

White House Cites Peace Corps and VISTA as Great Human Resources

In a statement issued at the White House on March 8, President Carter commemorated the 17th anniversary of Peace Corps and the 13th anniversary of VISTA.

The statement, which follows, comes during Peace Corps/VISTA Awareness Month, ACTION's month-long recruitment and public information campaign. Throughout March, senior staff will be on the road for 39 full working days visiting 130 campuses in 30 cities nationwide. They will be interviewed on local radio and TV shows, for major newspapers and will attend special receptions planned by former volunteers in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Madison, and Minneapolis.

Other events include 500 television public service announcements being broadcast nationwide featuring Mrs. Lillian Carter, speaking on Peace Corps and VISTA service, and Sam Brown's tentative appearance on a major, national talk show to discuss new directions within the agency.

Following is President Carter's statement commemorating the anniversaries of Peace Corps and VISTA:

Seventeen years ago this month, President Kennedy signed the Executive Order that created the Peace Corps. Since then, tens of thousands of Volunteers have worked in the developing world, serving their host countries and serving this nation as well.

Thirteen years ago, the first VISTA Volunteers began their work in the poorest and most isolated communities in our nation.

The spirit of Peace Corps and VISTA springs from the deepest wells in our culture, from the reasoned and strongly felt impulses of our people to share with their neighbors their caring and their labor. Peace Corps and VISTA and the thousands of other voluntary associations in this country are our greatest human resource in the effort to provide for the human needs of our neighbors on this earth.

These associations of Volunteers, including the Peace Corps and VISTA, represent our best offering to communities across the nation and around the world.

I ask the American people to join me in commemoration of the thousands of our citizens of all ages who have served in these and similar programs, and call upon you to support the voluntary efforts which are so important both to our own nation and the rest of the world.

YCS Project Begins: Mutually Beneficial to Volunteers and Community

The Youth Community Service (YCS) project was officially launched by ACTION Director Sam Brown in Syracuse, N.Y. on March 9. On March 10, ACTION held a special briefing in the New Executive Office Building, Washington on the YCS project for congressional staffs and government officials interested in the youth program.

In order to operate YCS, ACTION applied for and received an \$8 million grant from the Department of Labor under the Youth Employment Act of 1977. YCS will provide full-year service opportunities for up to 1,650 persons aged 16-21 years who reside in the Syracuse metropolitan area and who are looking for work.

The program benefits both the youth and the community by providing needed and meaningful services to the community while simultaneously offering young people opportunities for further education. Volunteers will choose their placements from opportunities developed within local nonprofit organizations, institutions, or social service agencies which have identified specific assignments for volunteers to accomplish during their year of service. There are no "make-work" jobs for volunteers.

All of the volunteer assignments will respond to basic human social and environmental needs, particularly relating to low-income community residents. Some typical volunteer assignments might include work in neighborhood revitalization, emergency home repair, recreation and arts, home health care, justice and legal rights and specialized transportation systems for the elderly or handicapped.

The YCS program will be administered by the National Youth Community Service Demonstration Project/Syracuse, a nonprofit organization run by a 21-person board of directors which includes representatives from city, county, business, civic and religious organizations and young people in the Syracuse area. YCS/Syracuse is responsible to ACTION, as a grantee of a federal agency.

Syracuse was selected as the site of the pilot project primarily because the area comes close to being an average American urban community. Among a youth population of 52,221 from a total population of 472,746, 22.6 percent of the youths in the labor force are unemployed. The unemployment rate for nonwhite youths is 46.9. For all non-high school graduates the estimate is 44.1 percent. Residents of the county are white, black, American Indian, Puerto Rican, and are from various ethnic groups.

Each YCS volunteer will participate in 30-40 days of group and individual learning activities during his or her year of service. Individualized study and training plans will enable the volunteers to learn from their volunteer experience and to develop a sense of career direction.

During service, work station supervisors will help the volunteers to periodically assess their personal progress, identify learning needs and select appropriate training as necessary. At the close of service, volunteers will participate in group learning sessions that will assist them in developing long-term career plans, to contact future employers or to enter formal education programs.

Volunteers will work fulltime and receive an annual stipend of \$4,056 or \$156 every two weeks for their services. Education and the development of skills are important aspects of the program as well. Each volunteer accrues an educational fund of \$44 per month or a total of \$400 at the end of service which may be spent on further training or education.

David Muchnick, an attorney and former faculty member of the New School for Social Research N.Y.C., has been named YCS demonstration project director. Amelia Greiner has been selected project director for the YCS Syracuse board.

YCS Project Brings Together Interior and ACTION in Cooperative Endeavor

As part of the Youth Community Service (YCS) program's interest in responding to basic human, social and environmental needs, ACTION recently entered into an agreement with the Interior Department's Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service to place YCS volunteers in urban recreation projects.

The agreement was signed by ACTION Director Sam Brown and Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) Director and Deputy Director Chris Delaporte and Meg Maguire in a special ceremony on February 24 in Brown's office.

HCRS has pledged \$25,000 to assist in the recreational aspects of the YCS demonstration project in Syracuse. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service will provide technical assistance in working out the details of the program, training supervisors, and assigning experts to work with ACTION and YCS program people to develop recreational positions that can be successfully filled by youths. Such positions might be at social service agencies, parks departments, or arts agencies in the Syracuse area, stated HCRS Deputy Director Meg Maguire.

She explained further that she sees the cooperative venture between HCRS and ACTION as an excellent one. "The agreement combines the concerns of all who have an interest in the productive use of young people in job situations."

Encouraging Voluntarism is OVCP Focus

In carrying out one of the major recommendations of Sam Brown's August 22 memo to staff regarding new policy directions for ACTION, a new Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation (OVCP) has been established. Mary King, who is serving as the office's interim acting director, said the creation of the office is a major step toward expanding and improving ACTION's mandate to support and encourage voluntary action at home and abroad. The office will accomplish this by serving as a contact point with the public and private volunteer sector, former volunteers, and by providing technical assistance and developmental funding and advocacy for strengthening and stimulating voluntary action.

Functions which were previously found in the Personnel Management Division, Special Volunteer Projects, Multilateral and Special Programs, OPP's Policy Development area and the former Office of Special Affairs have now been transferred to the Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation.

Barbara Sugarman and Francis Luzzatto have been named directors of the office's Operations and Technical Assistance Divisions. As director of the former division, Sugarman will manage the Statewide grant program, some aspects of domestic technical assistance, informational linkage with the private voluntary sector, federal interagency coordination, and special projects, as assigned.

The Technical Assistance Division, directed by Luzzatto, will be responsible for administering the Former Volunteer Project, Peace Corps Partnership Program, volunteer outplacement counseling, mini-grants program, domestic and international technical assistance to volunteer-sending organizations, and an appropriate technology information exchange program.

Mary King has appointed Ken Hill to provide daily administrative and managerial guidance in the interim period until a permanent director is appointed. Mr. Hill will also continue to coordinate the agency's reorganization project.

Issues and Answers at OAVP Congressional Hearings

The current series of Congressional authorization, appropriations and oversight hearings has generated a number of questions and answers. Some of those relating to FGP, but also SCP, are reprinted here.

Q. Is an increase in the volunteer stipend mandated?

A. Direct benefits provided to Foster Grandparents and to Senior Companions to enable them to volunteer without cost to themselves take three forms. First, is the stipend at \$32.00 a week. That sum was established when FGP was identified as an income supplement program in 1968. In 1969 FGP was established by legislation as a volunteer program.

Second, the allowances for transportation, meals, physical examinations, accident and liability insurance, and uniforms have been increased in response to increased costs.

The third relates to Sec. 418 of ACTION's legislation, P.L. 93-113, which includes an income-disregard provision. As a consequence FGP and SCP volunteers pay no federal or state income taxes and have no FICA deductions. In addition, since the stipend is not regarded as a wage or compensation for any purpose, their eligibility is preserved for Medicaid, full Social Security and SSI entitlements, food stamps, public housing, winterization, and subsidies for rent and rehabilitation of existing housing. The value of these benefits is significant, easily several thousand dollars, but varies with each volunteer, depending on which entitlements they choose to seek.

ACTION has each year considered the question of whether to increase the number of opportunities for Older Americans to volunteer as Foster Grandparents or Senior Companions or to increase the stipend for those now serving. The cost of living has always stimulated the question. Since 1974 Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion volunteers have been eligible for cost of living increases from Social Security and SSI entitlements.

It must be acknowledged that the costs of volunteering have also increased, including shoes and clothes for appearing and serving in public. ACTION seeks to be responsive to these changes with a modest increase in the stipend, an increase to \$40 a week in either one or two steps, as funds become available.

Q. Regarding the issue of the age of persons receiving Foster Grandparent Program services, there are many directors who feel that more flexibility is needed in assignments.

A. ACTION is urging project directors to take advantage of alternative assignments in the community where Foster Grandparents live. This would reduce the inflexible reliance on residential institutions for assignments, which is consistent with the current emphasis on deinstitutionalization. It would be responsive to the special needs of many children in individual and group homes. The position of ACTION is that with a limited number of dollars they should be used where they can accomplish the most. This is with the younger children with exceptional needs.

Q. Is the former ration of 80 percent direct benefits to 20 percent administrative costs required in budgets, still going to prevail?

A. ACTION is initiating a revised approach that will maximize direct benefits to Foster Grandparents by providing a total of \$9 of direct benefits for every \$10 of federal funds in the budget. In addition, it will be possible to show all local support in the budget, with no specific limit placed on volunteer support costs. The tentative new requirement will be that direct benefits to the volunteers (involving both federal and nonfederal contributions) shall be a sum equal to at least 90 percent of the ACTION federal grant.

Q. The requirement for filing a complete new application for funding every year raises objections by program review boards that the task is time-consuming and does not relate to program quality - only program writing quality. What's being done?

A. On January 27, a memorandum was sent to ACTION Regional and State Directors which simplifies data now required in the continuation narrative (A-566). This will reduce the time project staff now spend in reviewing continuation grants and the amount of paperwork required of Foster Grandparent Program Directors.

ACTION has under advisement a policy change to transfer the Program Review Board authority to State ACTION Offices, further reducing the time needed to approve applications.

Q. We contest the policy that ACTION now seems to be espousing that local small Foster Grandparent Programs are more desirable than larger programs.

A. ACTION does not favor small over large projects. Last fiscal year guidelines for expanding/developing FGP projects with an available \$1.7 million reserve provided in part that, "the remaining \$813,000 will be used in seven regions to support the expansion of a number of projects with less than 50 Foster Grandparents. The projects must be programmatically and operationally sound and merit additional positions." ACTION does favor community based projects in preference to statewide projects, believing that individual community controlled projects can be more responsive to individual human needs in the community than a state-institution controlled project.

Q. Although Congress directed ACTION to provide more expertise in the field of aging to gear up regional offices to assist Older Americans Programs, there does not appear to be any action in that direction.

A. Five ACTION regions have authorized attendance at the Western Gerontological Society meeting in April. Another region opted for the NCOA national conference. Project directors in all regions now have an opportunity to attend a national gerontological conference, within the constraint of available funds. ACTION is now planning to add an OAVP training specialist in the national office and each regional office to attend to the special training requirements of all OAVP projects. It is anticipated also that gerontological information of value to projects will be disseminated through the new periodical, <u>PRIME TIMES</u>.

LGA Thrust Reflects New Governmental Approach

Early in his administration, President Carter issued an Executive Order calling for the establishment of a "problem-

solving process" at the Federal level for applicants and recipients of federal aid.

In that Order, the President said:

"I have asked the head of each Executive Agency to name one person to serve as the liaison with state and local governments in the development of departmental policy and as an ombudsman in the resolution of federal aid problems. This official will be well-positioned to perform these tasks because I have asked that he/she be a senior departmental policy administrator..."

Acting upon that directive, some government agencies like HEW, for example, have placed the intergovernmental function within the director's office. HUD has added resources to an already large intergovernmental affairs staff.

ACTION has established a senior level position within what was once the Office of Congressional Affairs, and has broadened the mission--and the name--of that division to encompass both legislative and governmental affairs.

The Office of Legislative and Governmental Affairs (LGA) is now charged with developing legislative and intergovernmental policy for the agency and for coordinating and overseeing official agency contacts with Congress and with state and local governmental units. LGA also serves as the chief advisor for Sam Brown and support managers on all related issues and activities.

Al Raby, previously special assistant to former Illinois Governor Daniel Walker, educator, and civil rights leader, has been named LGA Director Dan Maldonado's intergovernmental affairs officer.

Brought on board in September as a consultant, and recently named to a permanent post, Raby is now developing and monitoring the agency's intergovernmental policy and relations.

He is the focal point for all agency-wide intergovernmental functions and represents the view of the Director internally as well as to top officials at the regional, state and local levels-including governors, mayors, county supervisors, commissioners and state and local legislative units and representatives-- and with their national associations as well as with citizen groups.

Raby sees his role as a resource person, a coordinator of information and issues, a bridge between different levels of government.

"Presumably," he explained, "if there is an elected official looking for information from the agency, and he is not getting a response, then I am the person to contact. If I don't have the information, I'll get it."

At the same time, Raby will serve as a "repository of information" about other government agencies.

"I will give technical assistance to ACTION staff and others in making it through the bureaucratic maze."

He also will feed information back to $\ensuremath{\mathsf{ACTION's}}$ chief policy-makers.

One of the agency's major thrusts in the area of intergovernmental relations will be to establish a closer tie with federal regional councils, representative bodies made up of regional directors of federal agencies. In the past, ACTION has maintained only an informal involvement. But now, Raby said, regional directors will hold a formal position on each of the 10 regional councils.

"We view our participation in the councils as one way in which we will be able to serve in coordinating efforts in some instances, and in others, to serve as advocates of the poor-which is our mandate. "To the extent that we establish close relationships with other agencies, particularly those with large sums of money, we can work to broaden their knowledge of the best ways to use their dollar resources in meeting basic human needs.

"That means we can have a leverage capability. We can influence decisions regarding the distribution of federal resources."

As an example of the role this agency might play in the decision - making process of others, Raby hypothesized:

"AOA in Alabama may ask our state director there to sit on an advisory board, or to recommend persons to do so... Here lies the possibility of having a significant influence on AOA program development."

The success or failure of ACTION's efforts to work in concert with elected and appointed officials at state and local levels will depend ultimately on the effectiveness of its state and regional directors, according to Raby. "For this to work, and for me to provide even the smallest amount of service, I must have the belief and trust of regional staff," he said.

A 1960 graduate of Chicago Teachers College, he taught in that city's public school system for five years. During that period, he was elected president of Teachers for Integrated Schools. In 1964, he was elected chairman of the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCO), Chicago's umbrella civil rights organization during the 60s. One year later, he was awarded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Rosa Parks award for significant contribution to nonviolence. Raby also co-chaired the Chicago Freedom Movement with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1968, he returned to graduate study in Americanhistory and urban studies at the University of Chicago.

In 1969, he was elected a delegate to the Illinois Constitutional Convention. He later served as a community organizations consultant for the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs. From 1971 to 1973, he was human relations director for the Illinois Education Association and from 1974-77, served as special assistant to then Illinois Governor Daniel Walker.

Final VISTA Guidance Papers Now Available

On November 30, 1977, a set of draft papers on VISTA's new program directions and means for implementation was sent for comment from VISTA Director Marge Tabankin to appropriate field and headquarters staff. All comments submitted by mid-January, at the close of the comment period, were collated by issue, reviewed, and incorporated, where necessary, into the final version of the papers. The final set, called the "VISTA Guidance Papers," was published in early March. Pertinent excerpts from the guidance papers on implementation of new program directions will be sent to every VISTA sponsor and will also be published in the <u>Federal Register</u> in March.

Employees interested in obtaining the complete series of "VISTA Guidance Papers" may write to VISTA, Policy Branch #1106, 806 Connectitut Ave., NW, Wash., D.C. 20525.

Following are excerpts from the introductory section of the papers.

The new direction of VISTA has as its purpose assisting low-income people to break the bonds of dependency. It reflects a firm belief in the democratic principles upon which our system of government is based and the willingness of people to help each other and themselves. It is also based on the belief that the problems of poverty will be ameliorated when, and only when, low-income people become empowered. In other words, low-income people must develop the capacity to help themselves.

VISTA PHILOSOPHY OF PROJECT SELECTION

VISTA volunteers can serve a unique role in the effort against poverty by working to empower groups of low-income citizens so they can influence the decisions that affect their lives.

Low-income people should participate in making the decisions that determine the kinds of services offered in their neighborhoods; for example, the education received by their children, the location and kinds of health care facilities, the location of highways and other public improvement, the amount and form of assistance offered, the kind and location of housing developed as well as many other decisions that are too often made for low-income citizens by the rest of us.

Successful citizen-participation organization will result in the increased access of low-income people to decision making through cooperative efforts with established public and private institutions, or through the creation of new mechanisms for the participation of low-income people in the decision making processes which affect their lives. The net result will be improved conditions through the more effective deployment of public and private resources designed to relieve poverty.

TECHNIQUE TO BE UTILIZED

The best way to accomplish the central purpose of the VISTA program is to assure that VISTA projects have as their method of attacking poverty the organization of low-income people to bring long term benefits to themselves and their communities through their own collective efforts.

People must be organized into effective groups so they may increase the strength of their voice as they advocate for their interests.

BASIC TEST OF PROJECT SELECTION

The test, then, for selecting a project for placement of VISTA volunteers, is whether that placement will lead to an increased voice for low-income people in the decision making processes which affect their lives.

How projects do this will differ from project to project and from community to community as will the exact nature of the volunteers' activities; however, with rare exceptions, the following elements should be present.

(1) The sponsoring agency should be grassroots (i.e., controlled and operated by those to be served). If it is not, the project should lead to the building or strengthening of a grassroots organization or advocacy system.

(2) The volunteers' roles should be ones of support. Under no circumstances should the volunteers be providing a direct service unless it can be demonstrated that the service roles are an integral part of an overall organizing strategy which will lead to the empowerment of low-income people.

Fulltime DO Programs Surveyed

The Office of Policy and Planning/Evaluation is conducting a survey of two of ACTION's full-time domestic volunteer programs, VISTA and UYA. The survey is designed to determine volunteer activities and successes and specific program information.

The questionnaires, prepared by the American Institutes for Research in cooperation with the Evaluation Office, were mailed in February to 4,500 volunteers. Questions cover such areas as training, activities, strategies, levels of satisfaction, supervision, and overall impact on the volunteers' appropriate program.

The survey will focus on national program thrusts in UYA

and VISTA by comparing, for example, the newer VISTA projects which operate under a grant system, and earlier projects which do not. The VISTA grant projects, which began a few months ago, will receive the OPP survey in the spring, allowing them time to organize and have a better perspective on their operations.

Information gathered from the survey will help update the agency's <u>Domestic Programs Fact Book</u>, will provide a more accurate count of the more than 500 VISTA projects nationwide and more accurate information on VISTA projects in the human needs area.

OPP project director Keith Jamtgaard reported that the first phase of the evaluation indicated some degree of success. "We have made 500 advance phone calls in four weeks to the projects involved." he said. "We are hoping for a much higher response rate than was achieved through earlier survey methods."

A report on survey results is planned for May.

DSRA Drive Enrolls 200-plus Members

The State - USIA Recreation Association (DSRA) 1978 Membership Drive ended February 17. During the four week drive, 237 additional ACTION employees joined the Association.

Jim Simpson and Charles Barenthaler, ACTION'S DSRA representatives, were encouraged by the positive response that employees displayed and have made a commitment to provide ACTION members with more information on DSRA sponsored activities. Already, bulletin boards and displays have been set up in the lobby of the Maitico Building with brochures and pamphlets on DSRA activities and trips.

For those employees who did not have the opportunity to fill out a membership application card, or would like to secure additional information regarding DSRA, please contact Jim Simpson in Room M-202, X48336, or Charles Barenthaler in Room M-306, X43167. Membership applications and assorted pamphlets are available. Membership is good for one to three years.



Office of Volunteer Placement: New Director Named

As new director of the Peace Corps' Office of Volunteer Placement Sandy McKenzie, who assumed her new position in January, will be responsible for managing the office's staging/ orientation/administrative unit and the placement unit.

The staging/orientation/administrative unit, McKenzie explained, is responsible for "coordinating activities at comprehensive stagings, those 2-3 day orientation sessions held in Washington for Peace Corps volunteers prior to departure for in-country training in their overseas assignments." The stagings provide would-be volunteers an opportunity to get acquainted with fellow volunteers, participate in some cross-cultural activities, and receive some information on the country in which they are about to serve.

The placement unit is responsible for determining which applicants for the Peace Corps will become volunteers and in what specific jobs they will serve.

McKenzie noted that the office is now developing new systems that can respond to Peace Corps changes with the new emphasis on generalist recruitment, skill training, programming in basic human needs, and a more expanded Corps open to a wider variety of people. A series of discussions are now taking place within the office, for example, centered around developing new and/or expanded models for stagings.

Other changes, McKenzie noted, is in emphasis from "job recruiting to Peace Corps recruiting and more importance placed on volunteer commitment and motivation." She added that the office will now be dealing with a larger number of applicants than under the previous pre-slot system and that there will be "more quality decisions for selection because of the larger pool of applicants for volunteer assignments."

Ms. McKenzie returns to Peace Corps after having held a variety of positions in Peace Corps operations from 1966-1971 as placement officer, chief program officer, acting director of the management information system and chief of the coordination control branch.

From 1971 until her recent Peace Corps appointment, she worked at the District of Columbia's Department of Human Resource where she served as Grants and Contract Manager of the Narcotics Treatment Administration.

Who's News: OPP John Sommer's Book Reviewed

Special Assistant in the Office of Policy and Planning, John Sommer, has published a book entitled, <u>Beyond Charity</u>: U.S. <u>Voluntary Aid for a Changing Third World</u>, which was recently reviewed in a number of publications, including <u>TAICH News</u>. (This is the publication of the Technical Assistance Information Clearing House of the American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service.)

The late Hubert H. Humphrey, in his foreword to the book, noted that "in a world that has seen enough of paternalism and that is striving to meet both basic human needs and essential demands for dignity and equality, the issue of how we Americans relate to other people becomes even more sensitive and important than in the past... This book," he added, "comes as a most timely and thoughtful contribution -- really the first one of its kind -- to our thinking here and to our planning for the future."

As <u>TAICH News</u> observes, the book examines the impact of different types of aid in overcoming poverty and addresses the American private and voluntary sector's role in the future international development process. More specifically, the review points out, Sommer looks at the changes in direction of private voluntary assistance over the years and assesses the value of food aid and the "blurred understanding" of the differences between relief and development approaches to overseas assistance.

Beyond Charity -- which also touches at points on the Peace Corps and on efforts to combat poverty in the U.S. -concludes with a number of recommendations on how U.S. voluntary assistance can be made more beneficial to the Third World, and on how it can provide the American people with a clearer understanding of world problems and the need for shared responsibility in finding solutions to them. The review cites the book's underlying assumption: "The private and voluntary sector, whatever its individual shortcomings, is a unique source of hope and promise as the people of the United States strive to reassert a constructive role in tomorrow's world."

Copies of <u>Beyond Charity</u> are available in the ACTION Library, Room M-407.

CMPs Provide Policy and Guidance

On January 30, Peace Corps Director Carolyn Payton sent Country Management Plan guidelines (CMPs) providing the basis The CMPs suggest how programs are to be rated according to the priorities given them by Peace Corps.

In explaining the guidelines, Director Payton noted that "Peace Corps never has and never will be able to recruit large numbers of technicians and specialists, and the bulk of volunteers are not these people. We are, however, committed to high quality skill training to make Peace Corps volunteers effective workers in specialized fields, even though they did not have pre-Peace Corps training or work experience in these fields."

Skill training for generalists is being intensified under the new agency-wide thrust toward meeting basic human needs. Peace Corps will begin new, and longer appropriate-skills training sessions both in the regions and in Washington as early as June.

Ms. Payton presented the broad philosophical directions underlying the new plans. "CMPs will be only as valid as the degree to which they reflect interaction with our hosts, and understanding and trust in the program development process."

The official statement of policy and guidance lists and defines program criteria in three categories by asking:

"How basic are the human needs which the program or project is addressing through primary and/or secondary activities?"

"To what degree does the program or project reflect other philosophicalemphases of the Peace Corps?" and

"To what extent is the program or project feasible for Peace Corps and likely to succeed?"

PCVs wishing to examine the plans and see how new guidelines relate to their own programs or projects will find the documents at country directors' offices.

PC Programming and Training Concentrate Efforts

As part of the renewed emphasis by Peace Corps on projects directly addressing the basic needs of the world's poor, Carolyn Payton has established the Office of Programming and Training Coordination, under David B. Levine. Levine is a former Ethiopia Peace Corps volunteer and staff member and a former program consultant and contract trainer to Peace Corps.

The establishment of the Office of Programming and Training Coordination represents the first effort since 1974 toward a single focus for Peace Corps programming and training activities. This new office will offer technical expertise in the various programming sectors, for example, health, food production, knowledge skills, in training design, and in the project development process. The Programming and Training group will also be involved in coordinating many aspects of evaluation, policy formulation and procedures which affect programming and training.

Levine, who officially took up his post in late February, has emphasized that several things must happen simultaneously before changes in Peace Corps programming, training and recruitment can occur. Appropriate projects which focus on the basic needs of the poorest must be identified, or existing projects changed in content and intended impact. The current country planning process now emphasizes a reexamination of both ongoing projects and those being developed. Also, the Peace Corps must develop a sophisticated skill training capacity to take committed, available volunteers and prepare them for specific roles defined by overseas staff and host country officials. Recruiting must be changed to stress commitment and desire to serve, rather than relying on pre-existing, scarce skills, for example. Levine and his staff are working intensely to provide required guidance and assistance at the same time they are developing the functions of their office. Some of their activities include developing a thorough review process for the FY 1979 country management plans with an interoffice workgroup. Criteria for assessing projects in each of the human needs areas (food and water, health and nutrition, knowledge and skills, economic development and income, housing, community services, energy and conservation) are being developed through a series of open roundtable meetings. A pool of consultants in such fields as health, agriculture, fisheries, natural resources, and general programming is being assembled and a process has been designed to field them on short notice when

overseas posts request help. A standard orientation for all Peace Corps volunteers in the essential subjects of voluntarism, motivation, and the Peace Corps' role in development is being prepared for initial implementation in spring and summer training cycles. Summer season training requirements are being reviewed with the Regional and Placement staffs to find opportunities for skill-training where recruiting shortfalls of scarce skills may occur, and to see where both quality and economy can be served by combining some technical training in U.S. or third country locations.

"Training will be longer and more intensive", says Levine. "Hopefully, Peace Corps can develop models to use to the Third World in plans to train their own middle-level and villagelevel workers." Peace Corps will continue to field specialists, but their assignments too will be directed toward meeting basic human needs, according to Levine.

"We began inviting requests for assistance from the field before we even had our staff pulled together in one place," Levine said. "We trust that our Directors will know that the offers are real. We are making arrangements so that all staff or consultants who travel to lend a hand with programming or training overseas are well versed in Peace Corps' policies, and programming techniques, and can move sensitively in the country situation where they are asked to work. Our credibility as a new office will depend on this to a great extent."

As a Peace Corps volunteer from 1964 to 1966, Levine served as assistant director for a 600-student secondary education division of Haile Selassie I School in Emdeber, Ethiopia. There he taught mathematics, science and English. He returned to the Peace Corps and Ethiopia in 1967 to become an Associate Peace Corps Director, and later Programming and Training Officer. He remained through 1970.

Before accepting his current position with Peace Corps-Washington, Levine was Manager of the Antioch School of Law in Washington, a post he had held since 1976. From 1975 through 1977, he also was Vice-President of the Institute of Educational Research in Washington.

From 1972 to 1975, Levine served as Executive Assistant to the President of Queens College, City University of New York in Flushing. Prior to that, he was assistant director for operations of federal or program contracts for the General Learning Corporation, Educational Services Division, from 1970 to 1971. He also has served as a technical studies coordinator for the Educational Development Center in Newton, Mass., and as a private consultant in program and training system design, development and implementation.

A 1964 graduate of Columbia College, Levine was a graduate fellow in comparative literature at Columbia University and has done further graduate work in Urban Studies at Queens College. He speaks several languages, including French and Amharic.

Peace Corps Discusses Cooperatives with Private Volunteer Sector

Representatives from both Peace Corps and private voluntary organizations met on March 3 in a continuing effort to increase cooperation between the Peace Corps and the private voluntary sector.

The voluntary organizations -- the American Institute of Cooperation, Volunteer Development Corporation and the National Rural Electrical Cooperative Association (NRECA) -- are concerned with the development of cooperatives worldwide. Discussion centered around private volunteer and continuing Peace Corps efforts in cooperative ventures in developing nations.

Art Mitchell, special projects manager NRECA, said the Electrical Cooperative Association has helped establish electrical systems for 34 developing nations. Currently, more than 6 1/2 million persons in these countries are receiving electrical service from cooperative initiatives in which NRECA has been involved.

State Department Officer Briefed on PC Fiscal Operations

New employees or employees involved in activities on the domestic side of the agency may not be all that familiar with the International Operations end. These people may be surprised to learn that State Department Officers handle a number of fiscal and support functions overseas for the Peace Corps.

In order to make the job of these State Department officers, such as Mr. Chris Runckel who will soon depart for Fiji, easier and more responsive to Peace Corps needs, a formal briefing session on Peace Corps administrative operations was recently held for Runckel at ACTION Headquarters with appropriate agency staff.

State Department Officers who handle Peace Corps fiscal functions are located at the American embassies where the Peace Corps is found. The officers have overall responsibility for certifying Peace Corps vouchers, issuing checks, maintaining accounting records and ensuring the smooth operation of the cable, pouch, and customs clearance operations.

According to Jim Robertson, Administration and Finance overseas liaison specialist, Peace Corps fiscal support systems in the South Pacific have had a number of problems because the American embassy which handles the fiscal functions is located in distant New Zealand. Some of these problems should be resolved when the State Department moves Peace Corps fiscal responsibilities from the American embassy in New Zealand to Suva, the capital of Fiji, and when Runckel assumes his position at the embassy in April.

Jim Robertson said the three-day ACTION briefing session in February was a successful one. Runckel met with representatives from the contracts and accounting divisions, the Office of Compliance, and the NANEAP region.

Smithsonian Seeks Peace Corps Mementos

The April issue of <u>Peace Corps Times</u>, new monthly publication for volunteers abroad, is running a request for personal accounts of volunteer experiences for use in an on-going Smithsonian project.

In 1975, the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives

began compiling information relating to cross-cultural experiences in the Peace Corps. Submissions have included personal diaries and journals, poetry and letters, and photographs and tapes. To date, the Archives has collected 60 to 75 separate accounts, each offering useful anthropological data.

In the past, student interns from George Washington University have worked with the Peace Corps and Smithsonian staffs in analyzing and categorizing the vast diversity of information received. The students also have devised an indexing system which allows researchers to readily find specific pieces of information.

Both the Peace Corps and the Smithsonian respect the privacy of volunteers' personal material, and have suggested that sensitive portions be marked "restricted." Peace Corps volunteers interested in submitting material, or staff members seeking information may write to Dr. Herman Viola, Director, the National Anthropological Archives, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

Hunger Dilemma Explored with ACTION Staff



Peace Corps priorities in better health and nutrition tie in with the Carter Administration's initiatives to end world hunger. And so do the efforts of the Hunger Project, according to founder Werner Erhard who also founded EST, the Erhard Seminar Training program.

In a special presentation to ACTION employees on February 21, Erhard spoke about the Hunger Project which, he believes, will "end hunger worldwide in two decades." The project advocates a rethinking on the part of people in all walks of life, who Erhard believes, have the capacity to turn around the entire issue of world hunger as we now know it.

Erhard said that all private citizens must begin to explore those "unexamined structures of beliefs" by which they operate. Some of those unexamined beliefs or "mindsets" are the idea that hunger is a function of reality, that it is inevitable, and that it has no solution. Erhard called for a transformation in thinking by studying the context of hunger and starvation in an entirely different way. He suggested we look at the reason for hunger's persistence, and then determine the principles which may bring about a solution. "We don't need any new processes or goals," he said. "And we don't need to do things more, better or different, because what we're doing now is still not going to work."

What is needed, he claimed, is a shift in the political and social "forces" which cause hunger. It was noted that one possible solution is a change in land reform.

Accompanying the Erhard talk was a film, featuring ACTION Director Sam Brown, Mrs. Rosalynn Carter, the late Senator Hubert Humphrey, U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young, Senator Robert Dole, and Donald Mills, U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica. Both Mills and Young spoke about the most basic of human rights, which is the right to eat. Senator Humphrey stated that no matter how impossible the task may appear, hunger can be eliminated in our time. "Whatever we want to do," he said, "we can get it done."

WATS Line: A Valuable Hook-Up

So often, superlative efforts of employees tucked away in corners go overlooked. It seems fitting that now during Peace Corps/VISTA Month we take the opportunity to give the people who answer the thousands of "Dear ACTION" queries a much deserved pat-on-the-back. The Dallas Service Center has reported that the ACTION WATS Line is responsible for more successfully recruited volunteers in the Dallas area than any other indirect method.

WATS, an acronyn for Wide Area Telephone Service, is a toll-free long distance system which enables people to call ACTION from anywhere in the United States at no charge. The WATS office staff of six, located within ORC-Washington, receives an average of 150 calls a day, according to Pat Pickering, chief. Many of these calls result in applications for volunteer service.

After tracking recently recruited volunteers--through code numbers appearing on application forms--to determine through what source they learned about opportunities in Peace Corps and VISTA, the Dallas office informed Ms. Pickering last week that her office ranked number one in the indirect recruiting category.

Indirect recruiting involves people taking the initiative to contact ACTION either by filling out cards on recruitment posters, writing "Dear ACTION" letters, or calling the WATS number. Direct recruiting, on the other hand, most often depends on person-toperson contact.

According to Ms. Pickering, the WATS staff is responsible for responding quickly to inquiries, providing accurate information about the agency in general and the programs in particular--always with an eye to encouraging the qualified individual to apply.

When someone dials the 800 number (800-424-8580) his/her call is received by a central switchboard with 16 trunk lines. The call is then transfered to one of 100 branch lines feeding into various agency offices.

Some calls are connected with country desk officers, special services, volunteer payroll, recruitment intern program or the reservation center.

Five of these branches link the caller with the WATS office. After talking with individuals, and after determining interest and appropriate skills, the staff mails out an application form. Once the application has been sent, the office then informs the appropriate regional recruiting staff of the contact, for possible follow-up.

In addition to taking calls, the WATS people also receive and answer volumes of letters -- 14,000 last year. The queries, by either telephone or letter may range from a worried parent of a Peace Corps volunteer serving in a country recently hit by an earthquake, a law school graduate looking for opportunities to use his skills in VISTA, or an older woman interested in the Foster Grandparent Program.

To meet these challenges, the WATS staffer is many things rolled into one: counselor, talking library, agency spokesperson, public relations representative and recruiter.

The WATS Line was introduced into civil government in 1970; VISTA was the first to install the system. When ACTION began in 1971, the WATS Line had ll extensions handling calls for Peace Corps and VISTA recruitment and applications' questions. Today, an average of 1,200 calls per day are processed on 100 extensions, providing information on all facets of agency business.

LIBRARY NOTES

The <u>Free and Reduced Rate Magazine List</u>, January 1978 has been distributed to all Peace Corps offices. The list includes publications on a wide variety of subjects which may be of interest to volunteers.

The World Neighbors organization is no longer able to provide complimentary subscriptions for its publications, Soundings and World Neighbors in ACTION. They now are available at \$2.00-a-year.

On the same note the Library of Congress has asked that volunteers be informed that the <u>Library of Congress Accessions</u> <u>Lists</u> are available free only to universities and research libraries.

Bonds Now Get There Quicker

A new system is in effect for providing faster delivery of U.S. Savings bonds to the regional offices. Administration and Finance will now mail savings bonds immediately upon receipt from Treasury rather than waiting for the traditional consolidated mailing of staff earnings statements, bonds, bank deposit listings, and time cards. This means that regional employees will receive their bonds several days prior to payday instead of on payday, as they had in the past.

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REGIONAL NEWS

Denver

ACTION'S OAVP programs were well-represented when the state of Colorado scheduled the first Senior Citizens' Day at the state legislature on February 7. Nearly 1,000 seniors from across the state visited the state senate and the house, met with their legislators and were honored at a tea hosted by Governor Richard Lamm at the governor's mansion. One ACTION staffer termed the event a "real exhibition of senior power and of seniors' interest in the political process."

When it comes to "extra-curricular" participation by ACTION program directors and staff, Utah seems to lead the field.

The Utah Area Association of Directors of Volunteers (UAADV) represents volunteer directors from many organizations, such as hospitals, schools, the Red Cross, and churches. UAADV President Dr. Rick Crawford is also ACTION State Program Officer. Vice-President is Ms. Corinne Hill, VISTA supervisor of the Salt Lake Schools project.

Charles Dearing, Foster Grandparent Director for the Utah County FGP, is currently serving as president of the Senior Citizens Executive Association of Utah (SCEAU). This association is composed of persons who head senior citizens programs such as Title VII nutrition centers, or nursing homes. Treasurer of the SCEAU is Ms. Ruth Conrow, Salt Lake County FGP Director.

Chicago

Future Farmers of America, the largest youth organization in the U.S., will soon be receiving some helpful information on international agricultural problems and solutions which has been compiled into information teaching units by Gene Peuse, Peace Corps strategy person in the Chicago region. With funds from an RPCV scholarship, Peuse developed the teaching unit which will be distributed to 8,500 chapters of Future Farmers of America. The unit contains information on international agricultural problems, along with a slide presentation on Peace Corps agricultural projects. This is the first time Future Farmers of America has incorporated in its curriculum teaching materials on international agricultural issues.