

improved home gardening. Eighty percent of the population relies on subsistence agriculture with high levels of malnutrition throughout the country. Both projects have increasingly focused on capacity building with youth, women, and village-level community leaders.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Major goals in Peace Corps activities are to improve food security and basic nutrition and to increase per capita income through the creation of food surplus. These activities will be focused on youth and women, the primary subsistence agriculture workers in the country. For example, four Volunteers helped plant backyard gardens, teaching composting techniques and crop diversification to their respective communities.

Business Development

Volunteers help small enterprises improve basic business practices, marketing skills, product development, and technical expertise. They also focus on community development by helping emerging local districts, sub-district governments, and organizations establish efficient practices in providing basic services to their communities. Volunteers work with village leaders and organizations to plan community development projects. They also work to identify local and national resources to meet their needs, including the rehabilitation of infrastructure destroyed after the vote for independence in 1999.

One Volunteer worked with a pottery cooperative to develop a new product—a fuel-efficient wood-burning stove—and a marketing strategy to both sell the product and teach other potters how to make the stoves. Another Volunteer, placed in the government development office, helped district staff develop office standards and practices, computer skills, and a district development plan to address all economic and social sectors in the district. Another Volunteer has worked with local village leaders to widen a footpath to accommodate motor vehicles so villagers can transport their produce to local markets.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The target population of health Volunteers are primarily youth and women (and their young children) with the goal of reducing the high child mortality rate (12.5 percent die before age 5). Volunteers teach general health education in community clinics; assist teachers in the design of lesson plans and the creation of materials for health education; and promote activities of health systems in communities.

Three Volunteers have created professional visual teaching materials on health promotion in Tetun to use with both adults and children. When asked to teach English over the local popular district radio station, a Volunteer incorporated lessons on basic health practices and prevention techniques. Another Volunteer has organized a weekly radio health promotion program that incorporates a question-and-answer format with local health providers.

Youth

Volunteers work formally and informally with youth, teaching life skills, leadership, organizational skills, and health practices. They also promote healthy lifestyles, including physical exercise. A Volunteer used the formation of two soccer teams to teach democratic decision-making organization and leadership. Volunteers have also taught basic literacy to youth who are not able to attend school. Many Volunteers teach basic computer and typing skills to both youth and their coworkers. One Volunteer trained local youth in health promotion and they are now teaching primary schoolchildren throughout their district using drama, skits, and participatory activities.

"As we in Bili-Bala Olaria see it, the Volunteer helps us very much and works diligently with us."

Adriana Fernandes, Manager
Bili-Bala Olaria Pottery Cooperative

"Peace Corps Volunteers do small things, but they have a big impact."

Estevao De Carvalho
District Development Officer

Ecuador

Capital ..... Quito

Population ..... 13 million

Annual per capita income $1,490

GDP growth 3.4%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 8%
Female: 10%

Infant mortality rate ..... 25 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 89%
Measles: 80%

Foreign direct investment ..... $1,275 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 90%
Rural: 75%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.30%

Religion ..... Roman Catholicism: 95%

Official language ..... Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	129	92
Program funds ($000)	2,983	2,844

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Ecuador's government, democratically elected in 2002, focuses on poverty alleviation, economic reforms, and anticorruption efforts. The government faces an array of challenges, including the need for serious fiscal and governmental reforms and the impact on its northern border of Colombia's civil war.

The Ecuadorian economy is based on petroleum production and exports of bananas, shrimp, cut flowers, and other agricultural products. A severe economic and financial crisis in 1999 and the resulting dollarization of Ecuador's economy exacerbated chronic problems of underdevelopment. Large sectors of the population suffer from nutritional deficiencies and a high infant mortality rate. An estimated 88 percent of the rural population lives at or below the poverty level.

Program Focus

Ecuador first welcomed Peace Corps Volunteers in 1962. In response to the economic crisis facing the majority of Ecuadorians, the Peace Corps has redoubled its efforts in the areas of agriculture, animal production, health, youth, and the environment. Moreover, the Peace Corps has integrated income-generation and business-development activities into all of its projects.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Volunteers train farmers to adopt land-use practices that are more environmentally sound. They also train farm families in small-animal husbandry practices to meet their nutritional and economic needs. To address the eroding incomes of rural families, Volunteers help farmers and cooperatives improve their business and marketing skills. In 2004, Volunteers worked with Ecuadorian communities to perform approximately 30 feasibility and marketing

studies to more than 150 small business leaders. One Volunteer works in a small Afro-Ecuadorian community with individual families integrating their farms. They have applied innovative techniques to growing native and fruit trees and they have started raising small animals. These animals include bees and goats for milk and cheese production and meat; rabbits for meat and lucky-charm key chains; and guinea pigs for human consumption.

The animal production project helps rural farmers find lower-cost production alternatives so they can meet a portion of their families' food needs. Volunteers focus on pigs, chicken, fish, sheep, goats, guinea pigs, and rabbits. Peace Corps/Ecuador is pursuing opportunities for rural families to start small native animal and native fish production businesses at their own homes for food and income. In 2004, Volunteers managed alpacas and llamas for the preservation and recuperation of the Andean paramo.

Business Development

Volunteers with business skills and training complement the five project sectors. These Volunteers manage a business working group that promotes local artisans' products and eco-tourism. In 2004, Volunteers expanded an innovative community savings/banking project that has been successful in more than 150 communities. Microbanks help people save and manage their finances, and they provide funds to rural families, which has become particularly important in Ecuador's economic crisis.

Environment

To address the high rate of environmental degradation in Ecuador, Volunteers work in three key areas: sustainable community management of trees and natural areas, environmental education, and income generation activities that address economic needs and promote the sustainable use of natural resources. In 2004, Volunteers promoted environmental education in schools, land management by farmers in buffer zones, soil conservation, and income-generating activities that are benefiting thousands of Ecuadorians. Results can be seen in outputs such as the establishment of several community-based eco-tourism projects that now receive paying guests. One Volunteer started a small agroforestry nursery with 100 seedlings collected in the forest or grown from seeds collected by community members. After a year and a half, the nursery had almost 7,000 plants of 20 different native species at any one time, and the community was outplanting almost 1,000 tree seedlings a month.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Malnutrition affects 60 percent of Ecuadorian children under five. To respond to this critical problem, Volunteers provide training in nutrition and family gardening. They also provide HIV/AIDS education in their communities. In 2004, Volunteers trained more than 1,200 persons, including 100 teachers, about HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention. One Volunteer worked with a new women's safe house to establish a community network with 16 communities to support families, especially women, facing domestic violence issues.

Youth

Volunteers work with youth and families in marginalized neighborhoods to address high school dropout rates, illiteracy, drug abuse, gangs, and unemployment. They create and strengthen youth organizations and provide youth with employment and leadership training. In 2004, Volunteers worked with almost 500 Ecuadorians on domestic violence and family relations in workshop settings. One Volunteer worked with the municipality to establish a safe house for street children.

"The Peace Corps Volunteers that have worked in Nabón and in our communities have provided excellent help. The school nursery is still producing plants even though the Volunteers left several years ago."

Mayor of Nabón

El Salvador

Capital	San Salvador
Population	6 million
Annual per capita income	$2,110
GDP growth	2.1%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male:18% Female: 23%
Infant mortality rate	33 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 81% Measles: 93%
Foreign direct investment	$208 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 91% Rural: 64%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.60%
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 55% Protestantism
Official language	Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	120	114
Program funds ($000)	2,576	2,558

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–1979 1993–present
Program sectors	Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

The government of El Salvador is pursuing a program of decentralization, which places more responsibility on leaders at the municipal level. As part of this effort, the government has requested the Peace Corps' assistance in improving municipal services and increasing community awareness and participation. Volunteers coordinate with local municipalities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and community groups to develop better water systems, make health and sanitation improvements, provide environmental education, and assist in municipal development projects. In the aftermath of earthquakes, Volunteers have played a key role in providing damage assessments of their sites, which has helped the government and local NGOs more effectively distribute resources to the most affected communities.

As the smallest, most densely populated country in Central America, El Salvador faces tremendous economic, social, and environmental challenges. In addition to chronic deforestation and poor land management, disasters such as Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and major earthquakes and aftershocks in 2001 resulted in continued loss of fertile topsoil, decreased crop yields, and displaced communities. These natural disasters also have limited access to health care and potable water by damaging major roads, contaminating water sources, and destroying latrines and waste-management systems.

Program Focus

The program in El Salvador, which began in 1962, was one of the Peace Corps' earliest efforts. The program was closed in 1979 because of civil war and reopened in 1993 after the war ended. Currently, approximately 110 Volunteers are working in municipal development, environmental education and agroforestry, and health.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

In the late 1980s, El Salvador began to decentralize government responsibilities and services from the national level down to local governments. However, municipal governments lack the legal and policy framework, technical skills, trained staff, and financial means to play a broader role in the country's democratic development. In addition, the citizenry is still gaining experience in the implementation of democratic processes that allows them to meaningfully participate in local decision-making. To address these issues, Volunteers work to increase the capacity of municipal institutions and rural community groups by improving their administration and organization skills. Their work allows municipal offices to better serve their constituents while also allowing community groups to solicit, administer, and manage projects at the local level through increased and effective citizen participation.

Five Volunteers created bulletin boards, newsletters, and brochures that inform community members of municipal activities and projects. One Volunteer, working with her local government counterparts, implemented a road project, created and trained five local development committees, and increased youth involvement in community projects. Another Volunteer worked to establish a municipal recycling and waste disposal program in a town where the local trash was normally dumped on the side of the road.

Environment

Deforestation and the resulting soil erosion have affected more than 80 percent of the nation's territory, according to El Salvador's Hydrological Census Service. This erosion has decreased the availability and sustainability of arable land. Volunteers are involved in environmental education and agroforestry activities to educate farmers about sustainable soil conservation and integrated pest management practices that incorporate environmentally friendly applications, diminish the use of chemicals, and improve organic fertilization. One Volunteer, a wildlife veterinarian, helped an agricultural cooperative cordon off and preserve the natural habitat for an endangered spider monkey population.

Health and HIV/AIDS

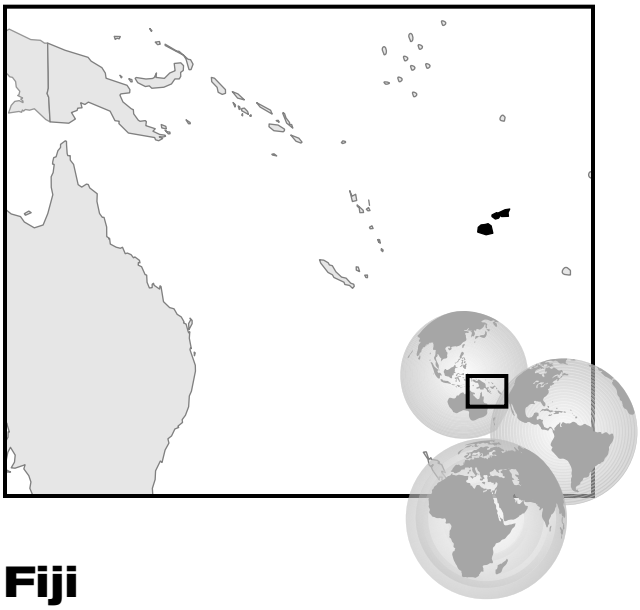
Volunteers work to increase access to potable water and improve sanitation for rural residents by building and maintaining water systems. They work with community groups to educate people about the maintenance, management, and monitoring of water systems and latrines. Volunteers also collaborate with these groups to expedite communication and cooperation with national and international agencies for future sustainable efforts.

El Salvador is a potentially high-risk AIDS nation because of its proximity and accessibility to Honduras, which has a high rate of HIV infection. Youth in rural communities usually have no reliable information about the spread of HIV/AIDS. To address these concerns, HIV/AIDS has been formally added as a component of the water and sanitation project. Working with rural health promoters from the Ministry of Health and local NGOs, Volunteers now develop educational materials, provide organizational support, conduct house visits, and assist with seminars on reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention.

One Volunteer arranged, through a Lion's Club in the Virginia area, to have a young boy flown to the U.S. for an operation to restore vision in one eye that had been severely damaged by a grenade explosion. Peace Corps Director Gaddi Vasquez visited the boy after his operation.

"My first thought upon hearing of my assignment was about what I could do to help build a water system. But the main thing is to help the community get organized and to help keep lines of communication open between the community and the outside organization."

El Salvador Volunteer
Health Sector



Fiji

Capital	Suva
Population	823,000
Annual per capita income	$2,130
GDP growth	4.1%
Adult illiteracy rate	7%
Infant mortality rate	16 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 90% Measles: 90%
Foreign direct investment	–$2.6 million
Access to safe water	47%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not available
Religions	Christianity: 52% Hinduism: 33% Islam: 7%
Official language	English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	68	54
Program funds ($000)	1,758	1,894

Country Overview

Program dates	1968–1998 2003–present
Program sectors	Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

For several years following its independence from Britain in 1970, Fiji was cited as a model of human rights and multiracial democracy in the Pacific region. However, a succession of coups in 1987 and in May 2000 left Fiji struggling to regain its political and economic stability. Much of the turmoil has been tied to ethnic tensions between indigenous Fijians and the Indo-Fijian descendants of indentured laborers. The indigenous Fijians control land rights and are guaranteed political authority by the current constitution. Most entrepreneurs and sugarcane farmers are Indo-Fijians; hence, they have great influence on the economy and politics. However, rule of law is still firmly established, and both sides are working to reconcile their political differences and reinvigorate the economy.

Although Fiji has one of the most developed economies in the Pacific, political instability and fluctuations in world sugar markets have impeded economic growth. Since the coups, Fiji has suffered a high rate of emigration of skilled and professional personnel. This has caused shortages in service sectors, such as education and health care. Furthermore, half of the population lives below or close to the poverty line, particularly in rural areas. Overfishing and environmental degradation have reduced food security from traditional sources.

While revenues from tourism, sugar, and garment exports remain the largest contributors to the economy, Fiji also has timber and mineral reserves. Fishing is important both as an export sector and for domestic consumption. Long-term problems include a potential collapse of the sugar and garment industry in 2006, continued low foreign investment rates, and uncertain property rights.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps has a long history of service in Fiji, and more than 2,200 Volunteers served in Fiji from 1968 to 1998. During that time, Volunteers worked in several sectors, including education, rural development, health, small business, agriculture, organizational strengthening, and fisheries. The

people and government of Fiji continue to praise the contributions made by Volunteers and requested that the Peace Corps reopen its program. Peace Corps re-entered Fiji in late 2003 and currently has 45 Volunteers serving throughout the country. Ample programming opportunities exist, but current projects primarily address nonformal education needs in environmental education, agriculture, health, youth, and information technology.

Volunteer Focus

Environment

Volunteers live and work in communities with existing environmental projects to support and provide technical assistance to participating communities. Predominant concerns are overfishing and the degradation of the marine and terrestrial environment, which are jeopardizing traditional food supplies in many parts of the country. A focus on long-term environmental stewardship and management of environmental resources will increase food security, improve diet and nutrition, raise awareness and involvement from women and youth in environmental projects, and increase income generated from sustainable eco-tourism. One environment Volunteer has implemented a village-wide composting project. Another Volunteer, serving as an environmental advisor for a province, is developing an environmentally sustainable project that will reduce hog-raising waste on the Coral Coast by 30 percent.

Health and HIV/AIDS

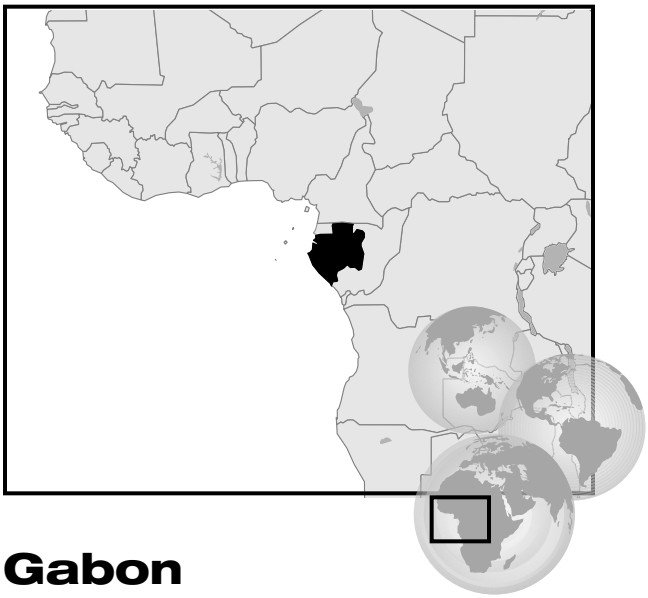
Volunteers, in partnership with Fijian health educators, provide rural health education and promotion activities related to HIV/AIDS prevention, nutrition, and prevention of mosquito-borne illnesses. Volunteers focus on skills transfer and capacity building for newly created health-promotion units at regional and subregional health centers. Additionally, they provide village-based health education that builds local capacity to respond to basic health issues. Health promotion Volunteers have trained more than 600 people on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Several Volunteers are working on a project to develop the capacity of rural communities to identify and provide health education and promotion services based on their own priorities and needs. One Volunteer is providing training on counseling skills to health professionals and is assisting in developing Fiji's counseling sector to provide support on emotional health issues.

Youth

Nonformal education activities focus on life skills, information technology, and income generation. Volunteers partner with local service organizations to engage Fijian youth in activities that enhance life skills for their future roles in their families, communities, and society. Among the topics presented are leadership, decision-making, healthy lifestyles, information technology, career planning, civic responsibility, and income generation. Volunteers also work to build organizational capacities and improve outreach programs conducted by local and international youth-related service providers. Youth Volunteers assist with skills development to prepare youth for employment and social responsibilities. Several Volunteers work with the Fiji Youth Volunteer Corps, which has provided training on HIV/AIDS, first-aid, disaster preparedness and mitigation, and volunteerism to more than 120 young people doing community service. Additionally, Volunteers have taught basic computer skills to several hundred youth in primary, secondary, and vocational schools.

"At the beginning I wanted everything to happen quickly, but I have learned that for it to work, I must go slow and be patient about things. It will happen; it will just take time for change. You can't expect for people to change the first time you tell them something — that isn't how Fiji works. Patience is the key!"

Fiji Volunteer
Health Sector



Gabon

Capital ..... Libreville

Population ..... 1 million

Annual per capita income $3,060

GDP growth 3.0%

Adult illiteracy rate 37%

Infant mortality rate ..... 63 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 38%
Measles: 55%

Foreign direct investment ..... $123 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 95%
Rural: 47%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 4.16%

Religions ..... Christianity
Indigenous beliefs
Islam

Official language ..... French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	29	34
Program funds ($000)	2,500	2,609

Country Overview

Program dates	1963–1967 1973–present
Program sectors	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Ruled by autocratic presidents since its independence from France in 1960, Gabon introduced a multiparty system and a new constitution in the early 1990s that produced a more transparent electoral process and subsequent reforms of governmental institutions. Gabon has remained relatively peaceful and stable since its independence. President Omar Bongo Ondimba is Africa's second longest-serving head of state and has been in power since 1967. A constitutional amendment passed in 2003 removed presidential term limits and allows him to run for president as many times as he likes. Political observers expect President Bongo to run again for re-election in December of 2005 when he will be 70.

Abundant natural resources, a small population, and considerable foreign support have helped make Gabon one of the more prosperous African countries. The country enjoys a per capita income more than 12 times that of most sub-Saharan Africa, with a per capita purchasing power parity estimated at $6,400. While there has been a sharp decline in extreme poverty, a large proportion of the population still remains poor because of income inequality. Gabon was dependent on timber and manganese for revenue until oil was discovered offshore in the early 1970s. The oil sector now accounts for 50 percent of GDP. Gabon continues to face fluctuating prices for its oil, timber, and other exports. Gabon is not self-sufficient in food production and imports large quantities of food from France and neighboring countries.

Program Focus

The government of Gabon is implementing sustainable development efforts. Efforts focus on human capacity building in conservation of forest and soil resources and tackling health problems related to HIV/AIDS transmission, diarrheal diseases, and malnutrition. Improving education is also a government priority. The educational system continues to experience acute shortages in trained teachers, resources, and curriculum appropriate to the lives

of Gabonese youth. Volunteers are helping Gabon address these issues through education, health, and environmental education projects. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Education

At the request of the government, the Peace Corps started a new education program in June 2002. Volunteers have been teaching English while using community content-based instruction to incorporate HIV/AIDS, environmental, and gender-specific themes into their lesson plans and presentations. This instruction develops critical thinking, builds self-esteem, develops goal-setting abilities, and encourages responsible behavior. Volunteers are also role models for their counterparts by demonstrating motivation to work and by being involved in after-school activities. These activities include hosting English clubs, offering computer literacy classes to both students and counterparts, organizing awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS, and tutoring students. Several TEFL Volunteers helped international environmental NGOs train newly appointed eco-guides and eco-guards in technical English that will help with eco-tourism efforts in several new national parks.

Environment

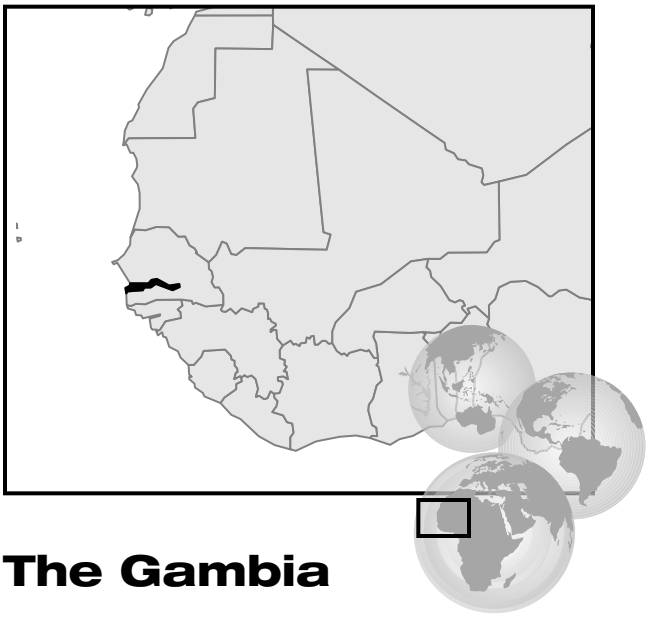
Environmental education Volunteers work with schoolteachers and students to incorporate environmental themes into the classroom and organize environment clubs in secondary schools. They also work with communities to address environmental issues and promote HIV/AIDS awareness. In 2004, six Volunteers helped international NGOs to sensitize villagers near newly established national parks to the parks' purpose and the importance of conservation. Peace Corps/Gabon also worked with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Water and Forest to help Gabon join the Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program. In 2004, more than 20 teachers from 10 schools received training in implementing GLOBE programs in their schools. Volunteers work equally with local and international NGOs on biodiversity conservation and ecotourism initiatives. These partnerships provide a structured environment for Volunteers' work and contribute to the overall objectives of the Congo Basin Initiative.

Health and HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS education is strategically integrated into all projects. Health Volunteers work in clinics, schools, towns, neighborhoods, and villages to educate people on prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, reproductive health, nutrition, and child health. Volunteers have helped establish peer educator groups, organized vaccination campaigns, and developed seminars for village health workers. In 2004, 25 Volunteers and their counterparts participated in HIV/AIDS life-skills training. The event was facilitated by trainers from local NGOS who were trained by the Peace Corps in 2003, thus building a cadre of trained life-skills experts in Gabon and building capacity throughout the country.

"Communication for behavior change regarding HIV/AIDS requires a strong and frank collaboration between the decision-makers and those who are and live closely with the population, for nobody can communicate for behavior change without knowing the target population and those who live in harmony with this population and their involvement and contribution to community actions. Peace Corps/Gabon is a striking example of this harmony!"

Omer Mbouma
Department of Information, Education, and Communication



The Gambia

Capital ..... Banjul

Population ..... 1 million

Annual per capita income $270

GDP growth ..... -3.1%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 56.3%
Female: 70.3%

Infant mortality rate ..... 91 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 90%
Measles: 90%

Foreign direct investment ..... $43 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 80%
Rural: 53%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 1.60%

Religions ..... Islam: 95%
Christianity: 4%
Animism: 0.08%

Official languages ..... English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	102	104
Program funds ($000)	1,886	1,906

Country Overview

Program dates	1967–present
Program sectors	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Since its independence from Great Britain in 1965, the Gambia has had a series of stable governments. This stability was momentarily interrupted by a military coup in 1994, which overthrew the party that had been in power since independence. President Yahya Jammeh first ruled as the head of the military junta. He then retired from the military and ran and won as a civilian in democratic elections in 1997. He won a subsequent democratic election in 2001. The next election is scheduled for 2006.

The Gambia has no important mineral or other natural resources and a limited agricultural base. Seventy-five percent of the population depends on the agriculture and natural resource sectors for its livelihood, but production of cash and food crops has steadily declined during the past two decades. This decline has been caused by environmental degradation. Small-scale manufacturing features the processing of peanuts, fish, and animal hides. Growth in the tourism industry is being planned and is anticipated.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps' relationship with the Gambia dates back to 1967, when the Peace Corps signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of External Affairs. Volunteers began working in the Gambia later that year, initially serving as mechanics and teachers. Since then, many Gambian institutions and communities have benefited from the services of Volunteers. The Peace Corps' development priorities in the areas of education, the environment, and health match those of the government. An important focus in the education sector is information technology. Volunteers in all sectors participate in HIV/AIDS initiatives, and many focus activities on girls, women, and youth.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Education Volunteers build the capacity of teachers, introduce student-centered teaching techniques and the effective use of learning aids, teach literacy, and launch libraries and resource centers. They promote e-learning, teaching computer literacy, and streamlining business operations using computer technology. For instance, two Volunteers designed, edited, and produced a multimedia CD, "Scientific Mission," which features Gambian teachers and students conducting biology, chemistry, and physics experiments using locally available materials. The CD will be distributed to schools nationwide and its production demonstrates how IT can be used to reinforce concepts in other fields of study. Volunteers worked with the U.S. embassy to revise and update computer use in the Gambian National Assembly. This project focused on automating the record-keeping unit of the national legislature, thereby strengthening the legislative arm of government. Volunteers also participated in the first distance-learning/virtual class in the Gambia. Held at the University of the Gambia, the project was funded by the U.S. State Department. A Volunteer led the technical component of the cultural history class, bringing together students from China, Sweden, the U.S. and the Gambia.

Environment

Volunteers work on a variety of environmental education projects that focus on natural resource management, small enterprise development, and conservation. Some Volunteers work with community groups to establish tree nurseries and fruit orchards and to construct windbreaks and live fences (vegetation used to keep predators out of small gardens). Other Volunteers work extensively with women on community garden projects and skills development. In 2003 and 2004, several Volunteers held beekeeping workshops in different villages that each attracted more than 100 community members. The workshops taught rural Gambians to construct and maintain beehives and to secure a revenue stream from the honey they harvest. Volunteers have also worked in wildlife protection by developing and working with education and eco-tourist centers to protect the Gambia's declining indigenous diversity.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers work in rural areas, where most of the population lives and most are engaged in subsistence farming. Volunteers design and implement activities that raise awareness of common health problems and strategies for preventing them. In 2004, a health Volunteer was concerned about the inability of Cuban doctors and nurses to communicate with their Gambian patients. Cuban doctors represent a large share of the medical staff in-country, and the Volunteer developed a Spanish/Mandinka manual to facilitate communication. A Volunteer with a master's degree in health administration is working with a committee representing a broad range of employees from a regional general hospital. The Volunteer is facilitating the development of the committee's mission and vision statements as well as its values and strategic goals.

"The Peace Corps has been active in this country for 37 years, during which period our partnership has steadily broadened to meet The Gambia's ever changing development needs and challenges."

Gambian Secretary of State for Education

Math teacher, The Gambia

Georgia

Capital ..... Tbilisi

Population ..... 5 million

Annual per capita income $650

GDP growth 5.6%

Adult illiteracy rate 1%

Infant mortality rate ..... 24 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 84%
Measles: 73%

Foreign direct investment ..... $165 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 90%
Rural: 61%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.1%

Religions ..... Georgian Orthodoxy: 65%
Islam: 11%
Russian Orthodoxy: 10%
Armenian Apostolicism: 8%
Other: 6%

Official language ..... Georgian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	67	90
Program funds ($000)	1,618	1,754

Country Overview

Program dates	2001–present
Program sector	Business Development Education

The Republic of Georgia is located between the Black Sea and Azerbaijan to its west and east and Russia and Armenia to its north and south. Georgia is a country with a long history and a strong culture. Adjara, an autonomous region, is again incorporated into present-day Georgia, following the sudden departure of its Russian-leaning, self-proclaimed president, Aslan Abashidze, in the spring of 2004. Georgia still faces the possible loss of two autonomous regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, because of ethnic separatists, poor governance, and pro-Russian elements. These factors prevent the government from exerting effective control over all its internationally recognized territory. Due to the civil war in Abkhazia (1992–1993), Georgia has a large internally displaced population. More than 80 percent of the population fled Abkhazia during and after the civil war.

In January 2004, Mikhail Saakashvili was inaugurated as Georgia's new president. Saakashvili's election followed the Rose Revolution, and heralded a breath of fresh political air for many Georgians. The presidential elections were held after President Shevardnadze resigned on November 23, 2003, in response to mass demonstrations protesting the results of parliamentary elections.

Georgia's main economic activities remain agricultural (nuts, citrus fruits, wine, and spring water), plus manganese and copper mining, small industry, tourism, telecommunications, and transport. The country imports most of its energy, but is in the process of laying gas and oil pipelines (from Azerbaijan to Turkey) that will bring much-needed investment and job opportunities to the region. Economic growth depends upon the present government's ability to address a poor fiscal situation, pervasive corruption, and arbitrary regulation implementation. Interest of foreign direct investment has increased since the Rose Revolution as the Saakashvili government appeals to Turkey, the European Union, and the West. Many have been arrested for corruption, though few have been tried in a court of law.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps began operations in Georgia in 2001 with an education project. The Ministry of Education, individual schools, and communities recognized that English language skills would provide Georgians with many advantages. These include furthering education and advancing careers, accessing information and technology, forging closer relationships with the West, understanding new business practices, and staying abreast of developments in various fields. Thus, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and other community partners, the Peace Corps first established an education program that focuses on English language skills and new teaching methodologies. The program is implemented in secondary English language education, a university program, and teacher training. Volunteers also work with community members on various projects identified by their communities as being high priorities.

In response to the demand for Volunteers' assistance in community outreach programs, a new Peace Corps program in NGO development began in 2004. The program provides organizational support to local NGOs, encourages accountability and transparency to target communities, and assists NGOs in using skills acquired through USAID-funded trainings.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

There is an increasing awareness and appreciation of Volunteers' assistance in NGO development. This is because of the work Volunteers already do with NGOs in their secondary projects, such as education and rehabilitation of internally displaced children. Consequently, there is an increased demand for more Volunteer assistance in NGO development. Peace Corps/Georgia has begun a new program to meet the needs of local NGOs and community-based organizations in outlying regions of Georgia.

Education

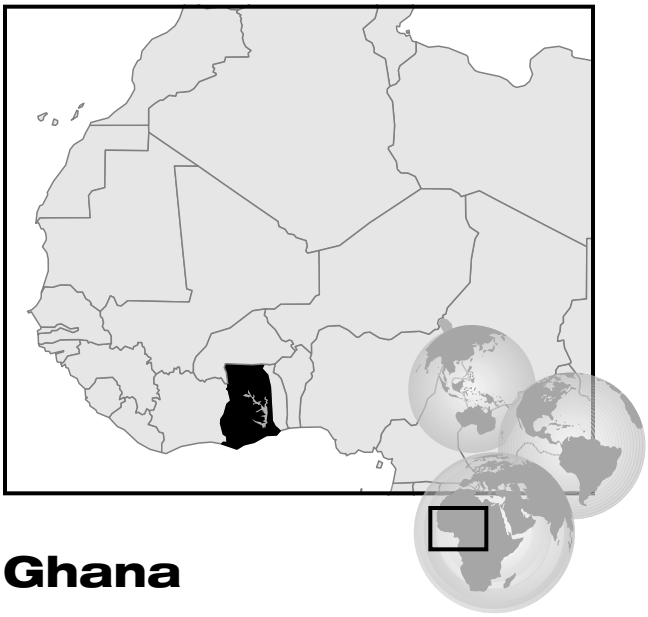
Placed in rural communities throughout the country, Volunteers provide English language instruction to Georgian students and community members, working with English language teachers in provincial and rural public schools. Their primary activities are team teaching with Georgian colleagues, initiating and implementing extracurricular activities for the school community, collaborating with counterparts to develop curricula, and instituting alternative teaching methods. These activities complement the ongoing World Bank-organized education reform program in Georgia.

As a result of the Peace Corps' activities, 65 secondary schools in nine regions of Georgia piloted new English textbooks; interactive teaching methodologies were introduced; and more than 200 Georgian teachers of English were trained in new approaches to teaching, testing, assessment, and evaluation. Additionally, more than 50 schools opened English resource rooms and language labs; nine schools established school and community computer centers; and more than 40 schools started after-school English clubs for students and interested community members. Volunteers arranged summer schools, Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) camps, and ecology camps where more than 250 girls and boys received training in leadership, life skills, critical thinking, environmental awareness, and conflict resolution.

Volunteers assisted secondary schools in rehabilitation projects by training school and community members in project design and management and helping to develop their grant-writing, fundraising, and project monitoring and evaluation skills. Volunteers' efforts have supported the sustainability of numerous school and community projects. These have included gym renovations, school reconstructions, creation of language labs, and garden and farm projects.

"My success is the combination of successes in lives of different people in my community."

Georgia Volunteer
Education Sector



Ghana

Capital ..... Accra

Population ..... 20 million

Annual per capita income $270

GDP growth 4.5%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 18%
Female: 34%

Infant mortality rate ..... 60 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 80%
Measles: 81%

Foreign direct investment ..... $50 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 91%
Rural: 62%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 3%

Religions ..... Christianity: 69%
Islam: 16%
Indigenous beliefs: 9%
None: 6%
Other: <1%

Official language ..... English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	151	155
Program funds ($000)	2,824	2,848

Country Overview

Program dates	1961–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Ghana's political environment is stable despite instability in some parts of West Africa. The 2000 presidential election was peaceful and has led Ghana in a new direction. The current administration promotes a private sector-led development approach heralded as the "Golden Age of Business."

The presidential and parliamentary elections of December 2004 will be historic because they mark the longest multiparty democratic period in Ghana's post-colonial history. It is expected to be free, fair, transparent, and without any irregularities.

The government remains committed to extending and strengthening democratic institutions. Civil society organizations are emerging as active participants in framing the policy agenda. Parliament's prominence as a dynamic branch of government is growing. The press is free and vibrant.

The overall level of poverty decreased from 52 percent in 1992 to 40 percent in 1999. Modest gains have been made in primary school enrollment. However, the economy grew by less than 4 percent in 2001, the lowest growth rate in a decade, and inflation is estimated at more than 30 percent. Economic growth has not been accompanied by improved health statistics as would normally be expected.

There continues to be a large deficit of teachers in mathematics, science, and computer technology, particularly in rural areas. Deterioration of the environment, from factors such as deforestation and drought, also has had a negative impact on social and economic demographics. Access to clean water remains a problem. Ghana has the highest rate of Guinea worm disease in the world.

Program Focus

Ghana was the first country to welcome Peace Corps Volunteers. Since 1961, some 4,000 Volunteers have served in Ghana. The government regards Volunteers' work as a significant contribution to community and national development. It has been estimated that one-quarter of current senior-level government officials and industry leaders were taught by Peace Corps Volunteer teachers in the

1960s and 1970s. Officials frequently express the difference it made in their lives.

The Peace Corps' programming strategy is derived from the 1983 government economic recovery program. Current programs are consistent with the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2002. This strategy is the basis for Peace Corps' participation in Ghana's economic recovery, and the protection and promotion of its human and natural resources. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in the promotion of HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers provide training in ecotourism, small- and micro-business development, financial management, marketing, product quality, client servicing, standards, and credit availability for small entrepreneurs. They work with international and local nongovernmental agencies, local governments, and private sector associations, in both urban and rural areas. Volunteers have won several Ghana government awards in ecotourism. They also organize youth clubs to build self-esteem, organize income-generating projects with people living with HIV/AIDS, and teach HIV/AIDS awareness seminars to youth and adults.

Education

Volunteers teach science, mathematics, and visual arts in 15 percent of Ghana's public senior secondary schools, including rural schools and schools for the deaf. With Ghanaian teachers, Volunteers develop teaching resource manuals; establish science resource centers, laboratories, and art studios; and help identify and acquire computer and library resources at schools.

One Volunteer teaches 176 students, 60 of whom are girls in a needy rural school for hearing-impaired and mentally handicapped students. The Volunteer has prepared a proposal to construct a vocational center to equip students with employable and life skills for their future lives. Along with the students, the Volunteer has painted a wall-sized world map to learn about the world. Additionally, the Volunteer produces resources for the teaching of visual art and sign language and is leading a drama club to teach vulnerable students about HIV/AIDS and community development.

Environment

Volunteers reduce environmental degradation through partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental agencies. Deforestation, diminished soil fertility, erosion, and disappearance of naturally occurring bodies of water are persistent issues in Ghana. As agroforestry managers, Volunteers direct the planting and sale of more than 1 million seedlings each year at community schools, clinics, churches, community forest reserves, and woodlots. They develop sustainable community groups in more than 50 communities each year. They transfer management skills for natural resource-based income-generating projects. Ten Volunteers developed environmental science education projects at 30 junior secondary schools with 1,000 students. A pilot aquaculture project begins this year.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers promote behavior change to reduce water- and sanitation-related diseases and to create HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. In 2004, 22 Volunteers helped 49 communities plan, acquire, operate, and manage their own water and sanitation facilities. Volunteers work with nongovernmental organizations to extend piped water where the ground structure makes sinking of boreholes economically impractical. Volunteers work on a school health education program that extends school-based health knowledge to homes. They also assist local health clinics to expand services to the full community and surrounding clinics. Volunteers assist the clinic staff with educational issues on hygiene, sexual reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, and nutrition. In 2004, health Volunteers created HIV/AIDS awareness trainings for men, women, and children. Two health Volunteers are working directly with groups of people living with AIDS to engage them in educational outreach programs. One-third of health Volunteers are working to eradicate the debilitating Guinea worm disease.

"Without good health, there cannot be sustainable development."

Ghana Volunteer
Health Sector

Guatemala

Capital	Guatemala City
Population	12 million
Annual per capita income	$1,760
GDP growth	2.2%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 23% Female: 38%
Infant mortality rate	36 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 84% Measles: 92%
Foreign direct investment	$110 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 98% Rural: 88%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1%
Religions	Protestantism Roman Catholicism Traditional Mayan
Official language	Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	173	162
Program funds ($000)	3,727	3,589

Country Overview

Program dates	1961–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Guatemala is a democratic republic with separation of powers and a centralized national administration. A new government took office in January 2004 following a highly participatory and peaceful electoral process. This successful election has renewed international organizations' interest in Guatemala, which represents an opportunity for the Peace Corps to become more directly engaged in the dialogue on future development strategies.

Guatemala's complex topography, as well as its cultural and linguistic diversity (22 indigenous languages), complicates efforts to expand education and health services, and contributes to extremely low labor productivity. The country's unique biodiversity offers considerable potential for further development of new products, crops, and ecotourism, but environmental degradation is rampant and few protective measures are currently in place.

Throughout the years, the Peace Corps has been a significant resource in grass-roots development in Guatemala. In recognition of 41 years of quality service, President Berger awarded the Peace Corps with the Orden del Quetzal, the highest honor bestowed upon either individuals or organizations.

Program Focus

The program in Guatemala, which began in 1963, is one of the Peace Corps' oldest. Since the program started, some 4,500 Volunteers have served in Guatemala. More than 175 Volunteers now work in agriculture, business development, the environment, health, and with youth.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Fifty-two percent of Guatemala's economically active population works in agriculture. With the current economic crisis resulting from a major drop in coffee prices, plus a severe drought in regions of

eastern Guatemala, improved methods for sustainable agriculture are of even greater importance in addressing rural poverty and food security. Volunteers work to increase small-animal production, diversify agricultural production, better manage harvests, and promote post-harvest marketing and home-based agroprocessing. Volunteers also train Guatemalans in information and communication technology activities.

During the past year, Volunteers working in agriculture projects have helped create close to 250 vegetable gardens, and they have trained 550 local families on sustainable agricultural techniques. One Volunteer formed a marketing committee for the group "Women of Ratzamut" because she saw the need for them to trade products themselves. This Volunteer worked with the women on simple marketing studies, as well as product presentation.

Business Development

The lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector forces nearly 72 percent of the economically active population in Guatemala into the informal economy. Volunteers in business development work with youth and adults to improve the overall profitability of small businesses. Their activities include working with women-owned and women-operated businesses and through the schools to teach practical skills that encourage entrepreneurial activity and teamwork. Training by Volunteers to the board of directors of Mujeres Mayas Comunicadoras has improved the process by which they utilize the concepts learned on a daily basis. In turn, there are 15 women that are associated with the organization that will train future scholarship students with the learned skills and techniques.

Volunteers also help strengthen the capacity of municipal authorities to deliver quality services, to enhance municipal planning, and to increase citizen participation. They do this by directly involving local people in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of local development projects. One Volunteer worked with a municipality to localize the planning process for its development plan. The plan that was developed with local government officials has been used at department and national levels.

Environment

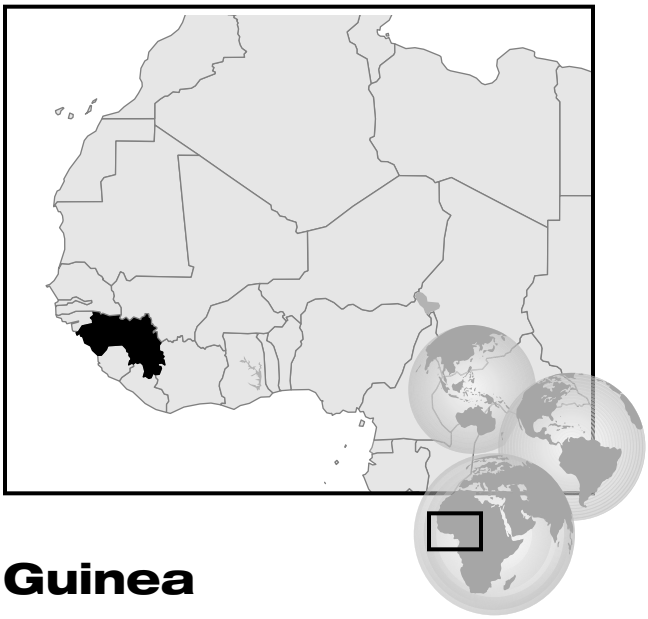
The rapid environmental deterioration and depletion of Guatemala's natural resources are undermining its rich biodiversity and limiting its potential for economic development. Volunteers work in environmental conservation activities to decelerate environmental degradation in protected areas, municipal nature reserves, and other areas where natural resources are particularly threatened. Volunteers are assigned to one of three complementary areas: ecotourism, integrated environmental education, and agroforestry.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The poor health of rural families is related to poor personal hygiene, respiratory problems resulting from indoor cooking fires, and lack of access to safe drinking water. Volunteers work to improve the health of rural elementary school students through education and improved school and community sanitation. They also promote the participation of rural teachers and parents in activities to improve student health and hygiene. In addition, Volunteers have introduced a variety of low-cost technologies to improve family health, including wood-saving stoves, latrines, rope pumps, solar water heaters, water catchment systems, water tanks, and grain storage silos. One Volunteer used participatory education techniques to teach children about the environmental problems in their own communities. Following various sessions, the students began working with community members to change environmentally unsound habits.

Youth

The demographics of Guatemalan society, with 50 percent of the population under 24 years of age, underline the importance of involving youth in the development of the country. Volunteers work with youth through activities in environmental education, junior entrepreneurship, and healthy schools. One Volunteer worked with a small group of girls who joined a community youth group to increase their self-confidence.



Guinea

Capital ..... Conakry

Population ..... 8 million

Annual per capita income $410

GDP growth 4.2%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 41.3%
Female: 73.6%

Infant mortality rate ..... 106 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 47%
Measles: 54%

Foreign direct investment ..... $0 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 72%
Rural: 36%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 1.5%

Religions ..... Islam: 85%
Christianity: 8%
Indigenous beliefs: 7%

Official language ..... French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	98	92
Program funds ($000)	2,483	2,619

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–1966 1969–1971 1985–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Guinea was the first French colony in Africa to gain its independence, which occurred in 1958 under the leadership of Sekou Touré. Soon after President Touré's death in 1984, a military coup, led by Guinean Army colonel Lansana Conté, took charge in the midst of a political dispute among high-ranking officials over succession. Conté subsequently became president and he has held this position ever since. A constitutional committee was established in 1988, and proposals for a new constitution were put to a popular vote at the end of 1990. The proposals received an overwhelming endorsement, ending the first phase of the transition to a democratically elected government. In 1991, a multiparty system was legalized, and a timetable for future elections was set. In 1993, President Conté was elected in Guinea's first multiparty elections. He was reelected at the end of 2003 in an uncontested election.

In 2001, a referendum passed that extends the president's term in office from two terms to life.

Despite its mineral wealth, Guinea is one of the poorest countries in the world. The tropical country's economy depends primarily on agriculture. Leading crops are coffee, bananas, palm kernels, and pineapples. Rich deposits of iron ore, gold, and diamonds exist, but Guinea's underdeveloped infrastructure prevents them from being exploited. Guinea's industrial and commercial sectors are in the early stages of development. Mining is the most dynamic and important source of foreign exchange, and it provided more than 90 percent of the export revenues for much of the 1980s. Guinea possesses about 30 percent of the world's known bauxite reserves, ranks second only to Australia in ore production, and is the world's largest exporter of bauxite.

Program Focus

From the initial group in 1962 to the present, more than 1,000 Americans have served as Volunteers in Guinea. The program today responds to the

government of Guinea's top priorities: education, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and small business development. The Peace Corps enjoys strong support from all levels of the government and people of Guinea, and an increasing number of international, national, and local NGOs as well as other private organizations are interested in collaborating with Volunteers. Volunteers are much in demand by schools, health centers, and rural communities, and the demand regularly exceeds the supply. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers work as small enterprise development advisors in medium to large communities. Their work is aimed at empowering youth and small-scale entrepreneurs to play an active role in the economic development of their communities by building their capacity through business management training, the creation and strengthening of market linkages, and establishing sound accounting systems. Volunteers also help individuals develop ideas into structured plans that can help fuel a successful business. The project supports two major cross-sectoral initiatives: empowering women and information and communication technology.

Education

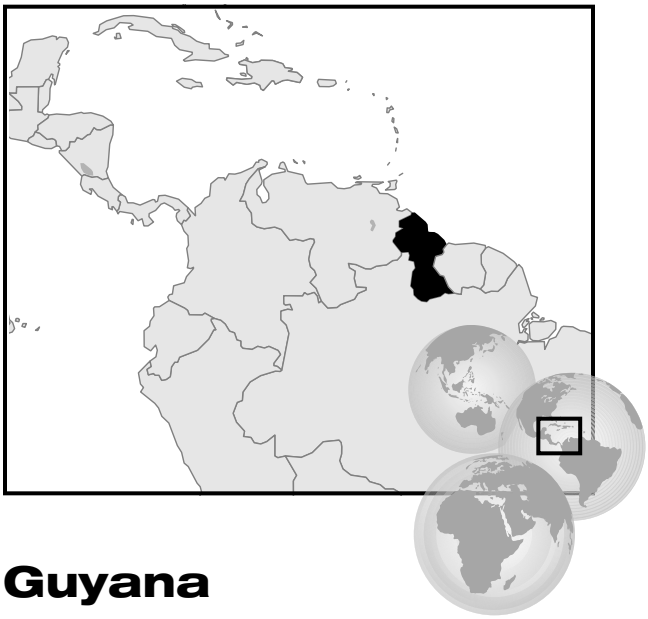
Volunteers have worked in Guinean secondary schools since 1986. In line with the country's priorities, Peace Corps/Guinea's education sector intervenes in four areas: fostering students' access and performance, building teachers' capacity, improving school resources, and enhancing communities' self-reliance. Volunteers teach TEFL, math, and physics. Almost all of the education Volunteers incorporate gender equity values in their daily teaching or give remedial instruction to girls in their schools. Many do secondary projects that help females cope with educational and developmental problems they face. In 2003, Peace Corps/Guinea started the GLOBE (global learning and observation to benefit the environment) program in 15 new junior high schools. This program focuses on collection of atmospheric data and emphasizes the importance of scientific information in daily life.

Environment

Approximately 80 percent of Guineans derive their living from agricultural activities. Traditional slash-and-burn practices, heavy rains, and the growing number of refugees from neighboring countries have negatively impacted the environment. Volunteers work with counterparts, water and forest technicians, and primary school teachers to raise awareness of environmental issues, promote sound agroforestry practices, and better the lives of rural people. The focus is on community participation at the grass-roots level to address top priorities of the rural population: boosting farm yields, food security, income generation, and environmental protection. For instance, one Volunteer and his community initiated a trash collection and recycling service for the publicly used areas in the town to protect the environment and beautify their town.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers work as public health extension agents in small rural communities. Their overall task is defined broadly as health promotion with specific intervention that directly supports the Ministry of Health's priority activities. These priority activities address diarrhea control, malaria control, reproductive health, and nutrition. Volunteers' work focuses on identifying problems by conducting community needs assessments and then transferring assessment skills as well as health education and project management skills to Guinean counterparts. Volunteers and their counterparts participate in annual HIV/AIDS workshops that provide participants with tools to carry out effective health education work. One Volunteer who coordinates gender and AIDS issues worked with a local NGO to record French and local language testimonies of four individuals living with HIV/AIDS. This cassette is distributed to all Volunteers as a resource for their fieldwork.



Guyana

Capital ..... Georgetown

Population 766,000

Annual per capita income $860

GDP growth ..... -1.1%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male 1.1%
Female: 1.9%

Infant mortality rate ..... 49 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 91.5%
Measles: 92%

Foreign direct investment ..... $ 56.1 million

Access to safe water 94%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 2.7%

Religions ..... Christianity: 57%
Hinduism: 33%
Islam: 9%
Other: 1%

Official language ..... English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	56	49
Program funds ($000)	1,539	1,515

Country Overview

Program dates	1967–1971 1995–present
Program sectors	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Guyana has a population of approximately 700,000 people, largely confined to a narrow coastal strip where sugar and rice cultivation is concentrated and where the nation's capital, Georgetown, clusters at the mouth of the Demerara River. There is a great diversity of racial and ethnic groups in Guyana. People of African descent constitute 35.6 percent of the population; people of East Indian descent 49.5 percent; and people of Portuguese, Chinese, Amerindian, or mixed descent 15 percent. In 2003, the two main political parties, which are divided along racial lines, made efforts at dialogue. This division is one of Guyana's greatest challenges.

Three major river systems, the Demerara, the Berbice, and the Essequibo, together with innumerable smaller rivers and creeks, drain this "Land of Many Waters" and link its vast forest and savanna interior to the coast. Agriculture and mining are Guyana's most important economic activities, with sugar, bauxite, rice, and gold accounting for roughly 70 percent of export earnings. As one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere, Guyana continues to face major impediments to economic growth. Significant emigration since the 1960s has caused critical shortages of teachers and health-care workers, among other groups.

Program Focus

At the request of the Guyanese government, the Peace Corps returned to Guyana in 1995 after a 24-year absence. Since the initial opening of the program in 1967, more than 350 Volunteers have served in Guyana. The reentry was initiated in response to the government's desire to improve its health-care system in rural communities and respond to the needs of a growing youth population with limited employment and educational opportunities. Volunteers address these needs by providing community health education and youth development in collaboration with relevant ministries and NGOs. They help facilitate community involvement, train service providers, and introduce new training and teaching methodologies. The education project

incorporates an information technology component that responds to a request from the Ministry of Education and community-based organizations to enhance their computer training for students, educators, and others.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Guyana has fallen to last place on the Caribbean community's standardized examination. Education needs include raising levels of literacy and numeracy, life skills, special education, environmental education, physical education, and teacher training in curriculum development, methodologies, and instruction. Much work is also needed in parental education, strengthening community-school linkages, social and sensitivity issues, and counseling.

Volunteers work with youth organizations and the Ministry of Education to provide at-risk youth with educational, personal, and life-skills development opportunities. This enables these youth to meet the challenges of adolescence and contribute positively to their communities. One Volunteer held a workshop with youth on conflict resolution. Through teacher-training activities, Volunteers also work with educators on participatory teaching methods and life-skills training. They provide training in computer literacy to Guyanese teachers and training in literacy, remedial reading, and information and communication technology to students. Volunteers also help students with career preparation, teaching them to develop resumes, write application letters, create personal job networks, and establish goals and plans.

Two Volunteers prepared a school-based assessment manual for teachers of integrated science. The manual contained illustrations and teaching materials for each science concept being taught in the curriculum. The manual was forwarded to the Ministry of Education's National Center for Educational Research and Development for review and may become a resource document for the teaching of integrated science.

Health and HIV/AIDS

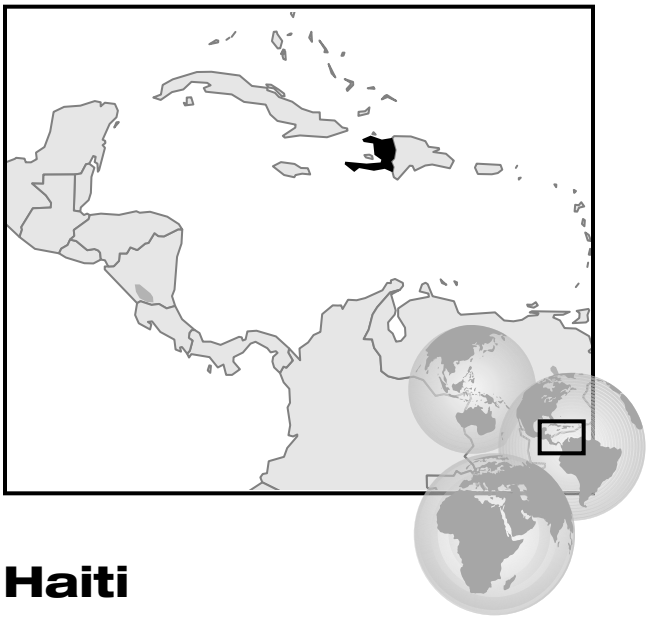
Guyana's general health indicators are the worst in the region with the exception of Haiti. The government has implemented a national health plan, and its first-order priorities are malaria, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), acute respiratory infections, immunizable diseases, and prenatal problems. Second-order priorities are malnutrition and diarrhea disease. Volunteers focus on activities that are in line with these priorities.

Volunteers work directly with health centers, NGOs, and communities to identify local and national resources, conduct community health assessments, design and implement health education, and train health-center staff and community leaders. Volunteers address Guyana's high HIV/AIDS rates in their training and outreach efforts. They provide health education sessions on HIV/AIDS prevention to youth in collaboration with NGOs. In 2003, Peace Corps/Guyana strengthened and expanded its collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Agency for International Development in addressing HIV/AIDS. Guyana is part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

One Volunteer working in a health center works with schools to promote and develop school health clubs. These clubs promote healthy living styles and address the critical health issues facing youth. This work has been recognized by the Ministry of Health, and the Volunteer has been asked to work at the national level to promote health clubs and youth health camps in the summer with a focus on HIV/AIDS information and counseling.

"Peace Corps Volunteers bring energy and motivation to their work."

Dr. Leslie Ramsammy
Minister of Health



Haiti

Capital ..... Port-au-Prince

Population ..... 8 million

Annual per capita income $440

GDP growth ..... -0.9%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 46%
Female: 50%

Infant mortality rate ..... 79 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 43%
Measles: 53%

Foreign direct investment ..... $3 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 49%
Rural: 45%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 6.1%

Religions ..... Roman Catholicism: 80%
Protestantism: 16%
Voodoo

Official languages ..... French
Creole

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	17	26
Program funds ($000)	1,392	1,414

Country Overview

Program dates	1982–1987 1990–1991 1996–2004 2004–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, occupies the western one-third of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean, with a land surface the size of the state of Maryland. Approximately 80 percent of the population lives below the poverty level and unemployment is estimated at 70 percent. Haiti's social and economic indicators are similar to those of many sub-Saharan African countries, making it one of the poorest countries in the world. The country's economic crisis continues with negative annual growth rates, declining per capita income, and double-digit inflation.

Nearly 70 percent of Haitians live in rural communities and depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Most farmers engage in small-scale subsistence farming. Urbanization, expansion of crop cultivation, and the burning of wood for fuel have accelerated deforestation and soil erosion. Consequently, agricultural production has steadily declined, and the country's forest cover has been nearly eliminated.

The Peace Corps has worked in Haiti during three separate periods of time: 1982 to 1987; 1990 to 1991; and 1996 to present. At the end of the first two periods, Volunteers were evacuated for safety and security reasons due to political instability and the program closed. In February 2004, the program was suspended for six months due to political instability; however, eight Volunteers returned in August 2004 to continue the work they were doing when the program was suspended.

Program Focus

Volunteers' work in HIV/AIDS education, agricultural development, environmental education, and other work has become well known and respected in the country. Recognizing the urgent need to address HIV/AIDS, the Peace Corps/Haiti program has focused on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. In 2004, Haiti was identified as a country in the

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and USAID, Peace Corps/Haiti has provided significant input in the design and implementation of the country's efforts. Volunteers work with the CDC to provide education and training to rural community members on the use of the CDC's testing stations. All Volunteers, regardless of their project focus, are trained in HIV/AIDS prevention and education.

In the past nine years, Peace Corps/Haiti has strived to establish a sustainable development program that meets the needs of the Haitian people and, at the same time, enables success for Volunteers by ensuring their safety, security, and health.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Volunteers assist local farming organizations and individual farmers in identifying community assets and using them to improve living standards. Volunteers also work to help farmers increase agricultural production. One Volunteer developed an agriculture group of men and women that meets weekly to outline concepts for the prevention of erosion and increased agricultural output on subsistence-level plots. As a result, more than 10 families will increase output from their crops so they can begin selling vegetables and grains for profit. Also, they are protecting the land using new farming practices that prevent soil erosion that they learned from the Volunteer.

Environment

Volunteers work with their communities to rehabilitate the environment through reforestation, soil conservation, and environmental education. As a result of one Volunteer's work, a six-grade class (ages 12–18) now has a foundation of basic environmental awareness through interactive learning. This type of learning encourages critical-thinking concepts so that the students are aware of their actions and their impact on the environment. With the recent flooding in Haiti due to heavy rains and hurricanes, the students see a connection between saving the environment and saving lives.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers promote health and HIV/AIDS education and raise health standards by teaching communities how to fight chronic malnutrition, stressing the importance of immunizations, sanitation, and child and maternal health. Volunteers work primarily with women and children in collaboration with health agencies. Active community partners worked with one Volunteer to form and train a group of more than 100 females, ages 15–25, which still meets weekly to discuss health topics, self-esteem, and women's issues. They traveled in small groups to five additional communities and conducted seminars on self-esteem and HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted disease prevention. These 100 women are now respected women's health educators. To date, more than 400 other young women in surrounding communities have benefited from their knowledge, hard work, and confidence.

As providing education to youth becomes an important part of community development, Volunteers focus on youth and incorporate more youth activities in their work plans. One Volunteer is working with a youth organization that actively recruits off the street and integrates youth back into the school system and back with their families. The Volunteer provides health seminars for children and parents on AIDS, family planning, nutrition, and other health issues that can improve their lives. As a result of this collaboration, close to 50 youth are getting an education and staying away from drugs, prostitution, and other vices found within street culture.

"The importance of a Peace Corps Volunteer in the community of a developing country should not be underestimated. ...Because we are a part of our community, we are best positioned to identify needs and devise simple strategies to solve problems. People in my Haitian town remember every Volunteer who has served in the area with great fondness and respect. Their very presence gave people hope that the future could be better."

Haiti Volunteer
Health Sector

Honduras

Capital	Tegucigalpa
Population	7 million
Annual per capita income	$930
GDP growth	2.5%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 20% Female: 20%
Infant mortality rate	32 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 95% Measles: 97%
Foreign direct investment	$143 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 95% Rural: 81%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	1.6%
Religion	Roman Catholicism: 97%
Official language	Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	223	200
Program funds ($000)	4,035	3,828

Country Overview

Program dates	1963–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, the armed forces were the principal political force in Honduras, governing directly, influencing general policy, and controlling national security affairs. The Honduran Constitution of 1982 provides the foundation for democracy, which continues to evolve in the post-armed forces era. The private sector, laborers, farmers, teachers, and professionals are all highly organized and actively pursue their own interests through a variety of means, including media, personal contact with officials, rallies, and demonstrations.

In November 2001, Ricardo Maduro of the National Party was elected President, outpolling the Liberal Party candidate by 8 percent. Observers considered the elections free and fair. During his campaign, Maduro promised to reduce crime, reinvigorate the economy, and fight corruption. President Maduro's term in office extends to December 2006.

Honduras is one of the poorest and least developed countries in Latin America. Poverty and food insecurity are exacerbated by the continuing effects of natural disasters such as Hurricane Mitch and the recent drought in which southern Honduras suffered a total grain loss. Current Honduran initiatives for economic expansion include tourism, focused on the Caribbean coast, the Bay Islands, and the Maya ruins of Copan; and re-export factories known as maquiladoras. Coffee, shrimp, bananas, and forest products continue to be the leading export commodities.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps has enjoyed a long history in Honduras, with more than 5,000 men and women having served as Volunteers since the program's inception in 1963. During the past 40 years, the Peace Corps has helped Honduras achieve many positive results. These include creating and implementing a national park system, expanding the national education curriculum to include environmental education,

reducing infant mortality through education, and constructing water and sanitation systems.

Honduras is currently the largest program in the Peace Corps' Inter-America and Pacific Region, with more than 250 Volunteers working in the areas of child survival and health, business development, agriculture and management of protected areas, water and sanitation, youth development, and municipal development.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Excessive use of slash-and-burn agriculture and poor soil conservation techniques on the hillsides of Honduras is causing a severe loss of quality topsoil, which, in turn, is diminishing crop yields. This situation is compounded by a lack of crop diversification, poor management skills, and few small-scale agribusiness initiatives. Consequently, farmers have difficulty generating and effectively managing extra sources of income or food for their families. Volunteers train farmers in sustainable production techniques to improve soil conservation and increase and diversify crops for greater food security and higher family incomes. In 2004, Volunteers helped create a laboratory to produce natural enemies for the Broca coffee weevil, a pest responsible for more than 90 percent of the losses in coffee production.

Business Development

Lack of basic business skills has limited economic opportunities for many low-income Hondurans. Volunteers assist people in the poorest communities by identifying local employment opportunities, improving business management practices, and training micro-entrepreneurs in basic business skills. Volunteers are also developing training programs in information technology to help business owners improve efficiency.

As a result of decentralization, Honduran municipalities have a critical need to improve the delivery of public services and strengthen community organizations. Volunteers help increase the capacities of municipal governments by training municipal employees and authorities to better manage the services they provide. For example, in 2004, one Volunteer created a database for his municipality that links land registries to property taxes and public services. This has allowed the municipality to significantly increase revenues.

Environment

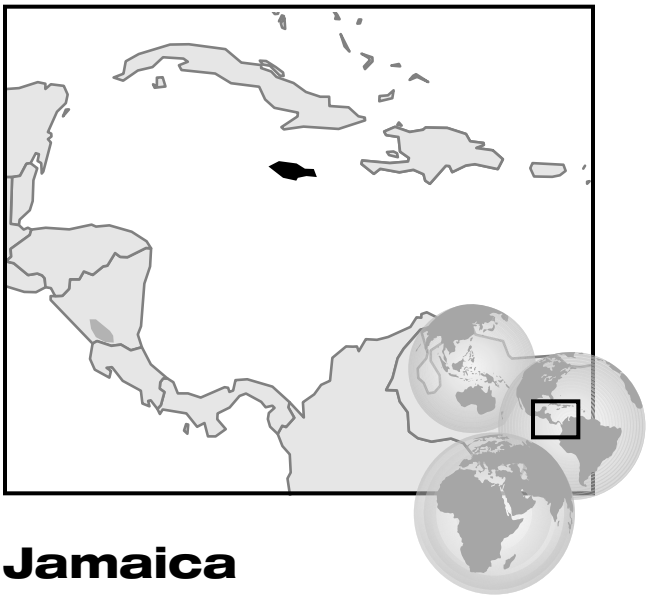
Honduran forest reserves and coastal areas are at risk of overexploitation. Urbanization poses a major threat to watersheds and protected areas throughout the country. Volunteers work with the national forest service and local nongovernmental organizations to promote environmental awareness, sound micro-watershed management practices, and ecotourism among farmers and schools in communities adjacent to protected areas. In 2004, Volunteers helped to organize a national coastal resources management workshop where participants learned to use coastal resources sustainably.

Health and HIV/AIDS

In rural Honduras, poor knowledge of proper hygiene practices, sanitary waste disposal, and the protection of water sources is causing widespread health problems, disease, and malnutrition. Volunteers train communities on water-source rehabilitation, expansion, and construction, as well as on the construction of fuel-efficient wood-burning stoves. In addition, they are responding to the critical need for health education and accessible health care by providing education on infant care, vaccination programs, and nutrition. Volunteers are increasingly involving women and youth in their projects. In 2004, one Volunteer inaugurated a water system that will benefit 400 people. Other Volunteers collaborated to organize workshops in several towns to train participants in HIV/AIDS education and outreach techniques.

Youth

Many Honduran youth face limited prospects of good employment, a sound financial situation, and stable family relationships. Volunteers work with youth, adults, and agencies to identify and initiate positive activities for young people that can help them develop as humans, citizens, family members, and professionals. In 2004, one Volunteer obtained a donation of 20 computers for youth centers in two communities where young people can now learn basic computer skills.



Jamaica

Capital ..... Kingston

Population ..... 3 million

Annual per capita income $2,690

GDP growth 1.1%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 16%
Female: 9%

Infant mortality rate ..... 17 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 87%
Measles: 86%

Foreign direct investment ..... $481 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 98%
Rural: 85%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 1.20%

Religions ..... Anglicanism
Judaism
Rastafarianism
Protestantism
Roman Catholicism

Official language ..... English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	115	107
Program funds ($000)	2,927	2,867

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present
Program sectors	Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Jamaica is striving to strengthen its economy and escape from a burden of debt. Increased poverty caused by inadequate educational programs, fast urbanization, and a sluggish economy has had a tremendous impact. Close to 70 percent of the budget is set aside to service the national debt, leaving no other choice than to borrow for meeting vital national needs. About 20 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and the government is struggling to provide the services and education that will improve people's standard of living and promote productive enterprise. The country is still recovering from the devastating impact of Hurricane Ivan of 2004, which affected 207 communities.

Providing opportunities to marginalized youth in urban areas is a main concern. With the lack of opportunities in Jamaica, many Jamaicans immigrate to the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, thus causing a "brain drain" and insufficient labor force in the farming industry. The education sector has particularly suffered from this phenomenon as skilled teachers leave for overseas opportunities. Last year's remittances from overseas translated into 25 percent of the GDP, making this inflow of money the largest source of net foreign exchange, before tourism and bauxite mining.

Program Focus

While Jamaica is famous for its green mountain landscapes, beaches, coral reefs, and unusual biological diversity, the country continues to grapple with many of the problems of underdevelopment, unemployment, environmental degradation, marginalization of young people (especially males), a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection (1.2 percent adult prevalence rate), lack of potable water, and poor sanitary practices. Despite high enrollment rates in primary and lower secondary schools, there is a drastic decline in enrollment rates among 17- to 19-year-olds. High levels of crime, violence, and drug trafficking, especially in inner-city garrison communities, further deteriorate living conditions and negatively impact foreign investments in many sectors on the island.

In response to Jamaica's development priorities, the Peace Corps is addressing these issues through programs in environmental awareness and protection; community environmental health, particularly water and sanitation; HIV/AIDS education and prevention; youth at-risk development, information communication technology (ICT); and, more recently, income generation/small business development for urban and rural youth.

Volunteer Focus

Environment

The principal focus of the Peace Corps' activities is increasing awareness of environmental issues such as solid waste management, recycling, watershed degradation, over-fishing, removal of coral reef, and damaging hillside-farming practices. Volunteers work with NGOs, community colleges, and schools to promote innovative and environmentally friendly income generation activities including heritage and community tourism events. They also help educate primary school students on environmental awareness and protection. Volunteers assist in creating educational materials and in training teachers in environmental education techniques, coordinating youth environmental camps, and organizing community clean-ups. Volunteers also help increase the capacity of environment NGOs and community-based organizations through technology and income generation projects.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The health project addresses two critical issues: the increasingly inadequate sanitation system, which contributes to poor water quality; and the need for HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Volunteers work in rural and urban squatter settlements to facilitate community development activities and strengthen community-based organizations that support health projects. Water/sanitation Volunteers help design and install waste-water treatment facilities and implement rural water systems that supply safe and reliable water to rural communities. Volunteers take an integrated approach to health promotion and many Volunteers address other issues such as basic hygiene and the maintenance and usage of latrines. Volunteers collaborate with teachers to develop health and hygiene curricula for schools. Additionally, in their secondary projects, Volunteers engage community groups in income-generating activities.

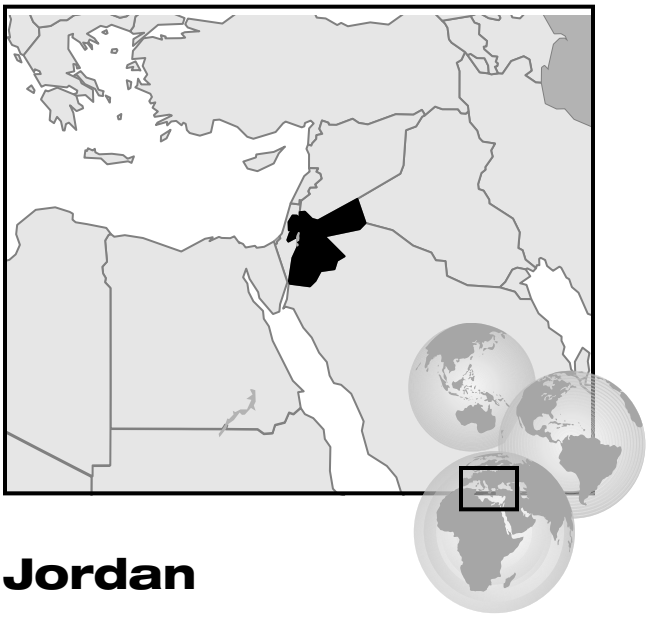
Youth

Volunteers work with youth in rural and urban areas, focusing on four main activities: HIV/AIDS education and prevention, ICT education, small business development, and youth development. Volunteers collaborate with the government of Jamaica, NGOs, community based organizations, schools, and clinics. Volunteers work with youth to improve their reading skills, life skills development, and computer literacy, and they assist organizations that support persons living with HIV/AIDS. They help build capacity—for youth through peer support and leadership training; for families through parenting education project; and for communities and agencies through developing business plans and youth entrepreneurship training.

The first ICT Volunteers were assigned to the Ministry of Education, offering services to schools and teacher-training colleges. The Peace Corps, the U.S. embassy, USAID, and the Jamaican Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture launched the Building Bridges School Link-Up Program in 2004. The program pairs five Jamaican primary schools with five elementary schools in Florida to raise cultural awareness and understanding between teachers and students in Jamaica and their peers in Florida. The program also helps boost students' literacy and technology skills. These Jamaican schools are participants in the New Horizons for Primary Schools Project (NHP), a collaboration of USAID and the Jamaican Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture to improve literacy and numeric abilities of students in 72 Jamaican primary schools. Peace Corps Volunteers have been assigned to the information technology centers of several NHP schools and also in the project's central office in Kingston.

"I will always love this country and the people here who have shown me a different way of thinking. I will always miss this country and the natural beauty that makes it unique."

Jamaica Volunteer
Youth Sector



Jordan

Capital ..... Amman

Population ..... 5 million

Annual per capita income $1,750

GDP growth 4.2%

dult illiteracy rate: ..... Male: 4%
Female: 16%

Infant mortality rate ..... 27 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 95%
Measles: 95%

Foreign direct investment ..... $56 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 100%
Rural: 84%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions ..... Sunni Islam: 95%
Christianity: 4%
Other: 1%

Official language ..... Arabic

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	60	50
Program funds ($000)	1,464	1,616

Country Overview

Program dates	1997–2002 2002–present
Program sectors	Education Youth

Since assuming the throne in 1999, King Abdullah II has demonstrated a sustained commitment to economic and social reform. Numerous development challenges face Jordan, among them high levels of poverty and unemployment and ambitious growth goals in education and primary health-care services. These are areas to which the Peace Corps contributes through programming initiatives and collaborative arrangements with other development and donor agencies.

Jordan is a small country with limited natural resources. Agricultural production is affected by drought and the lack of arable land. Traditionally, Jordan's economy has centered on phosphates, potash, fertilizer derivatives, overseas remittances, tourism, and foreign aid. In 2001, Jordan became the fourth nation to enter into a free-trade agreement with the United States, and it has signed trade liberalization agreements with the European Union. As elsewhere, tourism has been affected by a combination of political tension in the region and the events of September 11, 2001. A heavy debt burden and a large public sector continue to be challenges to economic growth in Jordan.

Program Focus

Since 2000 Jordan has developed a number of social and economic initiatives to raise the standard of living, develop human resources, promote rural development, and increase participation in civil society and governance. High among the King's priorities is addressing future human capacity requirements through improved early childhood, primary, and secondary education, with specific emphasis on English fluency and computer literacy.

Due to security concerns, the Peace Corps suspended its program and withdrew its Volunteers in November 2002. The country director and Jordanian staff used this interim period to evaluate programs, redesign training, and upgrade site development and safety and security systems. In June 2003, a Peace Corps assessment team, working with U.S. embassy and Jordanian officials, deemed the situation in the

country stable and the population receptive to renewing the relationship with the Peace Corps.

Peace Corps/Jordan welcomed two groups of Volunteers in 2004: 25 English teachers arrived in February for placement in rural primary and secondary schools; 10 special education and 15 youth and community development workers arrived in July for assignments at centers in rural and urban communities. This plan was developed in close cooperation with Jordanian partners—the Ministries of Social Development and Education and the Higher Council for Youth. Areas for potential expansion in subsequent years include health education and information technology.

Volunteer Focus

Education

English Language Teaching and Teacher Training

Volunteers assigned to rural primary and secondary schools enable Jordanian students, educators, and community members to improve their English language proficiency. This increases access to higher education and employment. Careful screening of underserved communities ensures that Volunteer contributions are focused less on carrying full class loads and more on maximizing Volunteers as resources, as native speakers, and as models of innovative and interactive teaching methods. Volunteers consult on the design and delivery of regional teacher-training workshops, conduct English clubs and camps for students, and teach groups such as women's clubs and youth centers.

Special Education

The return of special education Volunteers has been particularly welcomed as they serve small- to medium-sized communities, often working with charitable or parent-founded centers. The devotion of parents, families, and communities to their disadvantaged members sets the tone for a remarkable atmosphere of contribution and success.

Queen Rania has taken a strong interest in early childhood development and children with special needs. The University of Jordan now has a degree program in special education, though this remains an underdeveloped specialty. Volunteers are placed with rural and urban special education centers (some residential, some day care) under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Development. Beneficiaries have multitude physical and mental disabilities and are rarely integrated into the mainstream.

Current special education Volunteers have been warmly welcomed and counterparts have long lists of ideas, priorities, and proposals. This sense of urgency is a tremendous impetus to Volunteer integration and provides an early sense of fulfillment. At a recent counterpart conference, one center director expressed his appreciation for his new "exposure to other centers and their challenges and how we can unite to maximize resources." This has been an unanticipated fringe benefit, he said, putting a multiplier on the value of "just having our own Volunteer."

Youth

Given the population statistics on youth in Jordan and King Abdullah's commitment to investing in them, Volunteers assigned to centers with a range of youth-oriented community have access that bodes well for productive service. Activities are set according to community priorities and Volunteer talents and interests and may include sports and recreation, health and fitness, and computer training. Scouting has shown to be a particularly effective way to channel youth energy and productivity.

"The most important lesson I have learned is that the people of Rfa'yat want me to succeed. If I encounter any problems, I know now that I can go to members of the community who will help me any way they can."

Jordan Volunteer
Education Sector

"My only concern is whether our Volunteer can extend her stay beyond two years, because both her skills and dedication qualify her to help our future generations."

Besma Al-Qudah, Principal

Kazakhstan

Capital ..... Astana

Population ..... 15 million

Annual per capita income $1,520

GDP growth 9.8%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: <0.5%
Female: 1%

Infant mortality rate ..... 76 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 95%
Measles: 95%

Foreign direct investment ..... $2,583 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 98%
Rural: 82%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.10%

Religions ..... Sunni Islam: 47%
Russian Orthodoxy: 44%
Other: 7%
Protestantism: 2%

Official languages ..... Kazakh
Russian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	138	149
Program funds ($000)	2,686	2,874

Country Overview

Program dates	1993–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education

In 2004, Kazakhstan celebrates its 13th year of independence. Since its independence, Kazakhstan has been a constitutional republic led by Nursultan Nazarbayev, its only president to date. It is proceeding along the difficult path of reforming and building an open democratic society with a market economy. Economically, Kazakhstan has many successes to report. Driven by vast reserves of natural resources, including oil and gas, Kazakhstan has experienced strong growth in GDP. Transitioning to a civil society and securing basic human rights has proven to be a more arduous task. With little history or experience of its citizens participating to promote change in their communities, Kazakhstan's fledging NGO community is starting to take root.

Program Focus

In 1993, not long after the country declared its independence, President Nazarbayev invited the Peace Corps to help strengthen the human resource base in Kazakhstan. Since then, the Kazakhstani people and the government have been extremely supportive of the Peace Corps' role in their development. This year, the president announced his latest round of initiatives, including English as the third language of Kazakhstan and the importance of improving education in rural areas of the country. In addition, the president has committed to support the country's developing NGO sector with the creation of a new ministry to oversee NGO activities. The activities of Peace Corps Volunteers are closely aligned with the president's vision in these areas.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers promote the development of NGOs and civil society by working with host organizations, counterparts, and community volunteers throughout Kazakhstan to improve communities' capacity to meet their needs, particularly in target sectors such as HIV/AIDS, youth, environment, women, and economic development.

Under the mentorship of a Volunteer, one NGO obtained funding for and recruited 30 local people to participate in a 10-month Web development course. The most successful participants received funding to start Web development businesses. The aim of the program was to develop companies that can meet the needs of local and international companies for Web design services. These new companies bid for Web design business and far exceeded the break-even point in their first month of business. In the longer term, these local companies may be competitive in providing services to Western and regional companies looking for inexpensive outsourcing options for technology development.

Education

One of the main goals of Kazakhstan is integration into the world market economy, and English is the language of international communication. The Ministry of Education has requested assistance from the Peace Corps in English language teaching and educational resource development. The ministry has enthusiastically utilized Peace Corps education Volunteers, particularly in secondary schools in rural areas. Most schools and institutions of higher learning have inadequate teaching staff, outdated and often inappropriate textbooks, very limited teaching resources, and teachers who typically have limited fluency in English and who use a noncommunicative approach to the teaching of English. Volunteers help offset these limitations. In addition, Volunteers organize many community projects including business, technology, and environmental clubs; and HIV/AIDS awareness activities.

One Volunteer was advisor to a business English club and the resulting student-run company "Spirit." Students began an extensive market research project to determine if there was sufficient demand for school spirit products such as T-shirts with the university name. More than 1,000 individuals were surveyed and teachers used the data to illustrate market research capabilities. The IT department at the university created a database and management reports for students and teachers to discuss and evaluate results. The research showed that there was a viable market.

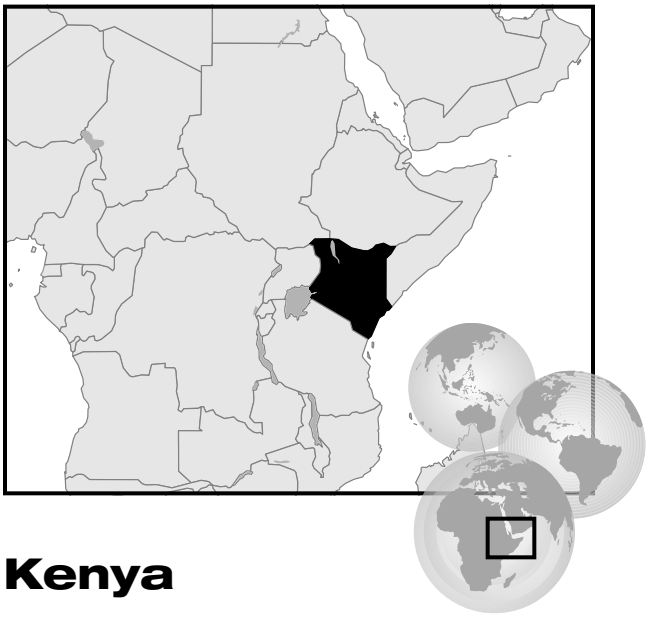
After extensive discussion on products, price points, colors, languages, etc., T-shirt proto-types were made and tested on focus groups and final decisions were made. Spirit, the student-run company, was created to design, produce, and sell T-shirts and other products. Students became officers of the company; they operate Spirit and make decisions about the future direction of the company and product offerings. Spirit has been approached by other area universities that are interested in having products with their name on them. Profits from the company will be used to fund other student companies.

Spirit offers real-world business experience to students and provides a forum for the practical application of skills learned in classes. In addition, students can include their Spirit business experience on their resumes.

"Personally, I see a world of possibilities in Kazakhstan, and, although each day has its challenges, they seem of little importance when compared to all the positives. In the end, my Peace Corps experience has been absolutely amazing."

Kazakhstan Volunteer
Business Development Sector

These married education Volunteers teach economic development at the Kazakhstan University. They are wearing university tee shirts that their students made as part of a branding and marketing project the couple initiated.



Kenya

Capital ..... Nairobi

Population ..... 31 million

Annual per capita income $360

GDP growth 1.0%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 10%
Female: 21%

Infant mortality rate ..... 78 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 84%
Measles: 78%

Foreign direct investment ..... $50 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 88%
Rural: 42%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 15%

Religions ..... Protestantism: 40%
Roman Catholicism: 30%
Islam: 20%
Indigenous beliefs: 10%

Official languages ..... English
Swahili

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	150	133
Program funds ($000)	3,085	2,963

Country Overview

Program dates	1964–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Since Kenya's independence from Britain in 1963, the first successful transfer of political power occurred with the December 2002 election of President Mwai Kibaki, leader of the opposition party National Rainbow Coalition. President Kibaki, who ran as the candidate representing Kenya's multiethnic population, will serve a five-year term through 2006. Priorities of the new government include free primary education for all children, good governance, and combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Kenya experienced economic growth after independence until the 1970s, but in the past two decades, Kenya's economy has declined, especially public sector investments. Agriculture is the main source of employment, with approximately 60 percent of the population engaged in farming. Although agriculture is Kenya's most important economic activity, only 20 percent of its land is arable. Kenya's economy is also heavily dependent on tourism.

Kenya ranks 148 out of 177 on the 2004 UN Human Development Index. About half the population lives below the poverty level. Kenya is the world's third largest exporter of tea, which, together with coffee and horticultural products, constituted 53 percent of the country's merchandise exports in 2002.

Program Focus

Since 1964, more than 4,400 Volunteers have helped the people and government of Kenya meet their development needs. The work of Volunteers is well-regarded by government officials at both the national and district levels as well as by NGOs and community members. Peace Corps/Kenya has adapted its projects over the years to fit Kenya's changing needs. Volunteers are currently involved in HIV/AIDS education, girls' education, and information technology education across all current project sectors.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Business Volunteers help Kenyans establish businesses and other income-generating activities by providing training and technical assistance in market expansion. Volunteers also work with Kenyan businesses to monitor product quality and to gain access to credit. Volunteers teach computer skills to community members. One Volunteer works at a dairy cooperative owned by and serving 800 small dairy farmers. The Volunteer has helped the co-op improve its overall business performance, which has produced higher and more stable incomes for the farmers. Additionally, the Volunteer is helping the government develop a software program for dairy co-ops across Kenya.

Education

Volunteers serve as HIV/AIDS educators in secondary and primary schools and work with teachers to implement the government's new AIDS education curricula.

Kenyan teachers learn new teaching techniques from Volunteers, which creates a more stimulating learning environment for students. Volunteers also mobilize teachers along with district education offices to train other educators to teach about HIV/AIDS to their students. One helped start a student health club that organized a local group called People Living Positively with HIV/AIDS. As a result, other students now volunteer their services.

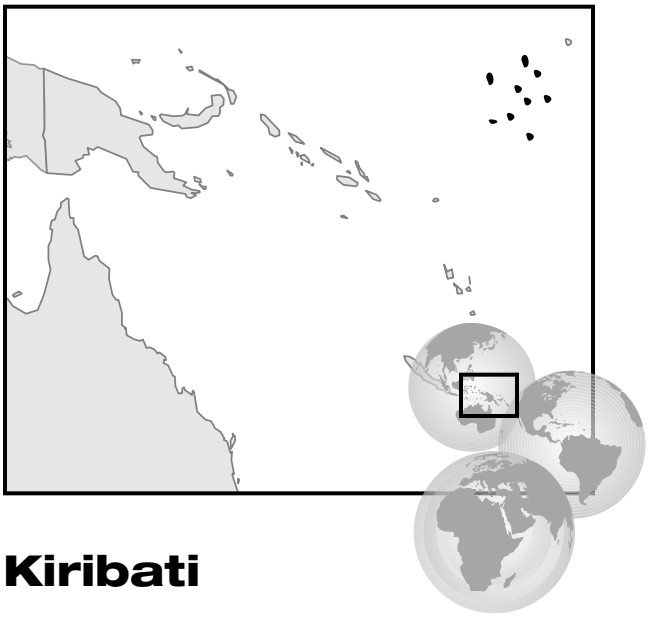
Volunteers teach in primary schools for the deaf and integrate deaf education into other activities. One group of Volunteers is developing a unique Kenyan sign language interactive CD that allows any user to browse through 3,000 English words and 1,100 Kenyan sign language signs. The CD will be distributed to all schools for the deaf, teacher training colleges, the Kenya Sign Language Research project, and several associations of the deaf in Kenya.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, address key public health challenges through attitude and behavior change in communities and among youth to reduce incidences of HIV/AIDS and waterborne diseases and to prevent malaria. Recently Volunteers conducted HIV/AIDS education sessions in schools and community clubs for 8,648 boys and 7,717 girls to encourage behavior modification. Volunteers helped establish two new community voluntary counseling and testing centers and helped train staff in counseling skills. Volunteers also conducted training on health and sanitation in schools through construction of 12 pit latrines and four water tanks. They dug two boreholes to increase access to safe, potable water. A Volunteer helped her community establish a new orphanage for children whose parents have died of AIDS.

"Often before I go to sleep, I think of all the wonderful sounds, ideas, and people that I meet every day in my small remote mountain village. In America, I don't think that we often take time to think about how many people just struggle from day to day just to survive. This is a humbling experience that puts one's priorities in order. I often fall asleep wondering what new things I will encounter tomorrow, thinking to myself that the Peace Corps motto could not be said better. " This is the toughest job you'll ever love".

Kenya Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector



Kiribati

Capital.....Tarawa

Population: 95,000

Annual per capita income $960

GDP growth 2.8%

Adult illiteracy rate .....Not available

Infant mortality rate..... 1 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 99%
Measles: 88%

Foreign direct investment..... $0.6 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 70%
Rural: 80%

HIV/AIDS prevalence .....Not available

Religions..... Roman Catholicism: 53%
Kiribati Protestantism: 39%

Official language .....English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	43	43
Program funds ($000)	1,217	1,313

Country Overview

Program dates	1973–present
Program sectors	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Kiribati (pronounced Kireebus) is a small, isolated group of islands in the central Pacific that straddles the equator and the international date line. The country comprises three island groups: the Gilbert Islands, Phoenix Islands, and Line Islands. It is composed of 33 coral atolls scattered over more than 2 million square miles, yet its total land area is only 264 square miles. Kiribati gained independence from Britain in 1979 and is now a democratic republic with a stable government.

Kiribati has few natural resources and a limited economy. Its main source of revenue is the export of dried coconut (*copra*) and fish and the sale of fishing rights. Agriculture is limited because of poor soil and scarce rainfall. Most citizens live at a subsistence level. Kiribati's poor resource base makes it difficult for the government to raise revenue for development programs, particularly in education, natural resource management, youth development, and health. Many of the country's educated and trained workers leave the country, making it a challenge to find people with the skills needed for successful development programs.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps began placing Volunteers in Kiribati in 1973, and Volunteers now work throughout the Gilbert Islands group. Most Volunteers work on outer islands, which lack services and educational opportunities because of their distance from the main island of Tarawa.

The Peace Corps' current program strategy supports the efforts of the government of Kiribati to address the key development areas of education and health. Kiribati does not have a sufficiently trained pool of teachers to meet the demand presented by the country's growing population. The work of Volunteers supports the national plan to improve the quality and accessibility of education at the primary and junior secondary levels. The geography of the country also makes it difficult for the government to provide health services and education to citizens in more rural, isolated villages. Volunteers provide

outreach to villages and develop awareness campaigns to inform youth and adults about important health issues.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Volunteers support the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sports in their efforts to provide education to the children and youth of Kiribati that will broaden their opportunities to become productive citizens of the country. Volunteers teach English, math, and science in junior secondary schools throughout Kiribati. They also help teachers in primary and secondary schools enhance their skills by co-teaching with them in the classroom, providing support in curriculum design and planning, conducting professional development workshops, and promoting extracurricular activities. Local teachers appreciate the work and efforts Volunteers have demonstrated in trying to achieve their goals. The Volunteers interaction in an informal setting with teachers and students of the schools where they are assigned to work has helped improve how teachers do their work and children's learning habits. One Volunteer on South Tarawa worked as an assistant coach for the Kiribati Athletic Association (national track team). This year, two athletes from the track team competed in the Athens Olympics. This was the first time Kiribati participated in the competition, and the nation became the 201st country to join the Olympics. Volunteers are also helping revise the national curriculum. Volunteers develop lesson plans, classroom materials, and teaching techniques that enhance the quality of education at all levels by strengthening the skills of co-teachers. In addition, Volunteers instruct new teachers at the Kiribati Teachers College in math, science, and education methodologies. Six Volunteers and four librarians participated in the Sabre Book Project, helping distribute the more than 10,000 books donated from the Sabre Company in the United States.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers in the health project educate communities on the prevention of common diseases and encourage behavior that promotes good health and well-being. Volunteers work directly with families and communities at the village level, managing outreach on topics such as leadership and youth development, HIV/AIDS prevention, nutrition, sanitation, first aid, immunizations, and common illnesses. Volunteers also work at the ministry level to carry out health promotion campaigns and activities related to nutrition, anti-smoking, and sports development. One Volunteer and one counterpart translated Can Quit Book (a stop-smoking guide) into I-Kiribati. Another Volunteer worked with the Kiribati Red Cross to strengthen their organizational capacity and ability to provide services to communities. Some Health Volunteers are working on a surveillance study funded by the Global Fund. The study will provide baseline data on HIV prevalence, behavioral risk factors, and sexually transmitted illness (STI) prevalence in two focus groups: the behavioral surveillance study and HIV test will be given to 300 seafarers, and the STI prevalence survey will be given to 200 antenatal mothers.

"Peace Corps has a wealth of information, expertise, and human resources for developing nations. Kiribati government will support the Peace Corps to support our people."

His Excellency, Anote Tong
President of the Republic of Kiribati

Kiribati children in costume

Kyrgyz Republic

Capital ..... Bishkek

Population ..... 5 million

Annual per capita income $290

GDP growth ..... -0.5%

Adult illiteracy rate 1.3%

Infant mortality rate ..... 52 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 98%
Measles: 98%

Foreign direct investment ..... $5 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 98%
Rural: 66%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions ..... Islam
Russian Orthodoxy

Official languages ..... Kyrgyz
Russian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	174	170
Program funds ($000)	1,848	1,828

Country Overview

Program dates	1993–2001 2002–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education

Since declaring its independence from the Soviet Union in August 1991, the government has ruled this small central Asian republic with few serious challenges to its authority. In December 1995, President Askar Akayev was reelected in the first multi-candidate presidential elections in central Asia. Although the Kyrgyz Republic is generally viewed as one of the most democratic former Soviet republics, the government is attempting to curb press freedom and corruption continues. The Kyrgyz Parliament has shown independence from the executive branch, but the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe declared that the parliamentary elections held in early 2000 were neither free nor fair. The next presidential elections are scheduled in 2005.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was a severe blow to the Kyrgyz economy. Between 1991 and 1995, the country's GDP shrank to 50 percent of its 1990 level. Reforms toward creating a market economy that began in 1993 have started to improve the situation; however, GDP growth has averaged only 5 percent per year since 1996, with particular impact on the important agriculture and mining sectors. In 1998, the Kyrgyz Republic became the first central Asian republic to join the World Trade Organization. However, the country remains one of the poorest in the world.

Program Focus

The first Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in the Kyrgyz Republic in 1993 to serve in this historically significant nation along the ancient Silk Road. After a temporary suspension of the Peace Corps program following the events of September 11, 2001, the program reopened in March 2002.

Since independence, the Kyrgyz Republic has demonstrated a commitment to achieve full participation in the global market. The government is eager to establish projects that will assist in the difficult transition from a state-controlled to a market-based economy. It wants to promote sustainable development and poverty alleviation by strengthening indigenous nongovernmental organizations and

business education. Although the Kyrgyz Republic continues to reform much of its legal and social structure to accommodate private sector activities, poverty remains a serious problem.

The Kyrgyz Republic has also placed a high priority on English education as a means to link the country to the world. However, the education system faces a severe shortage of trained teachers of English, textbooks, and basic instructional materials. Teacher salaries remain low and are often paid late. The government has requested assistance in increasing the level of English competency among secondary and university students and in improving Kyrgyz teachers' level of English and training. Volunteers address these needs by sharing current techniques in teaching foreign languages.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

The business development project places Volunteers directly at the grass-roots level. The project helps community-based organizations become sustainable, participatory, and effective organizations. Volunteers help improve access to information at the local level and work with organizations to develop effective networks and programs consistent with the organizations' missions and community needs. In particular, efforts focus on organizations that work with communities to develop sustainable rural tourism and handicraft projects, increase economic opportunities for women, and assist small farmers in marketing their goods. Additionally, Volunteers help local organizations and communities link with resources from international development efforts.

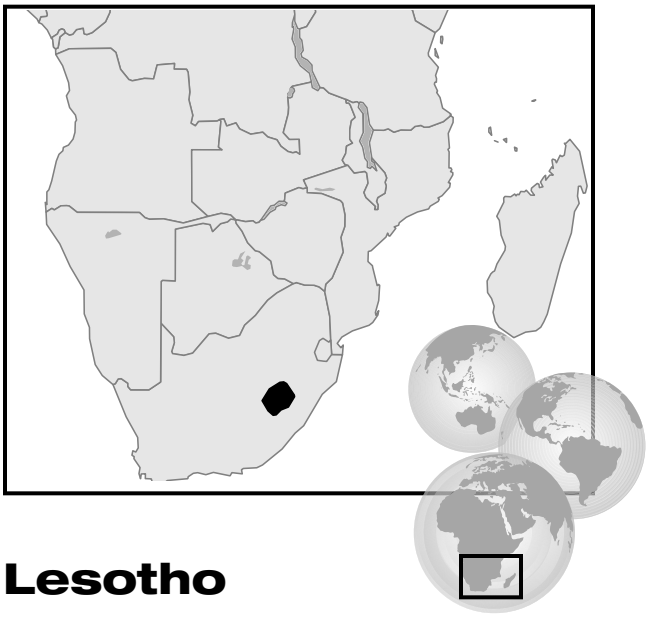
Education

The education project helps Kyrgyz students and English teachers improve their English language competency. Volunteers are assigned as English teachers to secondary schools in rural towns and villages and to institutes of higher education throughout the country. Volunteers in schools introduce communicative teaching methodologies and critical thinking skills. University-based Volunteers help prepare new teachers and teach business English and business-related courses. In addition to their teaching assignments, Volunteers help enhance students' computer and Internet skills and develop libraries and resource centers. Volunteers have formed English clubs, helped their students participate in local debates, and worked with local English teachers to develop lesson plans. Improved English skills have aided both students and teachers in winning scholarships to study abroad.

Youth development is a major focus of Volunteers in Kyrgyzstan. In addition to their primary assignments, Volunteers are actively involved in secondary projects, such as assisting their counterpart organizations with organizing summer camps. This year, 15 Volunteers helped organize a national summer camp for boys ages 14-17. The approach was to work with the youth to critically examine their roles and responsibilities as men in modern Kyrgyz society, helping them to see new perspectives and identify ways to face future challenges responsibly. About 70 students from all over the country were selected to participate in the Boys' State Camp. Camp objectives were to teach about democracy; promote interethnic and racial tolerance; expose young men to healthy, positive lifestyles; foster youth participation in the community and volunteerism; demonstrate the qualities of a good leader; and improve English communication skills.

"The biggest success is that there is continued interest in the English club and English class. I am teaching younger grades this year and these students are highly motivated. These girls learn quickly that they are already surpassing their older peers. One big success was a trip I took with students to a center that offered us a day-long seminar for beginning Internet and word-processing skills. I also arranged to have two hours of computer time reserved for our school, and students have been signing up for these slots."

Kyrgyz Republic Volunteer Education Sector



Lesotho

Capital ..... Maseru

Population ..... 2 million

Annual per capita income $550

GDP growth 3.8%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 26%
Female: 10%

Infant mortality rate ..... 91 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 79%
Measles: 70%

Foreign direct investment ..... $81 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 88%
Rural: 74%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 31%

Religions ..... Christianity: 80%
Hinduism
Islam
Indigenous beliefs

Official languages ..... English
Sesotho

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	85	76
Program funds ($000)	2,484	2,498

Country Overview

Program dates	1967–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Lesotho became a British protectorate in 1868 after a series of territorial wars in the mid-19th century that cost Lesotho much of its best agricultural land. It gained its independence in 1966, by which time Lesotho had already been forced into a state of economic dependence on South Africa. King Letsie III remains the head of state. Parliamentary elections were held in May 2002, and the government of Lesotho is confident that the country will remain politically stable.

Lesotho is a small, landlocked, mountainous country. Its economy is highly dependent on small-scale agriculture, livestock, remittances from miners employed in South Africa, and a rapidly growing apparel-assembly sector. Nearly half of all households live below the national poverty line. Lesotho's high unemployment rate and the return of migrant workers from South African mines have contributed to an increase of crime in the capital city. The government of Lesotho declared a state of famine in April 2002, after another year of poor harvests caused by excessive rainfall. The United Nations estimates that 500,000 people are in need of food assistance. Lesotho also has the world's third highest HIV infection rate in the world, which deepens the impact of the food crisis.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps was invited to work in Lesotho in 1967, and since then nearly 2,000 Volunteers have served in this southern African country. Volunteers respond to Lesotho's needs by strengthening the capacity of individuals to take control of their own lives. Education, business development, and, more recently, health and HIV/AIDS have been the Peace Corps' principal program sectors in Lesotho. The focus in the placement of Volunteers is on rural development, which mirrors the country's 85 percent rural population demography. Volunteers serve in all 10 districts of the country, and all Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers seek to improve the lives of rural communities by strengthening the capacity of nongovernmental organizations, vocational training institutes, community-based organizations, and orphans and youth groups. Volunteers work with cooperatives and registered community groups by organizing and facilitating training for community members in small business management, handicrafts development, marketing, and ecotourism. Three Volunteers taught groups of women weavers to use a computer as a means to market their products. At vocational institutions, Volunteers transfer skills by training staff in business management, and they teach computer skills for in-school youth and other members of the community. Two Volunteers are helping associations organize and improve the operation and management of pony-trekking clubs. One Volunteer is assisting in the development of a cultural village in the home village of King Moshoeshoe (the founder of Basotho nation). Two Volunteers are involved in extensive agricultural activities such as potato seeding, and in the storage and marketing of seeds for use by local farmers without crossing to South Africa. Additionally, Volunteers provide at-risk youth with training for income generation and job creation.

Education

In an innovative programming area, education Volunteers are working in five areas: early childhood development, primary teacher training, special education, secondary education, and distance education. Volunteers work with the Ministry of Education to upgrade teacher skills at numerous schools through teacher-training workshops, materials development, and working one-on-one with teachers. After a six-year absence, Volunteers have begun teaching English in classrooms at secondary school level. Volunteers are entering the classroom because of the increasing number of teachers who are dying due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the decline in the standard of English in schools. Twelve Volunteers taught English language and literature to approximately 1,300 boys and girls in secondary and high schools.

In addition to providing support to teachers and students, Volunteers promote girls' education, deliver lessons on HIV/AIDS awareness, train counterparts and parents in special education concepts, and establish community libraries and youth clubs. Education Volunteers also help major educational institutions integrate technology into distance education and teaching programs. They teach computer skills to university students and train teachers who work in early childhood programs. Twenty-three Volunteers provided teacher training for 160 teachers in early childhood care and development centers and primary schools.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The community health program is in its third year, with Volunteers helping the people of Lesotho fight the spread of HIV/AIDS. Volunteers work with district AIDS task forces and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to design and implement HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, and support programs for vulnerable groups. Health Volunteers work with communities in all 10 districts to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS on infected and otherwise affected people. Volunteers have helped district AIDS taskforces establish HIV/AIDS support groups, deliver home-based care kits, promote voluntary counseling and testing, and provide HIV/AIDS prevention education to more than 250 villages, reaching more than 13,000 adults and children across Lesotho. All Volunteers in are involved with HIV/AIDS activities as a part of their community outreach. In addition, Volunteers have worked with more than 50 schools, 15 NGOs and government ministries on HIV/AIDS activities. Volunteers also work in permaculture in rural communities to promote sustainable practices that increase the diversity of food and improve nutrition.

"My first six months were mostly observation and exchange of ideas. Through observation I was able to see resources that were easily available in the community and the entire income generation project has been started with local resources."

Lesotho Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Macedonia, Republic of

Capital ..... Skopje

Population ..... 2 million

Annual per capita income $1,710

GDP growth 0.7%

Adult illiteracy rate 5.4%

Infant mortality rate ..... 22 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 96%
Measles: 98%

Foreign direct investment ..... $77 million

Access to safe water ..... Not Available

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions ..... Eastern Orthodoxy: 65%
Islam: 29%
Catholicism: 4%
Others: 2%

Official language ..... Macedonian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	78	74
Program funds ($000)	1,632	1,624

Country Overview

Program dates	1996–1999 1999–2001 2002–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment

The Republic of Macedonia is making significant efforts to develop a society based on democratic principles, to establish a viable market economy, and to equitably represent all ethnic groups within its society. While much progress has been made, inflation and unemployment rates continue to be high and industrial production has been falling.

Macedonia's main objectives for the next few years are developing economic opportunities for its citizens; sharing the benefits of growth more equitably among groups and regions, especially through decentralization efforts; and moving toward European integration. Hopes are that the peace agreement that ended the ethnic conflict of 2001 will put that conflict firmly in the past, while membership in the World Trade Organization, progress toward membership in NATO, increasing regional trade ties, and generally improved links with the rest of the world will move the country closer toward European Union (EU)-level political and economic development.

Decentralization reforms, especially the Law on Territorial Division, which will reduce the number of municipalities from the current 124 municipalities to 84, are currently being debated within the government and society. Municipal elections are planned for March 2005 with decentralization of authority to the local government for such services as education, health care, infrastructure and others to be gradually implemented in 2005. Financing these now local-level responsibilities will be the key element to monitor during the next several years.

Security within Macedonia has steadily improved since the signing of the peace agreement in 2001. In fact, in January 2004, the EU's military force was replaced by an EU police mission, composed of only 200 mostly unarmed EU police. In cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE), this EU mission continues to train and deploy the newly integrated Macedonian police force.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps began operating in Macedonia in 1996 with seven Volunteers. They were assigned to the Ministry of Education and Science and worked in the secondary school English education program. During the next several years, as new Volunteers arrived, the program expanded to include programs in business (municipal and NGO) development, and environmental education and management. Despite early successes in each of these areas, the program did not fully develop because of regional political instability that suspended the Macedonia program on two separate occasions between 1999 and 2001. Since returning in November 2002, the program in Macedonia is again making significant progress in its three key program areas. Additionally, agriculture and forestry extension, community and youth development, and information technology are areas being examined for future focus.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

As government structures devolve from centralized to more localized systems and community jurisdictions have greater autonomy and decision-making authority, government officials must learn how to operate effectively in this new environment. Most municipalities have limited budgets and little experience in addressing these increased public administration responsibilities. Peace Corps Volunteers assist local/municipal governments, local government staff, and nongovernmental organizations through capacity-building training programs and establishment of frameworks for adopting more participatory and responsive management styles. Volunteers conduct organizational and management assistance to host organizations; provide computer skills training; share expertise in donor resource research methods; conduct community outreach in the areas of human/gender rights, health, and environmental awareness; and initiate small project assistance for various community activities.

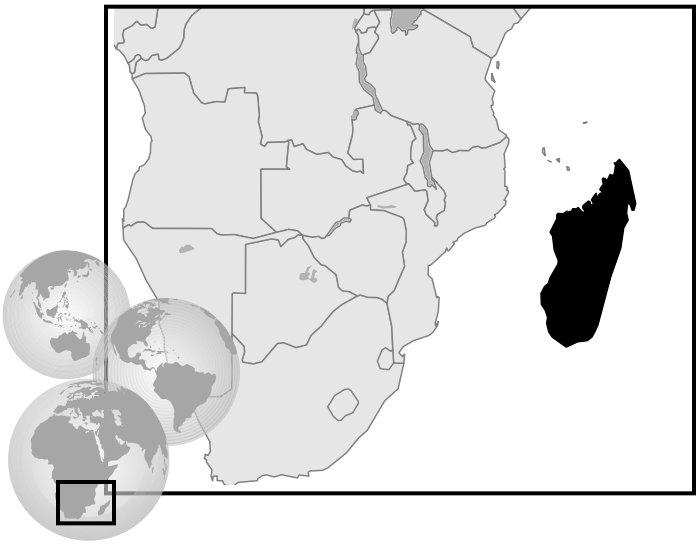
One Volunteer helped set up a citizens' information center (CIC) in his municipality. The CIC will help inform and involve citizens in the local government process, increasing their participation. It will also assist citizens who need access to information and services and help develop regular, transparent communication between the local government and its citizens. The center will inform citizens about their local government and regional ministries; facilitate solutions to problems citizens have with the delivery of public services; channel citizens' comments to the mayor; and act as a center for citizen complaints and suggestions.

Education

The Ministry of Education and Science is refining its curriculum and making concerted efforts to improve the skills of teachers, particularly in smaller towns and rural villages where the need is greatest. The Peace Corps' involvement in this challenging endeavor is twofold: to improve the effectiveness of instruction through teacher training and resource center development, and to help students improve their English language communication skills, critical thinking skills, and independent lifelong learning skills. Volunteers serve as English language resource teachers and facilitators to help meet the need for continued improvement of English language programs in primary and secondary schools. In addition, Volunteers work on summer projects, including girls' leadership training camps, and they organize English clubs after school, incorporating technology skills into the clubs when possible. The ministry is working to address the barriers that currently prevent foreigners from teaching and grading students.

Environment

The environment program in Macedonia has evolved over the years. Environmental degradation and lack of access to clean water, air and affordable energy services are being addressed at the national and community levels. Macedonia is seeking out and sharing best practices, providing innovative policy advice, and linking partners through pilot projects that help people build sustainable livelihoods. The Peace Corps program focuses on strengthening the capacity of environmental key players at the local level, such as NGOs, public works, schools, and natural parks. Volunteers support public work organizations in wastewater and solid-waste management, capacity strengthening for NGOs, management and sustainable use of natural resources, and development of environmental nonformal educational activities with students and public school teachers. They also assist with community projects with local clubs and NGOs.



Madagascar

Capital ..... Antananarivo

Population ..... 16 million

Annual per capita income $230

GDP growth ..... -12.7%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 26.4%
Female: 40.3%

Infant mortality rate ..... 84 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 62%
Measles: 61%

Foreign direct investment ..... $8 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 85%
Rural: 31%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.3%

Religions ..... Indigenous beliefs: 47%
Christianity: 45%
Islam: 7%

Official language ..... Malagasy

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	126	131
Program funds ($000)	2,233	2,251

Country Overview

Program dates	1993–present
Program sectors	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

The government of President Marc Ravalomanana, backed by its international partners, has embarked on economic recovery and poverty reduction and is committed to fighting environmental degradation, poor health, and the HIV/AIDS scourge. Numerous international development agencies and volunteer organizations have been welcomed to Madagascar, joining the growing number of Malagasy nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), to work with the people of Madagascar on their development efforts. Madagascar is ranked 150 of 177 countries on the 2004 United Nations Human Development Index.

The economy of Madagascar is dominated by agriculture, which employs four-fifths of the population. Agriculture, including fishing and forestry, contribute 25 percent of GDP; industry, 12 percent; and services, 63 percent. Major exports, including coffee, vanilla, cloves, shellfish, and sugar, were estimated at $700 million in 2002. Madagascar's natural resources are severely threatened by deforestation and erosion, aggravated by the use of firewood as the primary source of fuel, which negatively impact the economy and people. A great need continues for teachers, health specialists, and environmental counselors, particularly in rural areas.

Program Focus

The first education Volunteers arrived in late 1993. In subsequent years, the Peace Corps initiated programs in ecological conservation and community health education.

Today, Volunteers work in the education, environment, and health and HIV/AIDS sectors. Some Volunteers concentrate on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; others teach English and train teachers. Volunteers also work with communities and national parks to find ways to balance human needs with environmental conservation. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Volunteers are posted in rural communities and work with students, teachers, and the larger community to raise the standard of teaching, develop teaching resources, and strengthen the links between schools and communities. Middle and high school students are taught English through both traditional classroom lessons and nontraditional methods such as songs, drawing, poetry, and drama. Volunteers transfer teaching skills to Malagasy English teachers to increase their capacity to plan lessons and create classroom resources. Volunteers and their counterparts use English as a vehicle to promote community programs such as girls' camps, HIV/AIDS prevention, and tree plantings.

Environment

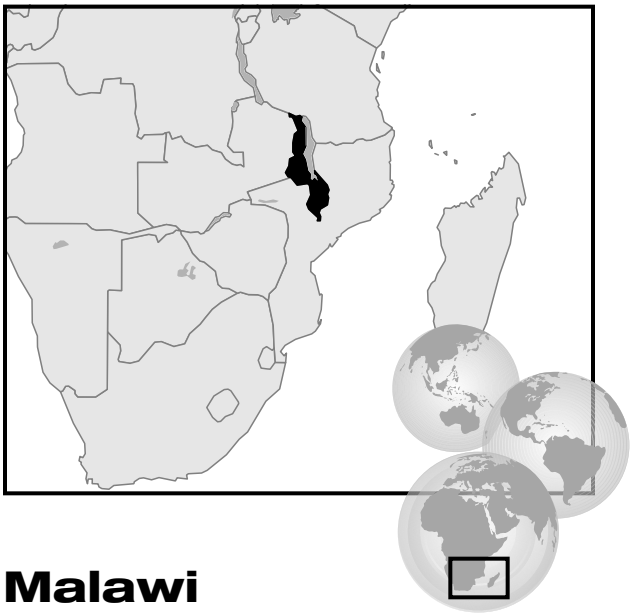
Working with the government, NGOs, and local communities, Volunteers provide training for managers of protected areas, community members, and groups to improve their skills in environmental conservation, natural resource management, and sustainable agroforestry and agriculture. More than 300 communities have learned about environmental conservation through theater projects, videos, and workshops. Volunteers have helped establish 45 tree nurseries, plant more than 2,500 trees, and build over 300 wood-saving mud stoves in 65 villages.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The community health project helps communities address health issues through behavioral change methodologies and by effectively disseminating health messages. Volunteers concentrate on prevention of the main life-threatening childhood illnesses; help mothers understand basic maternal health issues, such as how to ensure safe pregnancies; and provide the general population with information about preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Through their outreach programs, Volunteers disseminate vital health information to more than 400 communities each year. Volunteers from all sectors collaborate on projects that teach HIV/AIDS awareness. One Volunteer realized that illiterate dock workers and local rickshaw operators were unable to understand the health messages in traditional AIDS awareness campaigns, though this population was clearly at risk. The Volunteer mobilized local resources and organized a person-to-person peer education campaign that has enabled these people to finally understand the risks and solutions.

"Serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Madagascar has been one of the most challenging, illuminating, and irreplaceable experiences of my lifetime. Through the daily struggles to find a way to survive in another culture, seek a greater understanding of that culture, and finally help the people of Madagascar build a healthier and more prosperous future, I have seen remarkable examples of human dedication and exemplary diligence, in spite of minimal resources, that have inspired and humbled me."

Madagascar Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector



Malawi

Capital ..... Lilongwe

Population ..... 11 million

Annual per capita income $160

GDP growth 1.8%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 24%
Female: 51%

Infant mortality rate ..... 113 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 64%
Measles: 69%

Foreign direct investment ..... $6 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 95%
Rural: 44%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 15%

Religions ..... Protestantism: 55%
Roman Catholicism: 20%
Islam: 20%
Indigenous beliefs: 3%
Other: 2%

Official languages ..... English
Chichewa

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	103	99
Program funds ($000)	2,349	2,312

Country Overview

Program dates	1963–1969 1973–1976 1978–present
Program sectors	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

In 1994, after 30 years of one-party, dictatorial rule dating back to independence from Britain, Malawi quietly and peacefully elected a new government committed to multiparty democracy. In spite of the wave of euphoria that followed their newly won freedom, the Malawian people face the obstacles of drought, floods, environmental degradation, hunger, malnutrition, disease, rising crime, illiteracy, mismanagement, underutilization of local resources for sustainable livelihoods, and the mentality of poverty. Nevertheless, Malawi is on a path of social, political, and economic reform.

Malawi has a parliamentary style of government with a president as the head of state. The president has many powers and sets the agenda for parliamentary debate. Peaceful presidential elections were held in 1999 and in May 2004. Although there has been little local government control, this is gradually changing through a decentralization policy in which resources and responsibilities are moving from the national to the district level.

Agriculture is the mainstay of Malawi's economy, accounting for nearly half of its GDP. Tobacco, tea, and sugar together generate more than 70 percent of export earnings, with tobacco providing the majority (more than 60 percent). The agricultural sector employs nearly half of those formally employed and directly or indirectly supports an estimated 85 percent of the population. Malawi has a narrow economic base with little industry and no known economically viable deposits of gemstones, precious metals, or oil. As a landlocked country, its transport costs make imported goods expensive.

Program Focus

The change of government in 1994 opened up the possibility of placing Volunteers at the community level for the first time (under the prior regime, foreigners were not allowed to live at the community level). With the increased flexibility in programming, the Peace Corps began working with

counterpart ministries to identify appropriate areas for involvement at the community level. Currently, Volunteers currently work in health, education, the environment, and short-term Crisis Corps assignments related to health. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Education

The government implemented a free primary education policy in 1994 that has swelled the ranks of schools and seriously strained the country's resources. To support the government's initiative, the Peace Corps has focused its efforts on secondary schools in rural areas, where skills transfer and capacity building can have the greatest impact. Currently, 35 Volunteers help educate secondary school students, promote teacher-to-teacher collaboration, and encourage the exchange of experience and knowledge to improve methods of teaching. Volunteers work with their counterparts by sharing lesson plans and discussing strategies for teaching, evaluating students, and preparing exams. They use local resources to produce teaching and learning materials, such as model lungs and electricity circuit boards. Some Volunteers organized a school library with a textbook section, teacher reference section, and other resources for students and teachers. Other Volunteers have helped schools acquire new labs and equipment so students can perform science experiments.

The education program is introducing a teacher-training component that focuses on secondary schools grouped into clusters. This project will help teachers improve their teaching skills and learn to produce teaching and learning materials with local resources.

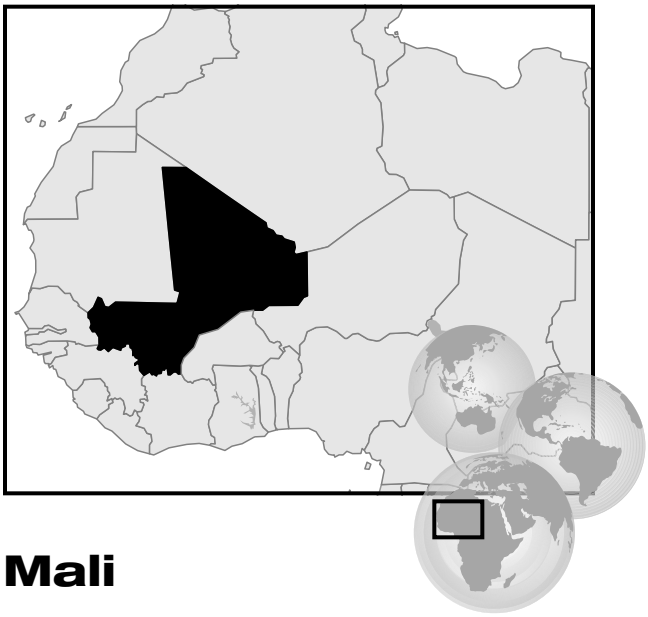
Environment

The community-based natural resource management project assists communities surrounding protected areas to create long-term natural resource management plans. Partnering with Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife and Department of Forestry, Volunteers are placed in communities around parks and forest reserves. They work with government staff and surrounding communities on issues of conservation and resource use, including agroforestry, income generation, appropriate technology, co-management of protected areas, and extension training. Twenty-five parks, wildlife, and forestry Volunteers work with communities that want to use protected-area resources more efficiently and sustainably. They have helped increase the productivity of fish farming and taught conservation farming approaches and how to propagate the trees and other plant species so critical to the rural farming system in Malawi. Volunteers have also helped establish village natural resources management committees and village forest areas, worked with schools and youth organizations, helped identify income-generating activities, and promoted conservation farming approaches.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Malawi is one of the countries most severely affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and it faces many other serious health conditions. The community health project works with the Ministry of Health and Population to address health issues in rural parts of the country. Volunteers work in AIDS education, orphan care, home-based care, youth and at-risk groups, child survival, nutrition, disease prevention, environmental health, and women's health. The project has evolved from primarily HIV/AIDS education to focus on behavior change and now is integrating other health concerns linked with the HIV/AIDS epidemic (for example, other sexually transmitted and infectious diseases). The project has enabled behavioral change through life-skills training offered to a wide range of Malawians, particularly youth. Volunteers have helped create 50 support groups for people living with AIDS.

Peace Corps/Malawi began inviting Crisis Corps Volunteers to work with local organizations that are striving to address the critical issues of HIV/AIDS, food security, and cholera. Since 2000, 42 former Volunteers have joined the Crisis Corps to provide specific technical support requested by organizations, including management, education, nutrition and food security, home-based care, and cholera prevention and treatment.



Mali

Capital ..... Bamako

Population ..... 11 million

Annual per capita income $240

GDP growth 4.4%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 73%
Female: 88%

Infant mortality rate ..... 122 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 57 %
Measles: 33%

Foreign direct investment ..... $102 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 74%
Rural: 61%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 1.70%

Religions ..... Islam: 90%
Indigenous beliefs: 6%
Christianity: 4%

Official language ..... French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	149	149
Program funds ($000)	4,144	3,811

Country Overview

Program dates	1971–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Mali achieved independence from France in 1960. Between 1968 and 1979, a military government ruled the country in a period known as the "second republic." In 1991, after a period of civil unrest, a transitional government ruled until elections were held in 1992. Mali is a young and growing democracy and has held two national elections since 1992. The government continues to promote democratization and administrative decentralization and has become a model in the region.

Mali is among the poorest countries in the world, and ranks 174 of 177 on the 2004 United Nations Human Development Index. As a landlocked country with 65 percent of its land desert or semi-desert, Mali is dependent on its neighbors for port facilities. Economic activity is largely confined to the area irrigated by the Niger River. Eighty percent of the labor force is engaged in farming and fishing, while industrial activity focuses on processing farm commodities. Mali is heavily dependent on foreign aid and vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices for cotton, its main export. A growing tourism industry is centered on Mopti, a major thoroughfare en route to Tombouctou.

Program Focus

The first Volunteers arrived in Mali in April 1971 to help allay the hardships caused by a severe drought. Mali is not self-sufficient in food production, a problem exacerbated by frequent droughts and a rapidly increasing population that is straining the natural resource base. Volunteers assist the government of Mali in addressing multiple development challenges. A new government initiative promotes decentralization so that local communities assume responsibility for development projects. These communities, however, lack the skilled personnel needed to identify, plan, and implement such projects. Currently, Peace Corps/Mali emphasizes sustainable small business projects in the areas of food production, water availability, environmental conservation, microenterprise development, and preventive health care. An expanded HIV/AIDS

awareness program began in 2001, and all Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Volunteers are technical resources for community members, associations, and youth groups on a variety of projects. These include animal husbandry, vegetable gardening, irrigation systems, and experimental farming at both regional and national levels. Their goals are to improve agricultural practices and to increase access to resources that can help local communities generate income and improve their diets.

Business Development

Volunteers work closely with small businesses to improve the management capabilities of entrepreneurs and to increase the availability of financial and technical resources. They provide training and counseling to entrepreneurs on feasibility studies, marketing surveys, inventory control, accounting, and product pricing. Some Volunteers help microfinance institutions establish appropriate management systems, loan-tracking systems, business education programs for their clients, and awareness campaigns about the importance of savings and the availability of credit. Other Volunteers work to strengthen existing computer centers and set up Internet cafes. A new initiative works with a nationwide network of community learning and information centers to provide training in basic computer and Internet skills to young Malians.

One Volunteer worked with the microfinance institution to develop a regional marketing plan. The Volunteer conducted a needs analysis with a group of women in a small village. The results indicated that a mobile banking service could improve their returns by training prospective borrowers. The Volunteer then trained many illiterate women in savings and credit concepts, and additional women were able to join the mobile banking service and take their first loans.

Environment

The need for better natural resource management and conservation techniques has grown with the increasing urgency of Mali's environmental problems. Peace Corps/Mali created the natural resource management project in 1986 in collaboration with the Ministry of Forestry to introduce sustainable environmental management systems to communities nationwide. Volunteers also seek to increase sources of safe drinking water and encourage proper disposal of wastewater and solids.

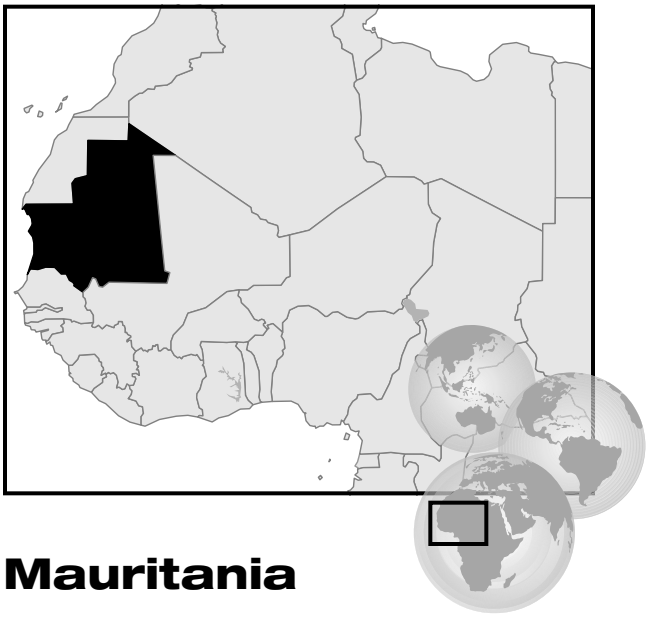
Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers help restructure the public health sector at the local level through their work with health-care providers, local associations, and individual community members. They raise awareness of health issues and promote preventive care measures such as nutritional practices, breast-feeding, diarrhea, disease control, polio eradication, and vaccinations. They also work with nongovernmental organizations in communities by organizing HIV/AIDS awareness days, working with HIV-positive individuals, educating high-risk groups on HIV transmission, and promoting voluntary testing centers.

Youth

Volunteers help restructure the public health sector at the local level through their work with health-care providers, local associations, and individual community members. They raise awareness of health issues and promote preventive care measures such as nutritional practices, breast-feeding, diarrhea, disease control, polio eradication, and vaccinations. They also work with nongovernmental organizations in communities by organizing HIV/AIDS awareness days, working with HIV-positive individuals, educating high-risk groups on HIV transmission, and promoting voluntary testing centers.

One Volunteer worked with her counterpart at a rural health center to train village lay health workers in 10 villages surrounding her town. These women were busy and could rarely afford transportation to come to training session, so the Volunteer built the training around the market day schedule. This enabled the women to be trained during a weekly class and allowed them to have the time to do market business. In the time between market days, women were able to practice their skills, think of questions, and identify other health needs in their communities. By the end of the six weeks of training, the women had become trained health extension agents, serving comfortably as liaisons between their village and the health center. These new extension agents continue to be engaged in health promotion activities in their villages, improving the capacity of the center to effectively serve the population.



Mauritania

Capital ..... Nouakchott

Population ..... 3 million

Annual per capita income $280

GDP growth 3.3%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 9%
Female: 69%

Infant mortality rate ..... 120 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 83%
Measles: 81%

Foreign direct investment ..... $12 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 34%
Rural: 40%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.52%

Religion ..... Islam

Official language ..... Arabic

Country Overview

Program dates	1967 1971–1991 1991–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

From its independence in 1960 until 1978, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania was governed by a civilian regime. A number of military governments followed until 1991, when political parties were legalized and a constitution was approved. The ruling Democratic and Social Republican Party currently holds the presidency and controls a majority in both houses. Conflict between Moor and non-Moor ethnic groups centering on language, land tenure, and other issues has been a problem in the country since its independence. Sparsely populated, with most of its land covered by the Sahara Desert, Mauritania is one of the least developed countries in the world. It ranks number 152 of 177 on the 2004 United Nations Human Development Index. Besides mining, the only commercially viable industry is fishing.

Program Focus

Since the 1980s, Volunteers have worked in agriculture, environmental conservation, cooperatives, health education, and Guinea worm eradication. In the 1990s, the agriculture and environmental conservation projects merged to form the agroforestry project. The cooperatives project became small business development, and the Guinea worm eradication project developed into community health and water/sanitation and disease control. In 2000, Peace Corps/Mauritania reinstated the TEFL project and created a new environmental education project. Girls' education and information technology projects were created in 2001. Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	90	105
Program funds ($000)	2,290	2,382

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers transfer basic business skills to microentrepreneurs in Mauritania's informal economic sector to strengthen skills in planning, financial management, marketing, and profitability. Volunteers help entrepreneurs gain access to credit, allowing them to create new businesses or expand existing ones. Information technology has become an increasingly important part of the business development sector. Volunteers work with the Ministry of New Technology and the Cisco Academy to teach the skills that are needed for the country to develop.

Working with counterparts at the Ministry of Women's Affairs, one Volunteer upgraded the activities, equipment, and outreach of a cyber center at a women's center in a low-income neighborhood. In addition to basic accounting and marketing skills, local women are offered classes in computer maintenance, trouble-shooting, and general management skills.

Education

Volunteers teach English in middle and high schools throughout Mauritania. They have coached Mauritanian teachers in English as they seek to become more qualified, creative, and effective in a work environment with few resources. Volunteers continue to work at the University of Nouakchott doing teacher training and developing classroom materials.

The Peace Corps-sponsored girl's mentoring centers (GMC) have been very successful with outreach efforts. Volunteers and their community partners have worked diligently to build stability into the nine regional GMCs. The centers are open to secondary school students and are managed by professional women from the community and Peace Corps Volunteers. These centers provide a positive environment where girls are encouraged to continue their studies and share their accomplishments with their peers.

Environment

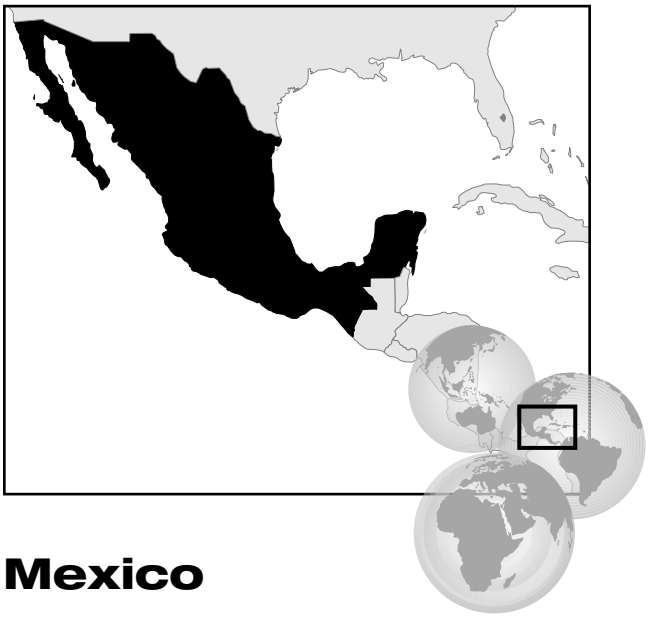
Volunteers are part of an integrated development effort to improve agricultural and forestry practices throughout rural Mauritania. They work to improve the capacity of local farmers in selected oases and villages. Volunteers and farmers work together to protect garden sites, villages, and oases against desert encroachment and natural degradation. Environmental education Volunteers work with teachers and students to increase awareness of the importance of environmental protection.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers strive to improve the health of the rural population by providing communities with the necessary analytical and technical skills to reduce the incidence of waterborne and hygiene-related diseases, such as malaria and diarrhea. They also promote access to potable water through the construction, repair, and maintenance of water sources, such as wells. Volunteers have also designed and implemented HIV/AIDS trainings of trainers and launched major HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in different regions of the country through sports, cultural events, and formal training sessions. In October 2004, Volunteers were involved in a door-to-door campaign to vaccinate children against polio.

"In a world of increasing tensions between the United States and the Muslim world, Peace Corps/Mauritania is one of the few meaningful ways in which American and Muslims work together constructively at a grass-roots level, overcoming the power of cliché and groupthink that stokes anti-Americanism and replacing it with the power of personal experience that promotes understanding and cooperation."

Mauritania Volunteer
Agriculture Sector



Mexico

Capital ..... Mexico City

Population ..... 101 million

Annual per capita income $5,920

GDP growth 0.9%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 7%
Female: 11%

Infant mortality rate ..... 24 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 91%
Measles: 96%

Foreign direct investment ..... $ 14,622 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 95%
Rural: 69%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.3%

Religions ..... Roman Catholicism: 89%
Protestantism: 6%
Other: 5%

Official language ..... Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	29	55
Program funds ($000)	1,239	1,748

Country Overview

Program dates	2004-present
Program sectors	Business Development Environment

As a nation of more than 100 million people, Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world. About 70 percent of the people live in rural areas. Many Mexicans emigrate from rural areas to the industrialized urban centers and the developing areas along the U.S.-Mexico border.

In late 1994, the devaluation of the Mexican peso sent the country into its worst recession in over half a century. Since then, there has been substantial progress in building a modern, diversified economy, improving infrastructure, and tackling the causes of poverty. Educational levels in Mexico have improved substantially in recent decades, and education continues to remain one of the government's highest priorities.

In July 2000, Vicente Fox of the National Action Party was elected president. This marked the first time since the Mexican Revolution that the opposition defeated the party in power, the Institutional Revolutionary Party. President Fox began his six-year term on December 1, 2000.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps program in Mexico is a unique partnership that provides the first opportunity for the Peace Corps to recruit highly specialized, technically trained and experienced Volunteers to work side-by-side with Mexican counterparts.

The Peace Corps first began exploring the possibility of entering Mexico after President George W. Bush and President Fox announced the Partnership for Prosperity initiative during their summit in September 2001. On June 10, 2003, the Peace Corps and CONACYT (National Council for Science and Technology) signed a memorandum of understanding regarding the Peace Corps' entry into Mexico. The full partnership accord was formalized at a signing ceremony at the Mexican embassy in Washington, D.C., on November 12, 2003.

The first group of Volunteers arrived in Mexico in October 2004. They are currently working with several CONACYT high-level scientific and technological national research centers located throughout central Mexico.

Their work will encompass the following areas of expertise: water and environmental engineering, agro-industrial and manufacturing, knowledge management, information communication technology, and business development. All Peace Corps/Mexico programming focuses on technical cooperation between the neighboring countries.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

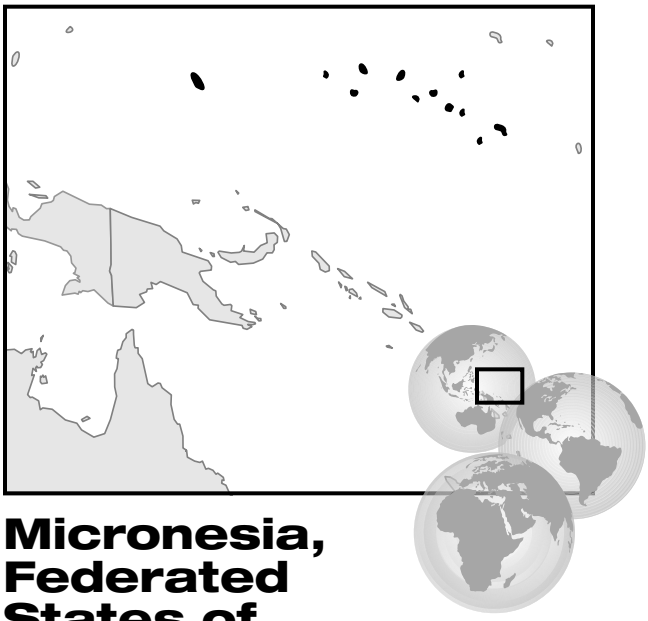
Volunteers in the business development project are assigned to one of several CONACYT centers and they will provide training and consultation in business practices. CONACYT also hopes to offer their clients assistance and training in business management practices. Volunteer collaboration will be in the following technological areas: business processes improvement, knowledge management, accounting and finance, marketing, and production/operations management.

Environment

Volunteers in the environmental engineering project work with CONACYT environmental technology departments in projects related to water and wastewater treatment and management. The project will support the appropriate use of water management technologies in rural communities. Specific tasks for Volunteers may include: laboratory research to develop efficient water treatment systems; assisting communities in the organization, planning and implementation of their water and sanitation projects; or promoting watershed protection and management.

"A tremendous opportunity to forge new relationships with our closest neighbor has arrived. Today, we begin a new level of partnership with the government and the people of Mexico. Mexico has unlimited potential in the field of information technology, and our Volunteers are excited to begin sharing their skills. Just as important, they are ready to learn and to bring back to the U.S. the personal stories and unique customs of the people of Mexico."

Peace Corps Director
Gaddi Vasquez



Micronesia, Federated States of, and Palau

Capitals: ..... Micronesia: Palikir
Palau: Koror

Average population 71,000

Average annual per capita income $4,395

Average GDP growth 1.9%

Average adult illiteracy rate 9.5%

Average infant mortality rate ..... 27 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 75%
Measles: 84%
(Micronesia only)

Foreign direct investment ..... Not available

Access to safe water ..... Not available

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... Not available

Religions ..... Modekngei
Roman Catholicism
Protestantism

Official language ..... English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	83	66
Program funds ($000)	1,909	1,773

Country Overview

Program dates	1966–present
Program sectors	Environment Youth

Both the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau are democratic republics modeled on the U.S. federal system, and each state has a state government. The states of FSM and Palau are highly autonomous, exercising great independence from the federal government. Both countries have economies and governments that are dependent on U.S. Compact of Free Association funds and U.S. foreign aid, both scheduled to decline over time. Both countries lack self-sustaining programs to provide for the needs of their population.

Most people of FSM and Palau have subsistence lifestyles, few private sector jobs exist, and basic infrastructure, education, and health services are underdeveloped. Both FSM and Palau have failed to develop a viable private sector. The newly established compact agreements require greater accountability for funds, and focus on helping FSM and Palau become self-reliant.

Developing viable industries and exporting are a challenge because of the geographic isolation and small size of FSM and Palau. Additionally, the nations' fragile natural resources are in danger of exploitation.

Program Focus

The focus of Peace Corps/Micronesia is to build the capacity of Micronesians so they can provide for their own needs, appreciate and preserve their environment, and provide opportunities and a healthy environment for youth. The two Peace Corps focus areas for FSM/Palau are environment and youth. Volunteers work in health and nutrition education, libraries, teacher training and curriculum improvement, information technology, small business development and women's income generation, marine resources conservation, environmental education, and terrestrial resources conservation.

Volunteer Focus

Environment

Volunteers are involved in marine and terrestrial resource conservation projects as well as environmental education activities. Volunteers promote an understanding of marine resources, watersheds, and mangrove ecosystems to build the capacity of government agencies and local conservation organizations to create and implement sound resource management policies. Volunteers also team with government agencies to develop marine resource-based and agricultural economic opportunities while providing training in business planning and operations. Volunteers lead environmental education programs in rural and urban communities and schools, and foster community involvement. Some environment Volunteers also teach gardening techniques in their communities. One Volunteer in FSM has implemented a community-based sea turtle conservation and awareness program. The Volunteer created community awareness through education about sea turtles. The Volunteer developed a program where youth help locate sea turtle nests thereby allowing community members to "adopt" a sea turtle. The turtles are raised in captivity to an age where they have a greater chance of survival in the wild and then are released. The Micronesian Conservation Trust has recently approved funding to hire a community member to be trained by the Volunteer to continue these community efforts.

Youth

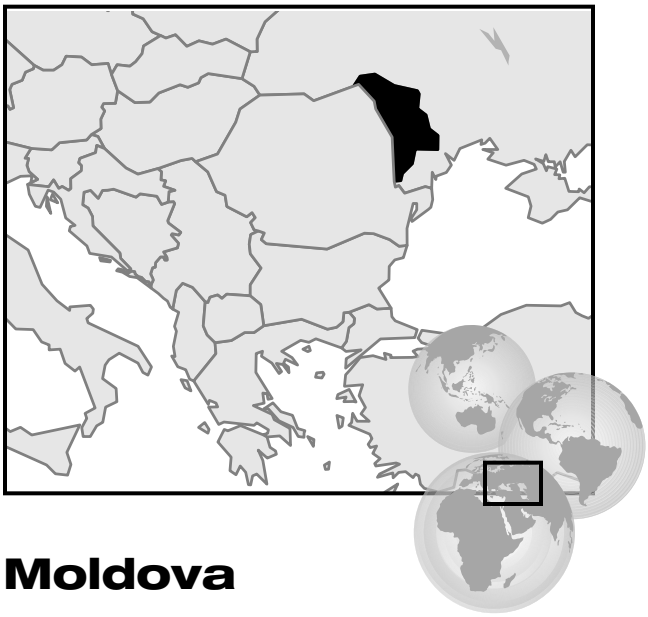
There are limited opportunities for youth in FSM and Palau. This has caused increasing problems with substance abuse, alcoholism, violence, suicide, obesity (leading to heart disease and diabetes), and teen pregnancy. The Peace Corps' youth project creates meaningful activities and opportunities for youth to establish healthy lifestyles and increase their participation in social and economic opportunities. They also help youth to take pride in their culture and traditions and promote community membership.

Volunteers work with youth group leaders, teachers, traditional community elders, local NGOs, government agencies, and families to promote self-esteem and encourage youth to continue their education. Many schools in FSM/Palau have limited resources and under-trained teachers. Volunteers work with teachers to enhance literacy and improve teaching methods by establishing school libraries and developing new curricula.

One Volunteer in Palau worked with her community to establish a community youth center. She helped her community expand a once-a-year softball tournament into a year-round league of more than six men's and four women's teams. Many Volunteers lead summer camps to keep students active during school breaks. Volunteers also coach community members on small business ideas. One Volunteer in FSM helped women in her community obtain funding to purchase a sewing machine so they could export local skirts they design to Guam. In April 2004, the government of Yap State in FSM cut short the school year due to damages from typhoon Sudal. In response, Volunteers organized "Camp SOS," where elementary school students participated in arts and crafts projects, environmental clean-ups, and sports activities.

"Only after a few months of incorporating the various sporting activities (i.e., softball league and aerobics) in their daily activities, a number of women have enthusiastically shared their weight loss success with me. This in itself is an accomplishment, as obesity-related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease are a major health crisis in the community."

Palau Volunteer
Youth Sector



Moldova

Capital ..... Chisinau

Population ..... 4 million

Annual per capita income $460

GDP growth 7.6%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: <0.5%
Female: 1%

Infant mortality rate ..... 27 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 97%
Measles: 94%

Foreign direct investment ..... $111 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 97%
Rural: 88%

HIV/AIDS infection rate: 0.20%

Religions ..... Eastern Orthodoxy: 98%
Judaism

Official language ..... Romanian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	157	149
Program funds ($000)	2,518	2,380

Country Overview

Program dates	1993–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Education Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Moldova is currently the poorest nation in Europe, though it started out its independence as a middle-income country. It has also become one of the region's most heavily indebted countries, especially to Russia. Moldova elected a Communist Party majority to parliament in February 2001, in part as a response to the difficulties people faced in a transitional economy. Though a significant reform agenda remains to be implemented, the government has stabilized the economy, launched some structural reforms, and begun the process of establishing an effective social protection system. Separatist forces in the Transnistrian region, along the Ukraine border, have prevented the government from exercising full control over its territory, exacerbating the difficulties in establishing a secure economy. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with the support of the U.S. embassy in Moldova, is seeking a solution to this conflict. In autumn 2003, President Vladimir Voronin publicly expressed the desire to move toward accession into the European Union (EU). However, to make progress toward EU membership, the Transnistrian issue must be resolved. Moldova will hold parliamentary elections in 2005 and this new parliament will select the president for the next five years.

Program Focus

The Moldovan government is concerned that a lack of English proficiency among its people will inhibit cultural and economic contact with the West. The educational system critically needs qualified English teachers as well as resources and instructional materials. Moldova also recognizes a need to focus on preventive health. However, there are no institutions to train health educators and basic health-care services have deteriorated considerably in recent years. Peace Corps Volunteers are addressing these issues with efforts in agriculture, education, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth. Volunteers also work in areas such as creating resource or information technology centers; leading sports

activities, summer camps, and model United Nations programs; and combating human trafficking.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Volunteers work with farmer-support organizations and individual farmers to increase incomes by developing information dissemination channels, consulting and training centers, and networking and marketing opportunities. Volunteers assist nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with strategic planning, development, and organizational management. They provide training in basic farm management and financial analysis and work with farmers and service providers to enhance computer literacy and Internet capabilities. One Volunteer worked with his community to renovate and restock fishponds. The fishponds are now providing valuable income to the farmers operating the pond, income to the municipal government through the leasing of the pond, and an inexpensive source of high-quality protein to the community.

Education

Volunteers teach at the primary, secondary, and university levels, Volunteers use English-language classes to improve student abilities in critical thinking, decision-making, teamwork, and problem-solving. Volunteers also work with Moldovan teachers of English through peer-training workshops on topics such as communicative methodologies, American civilization studies, current social and cultural issues, and environmental awareness education. Volunteers actively promote the use of information and communication technologies inside and outside the classroom. One Volunteer established a series of teacher-training seminars that are being conducted throughout Moldova using the network of partners working with Peace Corps to identify participants. For many of the teachers attending these seminars, it is their only access to technical training and skills enhancement.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Each Volunteer works with two partner agencies, a school and a health-care provider, to promote health education in Moldova. In school, Volunteers co-teach health education classes to more than 30,000 students for a minimum of eight hours per week. They also work intensively with students to create and develop peer education activities focused on HIV/AIDS prevention and substance abuse. Volunteers have initiated numerous projects with their health-care provider partners, including two nationwide projects addressing breast cancer awareness and education promoting nonviolence. Volunteers developed a life-skills teaching curriculum, in Moldovan, that was adopted by the Moldovan Ministry of Education as a part of the new national curriculum.

Youth

Volunteers in the economic and organizational development project work with NGOs, local governments, and social services agencies. They target community-based organizations that promote sustainable community development, especially in the social welfare field, with activities focused on children and youth. Volunteers assisted more than 6,500 individuals and worked with almost 400 service providers in 60 communities. A Volunteer working with hearing-impaired youth brought a group of her students to the national Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) camp. It was the first time a hearing-impaired group had participated in a national camp with hearing children.

"When I was considering whether or not to join Peace Corps, I asked myself, 'When I am 75 years old and reviewing what I have done with my life, how will I feel if I had the opportunity to join Peace Corps but did not?' That thought solidified my decision, I had to join."

Moldova Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

Mongolia

Capital ..... Ulaanbaatar

Population ..... 2 million

Annual per capita income $430

GDP growth 4.0%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 2%
Female: 2%

Infant mortality rate ..... 58 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 98%
Measles: 98%

Foreign direct investment ..... $78 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 77%
Rural: 30%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions ..... Tibetan Buddhist Lamaism: 94%
Islam: 6%
Shamanism

Official language ..... Halh Mongolian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	86	97
Program funds ($000)	1,820	1,872

Country Overview

Program dates	1991–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

Beginning in the late 1980s, Mongolia committed itself to democratization and a free-market economy. While this commitment has remained firm and the transition peaceful, economic and societal changes have severe stressed economic, social welfare, and education systems. Although English-language acquisition is of primary importance to citizens and the government, most rural schools do not have enough qualified teachers and resources. Textbooks at universities are outdated, reflecting Soviet-style economics. The health system faces challenges as it moves from a focus on Soviet-style curative treatment to a more modern, preventive approach.

During the transition to a free-market economy, many people have had to rely on natural resources like animals and forests to sustain a small livelihood. The resulting damage to the environment has been severe. Deforestation and encroaching desertification are leaving future generations with dwindling sources of income.

Program Focus

The people of Mongolia want to direct their own transition and advancement and consider the Peace Corps' approach—which emphasizes capacity building of local people—as fitting with the country's own approach to development. Volunteers provide assistance to organizations whose staff lack needed technical skills or knowledge. The program began with TEFL Volunteers in 1991 and expanded to include Volunteers working in environmental, health, and small business development sectors.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers assist the government with Mongolia's economic transition several ways. They build the capacity of nongovernmental organization (NGO) directors, help small business owners plan strate-

gically, develop information technology resources, and teach business management techniques and principles. Volunteers train rural Mongolians in customer service, strategic planning, operational systems, accounting practices, marketing, and proposal writing. They have helped establish computer resource centers and trained students and community members in computer and Internet usage. Volunteers teach business English, and they have organized seminars on networking, international relations, and how to plan for the future. One Volunteer is helping rural people transition from being nomadic livestock herders to semi-settled cooperative members with business plans and partnerships. The Volunteer has also helped with loan facilitation, which has provided the capital for the people to implement their business ideas.

Education

Education is at the forefront of the government's national agenda, and it has chosen English as the primary foreign language of study. Consequently, education Volunteers focus on either teaching English to students or English teacher training. Volunteers teach methodology, lesson planning, grammar, and communication skills as co-teachers in the classroom, as well as in individual sessions and in large workshops for the education community. Several also co-teach computer, economics, and health classes. The education project has a strong community development component. Volunteers engage in additional activities during schools' summer and holiday breaks. They also help co-workers create life-skills, ecology, debate, technology, and drama clubs for students after school. Volunteers have written teacher-training manuals, curricula guidebooks, a resource book to develop visual aids, and a classroom management handbook

Environment

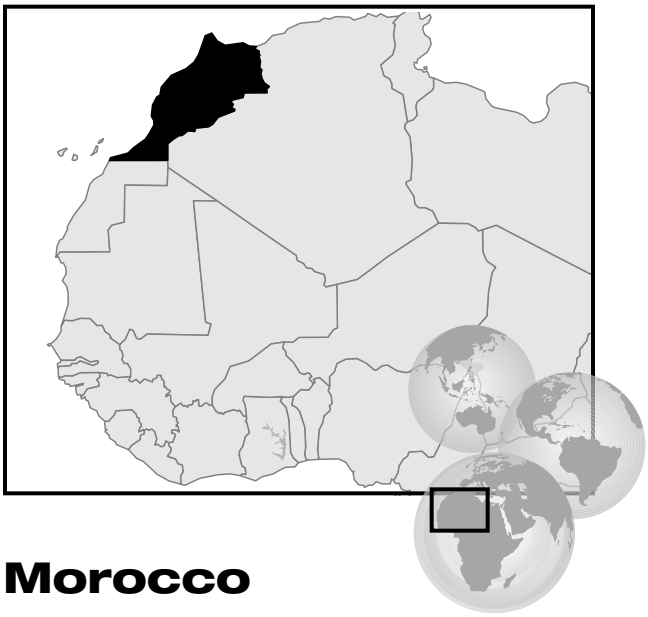
Environmental education is the primary focus of Volunteers' work in this sector. They promote environmental conservation in community development activities and support the expansion of the ecology curriculum in secondary schools. Eight of the 14 special protected areas offices in Mongolia have benefited from Volunteers' presentations and training on deforestation, wildlife surveying, desertification, alternative income generation and ecotourism development, as well as English language skills and computer and Internet training. Volunteers have written and published ecology curricula for students and teachers, including an "ecology theater" curriculum that was translated into Mongolian. They have also created books that identify endangered bird species in three regions of the country; brochures and media campaigns that promote ecotourism and public awareness of environmental issues; and a chapter in a life skills manual—in English and Mongolian—that covers environmental activities.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The community-based health project focuses on training health professionals and educating students and community members on disease prevention and public health topics. Health Volunteers placed at health departments and NGOs promote public awareness of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, which are on the rise in Mongolia's young and underemployed population. Volunteers have been instrumental in designing and implementing health education outreach activities. Projects have including working with the Red Cross in the training of trainers in First Aid/CPR, assisting with an NGO's teen counseling hotline, and promoting campaigns sponsored by the Public Health Institute-Nutrition Research Center to improve the Mongolian diet. Two Volunteers and their counterparts organized and facilitated a province-wide seminar for health professionals on the control and prevention of chronic diseases. Volunteers have provided life skills training for secondary school students, teachers, and staff; and they are developing a chapter on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health for a life skills manual.

Youth

According to United Nations Development Programme statistics, half of the Mongolian population is under 23; 38 percent under 16. In response to these numbers, Peace Corps/Mongolia is planning a youth development project that will be launched in September 2005. Volunteers will work with school social workers and teachers, staff from children's centers in the provinces, youth-focused NGOs, and the Mongolian Scout Association to provide training in life skills and to form youth clubs and camps.



Morocco

Capital ..... Rabat

Population ..... 30 million

Annual per capita income $1,170

GDP growth 3.2%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 37%
Female: 62%

Infant mortality rate ..... 39 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 94%
Measles: 96%

Foreign direct investment ..... $428 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 98%
Rural: 56%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.10%

Religions ..... Islam: 99%
Christianity, Judaism

Official language ..... Arabic

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	198	186
Program funds ($000)	3,382	3,559

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–1991 1991–2003 2003–present
Program sectors	Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

In 1999 King Mohammed VI assumed the throne after the death of his father, who had ruled for 38 years. Gradual political reforms in the 1990s led to establishment of a bicameral legislature. The king presides over the parliament, the judiciary, the military and the country's religious leaders. Morocco annexed the Western Sahara in the late 1970s. The status of the territory remains unresolved.

By enhancing tourism, Morocco hopes to attract 10 million tourists by 2010, which will, in turn, support small businesses and reduce unemployment. Until then, the government aims to produce quality crafts and to market and export products made by artisans. The kingdom has moved firmly into the reformist, liberalizing camp in the Islamic-Arab world, just as it has lately adopted a new family law. The approved law, which is considered "revolutionary" in the Arab and Muslim world, promotes women's rights and puts wives on a more equal footing with their husbands.

Morocco faces issues typical to developing countries. These include restraining government spending, reducing constraints on private activity and foreign trade, and achieving sustainable economic growth. The country remains vulnerable to drought, as rainfall is key to the performance of the agriculture-dominant economy. Financial reforms have been implemented, but long-term challenges remain, such as servicing the debt, improving trade relations with the European Union, increasing education and job prospects for youth, and attracting foreign investment.

Program Focus

Almost one out of four Moroccans in rural areas is poor, compared with one out of 10 in urban areas. Literacy rates are low in rural areas, particularly among girls. Maternal and child health is still a major concern as maternal and infant mortality rates are quite high. While sexually transmitted diseases are widespread, reports of HIV cases remain unrealistically low.

Climatic swings hamper harvests, while drainage of wetlands, deforestation of public areas, and erosion in national parks present continuing challenges. High unemployment and low wages have limited opportunities for entrepreneurs to access capital, putting them at a disadvantage in a rapidly evolving global economy. To help address these concerns, Peace Corps Volunteers are assigned to projects in business development, the environment, health and HIV/AIDS, and youth.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers assist artisan communities by designing sessions on management and computer skills and offering consulting services. One Volunteer trained local artisans in new techniques for stained glass and glass painting that the Ministry of Artisanat will introduce in its curriculum for national artisans' training centers. Another Volunteer organized a traditional weaving workshop to train 20 girls. To enhance crafts exportation, particularly with the newly signed U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement, one Volunteer is creating a CD-ROM catalog of local products with local artisans to promote their work to U.S. importers.

Environment

The environment project seeks to reinforce the Moroccan government's conservation initiatives and help rural populations achieve a higher standard of living. Volunteers have worked with government representatives, youth groups, and environmental interest groups. They have also worked with new local associations to promote income-generating activities such as ecotourism projects. Volunteers have established small community- or school-based tree nurseries and planted tree seedlings, and they have been involved in projects to control erosion and prevent water supply contamination.

Volunteers have co-facilitated workshops to identify topics on environmental awareness and methods to limit desertification in three provinces, and they have helped with the planning and implementation of tree-planting drives for income-generation and soil stabilization. One project involving seven new local associations resulted in the distribution of 12,000 olive, apple, cherry, and plum trees to 350 local families.

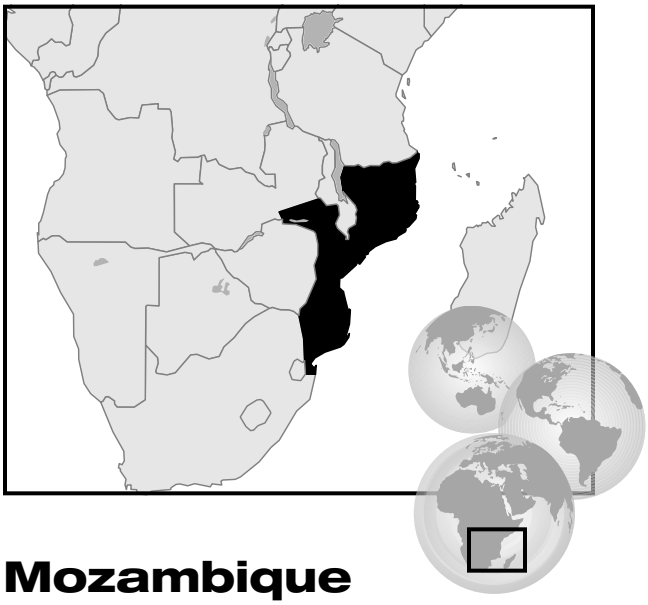
Health and HIV/AIDS

Morocco's high infant mortality rate reflects adverse living conditions associated with poor water quality and inadequate sanitation facilities. A major component of Volunteers' projects is health education focusing on maternal and child health and safe water. Volunteers have collaborated with the government in increasing community access to health services and assisted in educational activities during local vaccination drives conducted by health officials. Volunteers and their Moroccan counterparts developed informal health and hygiene lessons and activities for school-age children outside of school hours. Health Volunteers, in collaboration with youth development Volunteers, organized HIV/AIDS awareness activities in youth centers, high schools, and health clinics.

Youth

One-third of Moroccans are 15 years old and younger. Volunteers encourage youth to attend citizenship and leadership-building activities. Volunteers teach English at local youth centers and help implement extracurricular activities, such as managing sports teams, youth mentoring, and teaching computer skills. The Ministry of Youth has made educating girls a priority, so Volunteers, their supervisors, and other community members are addressing the needs of local girls. Volunteers work with teachers, women's centers, and parent-teacher associations.

In 2004, 18 Volunteers helped develop the curriculum for an English language summer camp for 100 high school students at the request of the Ministry in Charge of Youth. The Volunteers also co-led cultural, educational and leisure activities. The camp created a fun, friendly environment that motivated the young campers to speak English. Additionally, it helped promote leadership skills, encourage environmental awareness, and provide health education. The camp also provided cross-cultural interaction and an ideas exchange between the campers and Volunteers. The camp will serve as a model for language camps in 2005.



Mozambique

Capital ..... Maputo

Population ..... 18 million

Annual per capita income $200

GDP growth 7.7%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 38%
Female: 69%

Infant mortality rate ..... 128 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 60%
Measles: 58%

Foreign direct investment ..... $406 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 81%
Rural: 41%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 13.00%

Religions ..... Indigenous and other beliefs: 45%
Christianity: 30%
Islam: 17%

Official language ..... Portuguese

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	87	88
Program funds ($000)	2,227	2,283

Country Overview

Program dates	1998–present
Program sector	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Since its first democratic elections in 1994, the government of Mozambique has encouraged development and a free-market economy by privatizing former state-owned enterprises, respecting freedom of the press, and promoting the development of an active civil society. In 1999, President Joaquim Chissano was reelected in the country's second general elections, with a slight parliamentary majority for his party, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO). In 2003, municipal elections were held in 33 selected districts and cities for the third time. President Chissano did not run in the presidential elections in December 2004, and he was succeeded by FRELIMO candidate Armando Guebuza, who won the popular vote.

Despite impressive political achievements since gaining independence in 1975, Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 171 of 177 on the 2004 United Nations Human Development Index. However, the country is beginning to exploit the economic potential of its sizable agricultural, hydropower, and transportation resources. Improvements positively impacting the economy include the hook-up of secondary urban centers throughout the country to the powergrid of the hydroelectric dam of Cahora Bassa, the construction of a natural gas pipeline to South Africa, the restoration of three major sugar cane processing factories, and the investment in rare mineral mining.

Due to widespread poverty, poor infrastructure, a dispersed population, low education levels, and the growing threat of HIV/AIDS, the health status of Mozambicans is among the lowest in the world. Treatable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhea, and respiratory infections are the most common causes of premature deaths, particularly of children and infants.

Program Focus

In 1998, the Peace Corps began a program in Mozambique to assist the government in its plans for English language teaching. Peace Corps/Mozambique collaborates with the Ministry of Education to provide in-service opportunities for TEFL teachers,

produce low-cost materials from local resources, and facilitate projects that link schools and communities. The Peace Corps program expanded in 2004 to include work in the health sector. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Volunteers provide quality English and science instruction to students in secondary and technical schools. They also support Mozambican teachers in expanding their teaching methodologies, improving their English communication skills, developing educational materials, and completing certification responsibilities for the national in-service training program. A group of education Volunteers is preparing Mozambican primary school teachers to introduce English in the sixth grade as a part of a major curriculum overhaul. Volunteers also promote education outside the classroom with activities such as tutoring, coaching, organizing school libraries, and directing theater productions. In addition to their primary assignments, Volunteers are trained to be advocates and educators for HIV/AIDS prevention.

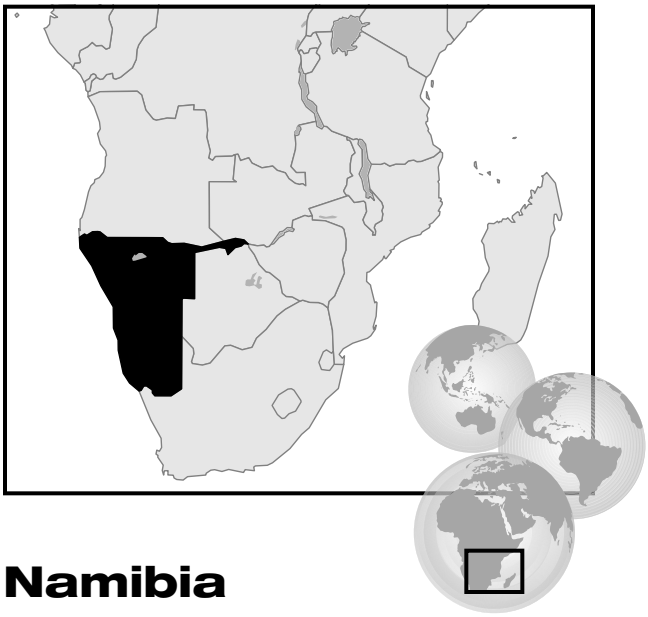
Two Volunteer biology teachers successfully organized the second annual regional science fair for students from eight schools in central provinces of Mozambique. Twenty-one students, selected as the best of their own schools, presented scientific experiments in biology, chemistry, and physics. The students' enthusiasm was evident as they presented their theories and it shows how well Volunteer teachers motivate their students to investigate and explore the topics. The students were highly motivated but also concise in their presentation of basic materials that were transformed into tools of a scientific project.

Health and HIV/AIDS

In April 2004, Peace Corps/Mozambique received its first group of health Volunteers. This development was highly welcomed by the National AIDS Council and the numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are working diligently to improve the health status of Mozambicans. Volunteers are assigned as HIV/AIDS community and institutional development workers to seven different international NGOs recognized by the Ministry of Health for their interventions in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"Students in my biology classes wanted to be a part of something new. I gave them sessions about speaking with their peers about HIV, the facts about who has HIV, what HIV and AIDS are, as well as many more related topics. These students are using their influence to spread the message and create that small change in people ready to receive the message which ends up making a big difference."

Mozambique Volunteer
Education Sector



Namibia

Capital ..... Windhoek

Population ..... 2 million

Annual per capita income $1,790

GDP growth 2.7%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 16%
Female: 17%

Infant mortality rate ..... 55 per 1,000 births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 77%
Measles: 68%

Foreign direct investment ..... Not available

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 100%
Rural: 67%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 22.50%

Religions ..... Christianity
Indigenous beliefs

Official language ..... English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	78	78
Program funds ($000)	2,665	2,684

Country Overview

Program dates	1990–present
Program sectors	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Since becoming independent in 1990, Namibia has emerged as a model by establishing political and economic frameworks that give it one of the freest and most open economies in Africa. Namibians are encouraged to participate fully in shaping laws and government policies. Especially noteworthy has been the country's ability to make significant social investments, including making education funding a top government priority. Namibia has set a model for advancing the rule of law and encouraging the growth of civil society.

The country had its first change of top political leadership since independence when Mr. Hisikepunwe Pohamba was elected president in November 2004. This election was a major test of the political institutions that have been built since 1990.

Mining, agriculture, and fishing account for more than 25 percent of GDP. Namibia's mineral resources include diamonds, uranium, copper, lead, zinc, and a variety of semiprecious stones. These industries, however, are very susceptible to external influences, so their contribution to GDP fluctuates. The apartheid system of job allocation and education continues to influence employment in these sectors, with the highest unemployment rates occurring among the least educated and skilled. The overall unemployment rate exceeds 30 percent. People residing in urban areas, including many migrant workers, have adopted Western ways; however, in rural areas, traditional society remains intact.

Program Focus

Immediately after Namibia's independence in 1990, the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture began to reform the educational system. The first group of Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Namibia less than six months after independence and have made substantial contributions to that reform. Currently, most Peace Corps/Namibia projects still collaborate with the education ministry, and the education sector is likely to continue to be the major platform from which the Peace Corps launches broader contributions to Namibia's development.

A recent collaboration with the U.S. National Science Resources Center (a partnership between the National Academies and the Smithsonian) and the Namibian Ministry of Basic Education will aim to improve the teaching of science. This pilot project to explore curriculum reform in primary and early secondary schools is being planned for future implementation.

Memoranda of understanding with the Ministry of Health and Social Services and with the National Planning Commission will continue to strengthen Peace Corps/Namibia's HIV/AIDS efforts. In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and USAID in Namibia, the initial project will directly support the ministry by providing community-level training in reproductive health, positive living, and home-based care. The project will provide more focused support to the ministry in the areas of HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, treatment, and care. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Peace Corps/Namibia has significantly contributed to education reform through teacher training; classroom teaching; and subject matter support for teachers, especially in science, mathematics, English, and information and communication technology. As an example, a Volunteer secured a donation of 100 computers through the Rotary Club to be placed in the northern schools.

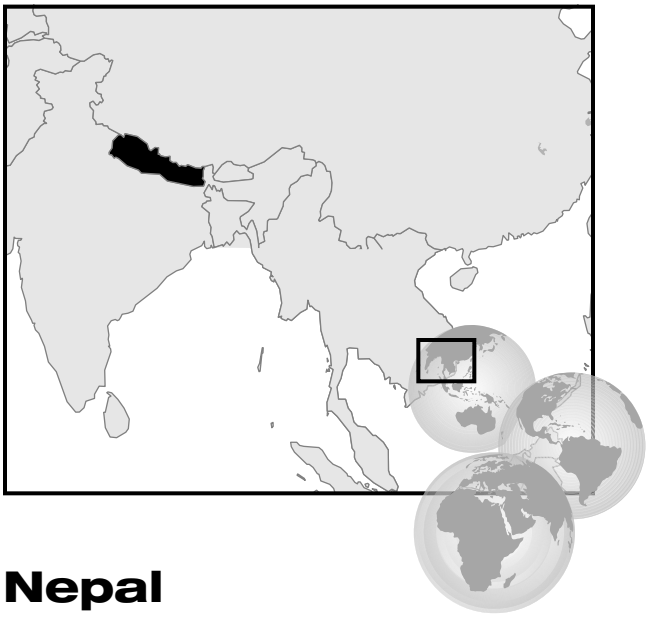
Another Volunteer secured donation of 3,000 books that will be categorized and distributed to school libraries throughout the country. Volunteers have also rigorously worked to increase parental and community involvement in education and, in some instances, have helped communities establish local school boards. Volunteers conduct workshops on classroom management and discipline and, at the grass-roots level, conduct home visits to explain student class assignments and solicit parental support for school-based activities. Volunteers also assist with community-based projects, such as planting gardens, promoting small business activities, and assisting women's sewing cooperatives.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers focus on capacity building at regional and school levels. They assist with establishing HIV/AIDS clubs and organizing HIV/AIDS dramas. They conduct HIV/AIDS workshops using both local and Volunteer-developed resources. As a result, regional personnel are more comfortable in accessing and using resources to prevent the further spread of HIV. Volunteers will begin working with the Ministry of Health to promote awareness of a new anti-retroviral treatment program, help build the capacity of the regional staff to use instructional technology, and build capacity of faith-based organizations to assist communities in developing HIV/AIDS action fora and strategies for prevention, care, and treatment.

"My Peace Corps experience was tough but I enjoyed every moment. I feel like I made a difference in the lives of the learners at my site."

Namibia Volunteer
Education Sector



Nepal

Capital ..... Kathmandu

Population ..... 24 million

Annual per capita income $230

GDP growth ..... -0.5%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 38%
Female: 74%

Infant Mortality Rate: ..... 62 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 72%
Measles: 71%

Foreign direct investment ..... $10 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 94%
Rural: 87%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.50%

Religions ..... Hinduism: 80.6%
Buddhism: 10.7%
Islam: 4.2%
Other: 4.2%

Official languages ..... Nepali
Gurung

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	0	0
Program funds ($000)	394	0

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present *(Suspended September 2004)*
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

The Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal is a landlocked, mountainous country that continues to face significant development challenges. The United Nations estimates that 42 percent of the population—about 9 million people—live in poverty, particularly in rural areas. The government's ability to commit significant resources to poverty-reduction activities has been severely compromised by its struggle to quell an ongoing insurgency by Nepali Maoists, who continue to wage their seven-year "people's war" against the government. All arable land is under cultivation and faces deteriorating soil productivity. Nepal also faces a lack of educational opportunities for its children, poor health facilities, deforestation, and soil erosion.

Ninety percent of the population is dependent on agriculture. Low per capita income; lack of capital, technology, and skills; the fragmented market; and the country's landlocked status have all impeded industrial development. Urban unemployment and underemployment, particularly in rural areas, remain high. Nepal's poor economic base and resources have made its economy overly dependent on other countries, particularly India, for the supply of capital, technology, raw materials, and consumer goods. Consequently, external forces exert much influence on the direction of Nepal's economy.

The Nepali government has experienced many changes of leadership, and the political situation remains unstable. King Gyanendra dissolved the House of Representatives in October 2002 and appointed the current nonparty government after the previous government failed to hold elections as scheduled. Almost all of Nepal's 75 districts have experienced some sort of violence because of the Maoist insurgency. Approximately 10,000 Nepalis have died in the conflict, including Maoists, members of the police and army, and civilians. Peace talks were held but were not successful.

In September 2004, due to the increased intensity of Maoist activities and a bombing at the American Center, the Peace Corps/Nepal program was suspended. In response to this development, there was an overwhelming outpouring of support and

expressions of appreciation and sadness from Nepali citizens, government agencies, and host agency partners. The Peace Corps has a very positive reputation in Nepal, and has built strong relationships during the 42 years it has been in-country.

Program Focus

In the last 42 years, more than 4,500 Americans have served as Volunteers with the Peace Corps in Nepal. In recent years, Volunteers' work has focused on the following program areas: education and teacher training, forestry, soil conservation, environmental conservation and education, national parks, water and sanitation, youth development, business development and income-generation, health education and nongovernmental organization (NGO) development.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

The small business development sector improves local capacities to plan, implement, and monitor business activities to generate income. Volunteers assist the executive staff and members of their NGOs and local women's groups with organizational development, management, marketing, and business-specific skills trainings. They achieve these objectives by creating websites, writing grant proposals for capital funding, and improving the management information systems of their assigned NGOs.

Education

Peace Corps/Nepal's overall commitment in this sector is to support girls' education and promote the quality of education for students from disadvantaged communities. Volunteers work as English language teacher trainers, English resource teachers, and science lab instructors. English language teacher trainers help upgrade the knowledge and skills of Nepali primary-level teachers in English language teaching methods. They promote sustainability and capacity building by working with local partners in designing and implementing curriculum, training, and follow-up support for teachers. Science lab instructors help set up and upgrade science labs. They train science teachers in lab safety, the use of lab equipment, how to integrate lab use into the science curriculum, and how to prepare and use locally available, low-cost or no-cost science teaching materials.

Environment

The natural resources project works in five major areas: soil conservation, community forestry, national parks, Institute of Forestry, and environmental conservation. Volunteers provide support to community groups on everything from soil conservation techniques to watershed, wildlife, and forestry management. They conduct trainings on income-generating activities (prioritizing women and disadvantaged groups), and they assist community groups in networking with each other and with relevant organizations and local bodies. They help staff in national parks develop wildlife databases, which is essential in promoting environmental conservation. Other Volunteers work with NGOs to raise conservation awareness in schools and communities.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The health sector supports government and NGO efforts to increase the access of Nepali communities to quality health education and information. Volunteers help health schools improve their nursing and medical training through classroom instruction and clinical supervision in hospitals and health posts. Other Volunteers assist with capacity building of NGOs by helping them with planning and management, and in establishing networks with other NGOs, government agencies, and international organizations to support health activities. Water and sanitation Volunteers help improve and strengthen communities' capacities to address personal, household, and community hygiene and environmental sanitation problems.

Youth

The youth development program provides programs and activities in life skills and job training, education, health (including drug use and HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness), and community service activities for youth at risk. The project provides programs and activities for youth living under difficult circumstances to enhance their employment opportunities and community involvement. Volunteers concentrate on strengthening local NGOs and community groups to improve the coordination and networking practices among these groups and government agencies. development, and health-related issues, such as drug abuse and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

Nicaragua

Capital	Managua
Population	5 million
Annual per capita income	$710
GDP growth	1.0%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 33% Female: 33%
Infant mortality rate	32 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 84% Measles: 98%
Foreign direct investment	$174 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 91% Rural: 59%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	0.20%
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 85%
Official language	Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	160	132
Program funds ($000)	2,613	2,452

Country Overview

Program dates	1968–1979 1991–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Nicaragua is a constitutional democracy with executive, legislative, judicial, and electoral branches of government. The president and members of the unicameral National Assembly are elected to concurrent five-year terms. Though the turbulent events of the past few decades have been reported widely, Nicaragua has become the newest democracy in the Americas. President Enrique Bolaños is only the third democratically elected president since the end of the Sandinista regime in 1990.

Nicaragua has soil, a climate, and an altitude suitable for the cultivation of a wide variety of crops and livestock. Its rivers, volcanoes, coastlines, and timber and mineral resources present impressive economic potential as well as a great challenge to sound environmental management. The country has also suffered from catastrophic natural disasters.

More than half of Nicaragua's population is underemployed or unemployed. Severe environmental degradation and flood damage from Hurricane Mitch have compromised the fragile food security of many rural areas. Limited access to health care and health education has led to a high rate of infant and maternal mortality. More than one-fourth of young women have their first child by age 19. Economic development is critically impaired by the limited availability of business education and poor access to credit.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps' program works to help Nicaraguans respond to the challenges of economic development and improve their quality of life through projects in four sectors: agriculture, business development, environment, and health and HIV/AIDS.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

The sustainable food security project focuses on improving the standard of living of rural farming families through improved agricultural techniques. Volunteers work closely with field technicians from the National Agricultural Technological Institute to help members of rural households develop skills in sustainable crop production, environmental protection, and integrated backyard management.

Volunteers have helped interested community members create 15 rural banks. These locally run banks encourage savings and teamwork and give the participants access to credit. Some have taken out small loans with the banks to initiate income-generating activities related to food processing and the marketing of marmalades, jellies, and fruit honeys.

Business Development

The small business development project focuses on the nation's youth, providing them with business and life skills that will enhance their capacity to gain meaningful employment and increase economic opportunities in their communities. Volunteers teach business enterprise development, primarily in secondary and vocational schools. In a creative business course given by Volunteers, students participate in all phases of business development, from product conception and selling of shares, to running the business, and finally its eventual closeout and paying off shareholders.

In 2004, two Volunteers organized a national competition on the creative business course. Thirteen primarily youth-owned micro-businesses participated in the daylong event. Prizes were awarded for three categories: best presentation of a business, best logo, and best product.

Environment

The environmental education project works directly with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECD). Peace Corps/Nicaragua and MECD created and published an environmental education guide for primary schools. Volunteers assigned to rural school districts work with at least three elementary schools in their district and use interactive, student-centered methods and community efforts to address local environmental concerns.

This year, a Volunteer helped the local youth ecological brigade organize a trash awareness campaign with local bus drivers. (Bus passengers are responsible for a significant amount of trash that accumulates on roadsides.) Bus drivers were responsible for directing passengers on appropriate trash disposal, playing a trash awareness-raising cassette, and to weigh the quantity of trash they collected on their trips. The bus driver who collected the most trash won a cash award.

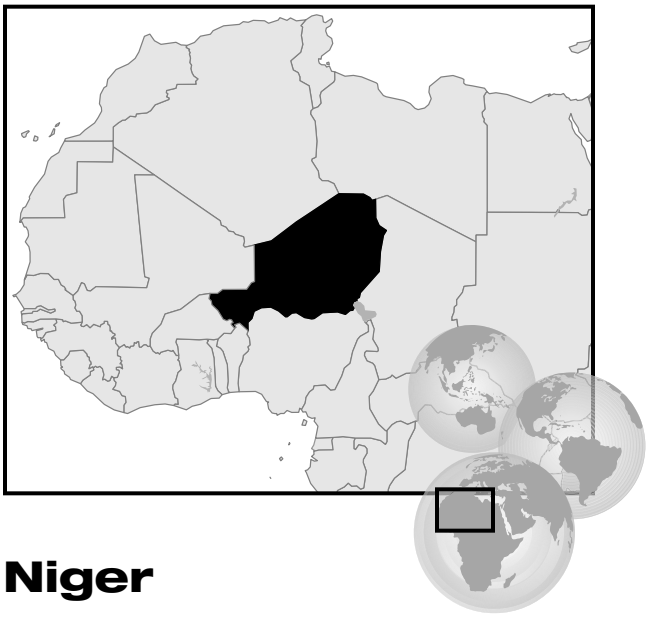
Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers teach community members basic prevention techniques that will help them avoid or diminish the effects of some devastating but controllable diseases. The preventive health education project works directly with the Ministry of Health and focuses on four primary areas: hygiene education, nutrition, adolescent health, and maternal and infant health. Volunteers also conduct HIV/AIDS prevention education.

With the assistance of local Ministry of Health specialists, Volunteers have designed and delivered a training series for community health workers. The educational sessions focused on increased knowledge of basic health issues and gender; participants were also taught nonformal education techniques. Follow-up was done with participants to see how they were implementing their new skills.

"The work of Volunteers is admirable; their tenacity and determination is contributing to Nicaragua's development via their skills and technology transfer. This will abound in the strengthening of capacities, values, and abilities in our communities and families, particularly for our youth."

Chancellor Norman Caldera Cardenal
Minister of Foreign Affairs



Niger

Capital ..... Niamey

Population ..... 11 million

Annual per capita income $180

GDP growth 3.0%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 75%
Female: 91%

Infant mortality rate ..... 155 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 23%
Measles: 48%

Foreign direct investment ..... $8 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 70%
Rural: 56%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 1.35%

Religions ..... Islam: 95%
Indigenous beliefs
Christianity

Official language ..... French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	108	131
Program funds ($000)	2,826	3,092

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

At independence in 1960, Niger became a constitutional democracy with an elected president and national assembly, but it was not until 1993 that the country held free and fair elections. A military coup occurred in 1996, but in late 1999, democratic elections were held again, renewing hopes for economic growth. The country has remained politically stable. The last round of elections were held in December 2004, and incumbent President Mamadou Tandja won a second term.

Niger remains one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 176 out of 177 on the 2004 United Nations Human Development Index. Natural impediments to growth include its landlocked position, its limited arable land, and the vulnerability to drought of its agriculturally based economy. These obstacles are compounded by a large population with a limited supply of skilled personnel, rapid population growth, intense exploitation of already fragile soils, and insufficient health services. Nearly 90 percent of Niger's population is vulnerable to malnutrition. The inability to produce, access, and use adequate quantities of food is the central concern for most Nigerien households as well as for the government of Niger.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps entered Niger in 1962 with seven Volunteers teaching English as a foreign language. Volunteers now work in agriculture, the environment, community development, youth, education, and health projects to help Nigerien communities attain household food security and to promote sustainable development. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Agricultural production is the number-one concern for Niger, a country with variable rainfall and predominantly sandy soils. The agriculture project, in conjunction with the Ministries of Planning,

Agricultural Development, and Animal Resources, helps develop local strategies to improve individual household food production, utilization, and acquisition systems. Volunteers work directly with farmers in their villages on issues such as water harvesting, crop rotation, soil fertility management, and improved animal husbandry.

Several Volunteers have worked with an NGO to train village-level animal health workers and provide vaccinations. Another Volunteer grew demonstration fields of improved varieties of millet and beans, and the results persuaded local farmers to try growing these crops.

Education

Peace Corps/Niger inaugurated new projects in community and youth education in June 2003. An initial group of 15 Volunteers is working to create regional English language centers, aimed primarily at adults who need English for their jobs or to gain employment. Others are conducting awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS and working with girls education, vocational training, and adult literacy.

Environment

In Niger, where food production is a primary concern, the environment and natural resources it supports are often exploited. Land degradation, the second highest population growth rate in the world, and diminishing natural resources (e.g., fuel wood) are critical problems. Poverty exacerbates these conditions, as most rural people must constantly weigh the choices of short-term resource use versus long-term protection and restoration of the landscape. Volunteers in the environment project implement land reclamation/anti-erosion activities, organize tree plantings/protection, and conduct environmental education and awareness sessions in schools and with rural youth.

One Volunteer organized her village youth to raise trees locally to be sold for profit with the income going into a savings system for the youth group. Another Volunteer has helped his community build a school, plant trees around it, and promote a native food tree with women in his community.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Niger suffers from one of the world's highest infant mortality rates. Roughly one-quarter of children under age five are malnourished. The primary strategy of the health project is to promote development of nutrition education skills and practices among mothers. Volunteers work to improve the nutrition of children and pregnant women in rural areas by educating mothers on how to improve their feeding and dietary practices. In a successful Guinea worm eradication project, Volunteers educate populations living in endemic zones by distributing fliers that provide important health information and by treating infested ponds. Peace Corps/Niger is also promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention on a region-wide basis through an annual AIDS bike ride that reaches several thousand people every year.

One Volunteer constructed a rural health clinic and selected an educated young man from the village to be trained and to serve as the village health agent. An initial stock of medicines and supplies was purchased with contributions from the villagers and assistance from outside sources, and a cost-recovery payment system was organized to ensure sustainability. The Volunteer also created a fund for maintenance and improvements to the center supported by consultation fees, as well as a "rent-to-own" impregnated mosquito net program.

Another Volunteer developed several effective PowerPoint presentations that trained other Volunteers and language teachers on HIV/AIDS education methods. The Volunteer also helped other Volunteers connect with international and local NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS activities.

"Coming to Niger is definitely a sensory overload. Everything is so new, the heat, the food, the smells, and sounds. The people in my village have become like family to me. And the work I have accomplished is so fufilling. I have gotten to work on a number of issues facing Niger including tree nurseries, gender development, and improved farming techniques. Being here has been an amazing experience!"

Niger Volunteer
Environment Sector

Panama

Capital	Panama City
Population	3 million
Annual per capita income	$4,020
GDP growth	0.8%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 7% Female: 8%
Infant mortality rate	19 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 89% Measles: 79%
Foreign direct investment	$57 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 99% Rural: 79%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Male: 1.5%
Religions	Roman Catholicism: 84% Protestantism: 15% Other: 1%
Official language	Spanish

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	147	119
Program funds ($000)	2,856	2,571

Country Overview

Program dates	1963–1971 1990–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Panama's history has been shaped by globalization and the ambitious dreams of Europeans and Americans. The achievements of the Canal and the construction of the glass and steel towers of Panama City obscure the reality that nearly 40 percent of Panamanians live in poverty. Rural Panamanians, and especially the indigenous groups, suffer from disturbing rates of poverty. Panama also is threatened by the second highest rate of HIV/AIDS incidence in Central America.

Panama's greatest resource—and its foundation for future success—is its environment, which is in peril. Poor management of natural resources has caused alarming rates of deforestation, erosion, and pollution. Panama's famed biological diversity is threatened as ecosystems, including coastal and marine systems, are degraded. As Panama looks to expand tourism and the Canal, these natural resources are more important than ever.

Program Focus

Peace Corps works in Panama's poorest rural and indigenous areas to identify, develop, and promote sustainable development projects. Peace Corps/Panama supports five programs: sustainable agriculture systems, environmental conservation, economic development, environmental health, and rural health. The combined effect of these programs leads to greater income generation opportunities, increased food security, more efficient use and conservation of natural resources, greater environmental stewardship and improved health and sanitation in Panama's poorest areas. Peace Corps/Panama works closely with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Environmental Authority, indigenous councils, and many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as development partners.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Traditionally, Panamanian agriculture has been based on "slash-and-burn" land-clearing techniques, causing extensive soil erosion and loss of habitat. The sustainable agriculture systems program works to preserve natural resources while increasing viable sources of income for farmers. Volunteers work with subsistence farmers to increase production using new agriculture methods and principles. Additionally, a greater emphasis is being placed on promoting small-scale agribusiness.

Volunteers have helped create integrated farm plans that have resulted in experimental vegetable plots, improved pasture grasses, increased production and sales of cacao, a coffee plant nursery, irrigation systems, and goat projects. One Volunteer helped to plant nearly 4,000 indigenous tree species saplings with a small NGO to promote intercropping of trees with traditional agricultural crops.

Business Development

The economic development project increases household and community incomes by supporting community cooperatives, community-based tourism initiatives, and youth and information technology initiatives. To further support youth development and employability, the program supports Junior Achievement programs in schools. Volunteers are helping to establish computer centers and training in schools and communities interested in increasing computer literacy to prepare youth for work in the information age. One Volunteer helped construct her community's first computer center, and she helped solicit funds for and donations of computers. She also helped the community build partnerships with a regional college to provide training on teaching methods and maintenance of systems. Another Volunteer has worked closely with an indigenous women's group to promote cultural and ecological tourism.

Environment

Environmental conservation Volunteers work to protect Panama's imperiled environment by working in and around priority protected areas, including the Panama Canal watershed. Volunteers promote appropriate technologies like lorena stoves that burn wood fuel more efficiently and reduce women's and children's exposure to harmful smoke. In 2004, Peace Corps helped train more than 100 agency and community leaders in the use of appropriate conservation technologies.

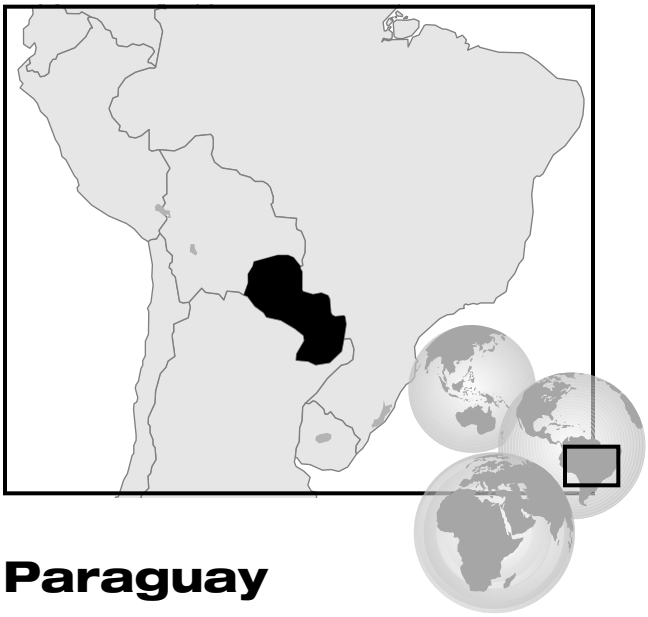
Volunteers also promote greater environmental stewardship in communities by supporting environmental youth groups. A group of Volunteers helped organize six weeks of summer camps, which focused on environmental awareness and life skills development and served more than 500 youth. Volunteers assigned to coastal areas and national park buffer zones play an important role in designing and implementing environmental conservation projects with their counterparts from the National Environmental Authority.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The environmental health and rural health programs address health and sanitation issues in the poorest indigenous communities. The environmental health program focuses on access to potable water, availability of proper sanitation services, and improving hygiene. Volunteers work with the Ministry of Health to develop action plans, design infrastructure, and identify needy communities. The rural health program, established in September 2004, works with the Ministry of Health to train indigenous health workers to improve nutrition, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS awareness. Both programs raise HIV/AIDS awareness through education and national youth conferences. One Volunteer in the environmental health program has helped construct aqueduct systems for three communities in partnership with the Ministry of Health, local water committees and U.S.-based NGOs.

"I'm trying to live a life that I will be proud of when I'm 80. That is why I am here with my husband, living in this small Embera community, working closely with the newly formed water committee to build the village's first aqueduct. Our work will truly make a difference."

Panama Volunteer
Environment Sector



Paraguay

Capital ..... Asunción

Population ..... 6 million

Annual per capita income $1,170

GDP growth ..... -2.3%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 7%
Female: 10%

Infant mortality rate ..... 26 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 77%
Measles: 82%

Foreign direct investment ..... $-22 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 93%
Rural: 59%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.11%

Religions ..... Roman Catholicism: 90%

Official languages ..... Spanish
Guaraní

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	188	172
Program funds ($000)	3,066	2,915

Country Overview

Program dates	1967–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

For the past decade, Paraguay has labored under serious economic challenges, aggravated by inadequate government policies. Though a new government administration, elected in August 2003, has begun tackling some of the country's problems. social and economic development will continue to be challenges into the future.

Paraguay has a predominantly agricultural economy and vast hydroelectric resources. Its main exports are soybeans, cotton, grains, cattle, timber, sugar, and electricity. Imports account for the vast majority of industrial products. The market economy contains a large informal sector that features both re-export of imported goods to neighboring countries as well as thousands of micro-enterprises and street vendors.

Limited access to land resources and economic opportunities have caused significant migration of the predominantly rural population to Paraguay's urban centers or neighboring countries. Extensive urban unemployment/underemployment are a pressing challenge for the government.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps/Paraguay opened in 1967. Since that time, more than 2,700 Volunteers have served in this country. To help address Paraguay's critical needs, Volunteers are assigned to projects in economic development, municipal services development, crop and beekeeping extension, early elementary education, environmental education, agroforestry extension, health and sanitation, and youth development.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Farming employs 45 percent of the labor force, but the country is experiencing a decrease in agricultural productivity as a result of soil erosion and

poor pest control practices. Crop and beekeeping extension Volunteers work with small-scale farmers to improve soils, diversify crops, seek new markets, improve people's nutritional status, and identify new income-generating activities. Projects promote horticulture and food crops for domestic consumption, both to reduce dependence on cotton as the single cash crop and to increase nutritional levels in the diet of Paraguayans. Volunteers have assisted farmers in procuring technical information and seeds for farm diversification efforts, provided orientation in planting new crops, and assisted farmers in organizing farmers' markets.

Business Development

Volunteers provide technical training and assistance to small business owners and rural agricultural cooperatives to increase incomes and job opportunities. They work with cooperatives to improve their administrative and organizational operations, management, accounting, and marketing skills. Volunteers help cooperatives diversify their services in credit, technical assistance to farmers, health and life insurance policies, home improvement and construction loans, and consumer clubs. Volunteers provide computer-training courses to cooperative employees, members, and their families.

As part of the municipal services project, Volunteers work with municipal governments to improve the planning and delivery of services to underserved communities. They also help municipalities modernize their data collection techniques and services through information technology. Volunteers work with neighborhood commissions to train them in project design and management and civic education.

Education

Volunteers train kindergarten through third grade teachers in new teaching techniques. They implement summer community education projects, assist families and schools in supporting children with special needs, and help school teachers and administrators promote gender equity in the classroom. Volunteers also work with community organizations, including health posts, municipalities, neighborhood commissions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), youth, and women's groups. Several Volunteers have been assigned to teacher training colleges to strengthen student teachers' skills.

Environment

Environmental degradation is dramatically increasing in Paraguay. Much of the deforestation, contamination, and inappropriate land use is due to lack of knowledge. Volunteers in the agroforestry project work to increase crop diversity on fragile deforested land while promoting resource sustainability. Volunteers in the environmental education project incorporate environmental education into schools' curricula and participate in village-based projects to support the Ministry of Education's reforms. One agroforestry Volunteer helped her community plant more than 150 trees as windbreaks, live fences, and field divisions. Volunteers helped increase soil production, worked with youth to demonstrate the benefits of trees, and created a community tree nursery.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Rural health and sanitation Volunteers work with Paraguay's National Environmental Sanitation Service. They focus on dental health education, parasite prevention, and nutrition education. They also help construct brick ovens, protect and decontaminate water sources, and construct and improve sanitary latrines. Volunteers work with the Ministry of Public Health to promote preventive health-care practices among nurses, parents, and community members. One Volunteer developed a two-day nutrition-training course for school directors and local leaders. The community requested she give a similar course to the broader community.

Youth

Urban youth development Volunteers live in marginal urban communities and work to form or strengthen youth groups associated with a variety of formal and nonformal institutions. Some Volunteers work with street children. By integrating life-skills education into various organized activities, Volunteers and local youth leaders help youth develop appropriate social and job skills and promote community service. When possible, Volunteers work to improve young people's employment prospects by teaching basic computer skills and a variety of skills that fortify their employability.

Peru

Capital ..... Lima

Population ..... 27 million

Annual per capita income $2,020

GDP growth 4.9%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 9%;
Female: 20%

Infant mortality rate ..... 30 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 89%
Measles: 95%

Foreign direct investment ..... $2,391 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 87%
Rural: 62%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.40%

Religions ..... Roman Catholicism: 90%

Official languages ..... Spanish
Quechua

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	139	150
Program funds ($000)	2,225	2,451

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–1975 2002–present
Program sectors	Business Development Health and HIV/AIDS Youth

In Peru, the national economic growth has been approximately 4 percent to 5 percent during the last two years, but the benefits of this economic growth are not felt in rural Peru. With 54 percent of the population living below the national poverty line, and 24 percent living in extreme poverty, the country faces significant development challenges. Peru is also plagued by severe underemployment, which is estimated at 43 percent. Large sectors of the population suffer from nutritional deficiencies, high infant mortality rates, and limited access to basic health services. Under the leadership of President Alejandro Toledo, the push for stronger regionalization is moving ahead with broad-based support.

Program Focus

Peru was one of the first countries to welcome Peace Corps Volunteers, who began working there in 1962. Volunteers worked in grass-roots development projects targeting health, agriculture, education and business development, until the program was closed in 1975. Returning in 2002 after a 28-year hiatus, Peace Corps/Peru is responding to the national development needs of strengthening civil society, reducing poverty, and building human capital. The program reopened with two projects in the areas of small business development and health. A new youth development program began in March 2004.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Peru suffers from an alarming rate of poverty and underemployment, particularly in rural areas. To address these critical issues, Volunteers help farmer associations, artisan associations, and small businesses improve incomes by enhancing links to urban markets, improving administrative and organizational operations, and strengthening management and accounting practices. In an enhanced

focus on information and communication technology, Volunteers are linking farmers, artisans, and small business owners to technology.

One business Volunteer worked with her weavers in developing new weaving designs. She assisted in their training in pricing, packaging, and general marketing. The weavers have since diversified their market to increase income.

Health and HIV/AIDS

In Peru, the gap between rural and urban health indicators is stark. Rural areas have much higher infant mortality rates, and chronic malnutrition approaches 50 percent. Volunteers promote preventive health-care practices and maternal and child care among health workers, families, community members, and local service providers. They focus on family health, nutrition, and hygiene in workshops, health education campaigns, and school lessons. Communication for social change is an area numerous health Volunteers have explored.

Hundreds of people have been reached by simple and effective health messages. For instance, one Volunteer hosts a weekly radio show that focuses on family health topics. A group of five health Volunteers travel to numerous communities to perform a presentation on dental care.

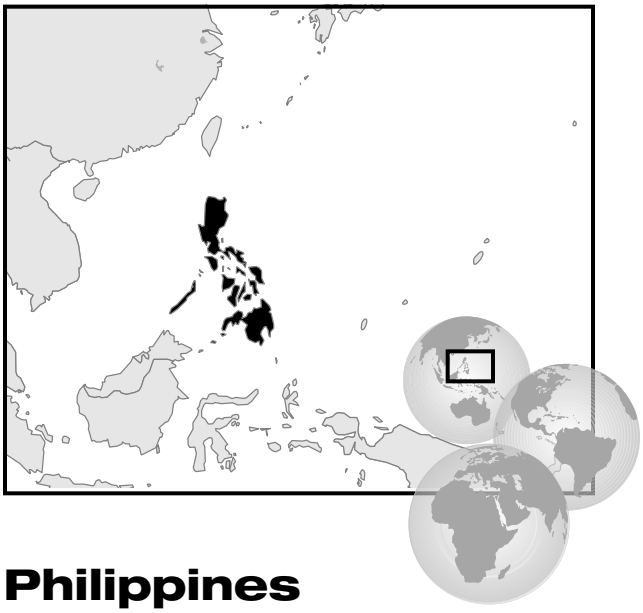
Youth

Children are the most vulnerable and unprotected citizens of Peru. Of the 3.8 million people living in extreme poverty, 2.1 million are children. More than 6.5 million of the 10.2 million youth live below the poverty line. Volunteers working in the youth development project address the multiple needs of youth, particularly groups in rural and peri-urban communities. Volunteers will work with youth to increase their capacity to overcome challenging life circumstances and become young adults who contribute to improving the quality of life for themselves, their families, and their communities. One Volunteer at an urban site has already begun to help counterparts deal more effectively with street kids. The Volunteer helps build street kids' self esteem and productivity through classes.

"As Volunteers, we are constantly being offered the best community members have to offer—whether it be the finest sugar cane juice or a *criollo* chicken egg, these gestures we can accept. But with that acceptance comes the responsibility to do our best and with this responsibility comes commitment. The dedication and passion that make up commitment are evident in the numerous meaningful conversations with staff, other Volunteers and community members alike. Giving the best of our learning, living and loving is the Peace Corps of the future."

Peru Volunteer
Business Development Sector

Peruvian sisters in local dress



Philippines

Capital ..... Manila

Population ..... 80 million

Annual per capita income $1,030

GDP growth 4.4%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 7%
Female: 7%

Infant mortality rate ..... 28 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 70%
Measles: 73%

Foreign direct investment ..... $1,111 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 91%
Rural: 79%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions ..... Roman Catholicism: 85%
Protestantism: 9%
Islam: 5%
Buddhist and other: 1%

Official languages ..... Filipino (based on Tagalog)
English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	108	141
Program funds ($000)	2,846	2,973

Country Overview

Program dates	1961–1990 1992–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment

The Republic of the Philippines is an archipelago of more than 7,000 islands and home to more than 85 million people. Filipinos are descendants of Indonesians and Malays who migrated to the islands hundreds of years ago. The Philippines has a representative democracy modeled on the U.S. system. Its constitution, adopted in 1987 during the administration of Corazon Aquino, reestablished a presidential system of government with a bicameral legislature and an independent judiciary. The president is limited to one six-year term.

The Filipino people face several challenges. Economic growth, while positive in recent years, has not performed at a level needed to provide for the population. While overseas workers continue to inject $6 billion into the economy annually, the country remains a weak economic performer. Rising crime and concerns about the security situation impact tourism and foreign investment. Although President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is pursuing peace talks with both Muslim separatist groups and Communist insurgents, the country continues to face threats from those groups. Consequently, the Philippines has had to devote increasing resources to quelling rebel group demands and activities, leaving fewer resources for development efforts.

As the Philippines continues to grow and become a center of international business, fluency in English has become an important skill for the workforce. Because of the country's close relationship with the United States, English is prevalent throughout the educational system and in the media, a competitive advantage that attracts foreign companies. A dramatic increase in students and cutbacks in funding for the education sector have led to a decrease in the quality of education over the past few years. In May 2004, newly elected President Arroyo committed her government to a 10-point national development agenda. Volunteers are addressing these areas through Peace Corps projects supporting livelihood development, business training, general education, information and communication technologies, improved management of natural resources, access to water, improved sanitation and solid waste management.

Program Focus

The program in the Philippines is the second oldest in the Peace Corps. It began with the arrival of 123 education Volunteers in October 1961. Since then, more than 8,000 Volunteers have served in the Philippines. In June 1990, the program was suspended because of a threat from Communist rebels; it resumed almost two years later. Over 43 years, the program has diversified into nearly all sectors of development, with projects in agriculture, forestry, small business management, the environment, conservation, health, urban and regional planning, water and sanitation, fisheries, youth, and education.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers assigned to this project focus their work on youth ages 10 to 25. They enhance youth's capacity to develop businesses by organizing classes on project planning, management, and leadership. They organize workshops to promote livelihood development for businesses such as engine repair, dressmaking, and handicrafts production. They provide consultation and advice on business plan development and finding sources of start-up funds. Volunteers working on alternative-livelihood projects have introduced activities such as raising free-range chickens and pigs, mud crab fattening and quilting.

Education

Volunteers in the basic education and technical assistance project work primarily with schools and school districts in activities designed to increase the English fluency, teaching skills, and effectiveness of Filipino teachers. Volunteers work with Filipino counterparts to plan, design, and implement content-based English curriculum in math, science, computer technology, and special education. In the community services component of the project, Volunteers mentor abused children and youth offenders. Volunteers have trained thousands of Filipino educators through workshops, seminars, and consultations.

Environment

A small island development and community-based conservation project promotes environmental education and protection of coastal and upland natural resources. The projects engage Volunteers and communities to reduce environmental degradation, introduce sustainable natural resource use, develop alternative livelihoods, improve water and sanitation, and encourage community participation in natural resource management. Volunteers introduce environmental education activities in schools and communities, encourage livelihood development, and promote natural resource management and environmental protection plans. Volunteers have helped an isolated school provide water to students by building a solar pumping system. One Volunteer assisted the local government unit develop an energy conservation program that will reduce energy costs by 30 percent.

"I have been a team leader, college professor, local government consultant, coach, author, translator, older sister, researcher, community worker, godmother, laborer, and cheerleader—and that's just this month! Navigating the various roles and working alongside my community has given me a sense of purpose toward the rehabilitation and protection of the coastal resources and the development of socio-economic progress...I am proud to represent the U.S. Peace Corps in [the] Philippines."

Philippines Volunteer
Environment Sector

Romania

Capital ..... Bucharest

Population ..... 22 million

Annual per capita income $1,870

GDP growth 4.3%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 2%
Female: 4%

Infant mortality rate ..... 19 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 99%
Measles: 98%

Foreign direct investment ..... $1,114 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 91%
Rural: 16%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... <0.10%

Religions ..... Romanian Orthodoxy: 86.8%
Roman Catholicism: 5%
Other Protestantism: 5%
Greek Catholicism: 1%
Judaism: 0.01%

Official language ..... Romanian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	131	134
Program funds ($000)	2,931	2,940

Country Overview

Program dates	1991–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Romania is politically stable and committed to institutionalizing civil liberties, human rights, freedom of the press, and other democratic principles. It has been working to join international institutions such as the European Union (EU) and NATO. NATO formally invited Romania to become a member at the Prague summit in November 2002, and Romania expects to join the EU in 2007. The country has recently taken significant measures to tackle needed reforms and is expected to continue on this path.

Romania has been transforming from a command to a market-based economy. In the years since the overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu's regime, small-scale privatization has moved forward swiftly, though large-scale privatization remains slow. Although macroeconomic performance has improved recently, Romania's failure to receive "functioning market economy" status implies that further structural adjustments are essential. Foreign investment and development aid are increasing, and Romania enjoyed an impressive GDP growth of 4.9 percent in 2003, continuing the trend from 2002. The country has great potential for future investment, with a well-trained workforce, vast natural resources, and opportunities for tourism. But with nearly 45 percent of the population living below the national poverty line and corruption at many levels of society, many challenges lie ahead.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps is meeting numerous development needs in Romania. All program sectors address the country's educational needs and aim at building local capacity and sustainability. As Romania looks to Europe for assistance, nongovernmental organization (NGO) and institutional development remains an important area of emphasis.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

The small business development project was established in 1993 to work with business advisory centers that were created as an initiative of the United Nations Development Programme. Over time, the project focus has shifted to encompass community economic development and local capacity building for sustainable development. All project-related activities are conducted with Romanian partner agencies. The project provides technical assistance in many different fields and works to foster entrepreneurial spirit to help Romanians find ways to increase their standard of living. Volunteers work with a broad range of community economic development organizations, including local and regional development agencies, educational institutions, and NGOs engaged in economic development. In 2004, Volunteers assisted over 3,000 individuals and 300 organizations in more than 100 communities.

Education

The English education project began in 1992 and addresses Romania's expressed need for improved English language instruction. Volunteers work directly with students and teachers to develop their English communication skills. In addition to classroom teaching and training, Volunteers organize and participate in a variety of summer activities, including drama courses and environmental, sports, and leadership camps. In 2004, Volunteers worked with more than 10,000 middle and secondary school students and 79 schools in 58 communities, teaching English, introducing American culture, and exchanging ideas on teaching methodology.

Environment

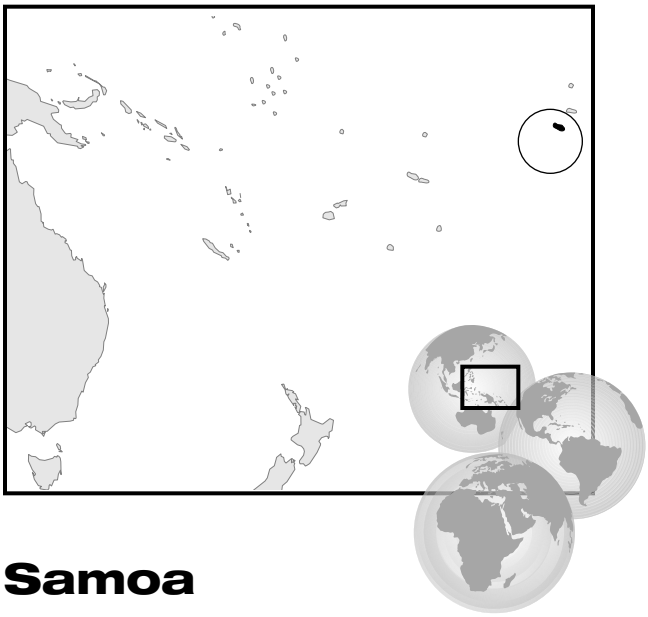
Romania's environment suffered considerably during the rapid, unregulated industrialization of the communist era. The environmental management and education project helps Romanian organizations address the challenges posed by the years of disregard for the environment. It also aims to develop an enhanced public awareness of responsible and sustainable environmental management that is compatible with economic development. Volunteers work primarily with environmental NGOs; however, collaboration with schools and governmental institutions is expanding to address sustainable development at the community level. In 2004, Volunteers assisted 1,580 individuals and 230 organizations, in 35 communities.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The institutional development project improves the quality and impact of services for youth and marginalized populations by establishing and strengthening local organizational capacity. Volunteers work in the areas of ethnicity and youth development and with organizations helping HIV-positive children, people with physical disabilities, orphaned or abandoned children, and the elderly. Currently, the central and local government cannot address the needs of these populations, so the nongovernmental sector, assisted by Peace Corps Volunteers, has committed its support. In 2004, these Volunteers assisted more than 2,500 people and 120 organizations in over 150 communities.

"The work of the Peace Corps has never been more critical than at this juncture in history. While the political tide of goodwill toward America ebbs across the globe, it is imperative that Volunteers be sent out to redeem our image with good works, to serve as role models for democracy, and to live out the faith in freedom that courses through our veins. Every Volunteer has a tremendous impact, from the completion of a much-needed project, to a chance encounter on the train that changes a life."

Romania Volunteer
Business Development Sector



Samoa

Capital.....Apia

Population 176,000

Annual per capita income $1,430

GDP growth 1.9%

Adult illiteracy rate.....0.3%

Infant mortality rate.....30 per 1,000 births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 93%
Measles: 92%

Foreign direct investment.....$1.2 million

Access to safe water 99%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 4%

Religions ..... Christianity: 99.7%

Official languages ..... Samoan
English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	48	43
Program funds ($000)	1,392	1,444

Country Overview

Program dates	1967–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

The modern history of Samoa began with the arrival of John William and his team from the London Missionary Society in 1830. To this day, Samoa's parliament is modeled after the British Westminster system. The country has a head of state and his appointment is for life. Members of the House of Representatives are elected by universal suffrage and serve a five-year team. In 1967, five years after independence and after experiencing a devastating cyclone, Samoa invited the Peace Corps to the country. The first Volunteers worked in rural villages leading health and hygiene projects for the Department of Health. While Volunteers have served in most sectors and departments, during the 35-plus year history of the Peace Corps in Samoa, the largest numbers have served in the Department of Education as classroom teachers and advisors.

Samoa's agriculture-based economy focuses primarily on crops such as cocoa, copra (dried coconut meat), and bananas. But new crops, such as kava and nonu, recognized for their medicinal value, have recently gained economic importance. The fishing industry has also become a significant part of the export economy in the past few years. The growing sector of tourism may soon replace all of the above areas in overall economic importance. However, Samoa continues to rely heavily on remittances from its citizens living and working overseas.

Program Focus

Peace Corps/Samoa works in two project areas that form the core of the Peace Corps' development assistance. The village-based development project addresses the needs of communities, especially in areas relating to project management and strategic planning. The project also encompasses agricultural training and environmental conservation. The capacity-building project recognizes the evolving role of Volunteers from classroom teachers to mentors in technical and professional areas, including information technology, early childhood and special-needs education, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) development.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers work with community members to develop strategic plans and prioritize project areas to improve their lives. Once projects are identified, the Volunteers conduct project design and management workshops that strengthen the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the community-developed projects. These workshops have led to two school renovation projects, several after-school homework centers and libraries, a creative arts class for young people, and income-generating community gardens. Several Volunteers have received donated computers for use in their communities that enable them to transfer business skills to people in rural villages. Peace Corps/Samoa is also working with Future Farmers projects and in the area of integrated coastal management. Volunteers are working with local agencies to strengthen their agricultural training delivery mechanisms for youth in rural communities and are also working with communities to better manage their environmental resources. One Volunteer worked with her counterpart to plan a project design and management training for two villages. As a result of the training, the communities developed a proposal for assistance in rebuilding their primary school.

Education

Today more than 25 percent of Volunteers serve either formally or informally in the area of information communication technology (ICT) by mentoring teachers and government officials and teaching computer skills to community youth and counterparts. These Volunteers enable future ICT specialists to make better decisions through technology and training. To support these activities, an advisory board with Samoan membership meets regularly to coordinate and leverage new resources. Two publications (Teacher's Resource Book for Introduction to Computer Studies and Text Introduction to Computer Studies) developed by Volunteers and their counterparts continue to be used in schools. One Volunteer is serving as a computer studies lecturer for the Samoa Polytechnic. He is able to offer short courses (four to six weeks) on several software packages, to community members and professionals from local organizations and ministries.

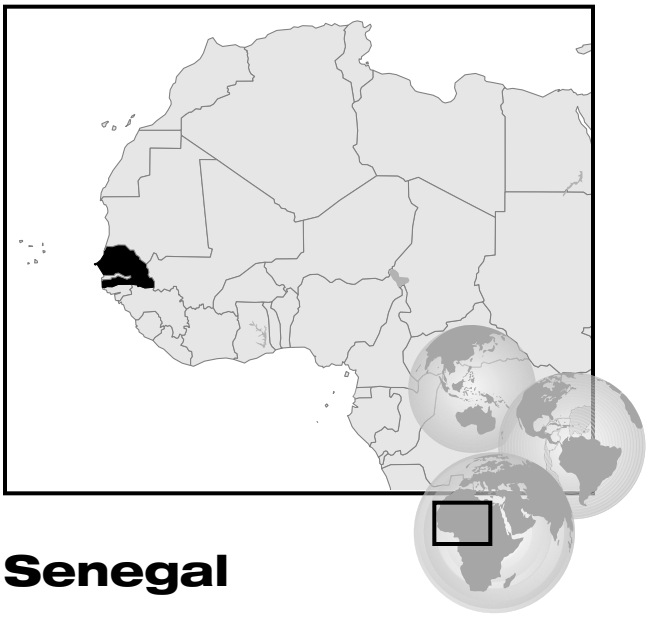
Volunteers with experience in special-needs education, such as autism, speech/language therapy, and art therapy, are working as teacher trainers for the Ministry of Education and the first "second chance" educational institution in Samoa. Volunteers assigned to the Ministry of Education have conducted workshops for special-needs teachers working at the primary and secondary levels. Additionally, Volunteers conduct island-wide surveys to identify special-needs students who could benefit from this program. Two Volunteers work with the Ministry of Education Sports & Culture to develop, coordinate and conduct workshops and trainings for special needs schools and teachers. They have also been instrumental in the development of a national sign language dictionary and curricula.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Fortunately, Samoa has very few HIV/AIDS cases. However, Volunteers work in their communities to promote health education by participating in trainings for health professionals on methods to control and prevent the spread of non-communicable diseases.

"The Peace Corps has made a significant contribution to Samoa over the many years of service and commitment. Volunteers exemplify the global village by becoming members of society—working and living with the people of their adopted countries. There are many Samoan families with Peace Corps sons and daughters of the United States. They remain part of their aiga and part of their village."

Dr. Emma Kruse Vaai
Academic Director, Samoa Polytechnic



Senegal

Capital.....Dakar

Population.....10 million

Annual per capita income $470

GDP growth 1.1%

Adult illiteracy rate..... Male: 51%
Female: 70%

Infant mortality rate..... 79 deaths per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate..... DPT: 60%
Measles: 54%

Foreign direct investment.....$93 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 92%
Rural: 65%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 0.50%

Religions ..... Islam: 95%
Christianity: 4%
Indigenous beliefs: 1%

Official language .....French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	140	159
Program funds ($000)	3,762	3,801

Country Overview

Program dates	1963–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Senegal has the distinction of being an African state that never experienced a coup d'état. Senegal has maintained a stable political climate, a free society, and viable democratic institutions. The government is committed to democracy, permits a flourishing independent media, oversees a generally tolerant socio-political culture free of exacerbated ethnic or religious tensions, and provides a resilient base for democratic politics.

Senegal is one of the world's least developed countries, ranking 157 out of 177 on the 2004 United Nations Human Development Index. Drought has recurred over three decades and agricultural production has declined. Rural out-migration to urban areas has increased rapidly; peanut production, historically the main agricultural export and basis of the economy, has greatly diminished. Desertification adversely impacts agriculture, further threatening the subsistence farm output of 70 percent of the population. In September 2004, locust swarms descended from the Sahara to affect Senegal and its neighbors. Agriculture now represents less than 20 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), reflecting continued decay of this once vital sector. The industrial sector, primarily agro-industrial and mining operations, accounts for about 20 percent of GDP. Fishing generates most foreign exchange earnings, followed by phosphate production and increasing tourism.

Program Focus

In 1963, the first Senegal Volunteers taught English, and the program evolved, providing a legacy of Volunteer contributions. Some 130 Volunteers currently serve in Senegal. Three quarters work in critically underserved rural areas, providing essential information to the poor on primary health care, environmental education, agriculture and environmental technology. Volunteers help individuals and communities sustainably address their priority development needs. All Volunteers promote HIV/AIDS awareness and girls' education in their assigned communities.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Volunteers work in sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, and improved crop production. They help communities and groups to improve soil fertility and production. They help farmers increase production through improved seed varieties and agricultural techniques, and train them in management and conservation techniques. Farmers' groups—and, increasingly, women's' groups—have produced bananas and cashews to generate additional revenue.

Volunteers recently started a new urban agriculture initiative. Their efforts are increasing producer incomes; building capacities in horticulture, animal husbandry, ornamental flower propagation, and tree nurseries; contributing to increased food security to combat malnutrition and alleviate poverty; and restoring the environment by recycling organic waste into useful products. Their work is increasing employment opportunities, especially for women, and generating income for poor families. The initiative incorporates knowledge and skills transfer in effective micro- and traditional gardening and waste recycling techniques.

In 2003, Volunteers introduced a fast-maturing bean variety to 148 farmers. Thrilled by the short growing cycle, which permits them to plant twice or more during the rainy season, farmers liked its taste and quality. In 2004, twice as many farmers planted the bean. Volunteers now emphasize crop protection, seed selection, and storage.

Business Development

Volunteers provide training and assistance in management, marketing, and finance. They promote business awareness and teach customer service, accounting, and marketing to entrepreneurs, groups and individuals. They work in traditionally underserved towns and villages, providing information to create business services. In larger towns, Volunteers work with business trainers to expand business services to poorer segments of the population.

With strong support from the Tourism Ministry and National Park Service, ecotourism Volunteers began service in December 2003. Placed near national parks and protected areas, these Volunteers advise tourism management committees and representatives from area villages. Volunteers help communities promote products and services and organize sessions on the risks and advantages of ecotourism, train guides, develop brochures and guidebooks, and provide business consulting to management committees to increase their ability to operate profitably.

Senegal is a Digital Freedom Initiative pilot nation. The Senegalese government, USAID, U.S. Department of Commerce, and private sector firms intend to increase business and grass-roots information technology capacity. Volunteers increasingly incorporate information technology as part of their activities.

Environment

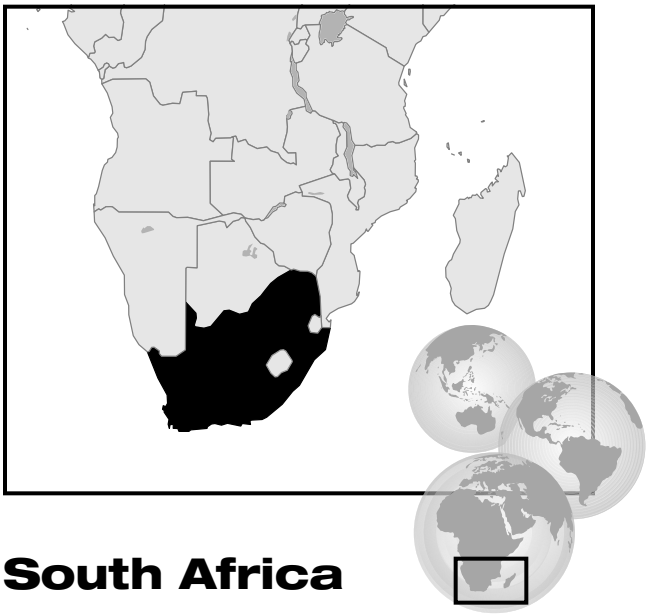
In rural communities with schools, Volunteers work with community leaders to increase awareness of human environmental impact. They help teachers design curricula to teach environmental lessons and work with students and community members to teach practical methods linked to classroom activities. Activities include tree planting for live fencing and community sanitation. Volunteers also promote youth clubs, organizing young community members in activities beneficial to their communities.

After several months working with a rural council to obtain title to two hectares of land, a community group, assisted by a Volunteer, fenced the land and obtained and planted 3,000 seedlings. Hundreds of villagers participated in planting. Soon after, the Minister of Youth visited the project and congratulated the village for their good work.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers educate people in primary health care, enabling them to avoid or treat common illnesses. Volunteers train community partners who train other members of the community, ultimately providing a sustainable base. Volunteers train Senegalese in disease prevention and HIV/AIDS awareness using informal education techniques, including art, music, and theater.

One Volunteer used cultural understanding to develop an original approach to tackle malnutrition. Realizing the important role grandparents occupy in Senegalese society, she trained grandmothers in healthy nutritional practices and breastfeeding and weaning techniques. Grandmothers now enthusiastically care for grandchildren and provide advice to their daughters. They lead sessions on proper nutrition and explain how to eat "well" on a meager budget.



South Africa

Capital ..... Pretoria

Population ..... 45 million

Annual per capita income $2,500

GDP growth 3.0%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 13%
Female: 15%

Infant mortality rate ..... 52 per 1,000 births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 82%
Measles: 78%

Foreign direct investment ..... $739 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 99%
Rural: 73%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 20.10%

Religions ..... Christianity, Indigenous beliefs
Islam, Hinduism, Judaism

Official languages ..... Afrikaans, English, Ndebele,
Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga,
Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	124	152
Program funds ($000)	3,276	3,431

Country Overview

Program dates	1997–present
Program sectors	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

South Africa celebrated its first decade of democracy in 2004. In the 10 years since the end of apartheid, South Africa has emerged as a leader on the African continent, with political, economic, and cultural ties around the world. The country's first democratically elected government achieved significant progress on issues of nation-building and reconciliation. South Africa's second president, Thabo Mbeki, spent his first term of office building the country's profile and standing internationally. Now, in his second term, President Mbeki is focusing on ensuring that government services have a direct impact on poverty.

South Africa has a productive and industrialized economy that paradoxically exhibits many characteristics associated with developing countries, including a division of labor between formal and informal sectors and uneven distribution of wealth and income. The formal sector, based on mining, manufacturing, electronics commerce, services, and agriculture, is well developed, but limited in reach. Current discourse and policy on economic issues focus on reconciling the country's "two economies" through the development and implementation of initiatives that achieve sustained economic growth while simultaneously redressing the socioeconomic disparities created by apartheid. Despite the nation's abundant wealth, half the population lives below the national poverty line and 30 percent are unemployed.

South Africa's constitution commits to establishing and maintaining a society that protects the human rights of all its citizens. However, the country continues to struggle with the legacy of apartheid and the challenge of achieving its full social and economic development potential. Developing human resources and tackling the specter of HIV/AIDS, which casts a shadow over all aspects of life, are two of the most pressing challenges the nation faces.

Program Focus

The government is committed to strengthening the educational system and is very supportive of the role of Peace Corps Volunteers. Volunteers

work side by side with district and circuit officials to instill a culture of learning and service as well as to ensure the delivery of quality education, based on a revised national curriculum, in schools and rural communities. The education project operates in predominantly black, rural primary schools.

The health and HIV/AIDS project started in 2001, and it focuses on developing the capacity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to better support community responses to the pandemic. South Africa has more people who are HIV positive than any other country in the world. Volunteers are able to play a significant role in developing the human and organizational capacity of NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) to make meaningful contributions to this pressing development issue. Recent policy changes and the advent of the President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) have created new space and new partnerships for Volunteers in this project.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Volunteers work with teachers and principals in nearly 340 rural primary schools and in more than 80 communities in the Limpopo, North West, and Mpumalanga provinces. Volunteers are reaching more than 100,000 students by working as school and community resources for clusters of three or four schools, each with 40 to 50 teachers. Volunteers are placed at the primary school level, where they facilitate workshops and help educators fully understand the country's revised curriculum. Their primary focus is English, math, science, and life skills. Additionally, Volunteers assist school management teams in implementing administrative practices that help schools develop into organizations that support learning. Volunteers also seek to creatively involve parents and community members in a mutually reinforcing relationship with schools.

As community resources, Volunteers are involved in a variety of other activities, such as HIV/AIDS education, computer training, income-generating projects, and youth development. Several Volunteers have worked with schools and communities to develop libraries and other resource centers, and they have worked with teachers to help them make use of these expanded resources.

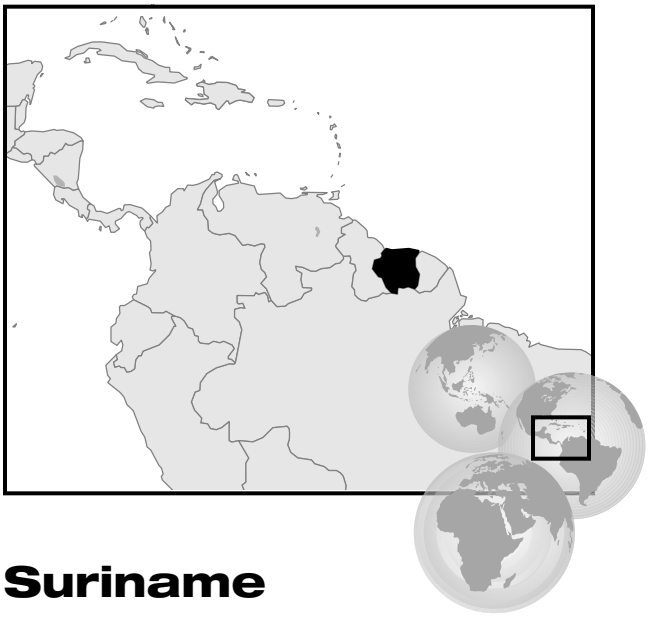
Health and HIV/AIDS

The South African government called on all organizations—local, national, and international—to join its Partnership Against AIDS at the end of 1998. The Peace Corps used this opportunity to expand its efforts to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and initiated an NGO capacity-building and HIV/AIDS integration project. In this project, Volunteers are placed with NGOs and CBOs to help them be more effective and sustainable while providing appropriate HIV/AIDS-related services to communities.

One Volunteer assigned to a home-based care agency spent time working directly with caregivers, providing technical training and supporting their ability to keep patient records. Another Volunteer worked with an NGO that provides counseling services to community members; she developed new training modules for counselors and worked with their supervisors to instill a more developmental approach to staff supervision. Other Volunteers support the development of planning, financial, and administrative systems and skills.

"I worked with people who are motivated and willing; they just needed some additional tools and encouragement and I was in the right place at the right time. As a young man, I was able to speak openly and honestly about sensitive issues with other young men—something that had been missing in my community's fight against HIV/AIDS."

South Africa Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector



Suriname

Capital.....Paramaribo

Population..... 433,000

Annual per capita income $1,940

GDP growth 3.0%

Adult illiteracy rate.....10%

Infant mortality rate.....27 per 1,000 births

Immunization rate..... DPT: 85%; Measles: 85%

Foreign direct investment..... -$66.8 million

Access to safe water 85.9%

HIV/AIDS prevalence ..... Not Available

Religions .....Hinduism
Islam
Christianity
Judaism
Baha'i

Official language ..... Dutch

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	40	33
Program funds ($000)	1,255	1,245

Country Overview

Program dates	1995–present
Program sector	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

After more than a decade of predominantly military rule, Suriname installed a freely elected Parliament and inaugurated a democratically chosen president in 1991. Most recently, in August 2000, the National Assembly elected Ronald Venetiaan as president for a five-year term. Suriname hopes to increase international investment to generate greater economic opportunities and employment. Its centralized system of government has traditionally focused on the capital of Paramaribo, generating a high sense of dependency among the indigenous and tribal peoples of Suriname's Amazon region.

Suriname is sparsely populated, with most of its inhabitants living in urban and semi-urban areas along the coastal zone. Approximately 33,000 Maroons and 7,000 Amerindians, the principal inhabitants of Suriname's interior, face many problems affecting their socioeconomic development.

Suriname's main exports are gold, bauxite, timber, fish, and bananas. Although it is politically stable, Suriname faces significant impediments to economic growth, including rising inflation and a devaluating currency. More than 85 percent of Surinamese live below the poverty line.

Program Focus

In 1995, the government of Suriname requested the Peace Corps' assistance in rural community development. Since that time, more than 230 Volunteers have served in Suriname. The Peace Corps provides assistance in the Amerindian and Maroon communities and in the coastal area. Working in the interior, Volunteers address issues such as community organizing, resources identification, project planning, income generation, health, and adult education. In the coastal areas, they focus on health-related issues (including HIV/AIDS) and strengthening local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In collaboration with governmental agencies and NGOs, the Peace Corps began a nonformal rural community education project in 2001, as the rural community development project ended. Working with the Ministry of Education, Volunteers now focus on nonformal education in rural areas.

Volunteer Focus

Education

The nonformal rural community education project improves the quality of life in rural communities by increasing educational opportunities and enabling communities to take responsibility for their own development. Volunteers assist communities through a variety of nonformal educational outreach activities. They organize preschool educational and basic hygiene activities, after-school programs, and adult education programs. Adult education Volunteers focus on income-generating activities and improving health and hygiene (focusing on water and sanitation as well as HIV/AIDS awareness). Volunteers also help promote community volunteerism.

Health and HIV/AIDS

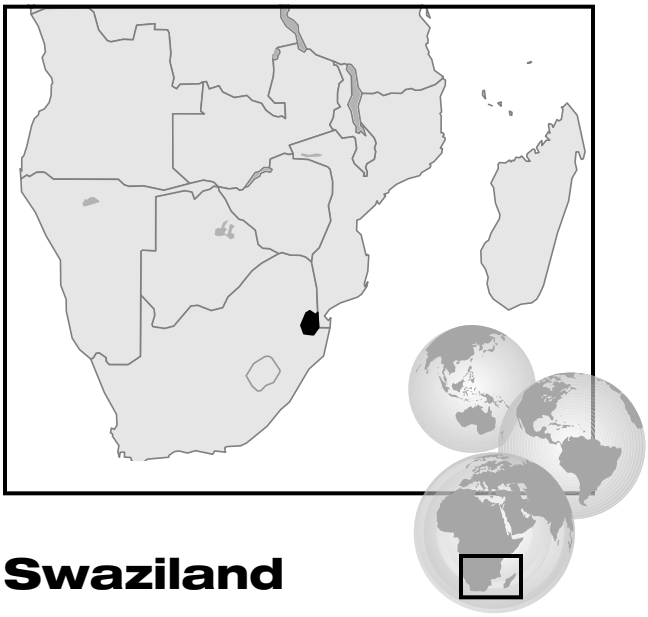
Peace Corps/Suriname shares an affiliation with the Ministry of Public Health (responsible for overall health planning and services), and the quasi-governmental Medical Mission, which has primary health-care responsibility for serving the interior populations. Volunteers support information technology planning affecting the health sector, and assist the Medical Mission in distributing health information throughout the interior. In turn, Medical Mission shares its radio communication facilities to support Volunteer communication needs regarding safety and security. Additionally, Volunteers support various health-sector providers in carrying out their stated mission of health education, prevention, and treatment.

"I work with the Stg. Mamio Namen Project, which deals with HIV/AIDS education and conducts visits to AIDS patients in hospitals and at home. The quilts that my agency makes from mementos brought in by the families of victims that have passed away are an important part of our work each week. These quilts are carefully stored and are then displayed at all events promoting HIV/AIDS throughout Suriname. I am very pleased to be a part of this organization and I cherish the friendships I have made during my time with them."

Suriname Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector

"Peace Corps does wonderful things in the interior of Suriname and the Peace Corps Volunteers are the best thing to come to Suriname from the United States of America."

Jules Adjohia
Vice President



Swaziland

Capital.....Mbabane

Population.....1 million

Annual per capita income.....$1,240

GDP growth..... 3.6%

Adult illiteracy rate..... Male: 18%
Female: 20%

Infant mortality rate.....106 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate..... DPT: 77%
Measles: 72%

Foreign direct investment.....$45 million

Access to safe water..... Not Available

HIV/AIDS prevalence..... 33.40%

Religions..... Protestantism: 35%
Zionism: 30%
Roman Catholicism: 25%
Other: 9%
Islam: 1%

Official languages..... English
Siswatii

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	74	77
Program funds ($000)	1,510	1,598

Country Overview

Program dates	1969–1996 2003–present
Program sector	Health and HIV/AIDS

Though Swaziland's first post-independence elections were held in May 1972, King Sobhuza II repealed the constitution and dissolved Parliament in 1973, imposing a state of emergency in which he assumed all powers of government and prohibited political parties. A new constitution in 1978 continued to concentrate political power in the hands of the monarch, but called for the appointment of a prime minister, a cabinet, and an elected Parliament, the Libandla, in which political parties would remain illegal. The Parliament's functions were restricted to conveying advice to the king and his principal advisory body, the Liqoqo (Supreme Council of State).

The current monarch, King Mswati III, was crowned in April 1986. Shortly afterward, he abolished the Liqoqo, and in 1987, a new Parliament was elected and a new cabinet was appointed. An underground political party, the People's United Democratic Party (PUDEMO), emerged in 1988 and clandestinely criticized the king and the government, calling for democratic reforms. In response to this political threat and to growing calls for greater government accountability, the king and prime minister initiated an ongoing national debate on the political future of Swaziland. Although steady pressure has been exerted on the king from both inside and outside the country, he remains immune to threats and continues as one of the world's few absolute monarchs.

In this small, landlocked country, subsistence agriculture occupies more than 60 percent of the population. Manufacturing consists of several agroprocessing factories. Mining has declined in recent years as diamond mines have shut down because of the depletion of easily accessible reserves, high-grade iron ore deposits have been depleted, and health concerns have cut the world demand for asbestos. Exports of soft-drink concentrate, sugar, and wood pulp are the main sources of hard currency. Surrounded by South Africa except for a short border with Mozambique, Swaziland is heavily dependent on South Africa, from which it receives four-fifths of its imports and to which it sends two-thirds of its exports. Remittances from the Southern

African Customs Union and Swazi workers in South African mines supplement domestically earned income substantially.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps was invited to work in Swaziland in 1969, a few months after the country gained independence from Great Britain. Over the next 28 years, 1,400 Volunteers served in Swaziland, working in the education and agriculture sectors. Volunteers taught English, agriculture, mathematics, science, and vocational education in secondary schools and promoted agricultural cooperatives in rural areas. The Peace Corps brought its program in Swaziland to a close in 1996.

In light of the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the people of Swaziland, the Peace Corps reentered Swaziland in 2003 with a program focusing on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Swazi youth ages 15 to 29 are the most vulnerable population. In 2002, the rate of HIV/AIDS among pregnant women was 38.6 percent. Approximately 35,000 children have been orphaned as a result of AIDS; it's estimated that these numbers will reach 120,000 by 2010. Despite King Mswati III's declaration of AIDS as a national crisis, infection rates have continued to escalate. The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Swaziland is exacerbating the country's current food crisis. The United Nations estimates that almost a quarter of the population will require food assistance. With outside assistance, Swaziland has embarked on initiatives to strengthen the execution of its national HIV/AIDS strategy.

Volunteer Focus

Health and HIV/AIDS

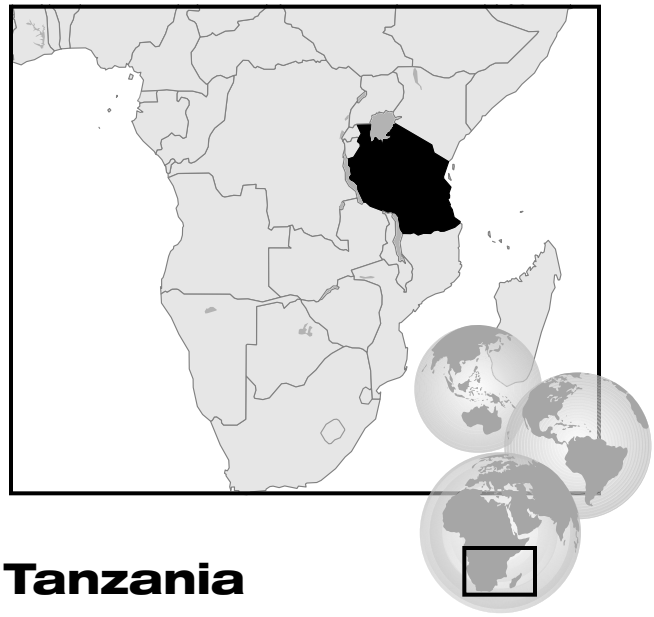
In April 2002, a Peace Corps assessment team visited Swaziland to determine how Volunteers could assist the Swazi people. The overwhelming effects of AIDS indicated a need for immediate assistance. The first group of HIV/AIDS Volunteers arrived in Swaziland in mid-September 2003 to reestablish the Peace Corps program. The new program assists the government of Swaziland in HIV/AIDS risk reduction and impact mitigation, with a focus on youth. Volunteers work to encourage in-school and out-of-school youth to develop appropriate behaviors that will reduce the spread of HIV; support mitigation efforts regarding the impact of HIV/AIDS on orphans and vulnerable children; and build the capacity of nongovernmental organizations and community-based organizations that provide HIV/AIDS services to youth.

Two Volunteers produced a video with public service messages on the orphan crisis. The video is helping to strengthen the national movement on mitigating the impact of AIDS on orphans and vulnerable children. Swaziland's Ministry of Education will play the audio on Swazi radio.

One Volunteer formed a youth association that is providing and promoting constructive activities for youth so that they can gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead healthy, productive, and responsible adult lives. This youth association hosted a "Knock-Out HIV/AIDS Football Tournament," which provided an opportunity to learn about HIV/AIDS prevention.

"Armed with the correct information, these youth can play a vital role in the fight against HIV and AIDS, serving as sources of knowledge amongst their peer groups, families and communities."

Swaziland Volunteer
Health and HIV/AIDS Sector



Tanzania

Capital	Dar es Salaam
Population	35 million
Annual per capita income	$290
GDP growth	6.3%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 15% Female: 31%
Infant mortality rate	104 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 89% Measles: 89%
Foreign direct investment	$240 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 90% Rural: 57%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	7.80%
Religions	Islam: 45% Christianity: 45% Indigenous beliefs: 10%
Official language	Kiswahili

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	177	145
Program funds ($000)	2,681	2,586

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–1969 1979–1991 1991–present
Program sectors	Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Although Tanzania has made some progress in restoring macroeconomic stability during the past two years, widespread and persistent poverty is still a challenge. Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 162 out of 177 on the 2004 United Nations Human Development Index. While poverty is mainly a rural phenomenon in Tanzania, urban poverty is also increasing. The rising rates of HIV infection and an unpredictable influx of refugees have aggravated the situation, and more than 36 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. There is a small but growing manufacturing sector and agricultural products account for approximately 85 percent of exports. Inefficient land and labor markets, deteriorating environmental conditions, slow progress in improving infrastructure, and limited human capacity (including a shortage of mathematics and science teachers) continue to be major challenges.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps arrived in Tanzania in 1962. Since then, Volunteers have served in the areas of education, health, the environment, and agriculture. Their work continues to be highly regarded by the government, and is seen as an important contribution to Tanzania's efforts to achieve community and national development. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Volunteers work in 70 secondary schools, teaching science, mathematics, and information technology to more than 10,000 students. This work is helping Tanzania address its very critical need for secondary school teachers. Volunteers prepare students for national examinations and promote

the development of critical thinking skills. They also closely collaborate with teachers in developing subject resource materials. Education Volunteers also organize math and science clubs, facilitate HIV/AIDS seminars, and promote environmental awareness on school farms. To encourage experiential learning and outdoor exploration, Volunteers have organized mountain-climbing clubs and field trips to places such as coffee plantations, beaches, forests, and markets. One information technology Volunteer is based in a vocational training center and has developed a variety of electronic math and science resources to share with other Volunteer teachers. Other Volunteers help students, teachers, and other school staff to gain basic computer literacy skills.

Environment

Volunteers assist village communities in the management of their natural resources and in raising awareness of environmental conservation. They promote soil improvement techniques, agroforestry (including tree planting for fuel wood and fruit trees as well as the conservation of indigenous community natural forests), beekeeping, fish farming, improved vegetable gardening, and live fencing. Volunteers teach farmers how to construct and use appropriate technologies, such as energy-efficient stoves and rainwater harvesting. They also promote improved livestock practices, including chicken vaccination and raising milk goats, milking cows, and pigs. Volunteers also engage youth in environmental education activities through school clubs, eco-camps, and experiential education. Particular emphasis is given to working with women and youth. One Volunteer worked with a village to vaccinate 4,000 chickens to protect them from Newcastle disease. Additionally, Volunteers have proactively disseminated messages on HIV/AIDS to students and out-of-school youth.

Health and HIV/AIDS

The school health education project was initiated in 2000 to empower youth with the knowledge and skills needed for making sound decisions about their health. Volunteers work with schools and communities on a variety of health issues, giving particular emphasis to HIV/AIDS. Volunteers train peer educators who then work with other youth to foster increased awareness about HIV/AIDS by using drama, discussion groups, and organized debates. Volunteers have worked successfully with question-and-answer boxes and health bulletin boards at their schools. Volunteers also work to train Tanzanian teachers in life skills and HIV/AIDS. Two Volunteers trained 60 teachers in Zanzibar through workshops and follow-up visits to their schools. Other Volunteers have trained nongovernmental organization staff and district education officers.

"At the country-to-country level, the ordinary citizens of the USA and those of Tanzania have to commend our two governments for continuing with the Peace Corps program. This is one of the best ways by which our people can have a better understanding of each other."

Morogoro Regional Administrative Secretary
Government of Tanzania

Thailand

Capital ..... Bang

Population ..... 62 million

Annual per capita income $2,000

GDP growth 5.4%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 5%
Female: 9%

Infant mortality rate ..... 24 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 96%
Measles: 94%

Foreign direct investment ..... $900 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 95%
Rural: 81%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 1.80%

Religions ..... Buddhism: 94.6%
Islam: 4.6%

Official Languages ..... Christianity
Hinduism
Brahminism
Other

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	99	99
Program funds ($000)	2,243	2,373

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present
Program sector	Business Development Education

Thailand has a constitutional monarchy and a relatively stable political system. The king has little direct power under the constitution but is a symbol of national identity and unity. Thailand's 76 provinces include the metropolis of greater Bangkok. Bangkok's governor is popularly elected, but those of the remaining provinces are career civil servants appointed by the Ministry of Interior.

Thailand has a free-enterprise economy and welcomes foreign investment. Exports feature computers and electrical appliances. Thailand's economy is set to record its fastest growth rate since the Asian financial crisis in 1998. Government stimulus programs and recovering export demand led to an economic turnaround in 2002, with the final gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate projected to be around 4.9 percent. The most recent government forecast points to a GDP of as much as 7 percent for 2004.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps has collaborated with the Thai government and Thai communities since 1962. For more than 40 years, Peace Corps has been providing Volunteers to cooperate with Thai counterparts on activities in education, health, water and sanitation, agriculture, the environment, and rural community outreach and development. Throughout this relationship, some of the most successful and compelling projects have been in the areas of English education and community development.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

The Thai government initiated a historical change in the local government administration system in 1994 when it passed the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act, decentralizing its power to the tambon (subdistrict) administrative organizations for the first time. Since the implementation of constitutional reforms in 1997, decentralization has become a strong emphasis of the Thai government.

To support the government's initiative, Peace Corps/Thailand recently developed a community-based project to assist small businesses with organizational development. Volunteers in this sector share experiences, strategies, and resources to assist administrative officials and communities at the grass-roots level. They focus on capacity building of sub-district and community groups (such as small business groups, women's groups, youth groups, and farmers' groups) to improve the quality of their products and services in rural areas. They work to develop and enhance professional capacities in organizational development, project planning and management, project monitoring and evaluation, and basic business English. All Volunteers in this project are currently assigned to the northeastern region, the historically poorest area of Thailand.

Education

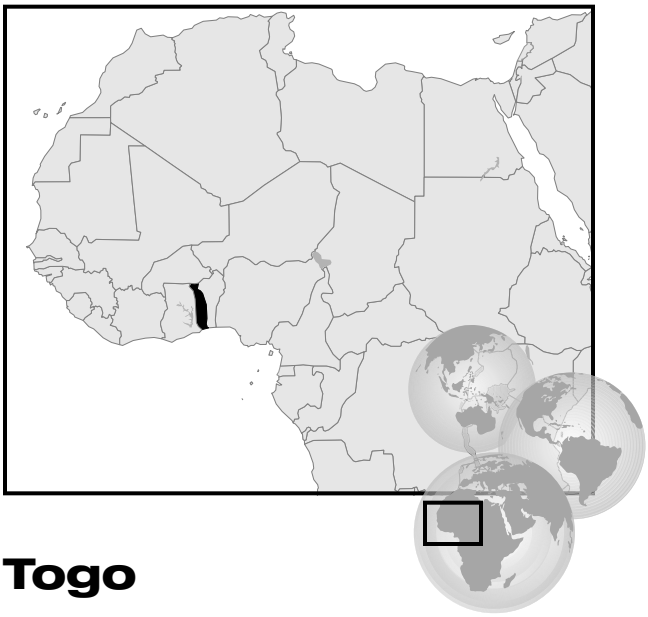
Peace Corps/Thailand initiated a teacher collaboration and community outreach project in 2003. This project is a sequel to the integrated education and community outreach project that concluded in April 2004. Currently, there are 67 Volunteers serving in schools and education districts throughout Thailand. The project focuses on student-centered educational reform at the primary level and improvement of Thai citizens' quality of life through sustainable community development initiatives. Volunteers and their Thai partners collaborate in English-language classrooms to institute reforms that support the government's 1999 National Education Act and to develop and enhance the skills of primary school teachers.

The flexibility of the project plan allows Volunteers to implement those activities that best match their interests and skills with the communities' needs and priorities. For example, one education Volunteer had a special interest in theater. She first worked with her counterparts in her own school district to organize a Shakespeare theater group for the students in local schools. It was so successful that many other school districts and the Volunteers serving there joined forces to establish the Thai Youth Theater. Performances are in English, and the performers are students from rural areas of Thailand. Many of them made their first trip to Bangkok this past year where they performed four Shakespeare plays in English. Funds were largely contributed by the local communities in which the students live.

U.S. Ambassador Darryl Johnson attended the outdoor performance, and spoke highly of the accomplishment of these young students and the teachers and Volunteers who helped train them.

"When first coming to my site of Nampong, I realized that community integration was my number one goal. If I couldn't understand these people, speak their language, or feel like a part of their community, then how could I help them or accomplish any of my goals as a Volunteer. There was never a question about whether or not I should integrate; it was a matter of how to do that effectively. I'll never be a Thai person. I'll never mesh totally into this complex culture, because I'll never understand it totally. But I think I've done the next best thing. I've found my place and the people if Nampong have found a place for me."

Thailand Volunteer
Education Sector



Togo

Capital	Lomé
Population	5 million
Annual per capita income	$270
GDP growth	4.6%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 26% Female: 55%
Infant mortality rate	87 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 64% Measles: 58%
Foreign direct investment	$75 million
Access to safe water	Urban: 85% Rural: 38%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	6.00%
Religions	Animism: 51% Christianity: 29% Islam: 20%
Official language	French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	129	113
Program funds ($000)	2,585	2,616

Country Overview

Program dates	1962–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

Togo attained independence from France in 1960. The country's first-elected president was killed in a coup d'etat on January 13, 1963. In 1967, General Gnassingbé Eyadéma became president and has remained in the position ever since, making him Africa's longest-serving head of state. Despite the facade of multiparty elections instituted in the early 1990s, the government continues to be dominated by President Eyadéma. Consequently, many development agencies that once served communities in Togo have either left the country or reduced their operations. In addition, Togo has come under fire from international organizations for human rights abuses and is plagued by political unrest. Most bilateral and multilateral aid to Togo remains frozen, though recent negotiations with the European Union may lead to increased aid in the future.

Togo remains one of the poorest nations of the world, ranking 143 of 177 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index. However, its coastal location, good harbor, and better-than-average infrastructure have helped to make its capital, Lomé, a regional trading center. However, agriculture is the foundation of Togo's economy, contributing 40 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and employing 70 percent of its workers. Corn, sorghum, millet, cassava, yams, cowpeas, and rice are the major food crops. Cash crops include coffee, cocoa, and cotton. Togo is the fifth largest producer of phosphates. Industry and manufacturing account for about a quarter of Togo's GDP. More than a third of the total domestic output is accounted for in the service sector.

Program Focus

Peace Corps began its work in Togo in 1962, and since that time has hosted over 1,700 Volunteers. Volunteers have a successful history of collaboration and involvement with the Togolese people at all levels. Their efforts build upon counterpart relationships and emphasize low-cost solutions that make maximum use of local resources. Partnering with

local and international organizations is an important component of Volunteer project activities. Volunteers work to promote self-sufficiency in the areas of business development, education, environment, and health. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

The economy's informal sector offers the best opportunity for economic development in Togo. The business development project improves basic business and entrepreneurial skills, thereby fostering opportunities for growth and job creation. Volunteers are assigned to local credit unions or nongovernmental organizations and offer business training and consulting to members to improve their business skills. Volunteers and their local counterparts have taught approximately 1,000 individual and cooperative member entrepreneurs in business practices. Workshops covering accounting, finance, marketing, and feasibility studies are offered to groups of tailors, retailers, and other small business people. Working with youth is also a focus of the program.

Education

Although women comprise 52 percent of Togo's general population, they are severely under-represented in the development process of the country. Girls' education and empowerment Volunteers work with different community groups to develop an understanding of the importance and benefits of girls' education in order to increase the girls' access to formal and nonformal education. They also work with teachers to create an environment that will keep girls in school and students in clubs and classrooms. In recent years, the project has expanded to address the educational needs of apprentices and the trafficking of children. Volunteers help coordinate boys' and girls' camps during the summer.

Environment

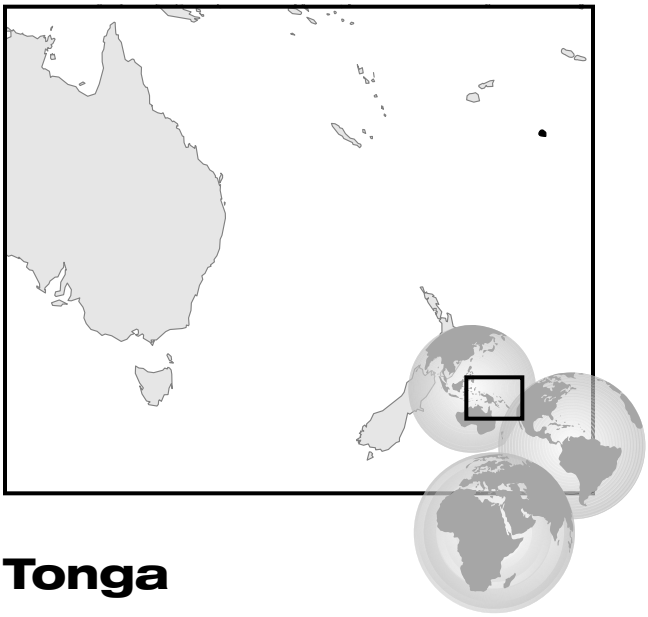
Traditional farming practices cannot meet the needs of Togo's growing population. Volunteers work with farmers to introduce sustainable farming practices that will lead to improved farm yields and reduced environmental degradation. In addition, some Volunteers are developing environmental education projects in primary and secondary schools. In 2003, Volunteers trained over 1,000 villagers in concepts and techniques of natural resource management, such as composting, improved cooking stoves, tree production, and animal husbandry.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Although women comprise 52 percent of Togo's general population, they are severely under-represented in the development process of the country. Girls' education and empowerment Volunteers work with different community groups to develop an understanding of the importance and benefits of girls' education in order to increase the girls' access to formal and nonformal education. They also work with teachers to create an environment that will keep girls in school and students in clubs and classrooms. In recent years, the project has expanded to address the educational needs of apprentices and the trafficking of children. Volunteers help coordinate boys' and girls' camps during the summer.

"I plan on becoming a lawyer. My experience as a girls' education and empowerment Volunteer in Togo has already taught me much about the nature of being an advocate."

Togo Volunteer
Education Sector



Tonga

Capital	Nuku'alofa
Population	101,000
Annual per capita income	$1,440
GDP growth	3.6%
Adult illiteracy rate	1.5%
Infant mortality rate	14 per 1,000 births
Immunization rate	DPT: 98.5% Measles: 99%
Foreign direct investment	$2 million
Access to safe water	100%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not Available
Religions	Christianity
Official languages	Tongan English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	64	52
Program funds ($000)	1,187	1,110

Country Overview

Program dates	1967–present
Program sector	Business Development Education Environment Youth

Since the adoption of its constitution in 1875, Tonga has been a kingdom with a monarch whose heirs are entitled to perpetual succession to the throne. The past two decades have seen the biggest changes in Tonga, especially its international status. In 1975, Tonga developed economic and political ties with the European Economic Community (now the European Union), and in 2000, Tonga became a full member of the United Nations. The most obvious benefit has been an inflow of foreign aid from developed nations and international agencies. This aid has enabled Tonga to improve social services and construct essential infrastructure.

The vast majority of Tongans are dependent on subsistence agriculture and fishing, which they supplement with monies from relatives who have emigrated. The pressures on these traditional sectors are depleting already scarce natural resources and degrading topsoil, rainforests, coastal reefs, and freshwater supplies. Also, with well over half its population under age 18 and a stagnating economy, Tonga faces many challenges in providing its youth with educational and economic opportunities. These problems are compounded by a chronic shortage of secondary school teachers, especially in science and information technology.

Program Focus

At the request of the Ministry of Education, the Peace Corps projects focus on preparing youth to become productive members of their communities. The community education project works primarily with in-school students, while the youth development project addresses the needs of out-of-school youth. Both projects emphasize building communities' capacity to prepare young people by developing leadership skills and income-generation opportunities. Volunteers in both projects help interested young people and communities develop computer centers at the regional, district, and village levels. These centers provide opportunities for out-of-school youth and others to attend basic computer

classes, bridging the technical gap between these community members and the small sector of the population that has access to formal training.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers work with community groups to implement small businesses for income generation. These small businesses are developing improved business practices, better products and greater community employment. One Volunteer worked with youth in her community who were selected for a Pacific regional workshop on enterprise development and marketing. The workshop was followed by a trade fair in which the youth participated and sold their products.

Education

Volunteers in the education project are placed in remote villages where the greatest needs exist. Volunteers introduce innovative teaching techniques and enhance teacher skills through modeling, team teaching, and workshops. A second component of the project provides community education, especially in computer skills, business skills, and nonformal education for out-of-school young women. Volunteers also teach 10–15 hours per week in classroom settings, focusing on English literacy, business education, basic computer skills, and industrial arts. One education Volunteer, teaching English in a remote island, worked extensively with her students to improve their English language skills. As a result, all of her students passed the national exams and one attained the highest mark in the entire kingdom.

Environment

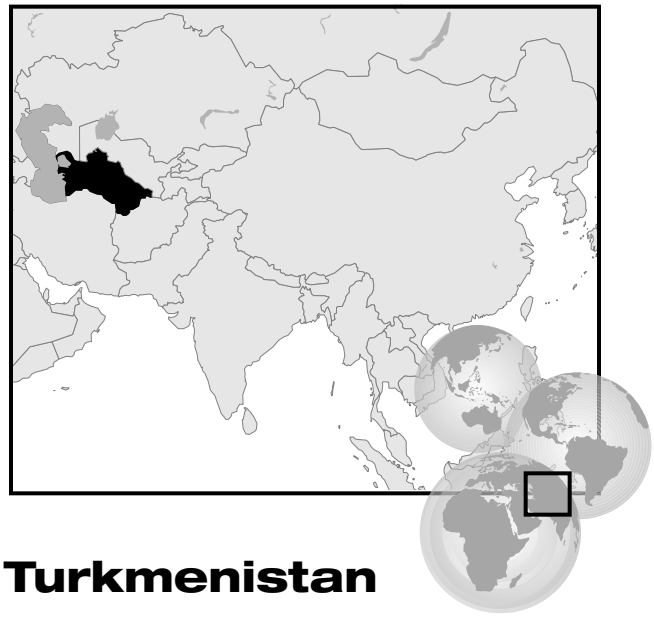
Volunteers focus on coastal management and the degradation of coastal resources through environmental education, conservation, solid-waste management, and village beautification. Volunteers have worked with communities in four different provinces to institute World Coastal Clean-Up Day and World Environment Day. Trash bins have been placed in public areas and weekly collection systems have been established. As a result, waste is taken to specified dump areas instead of being emptied on the beach, destroying valuable environmental resources.

Youth

Volunteers build the capacity of individuals, service providers, organizations, and communities. The youth project emphasizes community and family development and the role of youth as citizens and future leaders. Volunteers work with youth groups to carry out community projects, create income-generating opportunities, and develop employment skills. They are developing a curriculum accredited by the government that will allow youth to receive a certificate in information technology skills, increasing their employment options. Volunteers have also implemented a certificate program that gives school dropouts the opportunity to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma and thus continue their education.

The Peace Corps helped create the Tonga National Volunteer Service, which is a vehicle for Tongan youth, including those living abroad, to serve as volunteers in Tonga. This has become a model for other Pacific island countries. Many Tongan volunteers work alongside Peace Corps Volunteers in this project. One youth Volunteer worked with youth in his community to establish a catering service for funerals, which in Tonga requires tea and bread to be served throughout the night. Using grant-writing skills to acquire financial assistance, the youth purchased a bread-slicing machine and several gas burners, boilers, and large pots for cooking. The project continues to grow and is making a profit for the primary and neighboring villages.

Tonga education Volunteer teaching information technology skills



Turkmenistan

Capital	Ashgabat
Population	5 million
Annual per capita income	Not applicable
GDP growth	14.9%
Adult illiteracy rate	Male: 1% Female: 2%
Infant mortality rate	70 per 1,000 live births
Immunization rate	DPT: 98% Measles: 88%
Foreign direct investment	$100 million
Access to safe water	58%
HIV/AIDS prevalence	<0.10%
Religions	Islam: 89% Eastern Orthodoxy: 9% Other: 2%
Official Language:	Turkmen

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	96	74
Program funds ($000)	1,672	1,486

Country Overview

Program dates	1993–2001 2002–present
Program sectors	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

Turkmenistan is controlled by one political party, the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, which is led by President Saparmurat Niyazov (Turkmenbashi), appointed leader for life. Independent political activity is not allowed and citizens do not elect their government democratically. Turkmenistan has officially declared itself a neutral state. It has had diplomatic relations with the United States since 1992.

Turkmenistan still has a Soviet-style command economy, with industries and services provided almost entirely by government-controlled entities. It is the 10th largest producer of cotton worldwide and has large reserves of natural gas. These two products drive the economy. However, its gas and oil exports are dependent upon access to Russian pipelines and therefore Russia's cooperation. Cotton harvests have been poor over the past few years.

After ninth grade, schools send young people into the workforce with the expectation that they will work for two years to gain "practical experience." Since unemployment is already very high, especially for men, there is little opportunity for these young people to profitably occupy their time before higher education, which is limited at best. Readily available cheap drugs and alcohol further threaten the future of these youth.

Program Focus

Since gaining independence in 1991, Turkmenistan has experienced broad political, economic, and social changes, prompting the need for international assistance in training its professionals. Currently, Peace Corps Volunteers work in two projects: Education/TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language), which provides training to English teachers and school children; and community health education, which trains health professionals and grass-roots communities.

The program was suspended following the events of September 11, 2001. After a favorable reassessment in February 2002, seven Volunteers returned to Turkmenistan in April 2002 to complete their service. Since that time, approximately 50 Volunteers per year have been trained and sent

to sites throughout the country, serving in schools and clinics and working with a broad base of community people.

Volunteer Focus

Education

In 2004, 43 TEFL Volunteers helped conduct 15 English immersion camps for approximately 200 teachers and 800 students. These week- to 10-day-long camps allowed participants to work as counselors and junior counselors. Many teachers helped organize the camps and were able to practice their English-speaking skills while learning how to plan and carry out a project. The teachers also gained insight into student-centered teaching methodologies and activities, while they increased their leadership skills and self confidence. Camps are held in partnership with the Ministry of Education and regional educational departments. Most camps cover healthy lifestyle and hygiene education; self-esteem and leadership building; sportsmanship; and sessions on topics such as English, history, geography, civics, environmental awareness, art, and sports.

One of the outcomes of Volunteers' work with English teachers was the selection of 26 teachers by a Teacher Excellence Program. The teachers each received $2,000 to buy equipment and English teaching materials for their schools. Six were selected as Best English teachers of Turkmenistan and sent on a seven-week study tour to the United States.

Health and HIV/AIDS

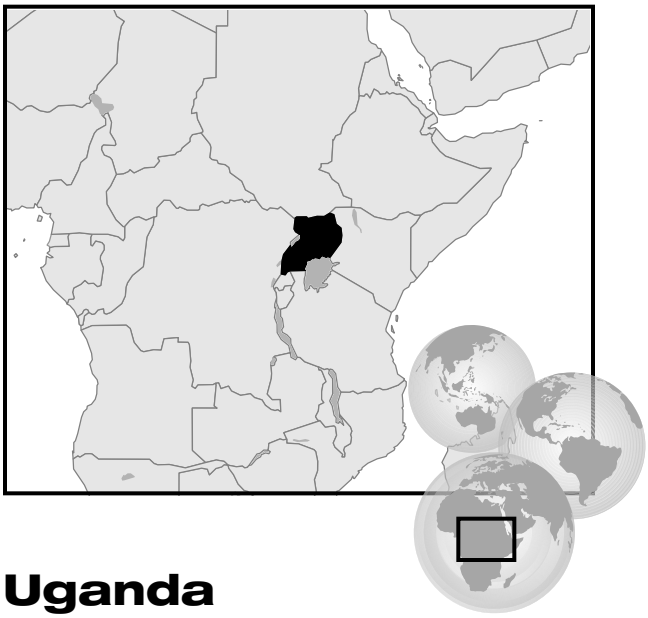
A lack of supplies, training, and technology has contributed to a decline in basic health and health-care services since independence. In support of recent reforms and initiatives of the government and the Ministry of Health of Turkmenistan, Peace Corps activities focus on maternal and child health-care issues in rural communities, with an emphasis on community health education including initial efforts to incorporate education about HIV/AIDS, a problem not openly acknowledged by the current government.

In 2004, Volunteers conducted lectures and seminars about environmental health, anatomy and physiology, healthy lifestyles, nutrition, healthy cooking, first aid, dental hygiene, potable water, and the importance of exercise that reached approximately 1,000 women and 2,400 children.

Volunteers have helped organize a project to draft a Turkmen/Russian/English dictionary of medical terms that will soon be released to the medical school and become a textbook for local physicians and future health-care-workers. Another team of Volunteers, in conjunction with local health workers, is preparing to publish and distribute a substance abuse education and activity book. Volunteers also helped with the design and printing of an Immunization Passport. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the booklet will help parents keep a record of their children's immunizations and the dates of the next shots.

"The accomplishments I'm particularly happy with are my teachers' clubs. By channeling the enthusiasm and energy of Lebap Teachers Summer Conference I have been able to establish and maintain five successful weekly teachers' clubs in Charjew. These clubs usually draw a total of between 25 and 30 teachers a week. They represent a majority of the English language schools in the city. After camp, I was approached by many teachers and asked to visit their schools and present material similar to that of the camp. After scheduling an initial meeting, the teachers acquired the proper ministry permissions and invited and encouraged their colleagues to attend."

Turkmenistan Volunteer
Education Sector



Uganda

Capital.....Kampala

Population.....25 million

Annual per capita income.....$240

GDP growth..... 6.7%

Adult illiteracy rate..... Male: 21%
Female: 41%

Infant mortality rate.....83 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate..... DPT: 72%
Measles: 77%

Foreign direct investment.....$150 million

Access to safe water..... Urban: 80%
Rural: 47%

HIV/AIDS prevalence..... 5%

Religions..... Christianity: 66%
Indigenous beliefs: 18%
Islam:16%

Official language..... English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	54	60
Program funds ($000)	1,635	1,689

Country Overview

Program dates	1964–1973 1991–1999 2000–present
Program sectors	Education Health and HIV/AIDS

In Uganda, economic change has accompanied political reform. The government is composed of broad-based political groupings brought together under the country's no-party system. The government's strong efforts to reform Uganda's educational system, promote sustainable growth in key sectors, and move to a more liberalized, private sector-driven market economy have, over the past decade, encouraged international investment and involvement from international development agencies. The government will face elections in the next two years, and a potential constitutional crisis exists if the current president decides to seek a third term. Corruption is an increasingly significant issue with the potential to bring growth to a halt as investors and donors turn to more transparent economies.

Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, regular rainfall, and sizable deposits of copper and cobalt. Agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, employing more than 80 percent of the workforce. Coffee is the major export crop, accounting for over half of export revenues. Since 1987, the government, with the support of donors, has rehabilitated and stabilized the economy by undertaking currency reform, raising producer prices on export crops, increasing prices of petroleum products, and improving civil service wages. The policy changes are to reduce inflation and boost production and export earnings. Significant donor assistance has been vital in supporting policies leading to this growth. Growth has been moderate over the past few years because of the continuing conflict in the north of the country. Growth has also been hampered by the perception by potential investors of increased levels of corruption, a lack of commitment to democratic principles, and close to a 20 percent drop in the value of the Ugandan shilling over the past year.

Program Focus

The first group of Volunteers in Uganda arrived as teachers in November 1964. A year later, the secondary education program consisted of 35 Vol-

unteers, and by 1967, the program had more than doubled. A health program was initiated in 1968 with the placement of 15 Volunteers. As the Peace Corps program in Uganda expanded, the major programming area was education, but Volunteers also worked in fisheries, agriculture, computer programming, and surveying. The Peace Corps terminated its program in 1973 during the civil unrest under the presidency of Idi Amin.

The 1964 agreement between the Ugandan government and the Peace Corps was reactivated in 1990, and Volunteers returned in June 1991. Peace Corps/Uganda continued to grow until local security problems led to a second program suspension in May 1999. At that time, there were 75 Volunteers in-country working in three programs: primary education teacher training, women in small enterprise, and natural resource management. An expansion into the health sector was also planned.

In 2000, the Peace Corps reopened its program in Uganda at the invitation of the Ugandan government. Field staff began work in August 2000, and the first education Volunteers arrived in March 2001. Currently, Peace Corps/Uganda has an education project and a community health project focusing on HIV/AIDS, both based on the interests and needs expressed by the government of Uganda and the communities where Volunteers work.

In response to the AIDS pandemic, the Ugandan government and civil society groups launched a nationwide, multisectoral effort to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. Though the HIV infection rate among pregnant women has decreased from 21 percent in 1991 to 6 percent in 2000, serious challenges remain. Uganda has more than 1 million AIDS orphans, and 2 million additional children have parents who are HIV positive. Thus, Volunteers partner with Ugandans both on HIV/AIDS education and prevention and on providing community support and care to those affected by the disease. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Education

Improving the quality of education, especially at the primary school level, has long been a priority of the government. With the introduction of universal primary education, the demand for primary teachers has doubled and, in some locations, even tripled. Each Volunteer works with a Ugandan counterpart to train teachers in teaching methodology, administrative management, and school resource development. More broadly, education Volunteers help improve the education of students by establishing children's clubs, conducting teacher workshops, and working with teacher and community organizations. Volunteers have worked to mobilize communities to connect with and support their primary schools, and they help develop the links between a school and its community through a variety of projects. For example, elementary school students in the schools around their teacher training resource center gathered stories in the local language from their parents and grandparents. The students wrote down the stories and illustrated them, creating reading materials for lower grades. This is the first local language reading material available for the primary level in the Dhopadola language. The activity empowered older students, engaged their parents, and provided simple but necessary instructional material for the lower grades. This design for making literacy education fun and collaborative has now been incorporated as a best practice by many primary teacher colleges in Uganda.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers working in the community well-being and positive-living project are assigned to small, community-based organizations, hospitals, and government health centers. Volunteers help these organizations provide information and support to people and families affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In 2004, Volunteers worked with more than 40 communities to transfer the knowledge and skills needed to increase the communities' capacity in areas such as sanitation, nutrition education, health education, life-skills education, gardening, hygiene, clean water, collaborating and networking, management training skills, and immunization. For example, a Volunteer working with a local Red Cross affiliate coordinated the training of a group of secondary school peer educators in HIV/AIDS. In addition to their activities in their own secondary schools, these young people have become life skills trainers for primary school programs in their areas. They recently practiced their skills as co-trainers, along with teachers and Red Cross community workers, at a life skills/self-esteem day camp for primary school students during the three-week school holidays.

Ukraine

Capital ..... Kiev

Population ..... 49 million

Annual per capita income $780

GDP growth 6.7%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: <0.5%
Female: <0.5%

Infant mortality rate ..... 16 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 99%
Measles: 99%

Foreign direct investment ..... $693 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 100%
Rural: 94%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 1%

Religions ..... Ukrainian Orthodoxy, Ukrainian Greek Catholicism, Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Islam

Official language ..... Ukrainian

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	313	286
Program funds ($000)	4,642	4,345

Country Overview

Program dates	1992–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Environment Youth

Ukraine, a country of 48 million people, has a well-educated, skilled labor force. Sixty-eight percent of the population lives in urban areas. Since January 2000, the country has embraced a strong economic reform program and focused its attention on the areas with the most critical economic and social impact.

Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and adopted its first post-Soviet constitution in 1996. Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and adopted its first post-Soviet constitution in 1996. The Presidential elections in October 2004 and disputed results of run-off voting brought international attention to this major political transition.

The basis for economic growth has moved beyond traditional industrial export goods to encompass agriculture, construction, and food processing. Privatized companies have figured prominently in economic expansion. Agriculture has been significantly strengthened by eliminating the collective farm system and following the legalization of private ownership. The country's unique geographic position, along with its possession of crucial ports on the Black Sea, has made it a trade link of growing importance between the former Soviet Union and Europe.

Ukraine has undertaken efforts to synchronize its trade policies with those of its neighbors and trade partners in both directions through a partnership agreement with the European Union and membership in a "single economic area" with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Ukraine seeks to become a transit center for oil from the Caspian Sea region, which is expected to increase significantly over the next decade. The leading potential conduit for this oil in Ukraine is a pipeline, which extends from Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odessa northward to the city of Brody. To world energy markets, Ukraine's real significance is as an intermediary connecting Russia, the world's largest natural gas producer, with growing European markets.

Program Focus

The Peace Corps program supports the Ukrainian government's declared goal of entry into the global community. Volunteers teach business skills, English, and environmental protection, positively affecting Ukrainians' capabilities to develop their country, to operate in a global economy, and to communicate globally. A youth development project will begin in 2005 that will teach high school students in villages and other disadvantaged areas computer, information technology, and basic business skills; healthy lifestyles; career development; and environmental awareness.

Volunteers also work as change agents in Ukrainian towns and villages, carrying out community projects that address youth leadership training, HIV/AIDS education and awareness building, teacher training, curriculum and textbook development, Internet and computer training, and civil society development.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

Volunteers transfer free-market business skills and expertise at multiple levels through teaching and consulting assistance to individual entrepreneurs, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, management institutes, and government structures at the regional, and local levels. An important emphasis of Volunteers' work is the introduction of computers, including Internet technology, in business centers, educational institutions, and NGOs. Volunteers teach economics, marketing, management, and related disciplines in schools. They assist in business education curriculum design and introduce new teaching methodologies that promote student participation and independent thinking.

Business education is an important component of Peace Corps Ukraine's business development project. Six Volunteers are working in regional centers on a coordinated project to reform Ukrainian graduate school curricula and introduce graduate programs in business administration at local universities that will follow Western-type syllabi and ensure a global standard in the courses that are offered.

Education

Volunteers work in secondary schools, colleges, universities, and in-service teacher-training institutes as English teachers and English teacher trainers. They bring new knowledge and methodologies to the Ukrainian educational system and foster teacher-to-teacher links to promote the exchange of information on effective practices. Volunteers working in the pilot phase of the teacher-trainer project developed materials and activities that attracted the interest and participation of Ukrainian teachers, devised a two-year timetable for working with their teacher counterparts, and started compiling a syllabus for a practical course in English language teaching.

Several Volunteers in Ukraine teach English in villages and other depressed areas of the country. By learning English, rural youth have a chance to pursue information about technology and gain valuable life and career skills. Volunteers in rural areas also introduce ideas about civic participation, community action, leadership, health, gender and critical thinking that the children otherwise would not encounter.

Environment

Through community-based projects, environment Volunteers promote interest in environmental learning and activism in schools, extracurricular educational institutions, and community clubs. They help build links between local and international programs to facilitate information exchanges and program support. They also promote participation in environmental camps, nature conservation, Earth Day celebrations, community cleanups, and the creation of environmental resource centers. Environment Volunteers work with local counterparts to promote ecotourism among Ukrainians and help develop nature trails, parks, water sports, and bed-and-breakfasts in villages.

Youth

In 2005, approximately 20 Volunteers will begin work on a pilot project to help disadvantaged youth gain needed skills that will enable them to compete successfully in Ukraine's rapidly growing modern sector. This project will begin under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science and will be tested in various parts of the country with a view toward producing a national curriculum that will be used in all schools.

Uzbekistan

Capital: Tashkent

Population 25 million

Annual per capita income $310

GDP growth 4.2%

Adult illiteracy rate Male: <0.5%
Female: 1%

Infant mortality rate 55 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate DPT: 98%
Measles: 97%

Foreign direct investment $65 million

Access to safe water Urban: 94%
Rural: 79%

HIV/AIDS prevalence <0.10%

Religions Islam: 88%
Eastern Orthodoxy: 9%
Other: 3%

Official language Northern Uzbek

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	153	167
Program funds ($000)	2,305	2,293

Country Overview

Program dates	1992–2001 2002–present
Program sectors	Business Development Education Health and HIV/AIDS

President Islam Karimov has ruled Uzbekistan, the most populated of the central Asian republics, since it declared its independence from the Soviet Union in September 1991. Presidential elections in 1991 and subsequent national referendums in 1995 and 2002 extended Karimov's rule were not considered free or fair by international observers. The judicial and legislative branches of government were considered weak and transitional. Recently, the parliament has been reorganized, moving from a unicameral body to a bicameral structure.

Agriculture continues to be the principal focus of the economy, accounting for 40 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Cotton is the major export crop. The country is rich in natural resources, including gold, natural gas, and oil. The government's expressed commitment to transformation to a free-market economy has been hindered by continued restrictions on currency convertibility, which was finally instituted on October 15, 2003. The Aral Sea environmental crisis is also affecting the country's economic performance. Despite a period of positive economic growth after independence, the economy has slowed and nearly 30 percent of the population still lives in poverty with Uzbekistan having one of the lowest standards of living in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Program Focus

The first Volunteers arrived in Uzbekistan in 1992. Since then, more than 630 Volunteers have served in this country rich in history from the days of the ancient Silk Road linking Europe to China. After a temporary suspension of the Peace Corps program following the events of September 11, 2001, the program was reopened in April 2002. Currently, close to 200 Volunteers are working in-country.

The people of Uzbekistan are working hard to make the difficult adjustment to democracy and a free-market economy and to cope with the many changes inherent in such a transition. The ability to communicate in English is viewed as vital to Uzbekistan's development and its status as a new na-

tion in the international community. In response to these needs, one focus of Volunteers in Uzbekistan is English instruction.

The government of Uzbekistan also recognizes the need to improve access to government health care by the rural population. Villagers often live far from medical facilities and cannot pay for travel to urban centers for specialized treatment. In support of government efforts to improve rural health-care services, the Peace Corps places health Volunteers at rural clinics.

Since independence, there has been a major effort to institutionalize a civil society. One of the outcomes of this process has been the recognition of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as important facilitators in a democratic society. Currently, more than 6,000 NGOs are operating and more than half of these are officially registered with the government. In January 2004, the Peace Corps signed a memorandum of understanding with the Supreme Council's Committee on Democratic Institutions, Non-Government Organizations, and Self-Governing Bodies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, initiating an NGO/business development program. Volunteers in the program strengthen the initiatives of local NGOs throughout the country.

Volunteer Focus

Business Development

The first group of Volunteers in the business development program work closely with the staff of local NGOs to increase the community's awareness of the NGO and their services, strengthen their organizational structure, and teach them fundraising strategies. Volunteers and their counterparts are also working to create a national network of NGOs to share skills and resources. One Volunteer is working at a youth English center started more than five years ago by a previous Volunteer. This center provides English language resources and classes to area youths.

Education

Volunteers work closely with Uzbek universities and secondary schools to improve the quality of English instruction and to increase access to internationally available resources. Emphasis is placed on teacher training and information exchange. Volunteers also work in primary schools, teaching and working with English teachers to improve their skills.

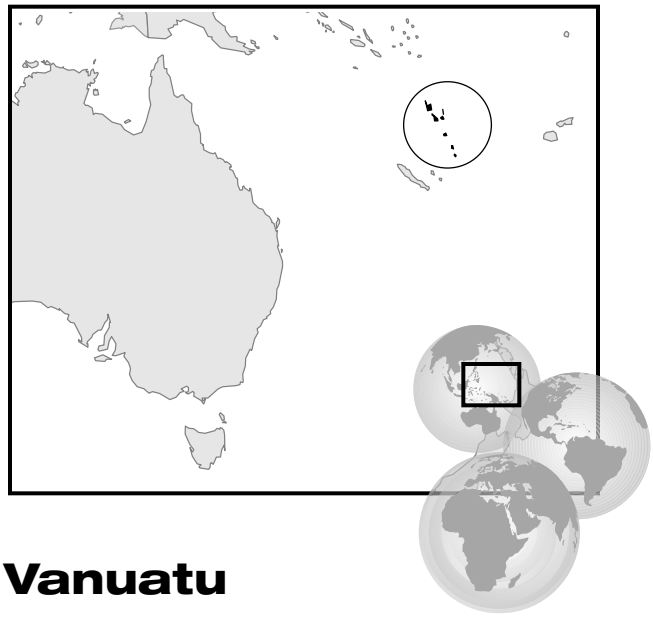
Local teachers attend workshops where they learn about contemporary teaching methodologies and materials development and improve their English skills. Volunteers were integral in the development of a new national curriculum for English instruction introduced in primary schools in September 2001. They recently finished a teacher's manual for first through third grades, which is currently being reviewed by the government for inclusion in the national curriculum for elementary English classes. Volunteers have also initiated community outreach activities, including English camps; HIV/AIDS peer education workshops; Earth Day activities; dance classes; and debate, ecology, and English clubs.

This summer, Volunteers and their local counterparts conducted 18 summer camps for children throughout Uzbekistan. The camps focused on leadership skills, health and hygiene, and English language skills. Many of these camps have become a tradition in the areas where Volunteers have served, and now, some of the children who attended camps years ago held by previous Volunteers work as counselors at the camps in their communities.

One Volunteer worked with his community to build a new school through a grant. The construction began in March 2004 and the school opened in September 2004. More than 300 students attend the school, which has greatly upgraded facilities from the previous school.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers focus on improving the health status of women and children in rural communities. Their activities emphasize prevention and health education to increase the capacity of staff to manage rural clinics. They also raise the level of English among health-care workers so they can make better use of current medical literature written in English. Volunteers conduct education seminars to address medical topics, such as anemia, first aid, reproductive health, and sight testing; as well as nonmedical topics, such as self-esteem, team building, and decision-making. In addition, they develop teaching aids that address hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, physiotherapy, and oral hygiene. During routine home visits, Volunteers distribute educational materials on anemia, goiter, nutrition, and breastfeeding.



Vanuatu

Capital	Port-Vila
Population	206,000
Annual per capita income	$1,070
GDP growth	-0.3%
Adult illiteracy rate:	47%
Infant mortality rate	60 per 1,000 births
Immunization rate	DPT: 93% Measles: 94%
Foreign direct investment	$20.3 million
Access to safe water	Not available
HIV/AIDS prevalence	Not Available
Religions	Christianity
Official languages	Bislama English French

Anticipated Number of Volunteers
Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	73	68
Program funds ($000)	2,055	2,162

Country Overview

Program dates	1990–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Business Development Education Environment Youth

Vanuatu is an independent republic consisting of 83 islands in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. Beginning in 1906, Vanuatu was governed under a special agreement between the British and the French, which divided the country and created completely separate systems of government and education. Upon gaining independence in 1980, the country united under one democratic government. However, with more than 100 local languages and a population spread over 65 inhabited islands, Vanuatu struggles to provide public services and education to its people.

The economy of Vanuatu is based primarily on subsistence or small-scale agriculture, which provides a living for most of the population. Copra and beef exports, fishing, offshore financial services, and tourism are the other main sources of revenue. Economic development is hindered by dependence on relatively few commodity exports, low market prices, vulnerability to natural disasters, long distances between main markets, and poor transportation and communication infrastructure. Although the majority of Vanuatu's population still lives in isolated rural areas, urbanization is increasing.

Program Focus

There is a growing awareness in Vanuatu that the education system is not meeting the social or economic needs of all people in the country. The government is also turning its attention to practical training and vocational education that will enhance the skills, self-sufficiency, and employability of young people. Moreover, the capacity of the government and civil society to provide services to rural populations is extremely limited. The Peace Corps has responded with a strategy that increases access to quality education, particularly in rural areas. It also addresses the needs of the Vanuatu people for training and service provision through nonformal community education and development activities that focus on income generation, food security, sus-

tainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and youth development. Volunteers also educate communities about disaster preparation to help them mitigate damage.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Volunteers promote sustainable farming practices and agroforestry to improve food security and income generation opportunities for Vanuatu's population. Volunteers also work with farming communities to expand opportunities for local value-added processing and marketing of crops. The Peace Corps program focuses on the production of higher value crops, such as vanilla, pepper, cocoa, and spices, as well as small livestock and staple foods. For instance, more than 20 Volunteers helped their communities and schools develop chicken egg-laying projects for income generation and to promote more balanced diets.

Business Development

Volunteers work with rural retail and marketing cooperatives to provide training in business and organizational management, bookkeeping, credit management, cooperative philosophy, and product diversification. They work with entrepreneurs and other clients to conduct business feasibility studies, start small businesses, identify local and regional markets, and undertake small-scale processing of local resources. Volunteers also promote the formation of small community savings-and-loan groups. The main target populations are youth and women. One Volunteer is helping to establish the first producer's organization of coffee growers enabling them to improve the quality of their produce and sell it at a competitive price with the effect of providing a sustainable source of income for their families.

Education

Volunteers serve either in primary and secondary schools or in community-based rural training centers, and their work has benefited more than 11,500 students and 450 teachers. Volunteers support the teaching of disadvantaged students in secondary schools, teaching math, science, information technology, and English. They also enhance the quality of education through teacher training, curriculum and resource development, and school-based strategic planning. For example, 12 Volunteers have helped community-managed rural training centers provide vocational and basic life skills to young people who cannot be accommodated in the secondary education system.

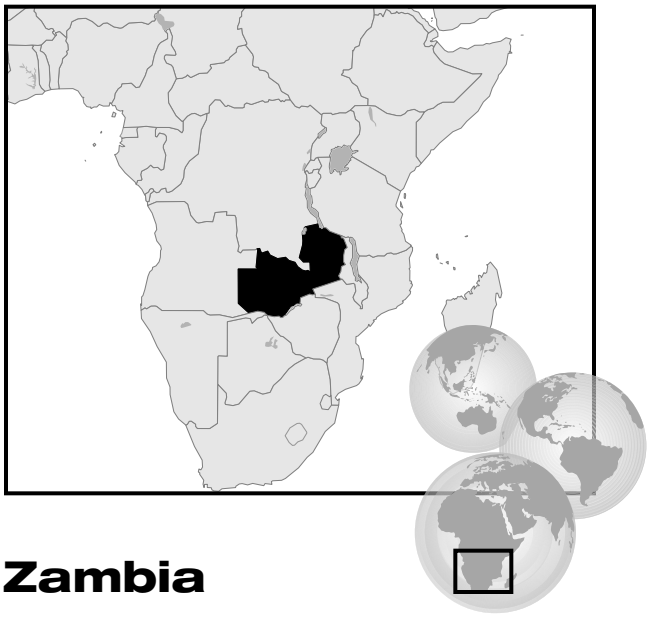
Environment

Communities have a strong interest in improving the management of their natural resources, including coral reefs, forests, wildlife, and agricultural lands. Volunteers work with communities to promote sustainable land-use practices, develop natural resource management plans, establish conservation areas, promote ecotourism, and create conservation enterprises. Most activities promote conservation and sustainable use while generating income for community members. Volunteers working on three islands this year helped their communities establish the first three marine-protected areas in the country, ensuring the sustainability of natural resources and the potential for tourist income generation.

The Peace Corps' disaster preparedness and mitigation project has inspired communities to raise awareness about natural disasters, produced risk assessment maps, and assisted community leaders in producing community disaster preparedness plans. This year, the Peace Corps helped Vanuatu respond to a devastating hurricane, providing the only comprehensive damage assessment so that government could effectively provide relief to the hardest-hit areas.

Youth

Volunteers work in both urban and rural settings to reach out-of-school youth, particularly those who are school dropouts or otherwise disadvantaged. Volunteers encourage youth to organize under the banner of the Vanuatu National Youth Council and work together to address their needs. They work on issues such as youth leadership, self-esteem, employability, food and livelihood security, HIV/AIDS awareness, basic literacy, conflict resolution, and culture. One Volunteer helped establish the first youth "drop-in" center in the northern provinces, providing opportunities for out-of-school youth to acquire income-generation skills and healthy attitudes.



Zambia

Capital ..... Lusaka

Population ..... 10 million

Annual per capita income $340

GDP growth 3.3%

Adult illiteracy rate ..... Male: 14%
Female: 26%

Infant mortality rate ..... 102 per 1,000 live births

Immunization rate ..... DPT: 78%
Measles: 85%

Foreign direct investment ..... $197 million

Access to safe water ..... Urban: 88%
Rural: 48%

HIV/AIDS prevalence 21.50%

Religions ..... Christianity
Indigenous beliefs
Islam
Hinduism

Official language ..... English

Anticipated Number of Volunteers

Calculated September 30 each year

	FY 2005	FY 2006
Volunteers	142	155
Program funds ($000)	3,061	3,230

Country Overview

Program dates	1993–present
Program sectors	Agriculture Education Environment Health and HIV/AIDS

The Republic of Zambia, formerly known as Northern Rhodesia, gained its independence from Britain in 1964. Kenneth Kaunda, the leader of the United National Independence Party, was named the first president and remained in power until 1991. After nearly three decades of one-party rule and worsening economic conditions, the Kaunda era came to an end. In November 1991, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) won Zambia's first free presidential and general elections since 1968. Frederick Chiluba was subsequently sworn in as the nation's second president and was reelected in 1996. He was succeeded by Levy Mwanawasa, also a member of the MMD, who was elected president in January 2002. Today, Zambia is a multiparty, participatory democracy.

Zambia is one of sub-Saharan Africa's most highly urbanized countries. Approximately half of the country's 10.2 million people are concentrated in a few urban zones strung along major transportation corridors. Unemployment and underemployment are serious problems, and Zambia has a relatively low per capita income. It has a mixed economy with a large urban public sector dominated by government, nonprofit nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and parastatal organizations, many of which have or are in the process of being privatized. Maize is the principle cash crop of a predominantly private rural agricultural sector.

Zambia contains one of the world's largest copper deposits. Historically, copper exports contributed to most of the country's foreign exchange earnings and provided the leading source of employment. The drastic decline of the copper market values in the mid 1970s, the slow rate of industrialization, and a high dependence on foreign imports drove Zambia's economy into an extended decline. However, Zambia remains a leading world producer of refined copper and cobalt, which together make up 95 percent of all exports.

Program Focus

In April 2004, the Peace Corps celebrated its 10th anniversary in Zambia. Peace Corps/Zambia opened its program in 1994 with a group of 12 water and sanitation/hygiene education Volunteers. In 1996, the program expanded to include a community action for health project and the rural aquaculture project. In 2003, a new education sector project was launched called Learning at Taonga Market (LTM). Using funding from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, an HIV/AIDS project began in late 2004. All Volunteers, regardless of sector, are trained in how to promote HIV/AIDS awareness.

Volunteer Focus

Agriculture

Volunteers are assisting the Department of Fisheries in the development of fish-farming projects aimed at improving livelihoods in rural communities. Volunteers provide technical assistance in establishing dams, furrows, fishponds, and integrated agriculture. In addition to providing an excellent source of nutrition for rural families, surplus fish and agricultural products are sold to provide substantial supplementary income. Volunteers also assist in enhancing development capacity of fish farming associations.

Education

Peace Corps Zambia's education project builds on the success of a national radio education program called "Learning at Taonga Market" (LTM). This interactive program, produced by the Zambian Ministry of Education, is broadcast over the national radio station and covers the primary school curriculum. The program provides a vehicle for the delivery of education that does not require a trained teacher or a school building, allowing for improved access to basic education for Zambia's most needy children. In 2004, the number of Volunteers increased to 17, and they continue to work with community partners in towns and rural villages to develop new sites, train mentors, and assist in the monitoring and evaluation of the project.

Environment

In 2000, the Zambian Wildlife Authority invited Peace Corps/Zambia to join a new environmental initiative to help communities living near national parks gain an economic stake and a voice in managing protected areas. Volunteers are helping to strengthen and facilitate the participation of rural communities in natural resource management and economic resource allocation. Volunteers have assisted more than 75 community groups in enhancing critical decision-making skills for this new responsibility. They have worked in 41 schools with 54 teachers to enhance environmental education curricula and delivered lessons to pupils in schools near national parks. Other Volunteer activities have addressed food insecurity and livelihood diversification within these communities, thus reducing pressure on park resources.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Volunteers work with counterparts from rural health centers to build and strengthen the capacity of neighborhood health committees to address health problems at the village level. Volunteers strengthen the skills of rural Zambians and facilitate better links among the committees, the rural health centers, and district health management boards. They also help communities implement cost-effective, sustainable health interventions.

Volunteers also work closely with neighborhood health committees to help village residents understand the role they can play HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support. They also enhance community awareness of good nutrition and food security as it relates to HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

"The zeal of the young people is apparent in Peace Corps Volunteers, who come as Americans but leave as ambassadors to Zambia. We stand shoulder to shoulder."

Dr. Nevers Mumba
Vice President, Republic of Zambia

Photo courtesy of the Washington, D.C. Convention and Tourism Corporation

Government Performance and Results Act

The Peace Corps' Performance Plans as Required Under the Government Performance and Results Act

FY 2004 Report, FY 2005 and FY 2006 Plans

Strategic Goal 1:

Assist interested countries with their identified needs by gradually expanding the existing number of Volunteers in the field at a rate consistent with funding levels and infrastructure support, up to 8,000 Volunteers by September 30, 2008.

Outcome Goals:

1.1 Maintain the approximate number of Volunteers in the field from the FY 2003 level of 7,533 to 8,000 (6.2 percent) by FY 2008, assuming full funding for FY 2006 and future requests, and incrementally expand Volunteer programming to include the development of innovative responses to natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

1.2 Increase the combined number of applications to the Peace Corps from underrepresented ethnic and age groups from 19 percent to 25 percent by FY 2008 in order to provide Volunteers to interested countries that better reflect American diversity.

1.3 Reduce Volunteers' overall 12-month early-termination (ET) rate by 2.5 percent from FY 2003 level of 11.6 percent to 9.1 percent by September 2008 through improved matching of Volunteers' skills and primary assignment, and improved satisfaction rate of Volunteer health and safety.

Performance Goal 1.1.1.

Incrementally increase in subsequent performance years Volunteer/trainees on board from the FY 2003 level of 7,533 to 8,000 (6.2 percent) by FY 2008.

Means and Strategies:

The Peace Corps will:

- refine recruitment business processes to make it easier for potential applicants to enter Peace Corps service;
- coordinate the increased use of returned Peace Corps Volunteers in awareness, recruitment, and retention activities for new applicants and Crisis Corps Volunteers;
- increase the number of Crisis Corps projects in humanitarian relief and responses to natural disasters;
- conduct annual public service announcement campaigns for radio, print, and television distribution;
- conduct strategic recruitment and media campaigns designed to cast a wide net for prospective Volunteer candidates at communities and campuses throughout the United States;
- increase the number of Volunteers working on HIV/AIDS activities, including the agency's involvement in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief;
- improve the functionality of Web-based application materials and expand the use of the Internet in marketing and retention activities; and
- identify new target markets and produce regionally appropriate marketing tools and other resources.

Verification and Validation:

Trainee input is tracked bimonthly and reported to the chief of staff by a group composed of staff from each of the three overseas Regions, the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, and the Office of Medical Services.

Performance Indicators 1.1.1.	FY 2004 actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
i. Number of new country entries	2	1	2
ii. Number of new country assessments	3	3	5
iii. Percentage of focus countries participating in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief	60%	90%	100%
iv. Number of Crisis Corps Volunteers responding to natural disasters or humanitarian crises	38	65	112
v. Overall traffic to website	7 million	7.3 million	7.7 million
vi. Online applications completed	10,062	10,300	10,600
vii. Increase number of inquires originating from website	147,872	155,000	160,000
viii. Rate of applications started vs. submitted	22%	22.5%	23%
ix. Value of earned/donated media based on $250K cost to produce (millions of dollars)	$7.9	$5*	$5*

* *Value of earned/donated media tied to when the material is produced. Goals for FY 2005 and FY 2006 reduced slightly based on placement of existing material from FY 2004 campaign.*

Performance Goal 1.2.1.

Increase the combined number of under-represented ethnic and age groups applying to the Peace Corps from 19 percent to 22 percent by FY 2006.

Means and Strategies:

The Peace Corps will:

- augment the use of targeted recruitment and communication strategies, which include multi-media campaigns to attract recruits requested by overseas posts, including minorities and others with needed skills;
- pursue marketing and recruiting initiatives that target colleges, universities, and community colleges with diverse populations, off-campus markets nationwide, and organizations serving the senior population, among others;
- increase the use of information technology to strengthen Web-based outreach to all groups and improve quality of contact information for minority recruitment; and
- implement recruitment techniques and materials that are specifically designed to attract greater numbers of minority applicants.

Verification and Validation:

The percentage of minority trainees has continued to rise over the FY 1999 level and is reflected in quarterly minority recruitment reports of the Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection.

Performance Indicators 1.2.1.	FY 2004 actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
i. Percentage of minority trainees	16.5%	Measured on actual data only. No targets established.	Measured on actual data only. No targets established.
ii. Recruitment and support efforts focusing on applicants over age 50, diverse ethnicities, backgrounds, and level of education	10 Diverse Conferences/ 5 Panel Presentations	10 Diverse Conferences/5 Panel Presentations	10 Diverse Conferences/5 Panel Presentations
iii. Percentage of Volunteers over age 50	5.8%	Measured on actual data only. No targets established.	Measured on actual data only. No targets established.
iv. Total visitors to website who access minority recruitment pages and/or scarce skills, family pages	304,336	350,000	400,000
v. Number of pieces of collateral used (i.e., all marketing material printed by Peace Corps) that target diverse audiences	2M*	1.2M	1.2M
vi. Number of articles placed in newspapers and other media that target diverse audiences	257**	150	175

* *Collateral marketing pieces used exceeded targeted goals (see table p. 220 in FY 2004 Performance Results).*

** *Placement of articles in FY 2004 far exceeded targeted goals (see table p. 220 in FY 2004 Performance Results).*

Performance Goal 1.3.1.

Reduce the overall 12-month Volunteer ET rate by 1.5 percent from FY 2003 level of 11.6 percent to 10.1 percent by September 2006.

Means and Strategies:

The Peace Corps will:

- develop and maintain systems to identify, collect and disseminate promising practices in programming and training from posts and other sources;
- promote and support the exchange of resources for enhancing programming and training effectiveness;
- develop manuals, tools, and resources, based on promising practices collected from the field and responding to needs expressed by posts; and
- develop materials and resources that address and integrate agency priorities.

Verification and Validation:

The regions will review and assess ET data with the Office of Policy, Planning, and Analysis, and report on results. The Peace Corps' Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research will monitor the production and quality of programming and training (including the quality of materials provided to posts) with the regions through review of annual reports and evaluations.

Performance Indicators 1.3.1.	FY 2004 actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
i. Percentage of sites described "very well," "well," or "adequately" prepared in the biennial Volunteer survey	71%	N/A*	80%
ii. Percentage of skills requests that align with available applicants	85%	90%	95%
iii. Percentage of Peace Corps project plans complete and current	50%	75%	95%
iv. Percentage of Peace Corps projects and training programs reviewed annually	100%**	95%	95%
v. Number of field-based project reviews and evaluations	29	30	30
vi. Number of project and training technical assistance events for posts	105	105	120

* *Volunteer survey is conducted biennially.*

** *Annual review of project and training programs exceeded expectations in FY 2004 (see table p. 221 in FY 2004 Performance Results).*

Strategic Goal 2

Improve the health and safety of Volunteers by improving the Volunteer health care satisfaction rate by 7 percent and increasing Volunteers' perceptions of their personal safety where they live by 3 percent by September 2008.

Outcome Goals:

1.1 Increase the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteers indicating feeling "well" or "completely" satisfied with their in-country health care from FY 2002 level of 75 percent to 82 percent by September 2008.

1.2 Increase the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteer survey responses indicating Volunteers feel safe "most of the time" where they live from FY 2002 level of 86 percent to 89 percent by September 2008.

Performance Goal 2.1.1.

Increase the percentage of respondents to the biennial Peace Corps Volunteer survey indicating feeling "well" or "completely" satisfied with their in-country health care by 5 percent from FY 2003 level of 75 percent to 80 percent by September 2006.

Means and Strategies:

The Peace Corps will:

- identify, in a timely manner, areas within the health care system that need improvement; and
- monitor the impact of strategies designed to improve its health care system.

Verification and Validation:

The Office of Medical Services will collect, analyze, and monitor statistics on specific health indicators to gauge the health of Volunteers and monitor the impacts of improvement strategies.

Performance Indicators 2.1.1.	FY 2004 actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
i. Percentage of Volunteers medically evacuated to Washington, D.C., reporting they are satisfied with their medical evacuation care as measured by the medevac survey	93%*	90%	95%
ii. Percentage of Volunteer respondents reporting health training as effective or very effective as measured by the biennial Volunteer survey	N/A	N/A	90%
iii. Incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases such as hepatitis A & B (measure is in cases per 100 Volunteer/trainee years)	0.0496	Target <0.05	Target <0.05
iv. Incidence of falciparum malaria in Africa region (measure is in cases per 100 Volunteer/trainee years)	1.2397	Target <6.0	Target <6.0

* *Satisfaction rate exceeded targeted goal for FY 2004 (see table p. 222 in FY 2004 Performance Results).*

Performance Goal 2.2.1.

Incrementally increase the percentage of respondents to the biennial Peace Corps Volunteer survey indicating that Volunteers feel safe most of the time at home by 2 percent from FY 2003 level of 86 percent to 88 percent by September 2006.

Means and Strategies:

The Peace Corps will:

- select Volunteer sites in communities that are stable and secure;
- through the Peace Corps safety and security officers, provide training and technical assistance so that posts meet compliance requirements;
- review communication and transportation systems to enhance Volunteer safety;
- conduct safety and security workshops for both overseas staff and Volunteers;
- conduct country assessments on safety and security concerns utilizing Peace Corps safety and security officers and State Department regional security officers in the field; and
- monitor post compliance with *Peace Corps Manual* Section 270 (MS 270)—Volunteer Safety and Security.

Verification and Validation:

The Peace Corps will track its progress in meeting safety and security requirements through mandatory post reports to the regional director on MS 270 compliance. In addition, the agency will monitor results from the biennial Volunteer survey regarding safety and security issues, as well as information reported in *Safety of the Volunteer*, the Peace Corps' annual report on safety and security incidents involving Volunteers.

Peace Corps country desk units will compile documentation that posts are meeting MS 270 compliance. The regional directors will work to ensure that posts receive the necessary resources to meet compliance goals.

Performance Indicators 2.2.1.	FY 2004 actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
i. Percentage of Volunteer pre-service training programs including safety training	96%	100%	100%
ii. Percentage of Volunteers demonstrating 10 safety and security competencies at end of pre-service training	80%	90%	100%
iii. Posts undergoing safety and security assessments	92%*	85%	95%
iv. Posts receiving Emergency Action Plan training	85%	90%	100%
v. Percentage of posts testing Emergency Action Plans at least once a year	100%	100%	100%
vi. Percentage of posts complying with all sections of MS 270, beginning July 2003	95%	95%	98%
vii. Percentage of Volunteer respondents reporting the safety and security portion of their pre-service training as "adequate," "effective" or "very effective" as measured by the biennial Volunteer survey	94%**	N/A	85%
viii. Percentage of Volunteer respondents reporting they were "somewhat," "considerably" or "completely" satisfied with support provided by Peace Corps staff for safety and security, as measured by the biennial Volunteer survey	88%**	N/A	85%

* *Safety and security assessments exceeded targeted goal for FY 2004; each post is assessed biennially (see table p. 224 in FY 2004 Performance Results).*

** *Volunteer responses exceeded targeted goal for FY 2004 (see table p. 224 in FY 2004 Performance Results).*

Strategic Goal 3

Improve Americans' understanding of other peoples by increasing returned Peace Corps Volunteers' (RPCVs) visits to schools and community organizations by 28 percent by September 2008.

Outcome Goal:

1.1 Increase RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 28 percent from FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 9,000 by September 2008.

Performance Goal 3.1.1.

Increase RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 17 percent from FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 8,200 by September 2006.

Means and Strategies:

The Peace Corps will:

- continue to sponsor and engage participation of returned and current Volunteers in Peace Corps Week activities;
- sponsor events and provide services to help first-year returned Volunteers market skills and experience derived from their Peace Corps service to U.S. employers; and
- improve communication with and information services to returned Volunteers, especially through the use of technology, to increase their awareness of Peace Corps activities and engagement in third goal initiatives.

Verification and Validation:

The Office of Domestic Programs will monitor and assess implementation of events and delivery of services to ensure increased RPCV involvement and participation in improving Americans' understanding of other peoples.

Performance Indicators 3.1.1.	FY 2004 actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
i. RPCVs participating in Peace Corps Week activities	7,031	7,800	8,200
ii. RPCVs participating in career events	915	950	950
iii. RPCVs e-mailed the RPCV newsletter	7,702	10,000	15,000
iv. Percentage of active Volunteers (not trainees) during the year participating in the Coverdell World Wise Schools (CWWS) one-to-one correspondence match program	47%	53%	53%
v. Average visitors per month to the CWWS section of the Peace Corps website	474,574	500,000	550,000

Strategic Goal 4

Reduce the Peace Corps overall response time for those applying to Peace Corps by 5 percent from FY 2003 level of 223 days to 212 days by September 2008.

Outcome Goal:

1.1 Reduce overall Peace Corps applicant response time by 5 percent by September 2008 through evaluation and integration of new technology and recruitment and placement of staff structures.

Performance Goal 4.1.1.

Reduce overall response time to applicants by 3 percent from FY 2003 level of 223 days to 215 days by September 2006.

Means and Strategies:

The Peace Corps will:

- institutionalize and enhance Web-based application procedures for prospective recruits;
- pilot at each regional recruitment office a variety of innovative Internet outreach, visibility, recruitment, and applicant retention activities, including those oriented toward minority audiences;
- continue to modify the Peace Corps' external website to provide a more citizen-centered experience, including expanded country and assignment information;
- institutionalize and enhance Web-based medical screening procedures for prospective recruits;
- institutionalize customer service improvements and simplify process for nominating applicants to Peace Corps programs;
- strengthen outreach for hard-to-fill countries, including those in Central Asia; and
- use the website as a tool in training, educating, and preparing Volunteers for service.

Verification and Validation:

The Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection will manage and evaluate these strategies, using (among other tools) the Peace Corps online application manager system that tracks online applications from the initiation of the process to submission of the application.

Performance Indicators 4.1.1.	FY 2004 actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
i. Percentage of applicants who complete their Volunteer applications over the Internet	75%	77%	80%
ii. Percentage of applicants who complete their health status review for medical screening over the Internet	86%*	78%	80%
iii. Application to nomination (number of days)	65	64	63
iv. Nomination to medical qualification (number of days)	75	74	74
v. Medical kit received by applicant to medical qualification (number of days)	48	47	46
vi. Medical qualification to invitation (number of days)	35	34	32

* *Health status reviews completed on the Internet exceeded targeted goal for FY 2004 (see table p. 227 in FY 2004 Performance Results).*

The Peace Corps' Performance Results as Required Under the Government Performance and Results Act

FY 2004 Results*

In response to President Bush's challenge to increase the size of the Peace Corps, the agency is focusing on growth while providing a positive experience for all Volunteers in a safe and secure environment. This section discusses the four strategic outcome goals the Peace Corps seeks to achieve from FY 2003 through FY 2008. Each strategic outcome goal has a set of measurable performance goals with accompanying means and strategies. Also discussed are their relationship to the agency's annual performance goals in the performance budget; key factors potentially affecting their achievement; and the methods used to assess that achievement.

Strategic Goal 1

Assist interested countries with their identified needs by increasing Volunteers in the field from 7,533 in FY 2003 to 11,250 by FY 2008, at a rate consistent with funding levels and infrastructure support.

Strategic Goal 2

Improve the health and safety of Volunteers by improving the Volunteer healthcare satisfaction rate by 7 percent, from 75 percent in FY 2002 to 82 percent in FY 2008; and increasing Volunteers' perceptions of their personal safety where they live by 3 percent, from 86 percent in FY 2002 to 89 percent by FY 2008.

Strategic Goal 3

Improve Americans' understanding of other peoples by increasing returned Peace Corps Volunteers' visits to schools and community organizations by 28 percent, from 7,000 in FY 2003 to 9,000 by FY 2008.

Strategic Goal 4

Reduce the Peace Corps' overall response time for those applying to the Peace Corps by 5 percent, from 222 days in FY 2003 to 212 days by FY 2008.

* *As reported in the FY 2004 Peace Corps Performance and Accountability Report released on November 15, 2004.*

As indicated earlier, the agency's FY 2004 performance plan results are based on reliable, actual data and/or a combination of actual data through most of the year with an estimate of results that covers the last quarter of the fiscal year. For example, as of October 12, 2004, the agency had received approximately 1,350 survey responses to the Peace Corps Volunteer survey via the Internet. The data from the online responses are instantly accessible, and have been used to create the responses in the performance report for questions pertaining to the Volunteer survey. However, these results are incomplete, as approximately 1,200 paper surveys have been received but not analyzed. Another 800 to 1,000 more responses are expected over the next couple of weeks. Thus, the results used to generate these findings represent only about 30 percent of the expected survey responses. Until the agency has a complete collection and analysis of all survey data, results are preliminary, incomplete, and could change.

Since we are in a transition year, and this document is Peace Corps' first ever Performance and Accountability Report (PAR), the agency has changes and improvements that it plans to undertake during FY 2005 to improve the quality, completeness, and accuracy of future PAR submissions. For example, the 2004 biennial Volunteer survey is scheduled to be tabulated and published in January 2005; the timing of this survey should be realigned to provide data for the PAR.

Strategic Goal 1:

Assist interested countries with their identified needs by increasing Volunteers in the field from the FY 2003 level of 7,533 to 11,250 by September 2008, at a rate consistent with funding levels and infrastructure support.

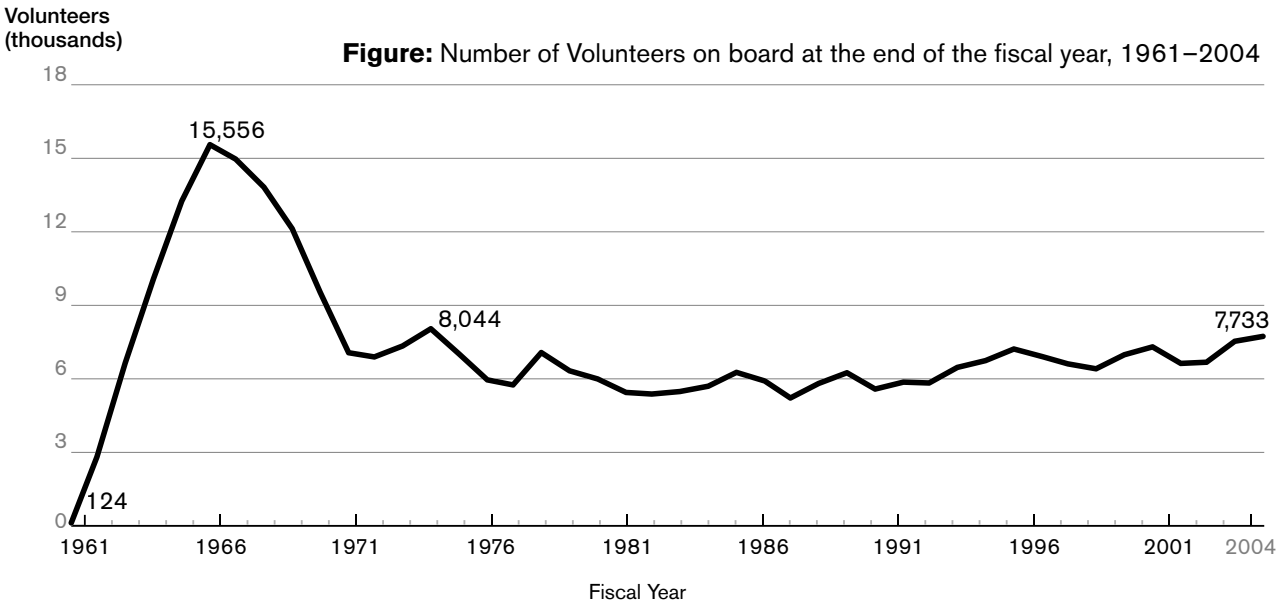
Outcome Goals:

1.1 Increase Volunteers in the field from the FY 2003 level of 7,533 to 11,250 (49 percent) by FY 2008, assuming full funding for FY 2005 and future requests.

1.2 Increase the combined number of applications to Peace Corps from underrepresented ethnic and age groups from 19 percent to 25 percent by FY 2008 to provide Volunteers to interested countries that better reflect American diversity.

1.3 Reduce overall Volunteers' 12-month early-termination (ET) rate by 2.5 percent from FY 2003 level of 11.6 percent to 9.1 percent by September 2008 through improved matching of Volunteers' skills and primary assignment, and improved satisfaction rate of Volunteer health and safety.

Figure: Number of Volunteers on board at the end of the fiscal year, 1961–2004



Performance Goal 1.1.1.

Incrementally increase in subsequent performance years Volunteers/trainees on board from the FY 2003 level of 7,533 to 9,300 (23 percent) by FY 2006.

FY 2004 Goal	FY 2004 Actual
7,840	7,733[1]

Results and Analysis

The Peace Corps strives to recruit and place the most qualified and diverse Volunteers effectively and efficiently. In FY 2004, the agency came very close to achieving this goal—7,733 is the highest number of Volunteers in 29 years. However, the current appropriations levels and trends require a revision of the agency's strategic plan for growth.

Performance Indicators 1.1.1.*	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
i. New country entries	0	2
ii. New country assessments	2	3
iii. Countries requesting programs	10	19
iv. Overall traffic to website	6 million	7 million
v. Online applications completed	8,000	10,062
vi. Inquiries originating from website	125,000	147,872
vii. Rate of applications started vs. submitted	22%	22%
viii. Value of earned/donated media (based on $250K cost to produce)	$8 million	$7.9 million
Resources Needed:		
Dollars (in thousands)	229,033	226,147
Full-time equivalents	922	875

* *All data in Performance Indicators 1.1.1 as of September 2004.*

[1] *The number of Volunteers/trainees on board is calculated on September 30 of the fiscal year.*

Results and Analysis

The Peace Corps received more requests from countries than expected, including preliminary inquiries on programming options and possible locations. Follow-up assessments are being planned for FY 2005, but these will depend on FY 2005 appropriations. However, the rising demand for Peace Corps and its programs throughout the developing world supports the agency's goal of increasing Volunteers. One recent request came from Indonesia, reflecting an appreciation of Peace Corps by predominantly Muslim countries.

There was an increase in traffic to the Peace Corps' Internet site during FY 2004. Several factors contributed to the agency exceeding its target by nearly 25 percent. A redesign of the Peace Corps website and additional content placed on the Web has attracted many new and repeat visitors. A successful new marketing campaign also funneled additional visitors to the website. In addition, the current international climate has increased Americans' awareness of global issues. The Peace Corps provides an ideal way for Americans to exercise their sense of service and ambassadorship, and the successful reception of the marketing campaign, Internet resources, and related materials are key indicators of that success.

Along with visits to the website, nearly every aspect of the interactive site saw similar increases. Online applications were higher then expected. Inquiries about the Peace Corps made through the website were 33 percent higher than expected. The Peace Corps will review its goals and targets for subsequent fiscal year performance plans in light of these unexpected, positive results.

Performance Goal 1.2.1.

Increase the combined number of underrepresented ethnic and age groups applying to the Peace Corps from 19 percent to 22 percent by FY 2006.

FY 2004 Goal	FY 2004 Actual
20%	19.6%[2]

Results and Analysis

While working to increase its numbers to meet the President's desire for growth, the agency is also attempting to increase underrepresented, racial, ethnic, and age groups applying to Peace Corps. This effort is essential to ensure that Peace Corps truly reflects the diversity of America.

2004 was the third year in a row in which the number of diverse applicants to the Peace Corps increased. Although FY 2004 results fell a bit short of the goal, the agency still saw an overall increase in the number of diverse applicants from 2,195 at the end of FY 2003 to 2,596 at the end of FY 2004. In comparison, at the end of FY 2002, 1,931 of all applicants were of diverse backgrounds.

At the end of FY 2002, the agency formed a working group on overcoming barriers to Volunteer service and establishing priorities to increase recruitment. An important priority of this working group is to significantly increase the number of diverse applicants. For example, the working group has focused on increasing diversity outreach through targeted local recruiting venues, conferences, publications, and website materials, on having web based materials during the application phase that increases awareness, on giving credit for service by colleges and universities; on having non-credit certificate programs for service that facilitates employment post service; on targeting community college students and expanding country programs for them, and on reviewing readjustment allowance levels following their service.

[2] *7.2 percent of all applicants did not specify their ethnicity.*

Performance Indicators 1.2.1.	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual
i. Percentage of minority trainees	Measured on actual data only (no targets established)	16.5%
ii. Recruitment and support efforts focusing on applicants over age 50, diverse ethnicities, backgrounds, and level of education	Expand recruitment and support for a diverse range of applicants and Volunteers, including seniors	10 diverse conferences, 5 panel presentations
iii. Percentage of Volunteers over age 50	Measured on actual data only (no targets established)	5.8%
iv. Visitors to website who access minority recruitment pages and/or scarce skills, family pages	200,000	304,336 *
v. Collateral pieces used (i.e., all marketing material printed by Peace Corps) that target diverse audiences	1 million	2 million *
vi. Articles placed in newspapers and other media that target diverse audiences	6	138 *
Resources Needed:		
Dollars (in thousands)	447	464
Full-time equivalents	4	4

* *Data as of August 31, 2004.*

Results and Analysis

It is critically important to the Peace Corps to attract underrepresented racial, ethnic and age group applicants. The redesigned website, with additional content targeted to underrepresented audiences, and the agency's overall marketing campaigns have attracted many new and repeat visitors to the website. This traffic is part of the significant growth in overall traffic to the website. The synergy of a new marketing campaign, international climate, improved Internet technology, and wide-reaching content again has caused results to exceed expectations. Based on this experience, the Peace Corps will review its goals for subsequent fiscal year performance plans.

The Peace Corps has targeted diverse audiences in all of its marketing materials, which were created for a variety of audiences. As this was the first year of a marketing campaign with all new materials, it was difficult to predict what number of pieces would be used during the year. Predictions based on previous recruitment materials generated these fiscal year goals; subsequent plans will allow the Peace Corps to review and revise targets with better information.

Performance Goal 1.3.1.

Reduce the overall 12-month Volunteer early termination (ET) rate by 1.5 percent, from FY 2003 level of 11.6 percent to 10.1 percent by September 2006.

FY 2004 Goal	FY 2004 Actual
11.1%	11.0%

Results and Analysis

The ET rate is declining, which is an improvement sought in the strategic plan. The Peace Corps developed a new survey instrument to collect data not previously captured from Volunteers and trainees who ET. This looks at reasons why an individual terminates early and will provide feedback to posts and headquarters to better understand and analyze this issue.

Early termination and the reasons for it can be complex. The additional focus on the subject, and the additional data being collected, will allow the agency to adjust recruitment information, pre-service training, in-service training, site and program development, and other factors that may contribute to ET rates.

Performance Indicators 1.3.1.	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual/ Estimate
i. Percentage of sites described as "very well," "well," or "adequately" prepared in the biennial Volunteer survey	75%	N/A*
ii. Percentage of skill requests that align with available applicants	85%	85%
iii. Percentage of Peace Corps project plans complete and current	50%	50%
iv. Percentage of Peace Corps projects and training programs reviewed annually	95%	100%
v. Field-based project reviews and evaluations	30	29
vi. Project and training technical assistance events for posts	105	105
Resources Needed:		
Dollars (in thousands)	6,937	6,699
Full-time equivalents	78	79

* *Final tabulation of the results of the 2004 biennial Peace Corps Volunteer survey is scheduled for January 2005. Thus, it is not possible to report on any of the indicators that rely on survey results. The agency plans to adjust the timing of future surveys to align with the timing of the PAR. At the time of producing this PAR, the agency had received approximately 30 percent of expected responses. This note applies to all indicators that rely on the biennial Peace Corps Volunteer survey for data.*

Results and Analysis

FY 2004 results of the work to reduce the ET rate were positive, as Peace Corps focused on training, matching skills with projects, and reviewing programs implemented in the field. Early termination is a complex issue, involving almost every aspect of the recruitment, application, training, and Volunteer experience. Significant attention was placed on this area in FY 2004, and the Peace Corps plans to continue to review and modify indicators to reflect the data we receive.

The agency will review and analyze the results of "i." above once the biennial Volunteer survey results are available—any lack of performance will be analyzed and addressed.

Strategic Goal 2:

Improve the health and safety of Volunteers by improving the Volunteer healthcare satisfaction rate by 7 percent and increasing Volunteers' perceptions of their personal safety where they live by 3 percent by September 2008.

Outcome Goals:

1.1 Increase the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteers indicating feeling "well" or "completely" satisfied with their in-country health care from the FY 2002 level of 75 percent to 82 percent by September 2008.

1.2 Increase the percentage of Peace Corps Volunteer survey responses indicating Volunteers feel safe "most of the time" where they live from FY 2002 level of 86 percent to 89 percent by September 2008.

Performance Goal 2.1.1.

Increase the percentage of respondents to the biennial Peace Corps Volunteer survey indicating feeling "well" or "completely" satisfied with their in-country health care by 5 percent, from FY 2003 level of 75 percent to 80 percent by September 2006.

FY 2004 Goal	FY 2004 Actual
78%	N/A[3]

Results and Analysis

The health, safety, and security of every Volunteer is the Peace Corps' highest priority and this is reflected in the agency's strategic plan. Greater emphasis on this priority in FY 2004 has placed increased attention on training, both before and after Volunteers travel overseas to their posts.

Actual results for FY 2004 will only be available by January 2005 because the biennial Volunteer survey is still in the process of tabulation and analysis. When the results become available to the agency, attention to this area will be made to ensure any lack of performance is analyzed, and addressed.

Performance Indicators 2.1.1.	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual/Estimate
i. Percentage of Volunteers medically evacuated to Washington, D.C., reporting they are satisfied with their medical evacuation care as measured by the medevac survey	95%	93%
ii. Percentage of Volunteer respondents reporting health training as effective or very effective as measured by the biennial Volunteer survey	85%	N/A*
iii. Incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases such as hepatitis A & B (measure is in cases per 100 Volunteer/trainee years)	Target <0.05	0.0496
iv. Incidence of falciparum malaria in Africa region (measure is in cases per 100 Volunteer/trainee years)	Target <6.0	1.2397
Resources Needed:		
Dollars (in thousands)	57,602	57,604
Full-time equivalents	103	90

* *See note for Performance Indicators 1.3.1., p. 221. Additionally, the 2002 Volunteer survey questioned overall physical health. In an effort to further understand how the Volunteers feel about their care, the 2004 survey makes a distinction between mental and physical health. Thus, the results will not be totally comparative—the agency will review this performance goal in FY 2005.*

[3] *See note for Performance Indicators 1.3.1., p. 219*

Results and Analysis

The results of FY 2004 medevac surveys were 2 percent lower than the FY 2004 goal; this small difference can be attributed to the overall circumstances of each situation. A medical evacuation is a stressful time, and Peace Corps does everything it can to ensure the safety and health of its Volunteers. Reviews will be made of the survey results to identity any trends and address any needs for additional training. The agency will also review the survey instrument to ensure it is appropriately designed and executed. Currently, 5 out of 21 questions ask the medevac Volunteer about the quality of their medevac care.

The incidence of falciparum malaria exceeds the FY 2004 goal for several reasons. First, the medication is effective. Also, Peace Corps medical officers provide comprehensive malaria education to Volunteers, and those Volunteers are complying with that training.

Performance Goal 2.2.1.

Incrementally increase the percentage of respondents to the biennial Peace Corps Volunteer survey indicating that Volunteers feel safe most of the time at home by 2 percent, from FY 2003 level of 86 percent to 88 percent by September 2006.

FY 2004 Goal	FY 2004 Actual
87%	N/A[4]

Results and Analysis

The safety and security of every Volunteer is the Peace Corps' highest priority and is reflected as such in the agency's strategic plan. As shown in this measurement, this emphasis is paying off with Volunteers feeling safe and confidant in their overseas homes. In light of the current global climate, this achievement is especially notable.

In FY 2004, all posts received a standardized template for an emergency action plan (EAP) and standard operating procedures that accompany that plan. The agency wants them to be fully operational by March 2005. This will help ensure continuous testing, monitoring, and operations of all emergency plans in the agency. Also in 2004, EAPs were placed in an electronic format allowing for easier transmittal and tracking. During emergencies, headquarters can receive and transmit the latest information electronically, including consolidation points and maps for all Volunteers. This is the first time the agency has achieved this interactive emergency operations system.

[4] *See note for Performance Indicators 1.3.1., p. 221.*

Performance Indicators 2.2.1.	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual/Estimate
i. Percentage of Volunteer pre-service training programs including safety training	90%	100%*
ii. Percentage of Volunteers demonstrating 10 safety and security competencies at end of pre-service training	75%	80%
iii. Posts undergoing safety and security assessments	75%	92%
iv. Posts receiving emergency action plan training	85%	85%
v. Percentage of posts testing emergency action plans at least once a year	95%	100%
vi. Percentage of posts complying with all sections of MS 270, beginning July 2003	95%	95%
vii. Percentage of Volunteer respondents reporting the safety and security portion of their pre-service training as "adequate," "effective," or "very effective" as measured by the biennial Volunteer survey	85%	N/A**
viii. Percentage of Volunteer respondents reporting they were "somewhat," "considerably," or "completely" satisfied with support provided by Peace Corps staff for safety and security, as measured by the biennial Volunteer survey	85%	N/A**
Resources Needed:		
Dollars in thousands	9,668	9,598
Full-time equivalents	12	11

* *Estimate based on FY 2003 Training Status Reports (TSR) results; FY 2004 TSR results will be available in the first quarter of 2005.*

** *See note for Performance Indicators 1.3.1., p.221.*

Results and Analysis

The Office of Safety and Security is responsible for several training and review programs. Each region also continually reiterates the agency's emphasis on safety and security. FY 2004 reports indicate that this vigilance has been both meaningful and successful.

Strategic Goal 3:

Improve Americans' understanding of other peoples by increasing returned Peace Corps Volunteers' (RPCVs) visits to schools and community organizations by 28 percent by September 2008.

Outcome Goal:

1.1 Increase RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 28 percent, from FY 2003 level 7,000 to 9,000 by September 2008.

Performance Goal 3.1.1.

Increase RPCV visits to schools and organizations by 17 percent, from the FY 2003 level of 7,000 to 8,200 by September 2006.

FY 2004 Goal	FY 2004 Actual
7,400	7,031

Results and Analysis

RPCV visits to schools and organizations in FY 2004 were at the highest level in the program's history. Though the agency fell slightly short of its projected goal, it has continued to witness a modest but steady growth in participation in Peace Corps Week (the anniversary devoted to RPCV outreach to schools, community centers, libraries, etc.). Peace Corps Week participation is driven by RPCV participation.

One factor that impacts the performance in this measure is the number of RPCVs that give talks to schools and organizations, but do not report these interactions to the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps is taking steps to better capture this information and to gain a clearer picture of the impact RPCVs are having on improving Americans' understanding of other peoples.

Improvements in gathering and maintaining contact information will allow the Peace Corps to organize activities for, and collect information from, Peace Corps Volunteers. Technology should make it easier to facilitate this, so improvements in meeting this goal are expected.

Performance Indicators 3.1.1.	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual*
i. RPCVs participating in Peace Corps Week activities	8,000	7,031
ii. RPCVs participating in career events	800	915
iii. RPCVs e-mailed the RPCV newsletter	7,000	7,702
iv. Percentage of active Volunteers (not trainees) during the year participating in the Coverdell World Wise Schools (CWWS) one-to-one correspondence match program	53%	47%
v. Average visitors per month to the CWWS section of the Peace Corps website	350,000	474,574
Resources Needed:		
Dollars (in thousands)	1,451	1,671
Full-time equivalents	18	16

* *Data as of early September 2004.*

Results and Analysis

Though the number of RPCV visits to schools and organizations in FY 2004 is the highest level ever recorded, much information is not being captured. Improvements in communication and database techniques will continue to make that task easier. In addition, more RPCVs than anticipated participated in a variety of career events, indicating a commitment to the agency's third goal. Although the Peace Corps exceeded its goal regarding the RPCV newsletter by about 10 percent, attaining next year's goal will require a concerted effort to build the database of e-mail addresses.

Forty-seven percent of active Volunteers participate in the CWWS match program. The absolute number of Volunteers participating in this program has not fallen. Transferring the application form for the correspondence match program to the online Volunteer toolkit should increase the number of Volunteers. The percentage in FY 2004 may have fallen due to the number of program closings, suspensions, and interruptions or to an anomaly with the new system reporting overall number of Volunteers.

The average number of visitors to the website as measured by page-view figures between October 2003 and August 2004 was 474,574, far exceeding the goal. This is attributed to user-friendly cosmetic and organizational changes to the website and the introduction of enhanced curriculum materials and programs. Plans are in place to continue adding new content and marketing it widely in FY 2005, which should increase visitors to the site.

Strategic Goal 4:

Reduce the Peace Corps overall response time for those applying to the Peace Corps by 5 percent, from FY 2003 level of 222 days to 212 days by September 2008.

Outcome Goal:

1.1 Reduce overall Peace Corps applicant response time by 5 percent by September 2008 through evaluation and integration of new technology and recruitment and placement of staff structures.

Performance Goal 4.1.1.

Reduce overall response time to applicants by 3 percent, from FY 2003 level of 222 days to 216 days by September 2006.

FY 2004 Goal	FY 2004 Estimated
220	N/A[5]

Results and Analysis

The FY 2004 overall response time is an estimate based on the best available data. Changes in the online application and status check systems occurred in September 2004, with a launch of the online application system hosted by a new vendor. The new system will improve the timeliness and accuracy of data, and it will be a key tool in tracking this performance goal. It will be used to integrate the measurement of the various stages that compose overall response time.

In 2002, a task force was convened to look at ways to decrease the number of days that prospective Volunteer candidates spent in the application process. This task force documented the number of days in each of the following stages of the application process from application through invitation (to a Volunteer assignment).

[5] *The Peace Corps does not currently have a system to track this performance goal other than ad hoc, partially anecdotal data. The agency plans to develop a tracking system in FY 2005.*

In 2004, the agency initiated the process standardization and integration project (PSIP) and conducted a business practices survey. The results of this survey led to the creation of a test site in Rosslyn, Virginia to determine which recruitment practices in the application-to-nomination process should be standardized and streamlined. The agency expects results from this test in FY 2005. Additionally, the PSIP is expected to help the agency develop a better system to ensure accurate measurement of the average time applicants are spending in the process.

Performance Indicators 4.1.1.	FY 2004 Target	FY 2004 Actual*
i. Percentage of applicants who complete their Volunteer applications over the Internet	75%	75%
ii. Percentage of applicants who complete their health status review for medical screening over the Internet	73%	86%
iii. Average months between application and departure for overseas assignment	9.5	N/A**
Resources Needed:		
Dollars (in thousands)	1,822	1,493
Full-time equivalents	4	4

* *See note for Performance Indicators 1.3.1., p. 221.*

** *Data as of early September 2004.*

Results and Analysis

The September 2004 launch of the new online application system should further improve the overall application process and timeliness. Already, the health status review (HSR) is ahead of schedule, due to the solid technology and process behind it. HSRs completed online have dramatically surpassed the 2004 goal. Persons of all ages have adapted to using the Web for interactive purposes, and the HSR is well-formatted and easy to fill out.

Similar gains are expected in other aspects of the application process. As the data are collected in the following fiscal years, the targets will be reviewed and modified to coincide with the new performance.

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